

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 06, No. 37, November, 1860 eBook

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 06, No. 37, November, 1860

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Page 1

THOMAS HOOD.

Thomas Hood was originally intended for business, and entered a mercantile house; but the failure of his health, at fifteen years of age, compelled him to leave it, and go to Scotland, where he remained two years, with much gain to his body and his mind. On his return to London, he applied himself to learn the art of engraving; but his constitution would not allow him to pursue it. Yet what he did acquire of this art, with his genius for comic observation, must have been of excellent service to him in his subsequent career. This, at first, was simply literary, in a subordinate connection with "The London Magazine." His relation to this periodical gave him opportunities, which he did not neglect, of knowing many of its brilliant contributors. Among these was Charles Lamb, who took a strong liking to the youthful sub-editor, and, doubtless, discovered a talent that in some points had resemblance to his own. The influence of his conversation and companionship may have brought Hood's natural qualities of mind into early growth, and helped them into early ripeness. Striking as the difference was, in some respects, between them, in other respects the likeness was quite as striking. Both were playful in manner, but melancholy by constitution, and in each there lurked an unsuspected sadness; both had tenderness in their mirth, and mirth in their tenderness; and both were born punsters, with more meaning in their puns than met the ear, and constantly bringing into sudden and surprising revelation the wonderful mysteries of words.

With a genius of so singular a cast, Hood was not destined to continue long a subordinate. Almost with manhood he began to be an independent workman of letters; and as such, through ever-varying gravities and gayeties, tears and laughter, grimscialities and whimsicalities, prose and verse, he labored incessantly till his too early death. The whole was truly and entirely "Hood's Own." In mind he owed no man anything. Unfortunately, he did in money. That he might economize, and be free to toil in order to pay, he went abroad, residing between four and five years out of England, part of the time at Coblenz, in Rhenish Prussia, and part at Ostend, in Belgium. The climate of Rhenish Prussia was bad for his health, and the people were disagreeable to his feelings. The change to Belgium was at first pleasant and an improvement; but complete recovery soon seemed as far away as ever; nay, it was absolutely away forever. But in the midst of his family—his wife, his little boy and girl, most loving and most loved—bravely he toiled, with pen and pencil, with head and heart; and while men held both their sides from laughter, he who shook them held both his sides from pain; while tears, kindly or comical, came at the touch of his genius into thousands of eyes, eyes were watching and weeping in secret by his bed-side in the lonely night, which, gazing through the cloud of sorrow on



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his thin features and his uneasy sleep, took note that the instrument was fast decaying which gave forth the enchantment and the charm of all this mirthful and melancholy music. Thus, in bodily pain, in bodily weakness even worse than pain, in pecuniary embarrassment worse than either, worst of all, often distressed in mind as to means of support for his family, he still persevered; his genius did not forsake him, nor did his goodness; the milk of human kindness did not grow sour, nor the sweet charities of human life turn into bitter irritations. But what a tragedy the whole suggests, in its combination of gayety with grief, and in the thought of laughter that must be created at the cost of sighs, of merriment in which every grin has been purchased by a groan!

An anecdote which we once read, always, when we recall it, deeply affects us. A favorite comic actor, on a certain evening, was hissed by the audience, who had always before applauded him. He burst into tears. He had been watching his dying wife, and had left her dead, as he came upon the stage. This was his apology for imperfection in his part. Poor Hood had also to unite comedy with tragedy,—not for a night, or a day, or a week, but for months and years. He had to give the comedy to the public, and keep the tragedy to himself; nor could he, if comedy failed him, plead with the public the tragedy of his circumstances. *That* was nothing to the public. He must give pleasure to the public, and not explanations and excuses. But genius, goodness, many friends, no enemy, the consciousness of imparting enjoyment to multitudes, and to no man wretchedness, a heart alive with all that is tender and gentle, and strong to manful and noble purpose and achievement,—these are grand compensations,—compensations for even more ills than Hood was heir to; and with such compensations Hood was largely blessed. Though his funds were nothing to the bounty of his spirit, yet he did not refuse to himself the blessedness of giving. Want, to his eye of charity, was neither native nor foreign, but *human*; and as *human* he pitied it always, and, as far as he could, relieved it. While abroad, he was constantly doing acts of beneficence; and the burlesque style with which, in his correspondence, he tries to disguise his own goodness, while using the incidents as items to write about, is one of the most delightful peculiarities in his delightful letters. The inimitable combination of humanity and humor in these passages renders them equal to the best things that Hood has anywhere written. To crown all, Hood had happiness unalloyed in his children and his wife. Mrs. Hood seems to have deserved to the utmost the abounding love which her husband lavished on her. She was not only, as a devoted wife, a cheerer of his heart, but, as a woman of accomplishment and ability, she was a companion for his mind. Her judgment was as clear and sure as her affection was warm and strong. Her letters have often a grave tenderness and an insinuated humor hardly inferior to her husband's. But as she must write from fact and not from fancy, what she writes naturally bears the impression of her cares. Here is a passage from one of her latest letters, which, half sadly, half amusingly, reminds us of Mrs. Primrose and her "I'll-warrant" and "Between-ourselves" manner.



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“Hood dines to-day,” she writes, “with Doctor Bowring, in Queen Square. He knew him well years ago in ‘The London Magazine’; and he wrote, a few days ago, to ask Hood to meet Bright and Cobden on business,—I think, to write songs for the League. I augur good from it. This comes of ‘The Song of the Shirt,’ of which we hear something continually.”

As an instance of her judgment, we may mention that she prophesied at once all the success which followed this same “Song of the Shirt.” When read to her in manuscript, —“Now mind, Hood,” said she, “mark my words, this will tell wonderfully! It is one of the best things you ever did.” Her reference to “The Song” in her letter has a sort of pathetic *naivete* in it; it shows that the thought with which she was concerned was practical, not poetical,—not her husband’s fame, but her household cares. She was thinking of songs that would turn into substance,—of “notes” that could be exchanged for cash,—of evanescent flame that might be condensed into solid coal, which would, in turn, make the pot boil,—and of music that could be converted into mutton. O ye entranced bards, drunk with the god, seeing visions and dreaming dreams in the third heaven, that is, the third story! O ye voluminous historians, who live in the guilt and glory of the past, and are proud in making the biggest and thickest books for the dust, cobwebs, and moths of the future! O ye commentators, who delight to render obscurity more obscure, and who assume that in a multitude of words, as in a multitude of counsellors, there is wisdom! O ye critics, who vote yourselves the Areopagites of Intellect, whose decrees confer immortality in the Universe of Letters! O all ye that write or scribble,—all ye tribes, both great and small, of pen-drivers and paper-scrappers!—know ye, that, while ye are listening in your imaginative ambition to the praise of the elect or the applause of nations, your wives are often counting the coppers that are to buy the coming meal, alarmed at the approaching rent-day, or trembling in apprehension of the baker’s bill.

Hood, in 1840, returned to reside in England during the small remainder of his life. For a few months he edited the “New Monthly,” and then, for a few months more, a magazine of his own. But the whole of this period was filled with bodily and mental trials, of which it is painful to read. Yet within this period it was that he wrote some of his finest things, both laughable and serious. It is, however, to be remarked, it was now he reached down to that well of tears which lay in the depth of his nature. Always before, there had been misty exhalations from it, that oozed up into the sunshine of his fancy, and that took all the shapes of glisten or of gloom which his Protean genius gave them. In the rapid eccentricities of cloud and coruscation, the source which supplied to the varying forms so much of their substance was hidden or unminded. But now the fountain of thought and tragedy had been readied, whence the waters of sin and suffering spring forth clear and unalloyed in their own deep loneliness, and we hear the gush and the murmur of their stream in such monodies as “The Song of the Shirt,” “The Lay of the Laborer,” and “The Bridge of Sighs.”



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Hood died in 1845, and was then only forty-six or forty-seven years old. Alike esteemed by the poor and the rich, both united to consecrate a monument to his memory. Kindly should we ever think of those who make our hearts and our tempers bright; who, without pomp of wisdom, help us to a cheerfulness which no proud philosophy can give; who, in the motley of checkered mirth and wit, sparkle on the resting-spots of life. Such men are rare, and as valuable as they are rare. The world wants them more than it wants heroes and victors: for mirth is better than massacre; and it is surely better to hear laughter sounding aloud the jubilee of the heart, than the shout of battle and yell of conquest. Precious, then, are those whose genius brings pleasure to the bosom and sunshine to the face; who not only call our thoughts into festive action, but brighten our affections into generous feeling. Though we may not loudly celebrate such men, we greatly miss them; and not on marble monuments, but in our warmest memories, their names continue fresh. But laugh and make laugh as they may, they, too, have the destiny of grief; and unto them, as unto all men, come their passages of tragedy,—the days of evil, the nights of waking, and the need of pity.

When Hood was near his death a pension of a hundred pounds a year was settled on his wife, at the instance of Sir Robert Peel. The wife, so soon to become a widow, did not long survive her husband; then, in 1847, the pension was continued to their two orphan children, at the instance of Lord John Russell. Politics and parties were forgotten, in gratitude to an earnest lover of his kind; and the people, as well as the government, in helping to provide for those whom he left behind, showed that they had not forgotten one whose desire it was to improve even more than to amuse them. And still we cannot but feel sad that there should ever have been this need. Nor would there have been, had Hood had the strength to carry him into the vast reading public which has arisen since his death, and which it was not his fate to know. "The income," says his daughter, "which his works now produce to his children, might then have prolonged his life for many years."

We have written more on the personal relations of Hood than we had intended; but we have been carried on unwittingly, while reading the "Memorials" of him recently published and edited by his children. The loving worth of the man, as therein revealed, made us slow to quit the companionship of his character to discuss the qualities of his genius. We trust that our time has not been misspent, morally or critically; for, besides the moral good which we gain from the contemplation of an excellent man, we enjoy also the critical satisfaction of learning that whatever is best in literature comes out of that which is best in life. We therefore close this section of our article with a bit of prose and a bit of poetry, among Hood's "last things,"—personally and pathetically characteristic of his nature and his genius.



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“Dear Moir,[A]

“God bless you and yours, and goodbye! I drop these few lines, as in a bottle from a ship water-logged and on the brink of foundering, being in the last stage of dropsical debility; but, though suffering in body, serene in mind. So, without reversing my union-jack, I await my last lurch. Till which, believe me, dear Moir,

“Yours most truly,

“*Thomas hood.*”

[Footnote A: The *Delta* of Blackwood]

Stanzas.

“Farewell, Life! My senses swim,
And the world is growing dim;
Thronging shadows cloud the light,
Like the advent of the night;
Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapor chill;
Strong the earthly odor grows,—
I smell the Mould above the Rose!”

“Welcome, Life! The spirit strives!
Strength returns, and hope revives!
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
Fly like shadows at the morn;
O'er the earth there comes a bloom,
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapors cold,—
I smell the Rose above the Mould!”

Nothing at first appears more easy than to define and to describe the genius of Hood. It is strictly singular, and entirely his own. That which is his is completely his, and no man can cry halves with him, or quarters,—hardly the smallest fraction. The estimate of his genius, therefore, puts the critic to no trouble of elaborate discrimination or comparison. When we think of Hood as a humorist, there is no need that we should at the same time think of Aristophanes, or Lucian, or Rabelais, or Swift, or Sterne, or Fielding, or Dickens, or Thackeray. When we think of him as a poet,—except in a few of his early compositions,—we are not driven to examine what he shares with Chaucer, or Spenser, or Shakspeare, or Milton, or Byron, or Coleridge, or Wordsworth, or any of the poetic masters of literature. Whether as humorist or as poet, he is in English literature what Richter is in German literature, “the only one.” Then the characteristics of his genius



are outwardly so evident, that, in merely a glance, we fancy we comprehend them. But the more we think, the more we reflect, the more the difficulty opens on us of doing full justice to the mind of Hood. We soon discover that we are dealing, not with a mere punster or jester, not with a mere master of grimace or manufacturer of broad grins, not with an eccentric oddity in prose or verse, not with a merry-andrew who tickles to senseless laughter, not with a spasmodic melodramatist who writhes in fictitious pain, but that we are dealing with a sincere, truthful, and most gifted nature,—many-sided, many-colored, harmonious as a whole, and having a real unity as the centre of its power. To enter into a complete exposition of such a nature is not our purpose: we must content ourselves with noting some of its most striking literary and moral peculiarities.

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We do not claim for Hood, that he was a man of profound, wide, or philosophic intellect, or that for grandeur of imagination he could be numbered among the godlike; we do not claim that he opened up the deeps of passion, or brought down transcendent truths from the higher spheres of mind; we claim for him no praise for science or for scholarship: we merely maintain, that he was a man of rare humanity, of close, subtle, and various observation, of good sense and common sense, of intuitive insight into character, of catholic sympathy with his kind that towards the lowest was the most loving, of extraordinary social and miscellaneous knowledge that was always at his command, a thinker to the fullest measure of his needs, and, as humorist and poet, an originality and a novelty in the world of genius. This is our general estimate of Hood. What further we have to say shall be in accordance with it; and such has been the impressive influence of Hood's writings upon us, that our thoughts, whether we will or not, are more intent on their serious than on their comic import.

In all the writings of Hood that are not absolutely serious the *grotesque* is a present and pervading element. Often it shows itself, as if from an irresistible instinct of fantastic extravagance, in the wild and reckless sport of oddity. Combinations, mental, verbal, and pictorial, to ordinary mortals the strangest and the most remote, were to Hood innate and spontaneous. They came not from the outward,—they were born of the inward. They were purely subjective, the sportive pranks of Hood's own *me*, when that *me* was in its queerest moods. How naturally the impossible or the absurd took the semblance of consistency in the mental associations of Hood, we observe even in his private correspondence. "Jane," (Mrs. Hood,) he writes, "is now drinking porter,—at which I look half savage.....I must even *sip*, when I long to *swig*. I shall turn a fish soon, and have the pleasure of angling for myself." This, if without intention, would be a blunder or a bull. If it were written unwittingly, the result would be simply ludicrous, and consign it to the category of humor; but knowingly written, as we are aware it was, we must ascribe it to the category of wit.

This presence or absence of *intention* often decides whether a saying or an image is within the sphere of humor or of wit. But wit and humor constantly run into each other; and though the absence of intention at once shows that a ludicrous surprise belongs to the humorous, the presence of it will not so clearly define it as belonging to the witty. Nor will laughter quite settle this question; for there is wit which makes us laugh, and there is humor which does not. On the whole, it is as to what is purely wit that we are ever the most at fault. Certain phases of humor we cannot mistake,—especially those which are broadly comic or farcical. But sometimes we meet with incidents or scenes which have more in them of the pathetic than the comic, that we must still rank with the humorous. Here is a case in point. A time was when it was a penal offence in Ireland for a priest to say Mass, and under particular circumstances a capital felony. A priest was malignantly prosecuted; but the judge, being humane, and better than the law, determined to confound the informer.



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“Pray, Sir,” said the judge, “how do you know he said Mass?”

“Because I heard him say it, my Lord.”

“Did he say it in Latin?” asked the judge.

“Yes, my Lord.”

“Then you understand Latin?”

“A little.”

“What words did you hear him say?”

“*Ave Maria*.”

“That is the Lord’s Prayer, is it not?” asked the judge.

“Yes, my Lord.”

“Here is a pretty witness to convict the prisoner!” cried the judge; “he swears *Ave Maria* is Latin for the Lord’s Prayer!”

Now, surely, this scene is hardly laughable, and yet it is thoroughly humorous. But take an instance which is entirely comic:—“All ye blackguards as isn’t lawyers,” exclaimed a crier, “quit the Coort.” Or this:—“Och, Counsellor, darling,” said a peasant once to O’Connell, “I’ve no way *here* to show your Honor my gratitude! but *I wish I saw you knocked down in my own parish*, and may be I wouldn’t bring a faction to the rescue.” A similar instance occurred in this country. An enthusiastic Irishwoman, listening once to a lecturer praising Ireland, exclaimed,—“I wish to God I saw that man in poverty, that I might do something to relieve him.”

We shall now cite an example of pure wit.

“How can you defend this item, Mr. Curran,” said Lord Chancellor Clare,—“To writing innumerable letters, L100?”

“Why, my Lord,” said Curran, “nothing can be more reasonable. *It is not a penny a letter.*”

But we might fill the whole space of our article, ay, or of twenty articles, with such illustrations; we will content ourselves with two others. The idea is the same in both; but in the first it seems to have a mixture of the witty and the humorous; in the second, it belongs entirely to the humorous.



A lady at a dinner-party passing near where Talleyrand was standing, he looked up and significantly exclaimed, "Ah!" In the course of the dinner, the lady having asked him across the table, why on her entrance he said "Oh!" Talleyrand, with a grave, self-vindicatory look, answered,—"*Madame, je n'ai pas dit 'Oh!' J'ai dit 'Ah!'*"

Here is the second.—The Reverend Alonzo Fizzle had preached his farewell-sermon to his disconsolate people in Drowsytown. The next morning, Monday, he was strolling musingly along a silent road among the melancholy woods. The pastor of a neighboring flock, the Reverend Darius Dizzle, was driving by in his modest one-horse chaise.

"Take a seat, Fizzle?" said he. "Don't care if I do," said Fizzle,—and took it.

"Why, the mischief, Fizzle," said Dizzle, "did you say in your farewell-sermon, that it was just as well to preach to the dead buried six feet under the earth as to the people of Drowsytown?"

"*I?—I?—I?*" gasped the astonished Fizzle. "A more alive and wakeful people are not upon the earth than the citizens of Drowsytown. What calumniator has thus outraged them and *me*? Who told you this? *Who* dared to say it?"

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“Brother Ichabod Muzzle,” calmly answered Dizzle.

Fizzle leaped out, hurried to his home, and was soon seen whipping his unfortunate horse in a certain direction. He was on his way to the residence of the Reverend Ichabod Muzzle, who lived five or six miles off. He reached the home of the Reverend Ichabod. The friends greeted each other. Fizzle, though pregnant with indignation, assumed the benignant air of the Beloved Disciple. Muzzle looked Platonically the incarnate idea of the Christian Parson.

“Fine day,” said Fizzle.

“Lovely,” said Muzzle.

“Glorious view from this window,” observed Fizzle.

“Superb,” replied Muzzle.

“The beauties of Nature are calming and consolatory,” murmured Fizzle.

“And so are the doctrines of grace,” whispered Muzzle.

Fizzle could hold out no longer. Still he tried to look the placid, and to speak with meekness.

“Pray, how did it come, Brother Muzzle,” said Fizzle, “that you reported I declared in my farewell-sermon it was as easy to preach to the dead buried six feet under the earth as to the people of Drowsytown?”

“You have been grossly misinformed, my brother,” replied Muzzle. “I didn’t say *six feet*. I said *four feet*.”

In Hood we have all varieties of wit and humor, both separate and intermingled.

As we have already observed, the grotesque is that which is most obviously distinctive in Hood’s writings. But in different degrees it is combined with other elements, and in each combination altered and modified. The combination which more immediately arrests attention is that with the ludicrous. In this the genius of Hood seemed to hold a very festival of antics, oddity, and mirth; all his faculties seemed to rant and riot in the Saturnalia of comic incongruity. And it is difficult to say whether, in provoking laughter, his pen or his pencil is the more effective instrument. The mere illustrations of the subject-matter are in themselves irresistible. They reach at once and directly the instinctive sense of the ludicrous, and over them youth and age cachinnate together. We have seen a little girl, eight years old, laugh as if her heart would break, in merely looking at the pictures in a volume of Hood. The printed page she did not read or care to read; what the prints illustrated she knew nothing about; but her eyes danced with joy



and overran with tears of childish merriment. But in all this luxury of fun, whether by pen or pencil, no word, idea, image, or delineation obscures the transparency of innocence, or leaves the shadow of a stain upon the purest mind. To be at the same time so comic and so chaste is not only a moral beauty, but a literary wonder. It is hard to deal with the oddities of humor, however carefully, without casual slips that may offend or shame the reverential or the sensitive. Noble, on the whole, as Shakspeare was, we would not in a mixed company, until after

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cautious rehearsal, venture to read his comic passages aloud. We may apply the statement, also, to the comic portions of Burns,—and, indeed, to comic literature in general. But who has fear to read most openly anything that Hood ever wrote? or who has a memory of wounded modesty for anything that he ever read secretly of Hood's? Dr. Johnson says that dirty images were as natural to Swift as sublime ones were to Milton;—we may say that images at once lambent and laughable were those which were natural to Hood. Even when his mirth is broadest, it is decent; and while the merest recollection of his drollery will often convulse the face in defiance of the best-bred muscles, no thought arises which the dying need regret. Who can ever forget “The Lost Heir,” or remember it but to laugh at its rich breadth of natural, yet farcical, absurdity? The very opening begins the giggle:—

“One day, as I was going by
That part of Holborn christened High,” *etc.*

Then there is that broadest of broad, but morally inoffensive stories, in which the laundress, in trying to cure a smoking chimney, blows herself to death, having merely power to speak a few words to Betty,—who gaspingly explains to her mistress “The Report from Below”:—

“Well, Ma’am, you won’t believe it, But it’s gospel fact and true, But these words is all she whispered,— ‘*Why, where is the powder blew?*’”

For other examples refer to “The Ode to Malthus” and “The Blow-up,” which pain the sides while they cheer the heart.

Again, we find the grotesque through Hood’s writings in union with the fantastic and the fanciful. His fertility in the most unexpected analogies becomes to the reader of his works a matter of continual wonder. Strange and curious contrasts and likenesses, both mental and verbal, which might never once occur even to a mind of more than common eccentricity and invention, seem to have been in his mind with the ordinary flow of thinking. Plenteous and sustained, therefore, as his wit is, it never fails to startle. We have no doubt of his endless resources, and yet each new instance becomes a new marvel. His wit, too, is usually pregnant and vital with force and meaning. This constitutes the singular and peculiar worth of his verbal wit in general, and of his puns in particular. In verbal wit he has had but few equals, and in puns he has had none. He made the pun an instrument of power; and had his wit been malignant, he could have pointed the pun to a sharpness that would have left wounds as deep as thought, and could have added a poison to it that would have kept them rankling as long as memory lasted. The secret of his power in the pun is, that he does not rest in the analogy of sound alone, but seeks also for analogy of significance. Generally there is a subtile

coincidence between his meaning and what the sound of the pun signifies, and thus the pun becomes an amusing or illustrative image,



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or a most emphatic and striking condensation of his thought. "Take care of your cough," he writes to his engraver, "lest you go to coughy-pot, as I said before; but I did *not* say before, that nobody is so likely as a wood-engraver to cut his stick." Speaking of his wife, he says,—“To be sure, she still sticks to her old fault of going to sleep while I am dictating, till I vow to change my *Womanuensis* for a *Manuensis*.” How keenly and well the pun serves him in burlesque, in his comic imitations of the great moralist! He hits off with inimitable ridicule the great moralist’s dislike to Scotland. Boswell inquired the Doctor’s opinion on illicit distillation, and how the great moralist would act in an affray between the smugglers and the excise. “If I went by the *letter* of the law, I should assist the customs; but according to the *spirit*, I should stand by the contrabandists.” The Doctor was always very satirical on the want of timber in the North. “Sir,” said he to the young Lord of Icombally, who was going to join his regiment, “may Providence preserve you in battle, and especially your nether limbs! You may grow a walking-stick here, but you must import a wooden leg.” At Dunsinnane the old prejudice broke out. “Sir,” said he to Boswell, “Macbeth was an idiot; he ought to have known that every wood in Scotland might be carried in a man’s hand. The Scotch, Sir, are like the frogs in the fable: if they had a log, they would make a king of it.” We will quote here a stanza which contains quite a serious application of the pun; and for Hood’s purpose no other word could so happily or so pungently express his meaning. The poem is an “Address to Mrs. Fry”; and the doctrine of it is, that it is better and wiser to teach the young and uncorrupted that are yet outside the prison than the vicious and the hardened who have got inside it. Thus he goes on:—

“I like your chocolate, good Mistress Fry!
I like your cookery in every way;
I like your Shrove-tide service and supply;
I like to hear your sweet Pandean play;
I like the pity in your full-brimmed eye;
I like your carriage and your silken gray,
Your dove-like habits, and your silent preaching;
But I don’t like your *Newgatory* teaching.”

Hood had not only an unexampled facility in the discovery of analogies in a multitude of separate resemblances and relations, but he had an equal facility of tracing with untiring persistency a single idea through all its possible variations. Take, for example, the idea of *gold*, in the poem of “Miss Kilmansegg,” and there is hardly a conceivable reference to *gold* which imagination or human life can suggest, that is not presented to us.



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But this play of words and thought would, after all, be in itself little more than serious trifling, a mere exhibition of mental and verbal ingenuity. It would be a kind of intellectual and linguistical dexterity, which would give the author a singularity and supremacy above the world. It would make him the greatest of mental acrobats or jugglers, and he might almost deserve as eminent a reputation as a similar class of artists in bodily achievements; possibly he might claim to be ranked with the man who cooked his dinner and ate it on a tight rope over the Niagara Rapids, or with the man who placed a pea-nut under a dish-cover and turned it into the American eagle. Such, however, is not Hood's case. In all feats of mental and verbal oddity, he does, indeed, rank the highest,—but *that* is the very lowest of his attainments. His pranks do verily cause us to laugh and wonder; but there is also that ever in his pranks which causes us to think, and even sometimes to weep. In much of his that seems burlesque, the most audacious, there are hidden springs of thought and tears. Often, when most he seems as the grimed and grinning clown in a circus girded by gaping spectators, he stops to pour out satire as passionate as that of Juvenal, or morality as eloquent and as pure as that of Pascal. And this he does without lengthening his face or taking off his paint. Sometimes, when he most absurdly scampers in his thoughts, when he kicks up the heels of his fancy in the most outrageous fashion, he is playing as it most doth please him on our human sympathy, and the human heart becomes an instrument to his using, out of which he discourseth eloquent music according to his moods. The interest one finds in reading Hood is often the sudden pleasure which comes upon him. When in the midst of what appears a wilful torrent of absurdity, there bursts out a rush of earnest and instinctive nature. We could quote enough in confirmation of this assertion to make a moderate volume. And then the large and charitable wisdom, which in Hood's genius makes the teacher humble in order to win the learner, we value all the more that it conceals authority in the guise of mirth, and under the coat of motley or the mantle of extravagance insinuates effective and salutary lessons.

No writer has ever so successfully as Hood combined the grotesque with the terrible. He has the art, as no man but himself ever had, of sustaining the illusion of an awful or solemn narrative through a long poem, to be closed in a catastrophe that is at once unexpected and ludicrous. The mystification is complete; the secret of the issue is never betrayed; suspense is maintained with Spartan reticence; curiosity is excited progressively to its utmost tension; and the surprise at the end is oftentimes electric. "A Storm at Hastings" and "The Demon Ship" are of this class. But sometimes the terrible so prevails as to overpower the ludicrous, or rather, it becomes more terrible by the very presence

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of the ludicrous. We have evidence of this in the poem called "The Last Man." Sometimes we find the idea of the supernatural added to the ludicrous with great moral and imaginative effect. Observe with what pathetic tenderness this is done in the "Ode to the Printer's Devil,"—with what solemn moral power in "The Tale of a Trumpet,"—and with what historical satire and social insight in "The Knight and the Dragon." Sometimes the ludicrous element entirely disappears, and we have the purely terrible,—the terrible in itself, as in "The Tower of Lahneck,"—the terrible in pathos, as in "The Work-House Clock,"—the terrible in penitence and remorse, as in "The Lady's Dream,"—the terrible in temptation and despair, as in "The Dream of Eugene Aram."

Hood, as we have seen, is a perfect master equally of the grotesque and the terrible. Some writers, it may be, were as powerful as he in the grotesque. Rabelais had a certain hugeness in it, which Hood did not have and did not need. Other writers transcended Hood in the region of the terrible. It is almost useless to name such sublime masters of it as Dante, Shakspeare, and Milton. But in the intermingling of the grotesque and terrible, and in the infinite diversification of them as thus united, not only has Hood no equal, but no rival. In some few marked and outward directions of his genius he may have imitators; but in this magical alchemy of sentiment, thought, passion, fancy, and imagination, the secret of his laboratory was *his* alone; no other man has discovered it, and no other man, as he did, could use it. But he worked in the purely ideal also;—if he did not work supremely, he worked well, as we have proof in many of his serious poems, and particularly in his "Plea for the Midsummer Fairies." And when aroused,—but that was rarely,—he could wield a burningly satiric pen, and with manly indignation and impassioned scorn wield it to chastise the hypocritical and the arrogant, as his letter to a certain pious lady and his "Ode to Rae Wilson" bear sufficient witness.

Along with the grotesque and terrible in Hood's writings we also often observe a wizard-like command over the elements of the desolate, the weird, the sad, the forlorn, and the dreary. We may trace it in many of the poems to which we have already alluded. But it appears with all its lonely gloom of power in "The Haunted House." This poem is surely the work of a fancy that must have often gone into the desert of the soul to meditate, and that must have made itself acquainted with all that is dismal in imagery and feeling. Pictures, in succession or combination, it would be impossible to conceive, which more dolefully impress the mind with a sense of doom, dread, and mystery; yet every picture is in itself natural, and, while each adds to the intensity of the impression, each is in itself complete.

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Now, having gone over some of the most noticeable qualities in the writings of Hood, we come to the crowning quality of his genius, the *simply pathetic*. We could, if space remained, adduce many psychological and other reasons why we apply this phrase to the pathos of Hood. One reason is, that Hood's pathos involves none of the complications of higher passion, nor any of the pomp which belongs, in mood, situation, or utterance, to the loftier phases of human suffering. The sorrow of those who most attracted his sympathy was not theatrical or imposing. It has been well said of him, that his "bias was towards all that was poor and unregarded." And thus, while those who painfully moved the charity and compassion of his genius were considered by him the victims of artificial civilization, his own feeling for them was natural and instinctive; yet never did natural and instinctive feeling receive expression more artistic, but with that admirable art in which elaboration attains the utmost perfection of simplicity. It excites our wonder to observe how in pathos Hood's genius divests itself of attributes which had seemed essential to its existence. All that is grotesque, whimsical, or odd disappears, and we have only the soul of pity in the sound of song,—in song "most musical, most melancholy." In pathos, Hood's is not what we should call a transformed genius so much as a genius becoming divested of its coarser life, and then breathing purely the inner spirit of goodness and beauty. The result is what one might almost term the "absolute" in pathos. Nothing is excluded that is necessary to impression; nothing is admitted that could vulgarize or weaken it. We have thus pathos at once practical and poetic,—pathos at once the most affecting and the most ideal,—coming from a heart rich with all human charities, and gaining worthy and immortal form by means of a subtle, deep, cultivated imagination. The pathetic, therefore, no less than the comic, in Hood's writings has all the author's peculiar originality, but has it in a higher order. Pathos was the product of the author's mind when it was most matured by experience, and when suffering, without impairing its strength, had refined its characteristic benevolence to the utmost tenderness.

Hood's pathos culminates in "The Song of the Shirt," "The Lay of the Laborer," and "The Bridge of Sighs."

These are marvellous lyrics. In spirit and in form they are singular and remarkable. We cannot think of any poems which more show the mystic enchantment of genius. How else was a ragged sempstress in a squalid garret made immortal, nay, made universal, made to stand for an entire sisterhood of wretchedness? Here is the direst poverty, blar-eyed sorrow, dim and dismal suffering,—nothing of the romantic. A stern picture it is, which even the softer touches render sterner; still there is nought in it that revolts or shocks; it is deeply poetic, calls into passionate action the feelings of reverence and pity, and has

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all the dignity of tragedy. Even more wonderful is the transformation that a rustic hind undergoes in "The Lay of the Laborer," in which a peasant out of work personifies, with eloquent impressiveness, the claims and calamities of toiling manhood. But an element of the sublime is added in "The Bridge of Sighs." In that we have the truly tragic; for we have in it the union of guilt, grief, despair, and death. An angel from heaven, we think, could not sing a more gentle dirge, or one more pure; yet the ordinary associations suggested by the corpse of the poor, ruined, self-murdered girl are such as to the prudish and fastidious would not allow her to be mentioned, much less bring her into song. But in the pity almost divine with which Hood sings her fate there is not only a spotless delicacy, there is also a morality as elevated as the heavenly mercy which the lyrist breathes. The pure can afford to be pitiful; and the life of Hood was so exemplary, that he had no fear to hinder him from being charitable. The cowardice of conscience is one of the saddest penalties of sin; and to avert suspicion from one's self by severity to others is, indeed, the most miserable expediency of self-condemnation. The temper of charity and compassion seems natural to men of letters and of art. They are emotional and sensitive, and by the necessity of their vocation have to hold much communion with the inmost consciousness of our nature; they thus learn the weakness of man, and the allowances that he needs; they are conversant with a broad and diversified humanity, and thence they are seldom narrow, intolerant, or self-righteous; feeling, too, their full share of moral and mortal imperfection, they refuse to be inquisitors of the unfortunate, but rather choose to be their advocates and helpers. No man ever had more of this temper than Hood; and out of it came these immortal lyrics upon which we have been commenting. For such a temper the writing of these lyrics was exceeding great reward; not only because they made the author an everlasting benefactor to the poor, but also because they became an interpretation of his own deeper genius, and revealed a nobler meaning in his works than had ever before been discerned. Hence-forth, he was more thought of as a profound poet than as the greatest of mimes, jesters, and punsters. The lyrics of the poor saved him from imminent injustice.—All that we have further to say of these lyrics is to express our admiration as to the classical finish of their diction, and as to the wild, sweet, and strange music in their sadly sounding measures.

Hood is a writer to whom, in his degree, we may apply the epithet *Shakspearian*. We do not, indeed, compare him with Shakspeare in bulk or force of genius, but only in quality and kind. He had, as the great dramatist, the same disregard of the temporary and discernment of the essential; the same wonderful wealth of vocabulary, and the same bold dexterity in the use of it; the same caprices of jestings and conceits;



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the same comminglings of mirth and melancholy; the same many-sided conception of existence; the same embracing catholicity of tastes and tendencies; the same indifference to sects and factions; the same freedom from jealousies, asperities, and spites; and in the lower scale of his genius, he resembled the mighty dramatist in subtle perception of life and Nature, in his mental and moral independence, and in his intuitive divinations of abstract truth and individual character.

As a poet of the poor, Crabbe is the only poet with whom he can be critically compared. The comparison would be a contrast; and in order to handle it to any purpose, a long essay would be required. Hood wrote but a few short lyrics on the poor; Crabbe wrote volumes. Crabbe was *literal*; Hood *ideal*. Crabbe was concrete; Hood was abstract. Crabbe lived among the rural poor; Hood among the city poor. Crabbe saw the poor constantly, and went minutely and practically into the interior of their life; if Hood ever directly saw them at all, it was merely with casual glimpses, and he must have learned of them only by occasional report. Crabbe was a man of vigorous constitution, he lived a hardy life, and he lived it long; Hood was a man of feeble health, he lived a life of pain, and he closed it early. Crabbe had a hard youth, but after that a certain and settled competence; Hood's was also a youth of struggle, but struggle was his destiny to the end. These radical and circumstantial differences between the men will account for their different modes in thinking and writing of the poor. But both were men of genius, of genial humanity, and of singular originality. No one who reads Crabbe's writings will deny him genius; no one who reads them with adequate sympathy and attention will deny that his genius is vital with passion and imagination. Only the latent heat of passion and imagination could save these seemingly bald and monotonous narratives from being as dull as a dictionary. But they are not so; they have an interest which holds the reader with a fixedness of grasp which he cannot loosen. Crabbe's poetry of the poor is slow and epic; Hood's is rapid and lyrical. Crabbe's characters are only actual and intensified individuals; Hood's characters are idealized and representative persons. Hood gives you only the pathetic or tragical essentials; but, along with these, Crabbe gives you the complexity and detail of life which surrounded them. Hood presents you with the picture of a lonely woman at midnight toiling and starving in the slavery of sewing; but Crabbe would trace her from her quiet country-home, through the follies which led her to a London garret. Hood, in his "Lay of the Laborer," makes you listen to the wail of a strong man imploring leave to toil; Crabbe would find him drunk in the beer-house or the gin-shop, and then carry you on to the catastrophe in his ruined home or in his penal death. Hood, in his "Bridge of Sighs," brings you into the presence of death,



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and you gaze, weeping, over the lifeless form of beauty that had once been innocent and blooming girlhood, but from which the spirit, early soiled and saddened, took violent flight in its despair; Crabbe would give us the record of her sins, and connect her end retributively with her conduct. Much is in Crabbe that is repulsive and austere; but he is, notwithstanding, an earnest moral teacher and a deep tragic poet. Let us be content with both Crabbe and Hood: we need to look at the aspect which each of them gives us of life,—the stern poetry of fact in Crabbe, and the lyrical poetry of feeling in Hood. Crabbe has dealt with groups and masses; Hood has immortalized single figures, which, by their isolation and intensity, take full and forcible possession of the mind, and can never be driven out from memory.

This is a rather serious conclusion of an article on a comic genius. As the humorist is for the most part on the play-side of literature, he should, we are apt to suppose, be entirely on the play-side of life. He ought to laugh and grow fat,—and he ought to have an easy-chair to laugh in. Why should he who makes so many joyous not have the largest mess of gladness to his share? He ought to be a favored Benjamin at the banquet of existence,—and have, above the most favored of his brethren, a double portion. He ought, like the wind, to be “a chartered libertine,”—to blow where he listeth, and have no one to question whence he cometh or whither he goeth. He ought to be the citizen of a comfortable world, and he ought to have an ungrudged freedom in it. What debt is he should not be allowed to learn or to know,—and the idea of a dun it should not be possible for him even to conceive. Give him good cheer; enrich the juices of his blood, nourish generously the functions of his brain; give him delicate viands and rosy wine; give him smiles and laughter, music and flowers; let him inherit every region of creation, and be at home in air and water as well as on the earth; at last, in an Anacreontic bloom of age, let him in a song breathe away his life. Such is the lot, we believe, that many imagine as the condition of a humorist; but which the humorist, less than most men, has ever enjoyed. All great humorists have been men grave at heart, and often men of more than ordinary trials. None but the superficial can fail to recognize the severity of Rabelais’s genius. The best portion of poor Moliere’s manhood was steeped in sorrow. The life of Swift was a hidden tragedy. The immortal wit of “Hudibras” did not save Butler from the straits and struggles of narrow means. Cervantes spent much of his time in a prison, and much of his grandest humor had there its birthplace. Farquhar died young, and in terrible distress of mind at the desolate prospect that he saw before his orphan children. How Sheridan died is familiar to us all. The very conditions of temperament which gave Sterne genius gave him also torment. Fielding and Smollett battled



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all their lives with adversity; and Goldsmith died in his prime, embittered in his last hours by distress and debt. Banim, the great Irish novelist, withered early out of life upon a government pittance of a pension; Griffin gave up literature, became a monk, and found in youth a grave; Carleton, one of the most gifted humorists that ever painted the many-colored pictures of Irish character, is now struggling against the pressure of a small income in his advancing years. Not to carry this melancholy list farther,—which might be indefinitely prolonged,—we close it with the name of Thomas Hood.

But not by contest with realities of life alone have humorists been saved from temptations to any dangerous levity; great humorists, as we have said, have generally been earnest men, very grave at heart, and much that they have written has been tragedy in the guise of irony. All readers cannot find this out. They cannot see the grief of life beneath its grin; they cannot detect the scorn or the pity that is hidden in joke or banter; neither can they always find out the joke or banter that is covered by a solemn face; and many a sincere believer has been deemed an atheist because he burlesqued hypocrites with their own gravity. Numbers judge only by the outside, and never reach the spirit of writing or of man. They laugh at the contortions of grimace, but of the mysteries of mind or the pains of heart which underlie the contortions they know nothing. They snatch their rapid pleasure, and leave unvalued the worth of him who gives it; they care not for the cost of genius or labor at which it has been procured; and when they have had their transient indulgence, they have had all they sought and all that they could enjoy.

The relation of many to the humorist is illustrated by that of the doctor, on a certain occasion, to Liston, the celebrated comedian. Liston was subject to constitutional melancholy, and in a severe attack of it he consulted a famous physician.

“Go and see Liston,” said the doctor.

“I am Liston,” said the actor.

And thus the inner soul of a great humorist is often as unrecognized by those who read him as was the natural personality of Liston by the doctor.

FAYAL AND THE PORTUGUESE.

Every man when he first crosses the ocean is a Columbus to himself, no matter how many voyages by other navigators he may have heard described or read recorded. Geographies convince only the brain, not the senses, that the globe is round; and when personal experience exhibits the fact, it is as wonderful as if never before suggested. You have dwelt for weeks within one unbroken loneliness of sea and sky, with nothing

that seemed solid in the universe but the bit of painted wood on which you have floated. Suddenly one morning something looms high and cloudlike far away, and you are told that it is land. Then you feel, with all ignorant races, as if the ship were a god,



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thus to find its way over that trackless waste, or as if this must be some great and unprecedented success, and in no way the expected or usual result of such enterprises. A sea-captain of twenty-five years' experience told me that this sensation never wore off, and that he still felt as fresh a sense of something extraordinary, on making land, as upon his first voyage. To discover for one's self that there is really another side to the ocean, —that is the astonishing thing. And when it happens, as in our case, that the haven thus gained is not merely a part of a great continent which the stupidest ship could not miss, if it only sailed far enough, but is actually a small volcanic island, a mere dot among those wild waves, a thing which one might easily have passed in the night, unsuspecting, and which yet was not so passed,—it really seems like the maddest piece of good-luck, as if one should go to sea in a bowl, hoping somewhere or other to land on the edge of a tea-cup.

As next day we stumbled on deck in the foggy dawn, the dim island five miles off seemed only dawning too, a shapeless thing, half-formed out of chaos, as if the leagues of gray ocean had grown weary of their eternal loneliness, and bungled into something like land at last. The phrase "*making* land" at once became the simple and necessary expression; we had come upon the very process itself. Nearer still, the cliffs five hundred feet in height, and the bare conical hills of the interior, divided everywhere by cane-hedges into a regular checker-work of cultivation, prolonged the mystery; and the glimpses of white villages scarcely seemed to break the spell. Point after point we passed,—great shoulders of volcanic mountain thrust out to meet the sea, with steep green ravines furrowed in between them; and when at last we rounded the Espalamarca, and the white walls and the Moorish towers of Horta stood revealed before us, and a stray sunbeam pierced the clouds on the great mountain Pico across the bay, and the Spanish steamship in the harbor flung out her gorgeous ensign of gold and blood—then, indeed, we felt that all the glowing cup of the tropics was proffered to our lips, and the dream of our voyage stood fulfilled.

Not one of our immediate party, most happily, had ever been beyond Boston Harbor before, and so we all plunged without fear or apology into the delicious sense of foreignness; we moved as those in dreams. No one could ever precisely remember what we said or what we did, only that we were somehow boated ashore till we landed with difficulty amid high surf on a wave-worn quay, amid an enthusiastic throng of women in dark-blue hooded cloaks which we all took for priestly vestments, and of beggars in a combination of patches which no sane person could reasonably take for vestments of any sort, until one saw how scrupulously they were washed and how carefully put together.

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The one overwhelming fact of the first day abroad is the simple sensation that one *is* abroad: a truth that can never be made anything but commonplace in the telling, or anything but wonderful in the fulfilling. What Emerson says of the landscape is true here: no particular foreign country is so remarkable as the necessity of being remarkable under which every foreign country lies. Horace Walpole found nothing in Europe so astonishing as Calais; and we felt that at every moment the first edge of novelty was being taken off for life, and that, if we were to continue our journey round the world, we never could have that first day's sensations again. Yet because no one can spare time to describe it at the moment, this first day has never yet been described; all books of travels begin on the second day; the daguerreotype-machine is not ready till the expression has begun to fade out. Months had been spent in questioning our travelled friends, sheets of old correspondence had been disinterred, sketches studied, Bullar's unsatisfactory book read, and now we were on the spot, and it seemed as if every line and letter must have been intended to describe some other place on the earth, and not this strange, picturesque, Portuguese, Semi-Moorish Fayal.

One general truth came over us instantly, and it was strange to think that no one had happened to speak of it before. The essence of the surprise was this. We had always been left to suppose that in a foreign country one would immediately begin to look about and observe the foreign things,—these novel details having of course that groundwork of ordinary human life, the same all the world over. To our amazement, we found that it was the groundwork itself that was foreign; we were shifted off our feet; not the details, but the basis itself was wholly new and bewildering; and, instead of noting down, like intelligent travellers, the objects which were new, we found ourselves stupidly staring about to find something which was old,—a square inch of surface anywhere which looked like anything ever seen before,—that we might take our departure from that, and then begin to improve our minds. Perhaps this is difficult for the first hours in any foreign country; certainly the untravelled American finds it utterly impossible in Fayal. Consider the incongruities. The beach beneath your feet, instead of being white or yellow, is black; the cliffs beside you are white or red, instead of black or gray. The houses are of white plaster on the outside, with wood-work, often painted in gay stripes, within. There are no chimneys to the buildings, but sometimes there is a building to the chimney; the latter being a picturesque tower with smoke coming from the top and a house appended to the base. One half the women go about bareheaded, save a handkerchief, and with a good deal of bareness at the other extremity,—while the other half wear hoops on their heads in the form of vast conical hoods attached to voluminous cloth



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cloaks which sweep the ground. The men cover their heads with all sorts of burdens, and their feet with nothing, or else with raw-hide slippers, hair outside. There is no roar or rumble in the streets, for there are no vehicles and no horses, but an endless stream of little donkeys, clicking the rough pavement beneath their sharp hoofs, and thumped solidly by screaming drivers. Who wears the new shoes on the island does not appear; but the hens limp about the houses, tethered to the old ones.

Further inspection reveals new marvels. The houses are roofed with red and black tiles, semi-cylindrical in shape and rusty in surface, and making the whole town look as if incrustated with barnacles. There is never a pane of glass on the lower story, even for the shops, but only barred windows and solid doors. Every house has a paved court-yard for the ground-floor, into which donkeys may be driven and where beggars or peasants may wait, and where one naturally expects to find Gil Blas in one corner and Sancho Panza in another. An English lady, on arriving, declared that our hotel was only a donkey-stable, and refused to enter it. In the intervals between the houses the streets are lined with solid stone walls from ten to twenty feet high, protecting the gardens behind; and there is another stone wall inclosing the town on the water side, as if to keep the people from being spilled out. One must go some miles into the country before getting beyond these walls, or seeing an inch, on either side. This would be intolerable, of course, were the country a level; but, as every rod of ground slopes up or down, it simply seems like walking through a series of roofless ropewalks or bowling-alleys, each being tilted up at an angle, so that one sees the landscape through the top, but never over the sides. Thus, walking or riding, one seldom sees the immediate foreground, but a changing background of soft valleys, an endless patchwork of varied green rising to the mountains in the interior of the island, or sinking to the blue sea, beyond which the mountain Pico rears its graceful outline across the bay.

From the street below comes up a constant hum of loud voices, often rising so high that one runs to see the fight commence, and by the time one has crossed the room it has all subsided and everybody is walking off in good-humor. Meanwhile the grave little donkeys are constantly pattering by, sometimes in pairs or in fours with a cask slung between; and mingled with these, in the middle of the street, there is an endless stream of picturesque figures, everybody bearing something on the head,—girls, with high water-jars, each with a green bough thrust in, to keep the water sweet,—boys, with baskets of fruit and vegetables, —men, with boxes, bales, bags, or trunks for the custom-house, or an enormous fagot of small sticks for firewood, or a long pole hung with wooden jars of milk, or with live chickens, head downward, or perhaps a basket of red and blue and golden fishes, fresh from the ocean and glistening in the sun. The strength of their necks seems wonderful, as does also their power of balancing. On a rainy day I have seen a tall man walk gravely along the middle of the street through the whole length of the town, bearing a large empty cask balanced upon his head, over which he held an umbrella.

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Perhaps it is a procession-day, and all the saints of some church are taken out for an airing. They are figures composed of wood and wax, life-size, and in full costume, each having a complete separate wardrobe, but more tawdry and shabby, let us hope, than the originals ever indulged in. Here are Saint Francis and Saint Isabella, Saint Peter with a monk kneeling before him, and Saint Margaret with her dog, and the sceptred and ermined Saint Louis, and then Joseph and Mary sitting amicably upon the same platform, with an additional force of bearers to sustain them. For this is the procession of the *Bem-casados* or Well-married, in honor of the parents of Jesus. Then there are lofty crucifixes and waving flags; and when the great banner, bearing simply the letters S.P.Q.R., comes flapping round the windy corner, one starts in wonder at the permanent might of that vast superstition which has grasped the very central symbol of ancient empire, and brought it down, like a boulder on a glacier, into modern days. It makes all Christianity seem but a vast palimpsest, since the letters which once meant "*Senatus Populusque Romanus*" stand now only for the feebler modern formula, "*Salve populum quem redemisti.*"

All these shabby splendors are interspersed among the rank and file of two hundred, or thereabouts, lay brethren of different orders, ranging in years from six to sixty. The Carmelites wear a sort of white bathing-dress, and the Brotherhood of Saint Francis are clothed in long brown robes, girded with coarse rope. The very old and the very young look rather picturesque in these disguises,—the latter especially, urchins with almost baby-faces, toddling along with lighted candle in hand; and one often feels astonished to recognize some familiar porter or shopkeeper in this ecclesiastical dress, as when discovering a pacific next-door neighbor beneath the bear-skin of an American military officer. A fit suggestion; for next follows a detachment of Portuguese troops-of-the-line, —twenty shambling men in short jackets, with hair shaved close, looking most like children's wooden monkeys, by no means live enough for the real ones. They straggle along, scarcely less irregular in aspect than the main body of the procession; they march to the tap of the drum. I never saw a Fourth-of-July procession in the remotest of our rural districts which was not beautiful, compared to this forlorn display; but the popular homage is duly given, the bells jangle incessantly, and, as the procession passes, all men uncover their heads or have their hats knocked off by official authority.



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Still watching from our hotel-window, turn now from the sham picturesqueness of the Church to the real and unconscious picturesqueness of every day. It is the orange-season, and beneath us streams an endless procession of men, women, and children, each bearing on the head a great graceful basket of yellow treasures. Opposite our window there is a wall by which they rest themselves, after their three-mile walk from the gardens. There they lounge and there they chatter. Little boys come slyly to pilfer oranges, and are pelted away with other oranges; for a single orange has here no more appreciable value than a single apple in our farmers' orchards; and, indeed, windfall oranges are left to decay, like windfall apples. During this season one sees oranges everywhere, even displayed as a sort of thank-offering on the humble altars of country-churches; the children's lips and cheeks assume a chronic yellowness; and the narrow side-walks are strewn with bits of peel, punched through and through by the boys' pop-guns, as our boys punch slices of potato.

All this procession files down, the whole day long, to the orange-yards by the quay. There one finds another merry group, or a series of groups, receiving and sorting the fragrant loads, papering, packing, boxing. In the gardens there seems no end to the varieties of the golden fruit, although only one or two are here being packed. There are shaddocks, *zamboas*, limes, sour lemons, sweet lemons, oranges proper, and *Tangerinas*; these last being delicate, perfumed, thin-skinned, miniature-fruit from the land of the Moors. One may begin to eat oranges at Fayal in November; but no discriminating person eats a whole orange before March,—a few slices from the sunny side, and the rest is thrown upon the ground. One learns to reverse the ordinary principles of selection also, and choose the smaller and darker before the large and yellow: the very finest in appearance being thrown aside by the packers as worthless. Of these packers the Messrs. Dabney employ two hundred, and five hundred beside in the transportation. One knows at a glance whether the cargo is destined for America or England: the English boxes having the thin wooden top bent into a sort of dome, almost doubling the solid contents of the box. This is to evade the duty, the custom-house measurement being taken only at the corners. It also enables the London dealers to remove some two hundred oranges from every box, and still send it into the country as full.—When one thinks what a knowing race we came from, it is really wonderful where we Yankees picked up our honesty.



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Let us take one more glance from the window; for there is a mighty jingling and rattling, the children are all running to see something, and the carriage is approaching. "The carriage": it is said advisedly; for there is but one street on the island passable to such an equipage, and but one such equipage to enjoy its privileges,—only one, that is, drawn by horses, and presentable in Broadway. There are three other vehicles, each the object of envy and admiration, but each drawn by oxen only. There is the Baroness, the only lady of title, who sports a sort of butcher's cart, with a white top; within lies a mattress, and on the mattress recline her ladyship and her daughter, as the cart rumbles and stumbles over the stones;—nor they alone, for, on emerging from an evening party, I have seen the oxen of the Baroness, unharnessed, quietly munching their hay at the foot of the stairs, while a pair of bare feet emerging from one end of the vehicle, and a hearty snore from the other, showed the mattress to be found a convenience by some one beside the nobility. Secondly, there is a stout gentleman near the Hotel, reputed to possess eleven daughters, and known to possess a pea-green omnibus mounted on an ox-cart; the windows are all closed with blinds, and the number of young ladies may be an approximation only. And, lastly, there sometimes rolls slowly by an expensive English curricle, lately imported; the springs are somehow deranged, so that it hangs entirely on one side; three ladies ride within, and the proprietor sits on the box, surveying in calm delight his two red oxen with their sky-blue yoke, and the tall peasant who drives them with a goad.

After a few days of gazing at objects like these, one is ready to recur to the maps, and become statistical. It would be needless to say (but that we all know far less of geography than we are supposed to know) that the Azores are about two-thirds of the way across the Atlantic, and about the latitude of Philadelphia; sharing, however, in the greater warmth of the European coast, and slightly affected, also, by the Gulf Stream. The islands are supposed to have been known to the Phoenicians, and Humboldt holds out a flattering possibility of Phoenician traces yet discoverable. This lent additional interest to a mysterious inscription which we hunted up in a church built in the time of Philip II., at the north end of the island; we had the satisfaction of sending a copy of it to Humboldt, though it turned out to be only a Latin inscription clothed in uncouth Greek characters, such as have long passed for Runic in the Belgian churches and elsewhere. The Phoenician traces yet remain to be discovered; so does a statue fabled to exist on the shore of one of the smaller islands, where Columbus landed in some of his earlier voyages, and, pacing the beach, looked eagerly towards the western sea: the statue is supposed still to portray him. In the fifteenth century, at any rate, the islands were re-discovered. They have always since then been under Portuguese control, including in that phrase the period when Philip II. united that crown with his own; and they are ruled now by Portuguese military and civil governors, with the aid of local legislatures.



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Fayal stands, with Pico and San Jorge, rather isolated from the rest of the group, and out of their sight. It is the largest and most populous of the islands, except St. Michael and Terceira; it has the best harbor and by far the most of American commerce, St. Michael taking most of the English. Whalers put into Fayal for fresh vegetables and supplies, and to transship their oil; while distressed vessels often seek the harbor to repair damages. The island is twenty-five miles long, and shaped like a turtle; the cliffs along the sea range from five hundred to a thousand feet in height, and the mountainous interior rises to three thousand. The sea is far more restless than upon our coast, the surf habitually higher; and there is such a depth of water in many places around the shore, that, on one occasion, a whale-ship, drawn too near by the current, broke her mainyard against the cliff, without grazing her keel.

The population numbers about twenty-five thousand, one-half of these being found in the city of Horta, and the rest scattered in some forty little hamlets lying at irregular distances along the shores. There are very few English or French residents, and no Americans but the different branches of the Consul's family,—a race whose reputation for all generous virtues has spread too widely to leave any impropriety in mentioning them here. Their energy and character have made themselves felt in every part of the island; and in the villages farthest from their charming home, one has simply to speak of *a familia*, "the family," and the introduction is sufficient. Almost every good institution or enterprise on the island is the creation of Mr. Dabney. He transacts without charge the trade in vegetables between the peasants and the whale-ships, guarantying the price to the producers, giving them the profits, if any, and taking the risk himself; and the only provision for pauperism is found in his charities. Every Saturday, rain or shine, there flocks together from all parts of the island a singular collection of aged people, lame, halt, and blind, who receive, to the number of two hundred, a weekly donation of ten cents each, making a thousand dollars annually, which constitutes but a small part of the benefactions of this remarkable man, the true father of the island, with twenty-five thousand grown children to take care of.

Ten cents a week may not seem worth a whole day's journey on foot, but by the Fayal standard it is amply worth it. The usual rate of wages for an able-bodied man is sixteen cents a day; and an acquaintance of ours, who had just got a job on the roads at thirty cents a day, declined a good opportunity to emigrate to America, on the ground that it was best to "let well alone." Yet the price of provisions is by no means very low, and the difference is chiefly in abstinence. But fuel and clothing cost little, since little is needed, —except that no woman thinks herself really respectable until she has her



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great blue cloak, which requires an outlay of from fifteen to thirty dollars, though the whole remaining wardrobe may not be worth half that. The poorer classes pay about a dollar a month in rent; they eat fish several times a week and meat twice or thrice a year, living chiefly upon the coarsest corn-bread, with yams and beans. Still they contrive to have their luxuries. A soldier's wife, an elderly woman, said to me pathetically, "We have six *vintems* (twelve cents) a day,—my husband smokes and I take snuff,—and how *are* we to buy shoes and stockings?" But the most extreme case of economy which I discovered was that of a poor old woman, unable to tell her own age, who boarded with a poor family for four *patacos* (twenty cents) a month, or five cents a week. She had, she said, a little place in the chimney to sleep in, and when they had too large a fire, she went out of doors. Such being the standard of ordinary living, one can compute the terrors of the famine which has since occurred in Fayal, and which has only been relieved through the contributions levied in this country, and the energy of Mr. Dabney.

Steeped in this utter poverty,—dwelling in low, dark, smoky huts, with earthen floors,—it is yet wonderful to see how these people preserve not merely the decencies, but even the amenities of life. Their clothes are a chaos of patches, but one sees no rags; all their well-worn white garments are white in the superlative degree; and when their scanty supply of water is at the scantiest, every bare foot on the island is sure to be washed in warm water at night. Certainly there are fleas and there are filthinesses in some directions; and yet it is amazing, especially for one accustomed to the Irish, to see an extreme of poverty so much greater, with such an utter absence of squalidness. But when all this is said and done, the position of the people of Fayal is an abject one, that is, it is a *European* position; it teaches more of history in a day to an untravelled American than all his studies had told him besides,—and he returns home ready to acquiesce in a thousand dissatisfactions, in view of that most wondrous of all recorded social changes, the transformation of the European peasant into the American citizen.

Fayal is not an expensive place. One pays six dollars a week at an excellent hotel, and there is nothing else to spend money on, except beggars and donkeys. For a shilling an hour one can go to ride, or, as the Portuguese phrase perhaps circuitously expresses it, go to walk on horseback on a donkey,—*dar um passeio a cavallo n'um burro*. The beggars, indeed, are numerous; but one's expenditures are always happily limited by the great scarcity of small change. A half-cent, however, will buy you blessings enough for a lifetime, and you can find an investment in almost any direction. You visit some church or cemetery; you ask a question or two of a loungee in a black cloak, with an air like an



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exiled Stuart, and, as you part, he detains you, saying, “Sir, will you give me some little thing, (*alguma cousinha*,)—I am so poor?” Overwhelmed with a sense of personal humility, you pull out three half-cents and present them with a touch of your hat, he receives them with the same, and you go home with a feeling that a distinguished honor has been done you. The Spaniards say that the Portuguese are “mean even in their begging”: they certainly make their benefactors mean; and I can remember returning home, after a donation of a whole *pataco*, (five cents,) with a debilitating sense of too profuse philanthropy.

It is inevitable that even the genteel life of Fayal should share this parsimony. As a general rule, the higher classes on the island, socially speaking, live on astonishingly narrow means. How they do it is a mystery; but families of eight contrive to spend only three or four hundred dollars a year, and yet keep several servants, and always appear rather stylishly dressed. The low rate of wages (two dollars a month at the very highest) makes servants a cheap form of elegance. I was told of a family employing two domestics upon an income of a hundred and twenty dollars. Persons come to beg, sometimes, and bring a servant to carry home what is given. I never saw a mechanic carry his tools; if it be only a hammer, the hired boy must come to fetch it.

Fortunately, there is not much to transport, the mechanic arts being in a very rudimentary condition. For instance, there are no saw-horses nor hand-saws, the smallest saw used being a miniature wood-saw, with the steel set at an angle, in a peculiar manner. It takes three men to saw a plank: one to hold the plank, another to saw, and a third to carry away the pieces.

Farming-tools have the same simplicity. It is one odd result of the universal bare feet that they never will use spades; everything is done with a hoe, most skilfully wielded. There are no wheelbarrows, but baskets are the universal substitutes. The plough is made entirely of wood, only pointed with iron, and is borne to and from the field on the shoulder. The carts are picturesque, but clumsy; they are made of wicker-work, and the iron-shod wheels are solidly attached to the axle, so that all revolves together, amid fearful creaking. The people could not be induced to use a cart with movable wheels which was imported from America, nor will they even grease their axles, because the noise is held to drive away witches. Some other arts are a little more advanced, as any visitor to Mr. Harper’s pleasant Fayal shop in Boston may discover. They make homespun cloth upon a simple loom, and out of their smoky huts come beautiful embroideries and stockings whose fineness is almost unequalled. Their baskets are strong and graceful, and I have seen men sitting in village doorways, weaving the beautiful broom-plant, yellow flowers and all, until basket and bouquet seemed one.

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The greater part of the surface of the island is cultivated like a kitchen-garden, even up to the top of volcanic cones eight hundred feet high, and accessible only by steps cut in the earth. All the land is divided into little rectangular patches of various verdure, — yellow-blossomed broom, blue-flowering flax, and the contrasting green of lupines, beans, Indian corn, and potatoes. There is not a spire of genuine grass on the island, except on the Consul's lawn, but wilds covered with red heather, low *faya*-bushes, (whence the name of the island,) and a great variety of mosses. The cattle are fed on beans and lupines. Firewood is obtained from the opposite island of Pico, five miles off, and from the *Caldeira* or Crater, a pit five miles round and fifteen hundred feet deep, at the summit of Fayal, whence great fagots are brought upon the heads of men and girls. It is an oversight in the "New American Cyclopaedia" to say of Fayal that "the chief object of agriculture is the vine," because there are not a half dozen vineyards on the island, the soil being unsuitable; but there are extensive vineyards on Pico, and these are owned almost wholly by proprietors resident in Fayal.

There is a succession of crops of vegetables throughout the year; peas are green in January, which is, indeed, said to be the most verdant month of the twelve, the fields in summer becoming parched and yellow. The mercury usually ranges from 50 deg. to 80 deg., winter and summer; but we were there during an unusually cool season, and it went down to 45 deg.. This was regarded as very severe by the thinly clad Fayalese, and I sometimes went into cottages and found the children lying in bed to keep warm. Yet roses, geraniums, and callas bloomed out of doors all the time, and great trees of red camellia, which they cut as we cut roses. Superb scarlet banana-flowers decked our Christmas-Tree. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter there, however, and exotic plants retain the habits they brought with them, with one singular exception. The *Morus multicaulis* was imported, and the silk-manufacture with it; suddenly the trees seemed to grow bewildered, they put forth earlier and earlier in the spring, until they got back to January; the leaves at last fell so early that the worms died before spinning cocoons, and the whole enterprise was in a few years abandoned because of this vegetable insanity.

In spite of the absence of snow and presence of verdure, this falling of the leaves gives some hint of winter; yet blackbirds and canaries sing without ceasing. The latter are a variety possessing rather inferior charms, compared with the domestic species; but they have a pretty habit of flying away to Pico every night: it was pleasant to sit at sunset on the high cliffs at the end of the island and watch the little brown creatures, like fragments of the rock itself, whirled away over the foaming ocean. The orange-orchards were rather a disappointment; they suggested quince-trees



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with more shining leaves; and, indeed, there was a hard, glossy, coriaceous look to the vegetation generally, which made us sometimes long for the soft, tender green of more temperate zones. The novel beauty of the Dabney gardens can scarcely be exaggerated; each step was a new incursion into the tropics,—a palm, a magnolia, a camphor-tree, a dragon-tree, suggesting Humboldt and Orotava, a clump of bamboos or cork-trees, or the startling strangeness of the great grass-like banana, itself a jungle. There are hedges of pittosporum, arbors veiled by passion-flowers, and two of that most beautiful of all living trees, the *araucaria*, or Norfolk Island pine,—one specimen being some eighty feet high, and said to be the tallest north of the equator. And when over all this luxuriant exotic beauty the soft clouds furled away and the sun showed us Pico, we had no more to ask, and the soft, beautiful blue cone became an altar for our gratitude, and the thin mist of hot volcanic air that flickered above it seemed the rising incense of the world.

In the midst of all these charming surprises, we found it hard to begin at once upon the study of the language, although the prospect of a six-months' stay made it desirable. We were pleased to experience the odd, stupid sensation of having people talk loud to us as being foreigners, and of seeing even the little children so much more at their ease than we were. And every step beyond this was a new enjoyment. We found the requisites for learning a language on its own soil to be a firm will, a quick ear, flexible lips, and a great deal of cool audacity. Plunge boldly in, expecting to make countless blunders; find out the shops where they speak English, and don't go there; make your first bargains at twenty-five per cent. disadvantage, and charge it as a lesson in the language; expect to be laughed at, and laugh yourself, because you win. The daily labor is its own reward. If it is a pleasure to look through a telescope in an observatory, gradually increasing its powers until a dim nebula is resolved into a whole galaxy of separate stars, how much more when the nebula is one of language around you, and the telescope is your own more educated ear!

We discovered further, what no one had ever told us, that the ability to speak French, however poorly, is rather a drawback in learning any less universal language, because the best company in any nation will usually have some knowledge of French, and this tempts one to remain on neutral ground and be lazy. But the best company in Fayal was so much less interesting than the peasantry, that some of us persevered in studying the vernacular. To be sure, one finds English spoken by more of the peasants than of the small aristocracy of the island, so many of the former have spent some years in American whale-ships, and come back to settle down with their savings in their native village. In visiting the smaller hamlets on the island, I usually found that the owners of the two or three most decent houses had learned to speak English in this way. But I was amused at the dismay of an American sea-captain who on a shooting excursion ventured on some free criticisms on the agriculture of a farm, and was soon answered in excellent English by the proprietor.



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“Look at the foolish fellow,” quoth the captain, “carrying his plough to the field on his shoulder!”

“Sir,” said the Portuguese, coolly, “I have no other way to take it there.”

The American reserved his fire, thereafter, for bipeds with wings.

These Americanized sailors form a sort of humbler aristocracy in Fayal, and are apt to pride themselves on their superior knowledge of the world, though their sober habits have commonly saved them from the demoralization of a sailor’s life. But the untravelled Fayalese peasantry are a very gentle, affectionate, childlike people, pensive rather than gay, industrious, but not ingenious, with few amusements and those the simplest, incapable of great crimes or very heroic virtues, educated by their religion up to the point of reverent obedience, but no higher.

Their grace and beauty are like our impressions of the Italian peasantry, and probably superior to the reality in that case. Among the young men and boys, especially, one sees the true olive cheeks and magnificent black eyes of Southern races. The women of Fayal are not considered remarkable for beauty, but in the villages of Pico one sees in the doorways of hovels complexions like rose-petals, and faces such as one attributes to Evangeline, soft, shy, and innocent. But the figure is the chief wonder, the figure of woman as she was meant to be, beautiful in superb vigor,—not diseased and tottering, as with us, but erect and strong and stately; every muscle fresh and alive, from the crown of the steady head, to the sole of the emancipated foot,—and yet not heavy and clumsy, as one fancies barefooted women must be, but inheriting symmetry and grace from the Portuguese or Moorish blood. I have looked through the crowded halls of Saratoga in vain for one such figure as I have again and again seen descending those steep mountain-paths with a bundle of firewood on the head, or ascending them with a basket of farm-manure. No person who has never left America can appreciate the sensation of living among healthy women; often as I heard of this, I was utterly unprepared for the realization; I never lost the conscious enjoyment of it for a single day; and when I reached home and walked across Boston Common on a June Sunday, I felt as if I were in a hospital for consumptives.

This condition of health cannot be attributed to any mere advantage of climate. The higher classes of Fayal are feeble and sickly; their diet is bad, they take no exercise, and suffer the consequences; they have all the ills to which flesh is heir, including one specially Portuguese complaint, known by the odd name of *dor do cotovelo*, elbow-disease, which corresponds to that known to Anglo-Saxons, by an equally bold symbol, as the green-eyed monster, Jealousy. So the physical superiority of the peasantry seems to come solely from their mode of life,—out-door labor, simple diet, and bare feet. Change these and their health goes; domestic service in foreign families on the island always makes them ill, and often destroys their health and bloom forever; and

strange to say, that which most nauseates and deranges their whole physical condition, in such cases, is the necessity of wearing shoes and stockings.



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The Pico peasants have also the advantage of the Fayalese in picturesqueness of costume. The men wear homespun blue jackets and blue or white trousers, with a high woollen cap of red or blue. The women wear a white waist with a gay kerchief crossed above the bosom, a full short skirt of blue, red, or white, and a man's jacket of blue, with tight sleeves. On the head there is the pretty round-topped straw hat with red and white cord, which is now so extensively imported from Fayal; and beneath this there is always another kerchief, tied under the chin, or hanging loosely. The costume is said to vary in every village, but in the villages opposite Horta this dress is worn by every woman from grandmother to smallest granddaughter; and when one sails across the harbor, in the lateen-sail packet-boat, and old and young come forth on the rocks to see the arrival, it seems like voyaging to some realm of butterflies.

This out-door life begins very early. As soon as the Fayalese baby is old enough to sit up alone, he is sent into the nursery. The nursery is the sunny side of the house-door. A large stone is selected, in a convenient position, and there the little dusky creature squats, hour after hour, clad in one garment at most, and looking at the universe through two black beads of eyes. Often the little dog comes and suns himself close by, and the little cat beside the dog, and the little pig beside the cat, and the little hen beside the pig,—a "Happy Family," a row of little traps to catch sunbeams, all down the lane. When older, the same child harnesses his little horse and wagon, he being the horse and a sheep's jawbone the wagon, and trots contentedly along, in almost the smallest amount of costume accessible to mortals. All this refers to the genuine, happy, plebeian baby. The genteel baby is probably as wretched in Fayal as elsewhere, but he is kept more out of sight.

These children are seldom noisy and never rude: the race is not hilarious, and their politeness is inborn. Not an urchin of three can be induced to accept a sugar-plum until he has shyly slid off his little cap, if he has one, and kissed his plump little hand. The society of princes can hardly surpass the natural courtesy of the peasant, who insists on climbing the orange-tree to select for you the choicest fruit. A shopkeeper never can sell you a handful of nuts without bringing the bundle near to his lips, first, with a graceful wave of salutation. A lady from Lisbon told us that this politeness surpassed that of the native Portuguese; and the wife of an English captain, who had sailed with her husband from port to port for fifteen years, said that she had never seen anything to equal it. It is not the slavishness of inferiors, for the poorest exhibit it towards each other. You see two very old women talking eagerly in the street, each in a cloak whose every square inch is a patch, and every patch a different shade,—and each alternate word you hear seems to be *Senhora*. Among laboring men, the most available medium of courtesy is the little paper cigar; it contains about four whiffs, and is smoked by about that number of separate persons.



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But to fully appreciate this natural courtesy, one must visit the humbler Fayalese at home. You enter a low stone hut, thatched and windowless, and you find the mistress within, a robust, black-eyed, dark-skinned woman, engaged in grinding corn with a Scriptural handmill. She bars your way with apologies; you must not enter so poor a house; you are so beautiful, so perfect, and she is so poor, she has “nothing but the day and the night,” or some equally poetic phrase. But you enter and talk with her a little, and she readily shows you all her little possessions,—her chest on the earthen floor, her one chair and stool, her tallow-candle stuck against the wall, her husk mattress rolled together, with the precious blue cloak inside of it. Behind a curtain of coarse straw-work is a sort of small boudoir, holding things more private, an old barrel with the winter’s fuel in it, a few ears of corn hanging against the wall, a pair of shoes, and a shelf with a large pasteboard box. The box she opens triumphantly and exhibits her *santinhos*, or little images of saints. This is San Antonio, and this is Nossa Senhora do Conceicao, Our Lady of the Conception. She prays to them every day for sunshine; but they do not seem to hear, this winter, and it rains all the time. Then, approaching the climax of her blessedness, with beaming face she opens a door in the wall, and shows you her pig.

The courtesy of the higher classes tends to formalism, and has stamped itself on the language in some very odd ways. The tendency common to all tongues, towards a disuse of the second person singular, as too blunt and familiar, is carried so far in Spanish and Portuguese as to disuse the second person plural also, except in the family circle, and to substitute the indirect phrases, *vuestra Merced* (in Spanish) and *vossa Merce* (in Portuguese), both much contracted in speaking and familiar writing, and both signifying “your Grace.” The joke of invariably applying this epithet to one’s valet would seem sufficiently grotesque in either language, and here the Spanish stops; but Portuguese propriety has gone so far that even this phrase has become too hackneyed to be civil. In talking with your equals, it would be held an insult to call them simply “your Grace”; it must be some phrase still more courtly,—*vossa Excellencia*, or *vossa Senhoria*.—One may hear an elderly gentleman talking to a young girl of fourteen, or, better still, two such damsels talking together, and it is “your Excellency” at every sentence; and the prescribed address on an envelope is “*Illustrissima Excellentissima Senhora Dona Maria*.” The lower classes have not quite reached the “Excellency,” but have got beyond the “Grace,” and hence the personal pronouns are in a state of colloquial chaos, and the only safe way is to hold to the third person and repeat the name of Manuel or Maria, or whatever it may be, as often as possible.



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This leads naturally to the mention of another peculiar usage. On visiting the Fayal post-office, I was amazed to find the letters arranged alphabetically in the order of the baptismal, not the family names, of the persons concerned,—as if we should enumerate Adam, Benjamin, Charles, and so on. But I at once discovered this to be the universal usage. Merchants, for instance, thus file their business papers; or rather, since four-fifths of the male baptismal names in the language fall under the four letters, A, F, J, M, they arrange only five bundles, giving one respectively to Antonio, Francisco, Jose or Joao, and Manuel, adding a fifth for sundries. This all seemed inexplicable, till at last there proved to be an historical kernel to the nut. The Portuguese, and to some extent the Spaniards, have kept nearer to the primitive usage which made the personal name the important one and the patronymic quite secondary. John Smith is not known conversationally as Mr. Smith, but as Mr. John,—Senhor Joao. One may have an acquaintance in society named Senhor Francisco, and another named Senhora Dona Christina, and it may be long before it turns out that they are brother and sister, the family name being, we will suppose, Garcia da Rosa; and even then it will be doubtful whether to call them Garcia or da Rosa. This explains the great multiplication of names in Spain and Portugal. The first name being the important one, the others may be added, subtracted, multiplied, or divided, with perfect freedom. A wife may or may not add her husband's name to her own; the eldest son takes some of the father's family names, the second son some of the mother's, saints' names are sprinkled in to suit the taste, and no confusion is produced, because the first name is the only one in common use. Each may, if he pleases, carry all his ancestors on his visiting-card, without any inconvenience except the cost of pasteboard.

Fayal exhibits another point of courtesy to be studied. The gentleman of our party was early warned that it was very well to learn his way about the streets, but far more essential to know the way to the brim of his hat. Every gentleman touches his hat to every lady, acquaintance or stranger, in street or balcony. So readily does one grow used to this, that I was astonished, for a moment, at the rudeness of some French officers, just landed from a frigate, who passed some ladies, friends of mine, without raising the hat. "Are these," I asked, "the polite Frenchmen one reads about?"—not reflecting that I myself should not have ventured on bowing to strange ladies in the same position, without special instruction in Portuguese courtesies. These little refinements became, indeed, very agreeable, only alloyed by the spirit of caste in which they were performed,—elbowing the peasant-woman off the sidewalk for the sake of doffing the hat to the Baroness. I thought of the impartial courtesies shown towards woman as woman in my own country, and



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the spread eagle within me flapped his pinions. Then I asked myself, "What if the woman were black?" and the eagle immediately closed his wings, and flapped no more. But I may add, that afterwards, attending dances among the peasants, I was surprised to see my graceful swains in humble life smoking and spitting in the presence of white-robed belles, in a manner not to be witnessed on our farthest western borders.

The position of woman in Portuguese countries brings one nearer to that Oriental type from which modern society has been gradually diverging. Woman is secluded, so far as each family can afford it, which is the key to the Oriental system. Seclusion is aristocracy, and if it cannot be made complete, the household must do the best they can. Thus, in the lowest classes, one daughter is often decreed by the parents to be brought up like a lady, and for this every sacrifice is to be made. Her robust sisters go bare-footed to the wells for water, they go miles unprotected into the lonely mountains; no social ambition, no genteel helplessness for them. But Mariquinha is taught to read, write, and sew; she is as carefully looked after as if the world wished to steal her; she wears shoes and stockings and an embroidered kerchief and a hooded cloak; and she never steps outside the door alone. You meet her, pale and demure, plodding along to mass with her mother. The sisters will marry laborers and fishermen; Mariquinha will marry a small shop-keeper or the mate of a vessel, or else die single. It is not very pleasant for the poor girl in the mean time; she is neither healthy nor happy; but "let us be genteel or die."

On *feira*-days she and her mother draw their hoods so low and their muffling handkerchiefs so high that the costume is as good as a *yashmak*, and in passing through the streets these one-eyed women seem like an importation from the "Arabian Nights." Ladies of higher rank, also, wear the hooded cloak for disguise and greater freedom, and at a fashionable wedding in the cathedral I have seen the jewelled fingers of the uninvited acquaintances gleam from the blue folds of broadcloth. But very rarely does one see the aristocratic lady in the street in her own French apparel, and never alone. There must be a male relative, or a servant, or, at the very least, a female companion. Even the ladies of the American Consul's family very rarely go out singly, —not from any fear, for the people are as harmless as birds, but from etiquette. The first foreign lady who walked habitually alone in the streets was at once christened "The Crazy American." A lady must not be escorted home from an evening party by a gentleman, but by a servant with a lantern; and as the streets have no lamps, I never could see the breaking-up of any such entertainment without recalling Retzsch's quaint pictures of the little German towns, and the burghers plodding home with their lanterns, —unless, perchance, what a foreign friend of ours called a "sit-down chair" came rattling by, and transferred our associations to Cranford and Mr. Winkle.



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We found or fancied other Orientalisms. A visitor claps his hands at the head of the court-yard stairs, to summon an attendant. The solid chimneys, with windows in them, are precisely those described by Urquhart in his delightful "Pillars of Hercules"; so are the gardens, divided into clean separate cells by tall hedges of cane; so is the game of ball played by the boys in the street, under the self-same Moorish name of *arri*; so is the mode of making butter, by tying up the cream in a goat-skin and kicking it till the butter comes. Even the architecture fused into one all our notions of Gothic and of Moorish, and gave great plausibility to Urquhart's ingenious argument for the latter as the true original. And it is a singular fact that the Mohammedan phrase *Oxald*, "Would to Allah," is still the most familiar ejaculation in the Portuguese language and the habitual equivalent in their religious books for "Would to God."

We were treated with great courtesy and hospitality by our Portuguese neighbors, and an evening party in Fayal is in some respects worth describing. As one enters, the anteroom is crowded with gentlemen, and the chief reception-room seems like a large omnibus, lighted, dressed with flowers, and having a row of ladies on each side. The personal beauty is perhaps less than one expects, though one sees some superb dark eyes and blue-black hair; they dress with a view to the latest French fashions, and sometimes rather a distant view. At last a lady takes her seat at the piano, then comes an eager rush of gentlemen into the room, and partners are taken for cotillons,—large, double, *very double* cotillons, here called *contradancas*. The gentlemen appear in scrupulous black broadcloth and satin and white kid; in summer alone they are permitted to wear white trousers to parties; and we heard of one anxious youth who, about the turn of the season, wore the black and carried the white in his pocket, peeping through the door, on arrival, to see which had the majority. It seemed a pity to waste such gifts of discretion on a monarchical country, when he might have emigrated to America and applied them to politics.

The company perform their dancing with the accustomed air of civilized festivity, "as if they were hired to do it, and were doubtful about being paid." Changes of figure are announced by a clapping of hands from one of the gentlemen, and a chorus of such applauses marks the end of the dance. Then they promenade slowly round the room, once or twice, in pairs; then the ladies take their seats, and instantly each gentleman walks hurriedly into the anteroom, and for ten minutes there is as absolute a separation of the sexes as in a Friends' Meeting. Nobody approves of this arrangement, in the abstract; it is all very well, they think, for gentlemen, if foreigners, to remain in the room, but it is not the Portuguese custom. Yet, with this exception, the manners are agreeably



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simple. Your admission to the house guaranties you as a proper acquaintance, there are no introductions, and you may address any one in any language you can coin into a sentence. Many speak French, and two or three English,—sometimes with an odd mingling of dialects, as when the Military Governor answered my inquiry, made in timid Portuguese, as to how long he had served in the army. "*Vinte-cinco annos*," he answered, in the same language; then, with an effort after an unexceptionable translation, "Vat you call, Twenty-cinq year"!

The great obstacle to the dialogue soon becomes, however, a deficit of subjects rather than of words. Most of these ladies never go out except to mass and to parties, they never read, and if one of them has some knowledge of geography, it is quite an extended education; so that, when you have asked them if they have ever been to St. Michael, and they have answered, Yes,—or to Lisbon, and they have answered, No,—then social intercourse rather flags. I gladly record, however, that there were some remarkable exceptions to this, and that we found in the family of the late eminent Portuguese statesman, Mousinho d'Albuquerque, accomplishments and knowledge which made their acquaintance an honor.

During the intervals of the dancing, little trays of tea and of cakes are repeatedly carried round,—astonishing cakes, in every gradation of insipidity, with the oddest names: white poison, nuns' kisses, angels' crops, cats' tails, heavenly bacon, royal eggs, coruscations, cocked hats, and *esquecidos*, or oblivion cakes, the butter being omitted. It seems an unexpected symbol of the plaintive melancholy of the Portuguese character that the small confections which we call kisses they call sighs, *suspiros*. As night advances, the cakes grow sweeter and the dances livelier, and the pretty national dances are at last introduced; though these are never seen to such advantage as when the peasants perform them on a Saturday or Sunday evening to the monotonous strain of a viola, the musician himself taking part in the complicated dance, and all the men chanting the refrain. Nevertheless they add to the gayety of our genteel entertainment, and you may stay at the party as long as you have patience,—if till four in the morning, so much the better for your popularity; for, though the gathering consist of but thirty people, they like to make the most of it.

Perhaps the next day one of these new friends kindly sends in a present for the ladies of the party: a bouquet of natural flowers with the petals carefully gilded; a *foliar* or Easter cake, being a large loaf of sweetened bread, baked in a ring, and having whole eggs, shell and all, in the midst of it. One lady of our acquaintance received a pretty basket, which being opened revealed two little Portuguese pigs, about eight inches long, snow-white, wearing blue ribbons round their necks and scented with cologne.

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Beyond these occasional parties, there seems very little society during the winter, the native ladies seldom either walking or riding, and there being no places of secular amusement. In summer, it is said, when the principal families resort to their vineyards at Pico, formalities are laid aside, and a simpler intercourse takes place. But I never saw any existence more thoroughly pitiable than that of the young men of the higher classes; they had literally nothing to do, except to dress themselves elegantly and lounge all day in an apothecary's shop. A very few went out shooting or fishing occasionally; but anything like employment, even mercantile, was entirely beneath their caste; and they only pardoned the constant industry of the American Consul and his family, as a sort of national eccentricity, for which they must not be severely condemned.

A good school-system is being introduced into all the Portuguese dominions, but there is no book-store in Fayal, though some dry-goods dealers sell a few religious books. We heard a rumor of a Portuguese "Uncle Tom" also, but I never could find the copy. The old Convent Libraries were sent to Lisbon, on the suppression of the monasteries, and never returned. There was once a printing-press on the island, but one of the Governors shipped it off to St. Michael. "There it goes," he said to the American Consul, "and the Devil take it!" The vessel was wrecked in the bay. "You see," he afterwards piously added, "the Devil *has* taken it." It is proper, however, to mention, that a press and a newspaper have been established since our visit, without further Satanic interference.

Books were scarce on the island. One official gentleman from Lisbon, quite an accomplished man, who spoke French fluently and English tolerably, had some five hundred books, chiefly in the former tongue, including seventy-two volumes of Balzac. His daughter, a young lady of fifteen, more accomplished than most of the belles of the island, showed me her little library of books in French and Portuguese, including three English volumes, an odd selection,—"The Vicar of Wakefield," Gregory's "Legacy to his Daughters," and Fielding's "Life of Jonathan Wild." But, indeed, her supply of modern Portuguese literature was almost as scanty, (there is so very little of it,) and we heard of a gentleman's studying French "in order to have something to read," which seemed the last stage in national decay.

Perhaps we were still more startled by the unexpected literary criticisms of a young lady from St. Michael, English on the father's side, but still Roman Catholic, who had just read the New Testament, and thus naively gave it her indorsement in a letter to an American friend:—"I dare say you have read the New Testament; but if you have not, I recommend it to you. I have just finished reading it, and find it a *very moral and nice book.*" After this certificate, it will be safe for the Bible Society to continue its operations.



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Nearly all the popular amusements in Fayal occur in connection with religion. After the simpler buildings and rites of the Romish Church in America, the Fayal churches impress one as vast baby-houses, and the services as acted charades. This perfect intermingling of the religious and the melodramatic was one of our most interesting experiences, and made the Miracle Plays of history a very simple and intelligible thing. In Fayal, holiday and holy-day have not yet undergone the slightest separation. A festival has to the people necessarily some religious association, and when the Americans celebrate the Fourth of July, Mr. Dabney's servants like to dress with flowers a wooden image in his garden, the fierce figure-head of some wrecked vessel, which they boldly personify as the American Saint. On the other hand, the properties of the Church are as freely used for merrymaking. On public days there are fireworks provided by the priests; they are kept in the church till the time comes, and then touched off in front of the building, with very limited success, by the sacristan. And strangest of all, at the final puff and bang of each remarkable piece of pyrotechny, the bells ring out just the same sudden clang which marks the agonizing moment of the Elevation of the Host.

On the same principle, the theatricals which occasionally enliven the island take place in chapels adjoining the churches. I shall never forget the example I saw, on one of these dramatic occasions, of that one cardinal virtue of Patience, which is to the Portuguese race the substitute for all more positive manly qualities. The performance was to be by amateurs, and a written programme had been sent from house to house during the day; and this had announced the curtain as sure to rise at eight. But as most of the spectators went at six to secure places,—literally, places, for each carried his or her own chair,—one might suppose the audience a little impatient before the appointed hour arrived. But one would then suppose very incorrectly. Eight o'clock came, and a quarter past eight, but no curtain rose. Half-past eight. No movement nor sign of any. The people sat still. A quarter to nine. The people sat still. Nine o'clock. The people sat perfectly still, nobody talking much, the gentlemen being all the while separated from the ladies, and all quiet. At last, at a quarter past nine, the orchestra came in! They sat down, laid aside their instruments, and looked about them. Suddenly a whistle was heard behind the scenes. Nothing came of it, however. After a time, another whistle. The people sat still. Then the orchestra began to tune their instruments, and at half-past nine the overture began. And during all that inexplicable delay of one hour and a half, after a preliminary waiting of two hours, there was not a single look of annoyance or impatience, nor the slightest indication, on any face, that this was viewed as a strange or extraordinary thing. Indeed, it was not.



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We duly attended, not on this occasion only, but on all ecclesiastical festivals, grave or gay,—the only difficulty being to discover any person in town who had even approximate information as to when or where they were to occur. We saw many sights that are universal in Roman Catholic countries, and many that are peculiar to Fayal: we saw the “Procession of the Empress,” when, for six successive Saturday evenings, young girls walk in order through the streets white-robed and crowned; saw the vessels in harbor decorated with dangling effigies of Judas, on the appointed day; saw the bands of men at Easter going about with flags and plates to beg money for the churches, and returning at night with feet suspiciously unsteady; saw the feet-washing, on Maundy-Thursday, of twelve old men, each having a square inch of the instep washed, wiped, and cautiously kissed by the Vicar-General, after which twelve lemons were solemnly distributed, each with a silver coin stuck into the peel; saw and felt the showers of water, beans, flour, oranges, eggs, from the balcony-windows during Carnival; saw weddings in churches, with groups of male companions holding tall candles round kneeling brides; saw the distribution to the poor of bread and meat and wine from long tables arranged down the principal street, on Whitsunday,—a memorial vow, made long since, to deprecate the recurrence of an earthquake. But it must be owned that these things, so unspeakably interesting at first, became a little threadbare before the end of the winter; we grew tired of the tawdriness and shabbiness which pervaded them all, of the coarse faces of the priests, and the rank odor of the incense.

We had left Protestantism in a state of vehement intolerance in America, but we soon found, that, to hear the hardest things said against the priesthood, one must visit a Roman Catholic country. There was no end to the anecdotes of avarice and sensuality in this direction, and there seemed everywhere the strangest combination of official reverence with personal contempt. The principal official, or *Ouvidor*, was known among his parishioners by the endearing appellation of “The Black Pig,” to which his appearance certainly did no discredit. There was a great shipwreck at Pico during our stay, and two hundred thousand dollars’ worth of rich goods was stranded on the bare rocks; there were no adequate means for its defence, and the peasants could hardly be expected to keep their hands off. But the foremost hands were those of the parish priest; for three weeks no mass was said in his church, and a funeral was left for days unperformed, that the representative of God might steal more silks and laces. When the next service occurred, the people remained quiet until the priest rose for the sermon; then they rose also tumultuously, and ran out of the church, crying, “*Ladrao!*” “Thief!” “But why this indignation?” said an intelligent Roman Catholic to us; “there is not a priest on either island who would not have done the same.” A few days after I saw this same cool critic, candle in hand, heading a solemn ecclesiastical procession in the cathedral.



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In the country-villages there naturally lingers more undisturbed the simple, picturesque life of Roman Catholic society. Every hamlet is clustered round its church, almost always magnificently situated, and each has its special festivals. Never shall I forget one lovely day when we went to witness the annual services at Praya, held to commemorate an ancient escape from an earthquake. It was the first day of February. After weeks of rain, there came at one burst all the luxury of June, winter seemed to pass into summer in a moment, and blackbirds sang on every spray. We walked or rode over a steep promontory, down into a green valley, scooped softly to the sea: the church was by the beach. As we passed along, the steep paths converging from all the hills were full of women and men in spotless blue and white, with bright kerchiefs; they were all walking barefooted over the rocky ways, only the women stopping, ere reaching the church, to don stockings and shoes. Many persons sat in sunny places by the roadsides to beg, with few to beg from,—blind old men, and groups of children clamorous for coppers, but propitiated by sugar-plums. Many others were bringing offerings, candles for the altar, poultry, which were piled, a living mass, legs tied, in the corner of the church, and small sums of money, which were recorded by an ancient man in a mighty book. The church was already so crowded that it was almost impossible to enter; the centre was one great flower-garden of headdresses of kneeling women, and in the aisles were penitents, toiling round the church upon their knees, each bearing a lighted candle. But the services had not yet begun, and we went down among the rocks to eat our luncheon of bread and oranges; the ocean rolled in languidly, a summer sea; we sat beside sheltered, transparent basins, among high and pointed rocks, and great, indolent waves sometimes reared their heads, looking in upon our retreat, or flooding our calm pools with a surface of creamy effervescence. Every square inch of the universe seemed crowded with particles of summer.

On our way past the church, we had caught a glimpse of unwonted black small-clothes, and, slyly peeping into a little chapel, had seen the august Senate of Horta apparently arraying themselves for the ceremony. Presently out came a man with a great Portuguese flag, and then the Senators, two and two, with short black cloaks, white bands, and gold-tipped staves, trod stately towards the church. And as we approached the door, on our return, we saw these dignitaries sitting in their great arm-chairs, as one might fancy Venetian potentates, while a sonorous Portuguese sermon rolled over their heads as innocuously as a Thanksgiving discourse over any New-England congregation.

Do not imagine, by the way, that critical remarks on sermons are a monopoly of Protestantism. After one religious service in Fayal, my friend, the Professor of Languages, who sometimes gave lessons in English, remarked to me confidentially, in my own tongue,—“His sermon is good, but his *exposition* is bad; he does not *expose* well.” Supposing him to refer to the elocution, I assented,—secretly thinking, however, that the divine in question had exposed himself exceedingly well.



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Another very impressive ceremony was the Midnight Mass on New Year's Eve, when we climbed at midnight, through some close, dark passages in the vast church edifice, into a sort of concealed opera-box above the high altar, and suddenly opened windows looking down into the brilliantly lighted cathedral, crammed with kneeling people and throbbing with loud music. It seemed centuries away from all modern life,—a glimpse into some buried Pompeii of the Middle Ages. More impressive still was Holy Week, when there were some rites unknown to other Roman Catholic countries. For three days the great cathedral was closely veiled from without and darkened within,—every door closed, every window obscured. Before this there had been seventy candles lighting up the high altar and the eager faces; now these were all extinguished, and through the dark church came chanting a procession bearing feeble candles and making a strange clapping sound, with *matracas*, like watchmen's rattles; men carried the symbolical bier of Jesus in the midst, to its symbolical rest beneath the altar, where the three candles, representing the three Marys, blazed above it. During the time of darkness there were frequent masses and sermons, while terrible transparencies of the Crucifixion were suddenly unrolled from the lofty pulpit, and the throng below wept in sympathy, and clapped their cheeks in token of anguish, like the flutter of many doves. Then came the Hallelujah Saturday, when at noon the mourning ended. It was a breathless moment. The priests kneeled in gorgeous robes, chanting monotonously, with their foreheads upon the altar-steps; and the hushed multitude hung upon their lips, in concentrated ecstasy, waiting for the coming joy. Suddenly burst the words, *Gloria in Excelsis*. In an instant every door was flung open, every curtain withdrawn, the great church was bathed in meridian sunlight, the organ crashed out triumphant, the bells pealed, flowers were thrown from the galleries in profusion, friends embraced and kissed each other, laughed, talked, and cried, and all the sea of gay head-dresses below was tremulous beneath a mist of unaccustomed splendor. And yet (this thought smote me) all the beautiful transformation has come by simply letting in the common light of day. Then why not keep it always? Clear away, Humanity, these darkened windows, but clear away also these darkening walls, and show us that the simplest religion is the best!

I cannot dwell upon the narrative of our many walks:—to the Espalamarca, with its lonely telegraph-station;—to the Burnt Mountain, with its colored cliffs;—to visit the few aged nuns who still linger in what was once a convent;—to Porto Pim, with its curving Italian beach, its playing boys and picturesque fishermen beneath the arched gateway;—to the tufa-ledges near by, where the soft rocks are honeycombed with the cells hollowed by echini below the water's edge, a fact undescribed and almost unexampled, said



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Agassiz afterwards;—to the lofty, lonely Monte da Guia, with its solitary chapel on the peak, and its extinct crater, where the sea rolls in and out;—to the Dabney orange-gardens, on Sunday afternoons;—to the beautiful Mirante ravine, whenever a sudden rain filled the cascades and set the watermills and the washerwomen all astir, and the long brook ran down in whirls of white foam to the waiting sea;—or to the western shores of the island, where we turned to Ariadnes, as we watched departing home-bound vessels from those cliffs whose wave-worn fiords and innumerable sea-birds make a Norway of Fayal.

And I must also pass over still greater things:—the winter storms and ship-wrecks, whose annals were they not written to the “New York Tribune”?—and the spring Sunday at superb Castello Branco, with the whole rural population thronging to meet in enthusiastic affection the unwonted presence of the Consul himself, the feudalism of love;—and the ascent of the wild Caldeira, we climbing height after height, leaving the valleys below mottled with blue-robed women spreading their white garments to dry in the sun, and the great Pico peeping above the clouds across the bay, and seeming as if directly above our heads, and nodding to us ere it drew back again;—and, best of all, that wonderful ascension, by two of us, of Pico itself, seven thousand feet from the level of the sea, where we began to climb. We camped half-way up, and watched the sunset over the lower peaks of Fayal; we kindled fires of *faya*-bushes on the lonely mountain-sides, a beacon for the world; we slept in the loft of a little cattle-shed, with the calves below us, “the cows’ sons,” as our Portuguese attendant courteously called them; we waked next morning above the clouds, with one vast floor of white level vapor beneath us, such as Thoreau alone has described, with here and there an open glimpse of the sea far below, yet lifted up to an apparent level with the clouds, so as to seem like an Arctic scene, with patches of open water. Then we climbed through endless sheep-pastures and over great slabs of lava, growing steeper and steeper; we entered the crater at last, walled with snows of which portions might be of untold ages, for it is never, I believe, wholly empty; we climbed, in such a gale of wind that the guides would not follow us, the steeple-like central pinnacle, two hundred feet high; and there we reached, never to be forgotten, a small central crater at the very summit, where steam poured up between the stones,—and, oh, from what central earthy depths of wonder that steam came to us! There has been no eruption from any portion of Pico for many years, but it is a volcano still, and we knew that we were standing on the narrow and giddy summit of a chimney of the globe. That was a sensation indeed!



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We saw many another wild volcanic cliff and fissure and cave on our two-days' tour round the island of Fayal; but it was most startling, when, on the first morning, as we passed from green valley to valley along the road, suddenly all verdure and life vanished, and we found ourselves riding through a belt of white, coarse moss stretching from mountain to sea, covering rock and wall and shed like snow or moonlight or mountain-laurel or any other pale and glimmering thing; and when, after miles of ignorant wonder, we rode out of it into greenness again, and were told that we had crossed what the Portuguese call a *Misterio* or *Mystery*,—the track of the last eruption. The moss was the first primeval coating of vegetation just clothing those lava-rocks again.

But the time was coming when we must bid good-bye to picturesque Fayal. We had been there from November to May; it had been a winter of incessant rains, and the first necessary of life had come to be a change of umbrellas; it had been colder than usual, making it a comfort to look at our stove, though we never lighted it; but our invalids had gained by even this degree of mildness, by the wholesome salt dampness, by the comforts of our hotel with its respectable Portuguese landlord and English landlady, and by the great kindness shown us by all others. At last we had begun to feel that we had squeezed the orange of the Azores a little dry, and we were ready to go. And when, after three weeks of rough sailing in the good bark Azor, we saw Cape Ann again, although it looked somewhat flat and prosaic after the headlands of Fayal, yet we knew that behind those low shores lay all that our hearts held dearest, and all the noblest hopes of the family of man.

* * * * *

MIDSUMMER AND MAY.

I.

Very probably you never saw such a superb creature,—if that word, creature, does not endow her with too much life: a Semiramis, without the profligacy,—an Isis, without the worship,—a Sphinx, yes, a Sphinx, with her desert, who long ago despaired of having one come to read her riddle, strong, calm, patient perhaps. In this respect she seemed to own no redundant life, just enough to eke along existence,—not living, but waiting.

I say, all this would have been one's impression; and one's impression would have been incorrect.

I really cannot state her age; and having attained to years of discretion, it is not of such consequence as it is often supposed to be, whether one be twenty or sixty. You would have been confident, that, living to count her hundreds, she would only have bloomed with more immortal freshness; but such a thought would not have occurred to you at all,



if you had not already felt that she was no longer young,—she possessed so perfectly that certain self-reliance, self-understanding, *aplomb*, into which little folk crystallize at an early age, but which is not to be found with those whose identities are cast in a larger mould, until they have passed through periods of fuller experience.



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That Mrs. Laudersdale was the technical magnificent woman, I need not reiterate. I wish I knew some name gorgeous enough in sound and association for that given her at christening; but I don't. It is my opinion that she was born Mrs. Laudersdale, that her coral-and-bell was marked Mrs. Laudersdale, and that her name stands golden-lettered on the recording angel's leaf simply as Mrs. Laudersdale. It is naturally to be inferred, then, that there was a Mr. Laudersdale. There was. But not by any means a person of consequence, you assume? Why, yes, of some,—to one individual at least Mrs. Laudersdale was so weak as to regard him with complacency; she loved—adored her husband. Let me have the justice to say that no one suspected her of it. Of course, then, Mr. Roger Raleigh had no business to fall in love with her.

Well,—but he did.

At the time when Mrs. Laudersdale had become somewhat more than a reigning beauty, and held her sceptre with such apparent indifference that she seemed about abandoning it forever, she no longer dazzled with unventured combinations of colors and materials in dress. She wore most frequently, at this epoch, black velvet that suppld about her well-asserted contours; and the very trail of her skirt was unlike another woman's, for it coiled and bristled after her with a life and motion of its own, like a serpent. Her hair, of too dead a black for gloss or glister, was always adorned with a nasturtium-vine, whose vivid flames seemed like some personal emanation, and whose odor, acrid and single, dispersed a character about her; and the only ornaments she condescended to assume were of Etruscan gold, severely simple in design, elaborately intricate in workmanship. It is evident she was a poet in costume, and had at last *en regle* acquired a manner. But thirteen years ago she apparelled herself otherwise, and thirteen years ago it was that Mr. Roger Raleigh fell in love with her. This is how it was.

Among the many lakes in New Hampshire, there is one of extreme beauty,—a broad, shadowy water, some nine miles in length, with steep, thickly wooded banks, and here and there, as if moored on its calm surface, an island fit for the Bower of Bliss. At one spot along its shore was, and still is, an old country-house, formerly used as a hotel, but whose customers, always pleasure-seekers from the neighboring towns, had been drawn away by the erection of a more modern and satisfactory place of entertainment at the other extremity of the lake, and it had now been for many years closed. There were no dwellings of any kind in its vicinity, so that it reigned over a solitude of a half-dozen miles in every direction. Once in a while the gay visitors in the more prosperous regions stretched their sails and skimmed along till they saw its white porticos and piazzas gleaming faintly up among the trees; once in a while a belated traveller tied his horse at the gate, and sought admittance

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in vain, at the empty house, of the shadows who may have kept it. It was not pleasant to see so goodly a mansion falling to ruin for want of fit occupancy, truly; and just as the walls had grown gray with rain and time, the chimneys choked and the casements shrunken, a merry company of friends and families, from another portion of the country, consolidated themselves into a society for the pursuit of happiness, rented the old place, put in carpenters and masons and glaziers, and, when the last tenants vacated the premises, took possession in state themselves. Care and responsibility were not theirs; the matron and her servants alone received such guests; the long summer-days were to come and go with them as joyously as with Bacchus and his crew.

Behold the party domesticated a fortnight at the Bawn, as it was afterward dubbed. Mr. Laudersdale had returned to New York that morning, and his wife had not been met since. Now, at about five o'clock, her white robe floated past the door, and she was seen moving up and down the long piazza and humming a faint little tune to herself. Just then a flock of young women, married and single, fluttered through door and windows to join her; and just then Mrs. Laudersdale stepped down from the end of the piazza and floated up the garden-path and into the woods that skirted the lake-shore and stretched far back and away. Thus abandoned, the others turned their attention to the expanse before and below them; and one or two made their way down to the brink, unhooked a boat, ventured in, and, lifting the single pair of oars, were soon laboring gayly out and creating havoc on the placid waters.

As Mrs. Laudersdale continued to walk, the path which she followed slowly descended to the pebbly rim, rich in open spaces, slopes of verdure just gilding in the declining sun, and coverts of cool, deep shadow. As she advanced leisurely, involved in pleasant fancy, something caught her eye, an unusual object, certainly, lying in a dusker recess; she drew nearer and hung a moment above it. Some fallen statue among rank Roman growth, some marble semblance of a young god, overlaced with a vine and plunged in tall ferns and beaded grasses? And she, bending there,—was it Diana and Endymion over again, Psyche and Eros? Ah, no!—simply Mrs. Laudersdale and Roger Raleigh. Only while one might have counted sixty did she linger to take the real beauty of the scene: the youth, adopted, as it were, to Nature's heart by the clustering growth that sprang up rebounding under the careless weight that crushed it; an attitude of complete and unconscious grace,—one arm thrown out beneath the head, the other listlessly fallen down his side, while the hand still detained the straw hat; the profile, by no means classic, but in strong relief, the dark hair blowing in the gentle wind, the flush of sleep that went and came almost perceptibly with the breath, and the sunbeam that slanting round suddenly suffused the whole. "Pretty boy!" thought Mrs. Laudersdale; "beautiful picture!" and she flitted on. But Roger Raleigh was not a boy, although sleep, that gives back to all stray glimpses of their primal nature, endowed him peculiarly with a look of childlike innocence unknown to his waking hours.



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Startled, perhaps, by the intruding step, for it was no light one, a squirrel leaped from the bough to the grass, and, leaping, woke the sleeper. He himself, now unperceived, saw a vision in return,—this woman, young and rare, this queenly, perfect thing, floating on and vanishing among the trees. Whence had she come, and who was she? And hereupon he remembered the old Bawn and its occupants. Had she seen him? Unlikely; but yet, unimportant as it was, it remained an interesting and open question in his mind. Bringing down the hair so ruffled in the idle breeze, he crowded his hat over it with a determined air, half ran, half tumbled, down the bank, sprang into his boat, and, shaking out a sail, went flirting over the lake as fast as the wind could carry him. Leaving a long, straight, shining wake behind him, Mr. Roger Raleigh skimmed along the skin of ripples, and, in order to avoid a sound of shrill voices, skirted the angle of an island, and found himself deceived by the echo and in the midst of them.

Mrs. McLean, Miss Helen Heath, and Miss Mary Purcell, who had embarked with a single pair of oars, were now shipwrecked on the waters wide, as Helen said; for one of their means of progress, she declared, had been snatched by the roaring waves and was floating in the trough of the sea, just beyond their reach. None of the number being acquainted with the process of sculling, they considered it imperative to secure the truant tool, unless they wished to perish floating about unseen; and having weighed the expediency of rigging Helen into a jury-mast, they were now using their endeavors to regain the oar,—Mary Purcell whirling them about like a maelstrom with the remaining one, and Mrs. McLean with her two hands grasping Helen's garments, while the latter half stood in the boat and half lay recumbent on the lake, tipping, slipping, dipping, till her head resembled a mermaid's; while they all three filled the air with more exclaim, shrieking, and laughter than could have been effected by a large-lunged mob.

"Bedlam let loose," thought the intruder, "or all the Naiads up for a frolic?" And as he shot by, a hush fell upon the noisy group,—Helen pausing and erecting herself from her ablutions, Mary's frantic efforts sending them as a broadside upon the Arrow and nearly capsizing it, and Mrs. McLean, ceasing merriment, staring from both her eyes, and saying nothing. Mr. Raleigh seized the oar in passing, and directly afterward had placed it in Helen's hands. Receiving it with a profusion of thanks, she seated herself and bent to its use. But, looking back in a few seconds, Mr. Raleigh observed that the exhausted rowers had made scarcely a yard's distance. He had no inclination for gallant *devoir*, his eyes and thoughts were full of his late vision in the woods, he wished to reach home and dream; but in a moment he was again beside them, had taken their painter with a bow and an easy sentence, but neither with *empressement* nor heightened color, and, changing his course, was lending them a portion of the Arrow's swiftness in flight towards the Bawn. It seemed as if the old place sent its ghosts out to him this afternoon. Bringing them close upon the flat landing-rock, and hooking the painter therein, he sheered off, lifting his hat, and was gone.



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“Roger! Roger Raleigh!” cried Mrs. McLean, from the shore, “come back!”

Obedying her with an air of puzzled surprise, the person so unceremoniously addressed was immediately beside her again.

“A cool proceeding, Sir!” said she, extending both her hands. “How long would you know your Cousin Kate to be here, and refuse to spare her an hour?”

“Upon my honor,” said her cousin, bending very low over the hands, “I but this moment learn her presence in my neighborhood.”

“Ah, Sir! and what becomes of my note sealed with sky-blue wax and despatched to you ten days ago?”

“It is true such a note lies on my table at this moment, and it is still sealed with sky-blue wax.”

“And still unread?”

“You will not force me to confess such delinquency?”

“And still unread?”

“Ten thousand pardons! Shall I go home and read it?” And herewith the saucy indifference of his face became evident, as he raised it.

“No. But is that the way to serve a lady’s communications? Fie, for a gallant! I must take you in hand. These are your New Hampshire customs?”

“O Kate, nice customs curtsy to nice kings!”

“So I’ve heard, when curtsying was in fashion; but that is out of date, together with a good many other nice things,—caring for one’s friends, for instance. Why don’t you ask how all your uncles and aunts are, Sir?”

“How are all my uncles and aunts, Miss?”

“Oh, don’t you know? I thought you didn’t. There’s another billet, inclosing a bit of pasteboard, lying on your table now unopened too, I’ll warrant. Don’t you read any of your letters?”

“Alphabetical or epistolary?”

“Answer properly, yes or no.”



“No.”

“Why?”

“I know no one that has authority to write to me, as half a reason.”

“Thank you, for one, Sir. And what becomes of your Uncle Reuben?”

“Not included in the category.”

“Then you’re not aware that I’ve changed my estate? You don’t know my name now, do you?”

“Bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst,
But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom”

“Nonsense! What an exasperating boy! Just the same as ever! Well, it explains itself. Here comes a recent property unto me appertaining. McLean! My husband, Mr. John McLean,—my cousin, Mr. Roger Raleigh.”

The new-comer was one of those “sterling men” always to be relied on, generally to be respected, and safely and appropriately leading society and subscription-lists. He was not very imaginative, and he understood at a glance as much of the other as he ever would understand. And the other, feeling instantly that only coin of the king’s stamp would pass current here, turned his own counter royal side up, and met his host with genuine cordiality. Shortly afterward, Mrs. McLean withdrew for an improvement in her toilet, and soon returning, found them comparing notes as to the condition of the country, tender bonds of the Union, and relative merits of rival candidates, for all which neither of them cared a straw.



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“How do you find me, Sir?” she asked of her cousin.

“Radiant, rosy, and rarely arrayed.”

“I see that your affections are to be won, and I proceed accordingly, by making myself charming, in the first place. And now, will you be cheered, but not inebriated, here under the trees, in company with dainty cheese-cakes compounded by these hands, and jelly of Helen Heath’s moulding, and automatic trifles that caught an ordaining glimpse of Mrs. Laudersdale’s eye and rushed madly together to become almond-pasty?”

“With a method in their madness, I hope.”

“Yes, all the almonds not on one side.”

“In company with cheese-cakes, jelly, and pasty, simply,—I should have claret and crackers at home, Capua willing. Will it pay?”

“You shall have Port here, when Mrs. Laudersdale comes.”

“Not old enough to be crusty yet, Kate,” said her husband.

“Very good, for you, John!”

“Mrs. Laudersdale is your housekeeper?” asked her cousin.

“Mrs. Laudersdale? That is rich! But I should never dare to tell her. Our housekeeper? Our cynosure! She is our argent-lidded Persian Girl,—our serene, imperial Eleanore;—

“Whene’er she moves,
The Samian Here rises, and she speaks
A Meinnon smitten with the morning sun.”

“Oh, indeed! And this is a conventicle of young matrimonial victims to practise cookery in seclusion, upon which I have blundered?”

“If the fancy pleases you, yes. There they are.”

And hereon followed a series of necessary introductions.

Mr. Roger Raleigh sat with both arms leaning on the table before him, and wondering which of the ladies, half whose names he had not heard, was the Samian Here,—if any of them was,—and if,—and if;—and here Mr. Roger Raleigh’s reflections went wandering back to the lakeside path and its vision. Not inopportunistly at this moment, a



white garment, which, it is unnecessary to say, he had long ago seen advancing, fluttered down the opposite path, and she herself approached.

“Ah! *Al fresco?*” said the pleasantest voice in the world.

“And isn’t it charming?” asked Mrs. McLean. “Imagine us with tables spread outside the door in Fifth Avenue, in Chestnut Street, or on the Common!”

“Even then the arabesque would be wanting,” said she, trailing a long branch of the wild grape-vine, with its pale and delicately fragrant blooms, along the snowy board. “Are the cheese-cakes a success, Mrs. McLean? I didn’t dine, and am famished.—I see that you have at last heard from your cousin,” she added, in an undertone.

“Yes; let me pre—Roger!”

Quickly frustrating any such presentation, Mr. Roger Raleigh half turned, and, bowing, said,—

“I believe I have had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Laudersdale before.”

Her haughtiness would have frozen any one else. She bent with the least possible inclination, and sat down upon a stump that immediately became a throne. He resumed his former position, and drummed lightly on the table, while waiting to be served. In less complete repose than she had previously seen him, Mrs. Laudersdale now examined anew the individual before her.



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Not by any means tall she found him, but having the square shoulders and broad chest which give, in so much greater a degree than mere height, an impression of strength,—a frame agile and compact, with that easy carriage of the head and that rapid movement so deceptively increasing the stature. The face, too, was probably what, if not informed by a singularly clean and fine soul, would, in the lapse of years, become gross,—the skin of a clear olive, which had slightly flushed as he addressed herself, but not when speaking to other strangers,—kept beardless, and rather square in contour; the mouth not small, but keenly cut, like marble, and always quivering before he spoke, as if the lightning of his thought ran thither naturally to seek spontaneous expression; teeth white; chin cleft; nose of the unclassified order, rather long, the curve opposite to aquiline, and saved from sharpness by nostrils that dilated with a pulse of their own, as those of very proud and sensitive people are apt to do; a wide, low forehead crowned with dark hair, long and fine; heavy brows that overhung deep-set eyes of lightest hazel, but endowed by shadow with a power that no eye of gypsy-black ever swayed for an instant. His whole countenance reminded you of nothing so much as of the young heroes of the French Revolution, for whom irregular features and sallow cheeks were transmuted into brilliant and singular beauty. It wore an inwrapped air, and, with all its mobility, was a mask. He very seldom raised the lids, and his pallor, though owning more of the golden touch of the sun, was as dazzling as Mrs. Laudersdale's own.

Mrs. Laudersdale scarcely observed,—she felt; and probably she saw nothing but the general impression of what I have been telling you.

“Tea, Roger?” asked Mrs. McLean.

“Green, I thank you, and strong.”

Rising to receive it, he continued his course till it naturally brought him before Mrs. Laudersdale. Pausing deliberately and sipping the pungent tonic, he at last looked up, and said,—

“Well, you are offended?”

“Then you were awake when I stayed to look at you?” she asked, in reply; for curiosity is a solvent.

“Then you *did* stay and look at me? That is exactly what I wished to know. How did I look, Belpheobe?”

“Out of his eyes, tell him,” said Helen Heath, in passing.

“They were not open,” responded Mrs. Laudersdale. “And I cannot tell how you saw me.”



“I saw you as Virgil saw his mother,—I mean Aeneas,—as the goddesses are always known, you remember, in departure.”

Mrs. Laudersdale felt a weight on her lids beneath his glance, and rose to approach the table.

“Allow me,” said Mr. Raleigh, taking her plate and bringing it back directly with a wafery slice of bread and a quaking tumulus of jelly.

Mrs. Laudersdale laughed, though perhaps scarcely pleased with him.

“How did you know my tastes so well?” she asked.



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“Since they are not mine,” he replied. “Of course you eat jelly, because it is no trouble; you choose your bread thin for the same reason; likewise you would find a glass of that suave, rich cream delicious. Among all motions, you prefer smooth sailing; and I’ll venture to say that you sleep in down all summer.”

Mrs. Laudersdale looked up in slow and still astonishment; but Mr. Raleigh was already pouring out the glass of cream.

“I’ve no doubt you would like to have me sweeten it,” said he, offering it to her; “but I will not humor such ascetic tendencies. I never approved of flagellation.”

And as he spoke, he was gone to break ground for a flirtation with Helen Heath.

Helen Heath appeared to be one of those gay, not-to-be-heart-broken damsels who can drink forever of this dangerous and exhilarating cup without showing symptoms of intoxication. Young men who have nothing worse to do with their time gravitate naturally and unawares toward them for amusement, and spin out the thread till they reach its end, without expectation, without surprise, without regret, without occasion for remorse. Mr. Raleigh could not have been more unfortunate than he was in meeting her, since it gave him reason and excuse henceforth for visiting the Bawn at all seasons.

The table was at last removed, the dew began to fall, Mrs. Laudersdale shivered and withdrew toward the house.

“*Incessu patet dea,*” Mr. Raleigh remembered.

Somewhat later, he started from his seat, bade them all good-night, ran gayly down the bank, and shoved off from shore. And shortly after, Mrs. Laudersdale, looking from her window, saw, for an instant, a single fire-fly hovering over the dark lake. It was Mr. Roger Raleigh’s distant lantern, as, stretched at ease, he turned the slow leaves of a Froissart, and suffered the Arrow to drift as it would across the night.

The next morning Mrs. Laudersdale descended, as usual, to the breakfast-table, at an hour when all the rest had concluded their repast. Miss Helen Heath alone remained, trifling with the tea-cups, and singing little exercises.

“Quite an acquisition, Mrs. Laudersdale!” said she.

“What?” said the other, languidly, leaning one arm on the table and looking about for any appetizing edible. “What is an acquisition?”

“You mean who. Mr. Raleigh, of course. But isn’t it the queerest thing in the world, up here in this savage district, to light upon a gentleman?”



“Is this a savage district? And is Mr. Raleigh a gentleman?”

“Is he? I never saw his match.”

“Nor I.”

“What! don’t you find him so? a thorough gentleman?”

“I don’t know what a thorough gentleman is, I dare say,” assented Mrs. Laudersdale, indifferently, with no spirit for repartee, breaking an egg and putting it down, crumbling a roll, and finally attacking a biscuit, but gradually raising the siege, yawning, and leaning back in her chair.



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"You poor thing!" said Helen. "You are starving to death. What shall I get for you? I have influence in the kitchens. Does marmalade, to spread your muffins, present any attractions? or shall I beg for rusks? or what do you say to doughnuts? there are doughnuts in this closet; crullers and milk are nice for breakfast."

And in a few minutes Helen had rifled a shelf of sufficient temptations to overcome Mrs. Laudersdale's abstinence.

"After all," said she then, "you didn't answer my question."

"What question?"

"If it weren't odd to meet Mr. Raleigh here."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Laudersdale.

"Dear! Mary Purcell takes as much interest. She said he was impertinent, made her talk too much, and made fun of her."

"Very likely."

"You are as aggravating as he! If you had anything to do except to look divinely, we'd quarrel. I thought I had a nice bit of entertaining news for you."

"Is that your trouble? I should be sorry to oppress you with it longer. Pray, tell it."

"Will it entertain you?"

"It won't bore *you*."

"I don't know that I *will* tell it on such terms. However, I—must talk. Well, then. I have not been dreaming by daylight, but up and improving my opportunities. Partly from himself, and partly from Kate, and partly from the matron here, I have made the following discoveries. Mr. Roger Raleigh has left some very gay cities, and crossed some parallels of latitude, to exile himself in this wilderness of ice and snow,—that's what you and I vote it, whether the trees are green and the sun shines, or not; and I don't see what bewitched mother to adopt such a suicidal plan as coming here to be buried alive. He, that is, Mr. Raleigh, to join my ends, has lived here for five years; and as he came when he was twenty, he is consequently about my age now,—I shouldn't wonder if a trifle older than you. He came here because an immense estate was bequeathed him on the condition that he should occupy this corner of it during one-half of every year from his twenty-first to his thirty-first He has chosen to occupy it during the entire year, running down now and then to have a little music or see a little painting. Sometimes a parcel of his friends,—he never was at college, hasn't any chums, and has educated himself by all manner of out-of-the-way dodges,—sometimes these



friends, odd specimens, old music-masters, rambling artists, seedy tutors, fencers, boxers, hunters, clowns, all light down together, and then the neighborhood rings with this precious covey: the rest of the year, may-be, he don't see an individual. One result of this isolation is, that freaks which would be very strange escapades in other people with him are mere commonplaces. Sometimes he goes over to the city there, and roams round like a lost soul seeking for its body; sometimes he goes up a hundred miles or two, takes a guide and handles the mountains; and, except in the accidents at such times, he hasn't seen a woman since he came."



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"That accounts," said Mrs. Laudersdale.

"Yes. But just think what a life!"

"He wouldn't stay, if he didn't like," replied Mrs. Laudersdale, to whom the words poverty and riches conveyed not the least idea.

"I don't know. He has an uncle, of whom he is very fond, in India," continued Helen,—
"an unfortunate kind of man, with whom everything goes wrong, and who is always taking fevers; and once or twice Mr. Raleigh has started to go and take care of him, and lose the whole estate by the means. He intends to endow him, I believe, by-and-by, when the thing is at his disposal. This uncle kept him at school, when he was an orphan in different circumstances, at a Jesuit institution; and he and Miss Kent were always quarrelling over him, and she thought she had tied up her property nicely out of old Reuben Raleigh's way. It will be nuts, if he ever accepts his nephew's proposed present. The best of it all is, that, if he breaks the condition,—there's no accounting for the caprices of wills,—part of it goes to a needy institution, and part of it inalienably to Mrs. McLean, who"—

"Is an institution, too."

"Who is not needy. There, isn't that a pretty little *conte*?"

"Very," said Mrs. Laudersdale, having listened with increasing interest. "But, Helen, you'll be a gossip, if you go on and prosper."

"Why, my dear child! He'll be over here every day now; and do you suppose I'm going to flirt with any one, when I don't know his antecedents? There he is now!"

And as Mrs. Laudersdale turned, she saw Mr. Raleigh standing composedly in the doorway and surveying them. She bade him good-morning, coolly enough, while Helen began searching the grounds of the tea-cups, rather uncertain how much of her recital might have met his ears.

"Turning tea-cups, Gypsy Helen, and telling fates, all to no audience, and with no cross on your palm?" asked the guest.

"So you ignore Mrs. Laudersdale?"

"Not at all; you weren't looking at her cup,—if she has one. Will you have the morning paper?" he asked of that lady, who, receiving it, leisurely unfolded and glanced over its extent.

"Where's my Cousin Kate?" then demanded Mr. Raleigh of Helen, having regarded this performance.



“Gone shopping in town.”

“Her vocation. For the day?”

“No,—it is time for their return now. When you hear wheels”—

“I hear them”; and he strolled to the window. “You should have said, when I heard tongues; Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia were less cheerful. A very pretty team. So she took her conjugal appurtenance with her?”

“And left her cousinly impertinence behind her,” retorted a gay voice from his elbow.

“Ah, Kate! are you there? It’s not a moment since I saw you ’coming from the town.’ A pretty hostess, you! I arrive on your invitation to pass the day”—



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“But I didn’t expect you before the sun.”

“To pass the day, and find you absent and the breakfast-table not cleared away.”

“My dear Roger, we have not quite taken our habits yet. As soon as the country-air shall have wakened and made over Helen and Mrs. Laudersdale, you will find us ready for company at daybreak.”

“What a passion for ‘company’! I shall not be surprised some day to receive cards for your death-bed.”

“Friends and relatives invited to attend? No, Roger, you mustn’t be naughty. You shall receive cards for my dinner-party before we go, if you won’t come without; for we have innumerable friends in town, already.”

“Happy woman!”

“What’s that? A newspaper? A newspaper! How McLean will chuckle!” And she seized the sheet which Mrs. Laudersdale had abandoned in sweeping from the room.

“Is there a Mr. Laudersdale? Where is he?” asked Mr. Raleigh, as he leaned against the window.

“Who?” asked his cousin, deep in a paragraph.

“Mr. Laudersdale. Where is he?”

“Oh! between his four planks, I suppose,” she replied, thinking of the Soundboat’s berth, which probably contained the gentleman designated.

“Between his four planks,” repeated Mr. Raleigh, in a musing tone, entirely misinterpreting her, and to this little accident owing nearly thirteen years’ unhappiness.

“She must have married early,” he continued.

“Oh, fabulously early,” replied Mrs. McLean, between the lines she read. “She is Creole, I believe. She is perfect. The women are as infatuated about her as the men. Here’s Helen Heath been dawdling round the table all the morning for the sake of chatting to her while she breakfasts. I don’t know why, I’m sure; the woman’s charming, but she’s too lazy even to talk. McLean! Another flurry in France.”

And after shaking hands with Mr. Raleigh, that worthy seized the proffered paper and vanished behind it, leaving to his wife the entertainment of her cousin, which duty she seemed by no means in haste to assume, preferring to remain and vex her husband with a thousand little teasing arts. Meanwhile Mr. Raleigh proceeded to take that office



upon himself, by crossing the hall, exploring the parlors, examining the manuscript commonplace-books, and finally by sketching on a leaf of his pocket-book Mrs. Laudersdale, at the other end of the piazza, half-swinging in the vines through which broad sunbeams poured, while Helen Heath was singing and several other ladies were busying themselves with books and needle-work in her vicinity.”

“Ah, Mr. Raleigh!” said Helen Heath, as he put up the pocket-book and drew near,—
“Mrs. Laudersdale and I have been wondering how you amuse yourself up here; and I make my discovery. You study animated nature; that is to say, you draw Mrs. Laudersdale and me.”

“Mistaken, Miss Helen. I draw only Mrs. Laudersdale; and do you call that animated nature?”



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"I wish you would draw. Mrs. Laudersdale *out*."

At this point Mrs. Laudersdale *fell* out; but, without otherwise stirring from his position than by moving an apparently careless arm, Mr. Raleigh caught and restored her to her balance, as lightly as if he had brushed a floating gossamer from the air to his finger. For the first time, perhaps, in her life, a carnation blossomed an instant in her cheek, then all was as before,—only two of the party felt on that instant that in some mysterious manner their relations with each other were entirely changed.

"But what *is* it that you do with yourself?" persisted Helen. "Tell us, that we may do likewise."

"Will you come and see?" he asked,—his eyes, however, on Mrs. Laudersdale.

"Will you come in away from the lake to the brooks, and hang among the alders and angle, dreaming, all day long? Or will you rise at dead of night and go out on the lake with me and watch field after field of white lilies flash open as the sun touches them with his spear? Or will you lie during still noons up among the farmers' fields where myriad bandrol corn-poppies flaunt over your head, and stain your finger-tips with the red berries that hang like globes of light in the palace-gardens of mites and midges, soaking yourself in hot sunshine and south-winds and heavy aromatic earth-scents?"

"Come!" said Mrs. Laudersdale, rising earnestly, like one in an eager dream.

"It is plain that you are in training for a poet," said Helen Heath, laughing, to Mr. Raleigh. "Well, when will you take us? Are the lilies in bloom? Shall we go to-morrow morning?"

"I don't know that I shall take you at all, Miss Helen;—river-lilies might suit you best; but these queens of the lakes, the great, calm pond-lilies, creatures of quiet and white radiance,—I have seen only one head that possessed enough of the genuine East-Indian repose to be crowned with them."

"You like repose," said Mrs. Laudersdale. "But what is it?"

"Repose is strength,—life that develops from within, and feels itself and has no need of effort. Repose is inherent security."

"Goodness!" exclaimed Helen. "Article first in a new dictionary,—encyclopedia, I should say. You worship, but you don't possess your god, for you look at this moment like a shaft in the bow; and here comes an archer to give it flight."

"Where are you going, Kate?" said her cousin.

"To pick strawberries in the garden. Want to come?"



The three could do no better than accept her invitation. The good ladies might stare as they could after Mrs. Laudersdale, and wonder what sudden sprite had possessed her, since for neither man nor woman of the numerous party had she hitherto condescended to lift an unwonted eyelid; what they would have said to have seen her plunged in a strawberry-bed, gathering handfuls and raining them drop by drop into Helen Heath's

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mouth, to silence her while she herself might talk,—her own fingers tipped with more sanguine shade than their native rose, her eyes full of the noon sparkle, and her lips parted with laughter,—we cannot say. Roger Raleigh forgot to move, to speak, to think, as he watched her. But in the midst of this brilliant and novel gayety of hers, there was still a dignity to make one feel that she had by no means abandoned her regal purple, but merely adorned it with profuse golden flourishes.

At dinner that day, Helen begged to know if there were not a great many routes in the vicinity practicable only on horseback, and thought she had attained her end when Mr. Raleigh put his horses and his escort at the service of herself and Mrs. Laudersdale during their stay.

“During our stay!” said Mrs. Laudersdale. “That reminds me that we are to go away!”

“Pleasantly, certainly. When snows fall and storms pipe, the Bawn is an icehouse,” said he.

After noon, the remainder of the day was interspersed with light thunder-showers, rendering tea on the grass again impossible; they passed the steaming cups, therefore, as they sat on the piazza curtained with dripping woodbine. The glitter of the drops in the sunset light, a jewelled scintillation, was caught in Mrs. Laudersdale’s eyes, and some unconscious excitement fanned a faint color to and fro on her cheek. At last the moon rose; the whole party, regardless of wet slippers, sauntered with Mr. Raleigh to the shore, where the little Arrow hung balancing on her restraining cord. Mrs. Laudersdale stepped in, Mr. Raleigh followed, took up an oar, and pushed out, both standing, and drifting slowly for a few rods’ distance; then Mr. Raleigh made the shore again, assisted her out, and shot impatiently away alone. The waters shone like white fire in the wake he cut, great shadows fall through them where island and wood intercepted the broad ascending light, and Mrs. Laudersdale’s gay laugh rung across them, as the space grew,—a sweet, rich laugh, that all the spirits of the depths caught and played with like a rare beam that transiently illumined their shadowy, silent haunts.

The next day, and the next, and so for a fortnight, Mr. Roger Raleigh presented himself with the breakfast-urn at the Bawn, tarried during sunshine, slipped home by starlight across the lake. Every day Mrs. Laudersdale was more brilliant, and flashed with a cheery merriment like harmless summer-lightnings. One night, as he pushed away from the bank, he said,—

“*Au revoir* for five hours.”

“For five hours?” said Mrs. Laudersdale.



“For five hours.”

“At half-past three in the night?”

“In the morning.”

“And what brings you here at dead of dark?”

“The lilies and the dawn.”

“Indeed! And whom do you expect to find?”

“You and Miss Helen.”

“Well, summer and freedom are here; I am ready for all fates, all deeds of valor, vigils among the rest. We will await you at half-past three in the morning. Helen, we must sleep at high-pressure, soundly, crowding all we can on the square inch of time. *Au revoir.*”



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A shadow stood on the piazza, in the semi-darkness, at the appointed hour; two other shadows flitted forward to meet it, and silently down the bank, into the boat, and out upon the lonely glimmering reaches of the water. Nobody spoke; the midnight capture of no fort was ever effected with more phantom-like noiselessness than now went to surprise the Vestals of the Lake; only as two hands touched for an instant, a strange thrill, like fire, quivered through each and tore them apart more swiftly than two winds might cross each other's course. Helen Heath was drowsy and half-nodding in the bow, nodding with the more ease that it was still so dark and that Mr. Raleigh's back was toward her. Mrs. Laudersdale reclined in the stern. Mr. Raleigh once in a while sent them far along with a strong stroke, then only an occasional plash broke the charm of perfect stillness. Ever and anon they passed under the lee of some island, and the heavy air grew full of idle night-sweetness; the waning moon with all its sad and alien power hung low,—dun, malign, and distant, a coppery blotch on the rich darkness of heaven. They floated slowly, still; now and then she dipped a hand into the cool current; now and then he drew in his oars, and, bending forward, dipped his hand with hers. The stars retreated in a pallid veil that dimmed their beams, faint lights streamed up the sky,—the dark yet clear and delicious. They paused motionless in the shelter of a steep rock; over them a wild vine hung and swayed its long wreaths in the water, a sweet-brier starred with fragrant sleeping buds climbed and twisted, and tufts of ribbon-grass fell forward and streamed in the indolent ripple; beneath them the lake, lucid as some dark crystal, sheeted with olive transparence a bottom of yellow sand; here a bream poised on slowly waving fins, as if dreaming of motion, or a perch flashed its red fin from one hollow to another. The shadow lifted a degree, the eye penetrated to farther regions; a bird piped warily, then freely, a second and a third answered, a fourth took up the tale, blue-jay and thrush, catbird and bobolink; wings began to dart about them, the world to rustle overhead, near and far the dark prime grew instinct with sound, the shores and heavens blew out gales of melody, the air broke up in music. He lifted his oars silently; she caught the sweet-brier, and, lightly shaking it, a rain of dew-drops dashed with deepest perfume sprinkled them; they moved on. A thin mist breathed from the lake, steamed round the boat, and lay like a white coverlet upon the water; a light wind sprang up and blew it in long rags and ribbons, lifted, and torn, and streaming, out of sight. All the air was pearly, the sky opaline, the water now crisply emblazoned with a dark and splendid jewelry,—the paved-work of a sapphire; a rosy fleece sailed across their heads, some furnace glowed in the east behind the trees, long beams fell resplendently through and lay beside vast shadows, the giant firs stood black and intense against

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a red and risen sun; they trailed with one oar through a pad of buds all-unaware of change, stole from the overhanging thickets through a high-walled pass, where, on the open lake, the broad, silent, yellow light crept from bloom to bloom and awoke them with a touch. How perfectly they put off sleep! with what a queenly calm displayed their spotless snow, their priceless gold, and shed abroad their matchless scent! He twined his finger round a slippery serpent-stem, turned the crimson underside of the floating pavilion, and brought up a waxen wonder from its throne to hang like a star in the black braids on her temple. An hour's harvesting among the nymphs, in this rich atmosphere of another world, and with a loaded boat they turned to shore again.

“Smothered in sweets!” exclaimed Mr. Raleigh, as he sprang out, and woke Helen Heath, where, slipped down upon the floor of the boat, her head fallen on her arms, she had lain half-asleep. They were the first words spoken during the morning, and in such situations silence is dangerous.

When the rest of the family descended to breakfast, they found the pictures framed in wreaths of lilies, great floats of them in hall and parlor, and the table laden with flat dishes where with coiled stems they crowded, a white, magnificent throng. Mr. Raleigh still lingered, and, while Mrs. Laudersdale and Helen renewed their toilets, had busied himself in weaving a crown of these and another of poppy-leaves, hanging the one on Mrs. Laudersdale's head, as she entered refreshed, snowy, and fragrant herself, and the sleep-giving things on Helen's,—the latter avenging herself by surveying her companion's adornment, and, as she adjusted the bloom-gray leaves of her own, inquiring if olives grew pickled.

Nothing could be more airy and blithe than were Mrs. Laudersdale's spirits all that morning,—bubbles dancing on a brook, nor foam-sparkle of rosy Champagne. She related their adventures with graphic swiftness, and improvised dangers and escapes with such a reckless disregard of truth that Mr. Raleigh was forced to come to the rescue with more startling improbabilities than they would have encountered in the Enchanted Forest.

The red dawn brought its rain, and before they rose from table the sunshine withdrew and large drops began to patter in good earnest. Mr. Raleigh, who had generally suffered others to entertain him, now, as Mrs. McLean ushered the whole company into the sewing-room, seemed spurred by gayety and brilliance, and to bring into employ all those secrets through which he had ever annihilated time. For a while devoting himself to the elder dames, he won the heart of one by a laborious invention of a million varicolored angles to a square barley-corn of worsted—work, involved Mrs. McLean's crocheting in an inextricable labyrinth as he endeavored to afford her some requisite conchological assistance, and turned with three strokes a very absurd drawing of Mrs. Laudersdale's into a splendid



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caricature. Having made himself thus generally useful, he now proceeded to make himself generally agreeable; went with all necessary gravity through a series of complicate dancing-steps with Miss Heath; begged Miss Purcell, who was longing to cry over her novel, to allow him to read for her, since he saw that she was trying her eyes, and therewith made *fiasco* of a page of delicious dolor; and being challenged to chess by a third, declared that was child's play, and dominoes was the game for science,—whereon, having seated a circle at that absorbing sport, he deserted for a meerschaum and the gentlemen, and in company with Captain Purcell, Mr. McLean, and the rest, rolled up from the hall below wreaths of smoke, bursts of laughter, and finally chimes of those concordant voices with which gentlemen talk politics, and, even when agreeing infamously, become vociferant and high-colored.

It was after lunch that Mrs. Laudersdale, having grown weary of the needle-women's thread of discourse, left the sewing-room and proceeded toward her own apartment. Just as she crossed the head of the staircase, the hall-door was flung open, admitting a gleeful blast of the boisterous gale, and an object that, puffing and blowing like a sad-hued dolphin, and shaking like a Newfoundland, appeared at first to be the famous South-West Wind, Esq., in proper person,—whose once sumptuous array clung to his form, and whose face and hands, shining as coal, rolled off the rain like a bronze.

“Bless my heart, Capua!” cried Mr. Raleigh, removing the stem from his lips; “how came you here?”

“Lors, Massa, it's only me,” said Capua.

“So I see,” replied his master, restoring the pipe to its former position. “How did you come?”

“‘Bout swimmied, I 'spect,” answered Capua, grounding a chuckle on a reef of ivory.

“‘Ta'n't no fish-story, dat!”

“Well, what brings you?”

“Naughty Nan,—she hadn't been out”—

“Do you mean to say, you rascal! that you've taken Nan out on such a day? and round the lake, too, I'll warrant?” asked Mr. Raleigh, with some excitement.

“Jes' dat; an' round de lake, ob course; we couldn' come acrost.”

“You've ruined her, then”-----



“Bress you, Massa, she won’t ketch no cold,—she! Smokes like a beaver now; came like streak o’ lightnin’.”

“You may as well swim her back,—and where we can all see the sport, too.”

“But”

“No buts about it, Capua,” insisted his master, with mock gravity, the stem between his teeth.

“Spect I’d better rub her down, now I’s here, an’ wait’ll it holds up a bit, Mass’ Roger?” urged Capua, coaxingly.

“Do as you’re bid!” ejaculated his master; which, evidently, from long habit, meant, Do as you please.

Mrs. Laudersdale and Helen Heath had crept down the stairs during this dialogue, and now stood interested spectators of the scene. Mrs. McLean came running down behind them.



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“Forgotten me, Capua?” said she.

“Lors, Miss Kate!” he replied, scraping his foot and pulling off his hat,—“Cap never f’gets his friends, though you’ve growed. How d’ye do, Miss Kate?”

“Nicely, thank you. And how’s your wife?”

“My wife? Well, she’s ’bout beat out. Massa Roger ’n’ I, we buried her; finer funeral dan Massa Roger’s own mother, Miss Kate, dat was!”

“Poor fellow! I’m so sorry!” began Mrs. McLean, consolingly.

“Well, Miss Kate, you know some folks is easier spared ’n others. Some tongues sharper ’n others. Alwes liked to gib a hot temper time to cool, ’s Massa says.”

“And how do *you* do, Capua?”

“Pretty well, Miss Kate; leastways, I’s well enough,—a’n’t so pretty.”

“*What* is his name?” whispered Helen.

“Annible, Missis,” said the attentive Capua, whose eyes had been for some time oscillating with indecision between Helen Heath and Mrs. Laudersdale. “Hannibal Raleigh’s my name; though Massa alwes call me Cap,” he added, insinuatingly,—which, by the way, “Massa” never had been known to do.

“And are you always going to stay and take care of Master Roger?”

“Spect I shall. Lors, Miss Kate, he’s more bother to me ’n all my work,—dat boy!”

“That will do, Capua,” said his master; “you may go.” And therewith Capua scuffled away.

“Well, Roger, what does this mean?” asked Mrs. McLean, as the door closed.

“It means that Capua, having been dying of curiosity, has resolved to die game, and therefore takes matters into his own hands, and arrives to inspect my conduct and my company.”

“Ah, I see. He trembles for his sceptre.”

“Miss Heath,” said Mr. McLean, rallyingly, “you received a great many of the sable shafts.”

“A Saint Sebastiana,” said his wife.



“Did Saint Sebastian die of his wounds?” asked Helen.

“Let me tell you, Miss Helen,” said Mr. Raleigh, “that Capua is a connoisseur, and his *dictum* is worth all flatteries. If he had only been with us this morning!”

“You have teased me so much about that, Mr. Raleigh, that I have half a mind never to go with you on another expedition.”

“Make no rash vows. I was just thinking what fine company you would be when trouting. The most enchanting quiet is required then, you are aware.”

“Oh! when shall we go trouting?”

“We? It was only half a mind, then! We will go to-morrow, wind and weather agreeing.”

“And what must I do?”

“You must keep still, stand in the shadow, and fish up-stream.”

At this point, Capua put his head inside the door again.

“What is it?” asked Mr. Raleigh.

“Forgot to say, Massa,” replied Capua, rolling his eyes fearfully, and still hesitating, and half-closing the door, and then looking back.

“Well, Capua?”



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“Mass’ Raleigh, your house done been burned up!” said Capua, at last, jerking back his head, as if afraid of losing it.

“Ah? And what did you do with”——

“Oh, eberyting safe an’ sound. ’Ta’n’t dat house; ’ta’n’t dis yer house Massa lib in;— Massa’s sparrer-house. Reckoned I’d better come and ’form him.”

“Is that all?” asked his master, who was accustomed to Capua’s method of breaking ill news.

“Now, Mass’ Roger, don’t you go to being pervoked an’ flyin’ into one ob dese yer tempers! It’s all distinguished now. Ole Cap didn’ want to shock his young massa, so thought ’twarn’t de wisest way to tell him ’twarn’t de sparrer-house, either, at first. ’Twas de inside ob de libery, if he must know de troof; wet an’ smutty dar now, mebbe, but no fire.”

“Why not? What made the fire go out?” asked Mr. Raleigh, composedly.

“Well, two reasons,” replied Capua, rolling a glance over the company;—“one was dis chile’s exertions; an’ t’other fact, on account ob wich de flames was checked, was because dere warn’t no more to burn. Hi!”

“Capua, take Nan, and don’t let me see your face again, till I send for it!” said his master, now slightly irate.

“Massa’s nigger alwes mind him,” was the dutiful response.

Mrs. Laudersdale’s handkerchief fell at that moment from the hand that hung over the balustrade. Capua darted to restore it.

“Bress her pretty eyes!” said he. “Ole Cap see’s fur into a millstone as any one!” and vanished through the doorway.

“I beg your pardon,” said Mr. Raleigh, turning to Mrs. Laudersdale. “He has refused to leave me, and I must indulge him too much, and my sins fall on the head of the nearest passer. He appears to have a constitutional inability to comprehend this absence of punishment. His immunity is so painful to him that I sometimes fancy him to be homesick for a lashing. Now if I do not hasten home, Kate, I shall find a conflagration of the whole house there before me.”

And making quick adieux,—while Mrs. Laudersdale jested about tempting the raging waters, and the dinner-bell was ringing, and Helen singing, “Come o’er the stream, Charlie, and dine wi’ McLean,”—he opened the door, suffered a patch of blue sky to be seen, and the segment of an afternoon rainbow, shut it, and was gone.



Early again the next morning, Mr. Raleigh sought the Bawn, followed this time by Capua, who was determined not to lose any ground once made, and who now carried the rods, bait, and other paraphernalia.

“Powerful pretty woman, dat, Massa!” said he, as through the open doors a voice was heard gayly exclaiming and answering.

“Which one, Capua?” asked his master.

“A’n’t no t’orrer,” was his reply; “leastwise, a’n’t no ’count,—good for nott’n. Now she,—pity she a’n’t single, Massa,—should say she’d lived where sun was plenty and had laid up heaps in her heart.”

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Here Mrs. Laudersdale came out, and shortly afterward Helen and three or four others. In reply to their questions, Mr. Raleigh stated that the preceding day's disaster had been occasioned by a meerschaum, and had merely charred a table with its superficies of papers and pamphlets, which Capua had chosen to magnify for his own purposes; and the assemblage immediately turned its course inland and toward the brooks. The two who led soon distanced the rest, Capua trudging respectfully behind and keeping them in sight. Here, as they brushed along through the woods, they delayed in order to examine a partridge's nest, to tree a squirrel, to gather some strange wild-flower opening at their approach. Here on the banks they watched the bitterns rise and sail heavily away, and finally in silence commenced the genuine sport.

"Nonsense!" said Helen Heath, meaningly, as Mrs. Laudersdale, when the others joined them, displayed her first capture. "Is that all you've caught?"

Mrs. Laudersdale drew in another for reply.

"How absurd!" said Helen. "Here a month ago you were the dearest and most helpless of mortals, and now you are doing everything!"

The other opened her eyes a moment, and then laughed.

"Hush!" said she.

"Shs! shs!" echoed Capua, making an infinite hubbub himself.

Silence accordingly reigned and produced a string fit for the Sultan's kitchen,—of all the number, Mrs. Laudersdale adding by far the majority,—possibly because her shining prey found destination in the same basket with Mr. Raleigh's,—possibly because, as Helen had intimated, a sudden deftness had bewitched her fingers, so that neither dropping rod nor tangling reel detained her for an instant.

"Our lines have fallen in pleasant places," said Helen, as they took at last their homeward path; "and what a shame! not an adventure yet!"

Mrs. McLean hung on Mr. Raleigh's arm as they went,—for she had taken a whim and feared to see her cousin in the fangs of a coquette; by which means Helen became the companion of Captain Purcell and his daughter, and Mrs. Laudersdale kept lightly in advance, leading a gambol with the greyhound that Capua had added to the party, and presenting in one person, as she went springing from knoll to knoll along the bank, now in sunshine, now in shade, lifting the green boughs or sweeping them aside, a succession of the vivid figures of some antique and processional frieze. Suddenly, with a quick cry, she disappeared, and Helen had her adventure. Mr. Raleigh darted forward, while the hound came frisking back; yet, when he found her fainting in the hollow, stood with stolid immobility until Capua snatched her up and carried her along in



his arms, leaving his master to reflect how many times such swarthy servitors might have borne her, as a child, through her island groves. And thus the party, somewhat sobered, resumed their march again. But in the discovery that he had

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not dared to lift her in his arms, he who took such liberties with every one,—that, lying under her semblance of death, she had inspired him with a certain awe, that he had suddenly found this woman to be an object somewhat sacred,—in this discovery Mr. Raleigh learned not a little. And it would not, perhaps, be an untrue surmise that he found therein as much of pain as of any other emotion; since all the experiences and passions of life must share the phenomena of the great fact itself whose pulse beats through them; and if to love unawares be to dwell like a child in the region of thoughtless and innocent bliss, in attaining manhood all the sadness which is to be eliminated from life becomes apparent, and bliss henceforth must be sought and earned. From that day, then, Mr. Raleigh with difficulty retained his former habits, prevented any eagerness of manner, maintained a cautious vigilance, and in so doing he again became aware that the easy *insouciance* with which he addressed all other women had long been lost toward Mrs. Laudersdale, or, if yet existing, had become like the light and tender play of any lingering summer-wind in the tress upon her brow.

Mrs. Laudersdale's ankle having been injured by her fall, and Mrs. McLean having taken a cold, the two invalids now became during a week and a day the auditory for all quips and pranks that Miss Heath and Mr. Raleigh could devise. And on the event of their convalescence, the Lord of Misrule himself seemed to have ordained the course of affairs, with a swarming crew of all the imps and mischiefs ever hatched. Mr. Raleigh and Capua went and came with boat-loads of gorgeous stuff from across the lake, a little old man appeared on the spot in answer to a flight of telegrams, machinery and scenery rose like exhalations, music was brought from the city, all the availables of the family were to be found in garden, closet, house-top, conning hieroglyphical pages, and the whole chaotic confusion takes final shape and resolves into a little Spanish Masque, to which kings and queens have once listened in courtly state, and which now unrolls its resplendent pageant before the eyes of Mrs. Laudersdale, translating her, as it were, into another planet, where familiar faces in pompous entablature look out upon her from a whirl of light and color, and familiar voices utter stately sentences in some honeyed unknown tongue. And finally, when the glittering parade finishes, and the strange groups, in their costly raiment, throng out for dancing, she herself gives her hand to some Prince of the pageantry, who does her homage, and, sealing the fact of her restoration, swims once round the room in a mist of harmony, and afterward sits by his side, captive to his will, and subject to his enchantment, while

“All night had the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon,
All night had the casement jessamine stirred
With the dancers dancing in tune,
Till a silence fell with the waking bird
And a hush with the setting moon.”



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This little episode of illness and recovery having been thus duly celebrated, the masqueraders again forswore roofs and spent long days in distant junketing throughout the woods; the horses, too, were brought into requisition, and a flock of boats kept forever on the wing. And meanwhile, as Helen Heath said,—she then least of all comprehending the real drama of that summer,—Mrs. Laudersdale had taught them how the Greek animated his statue.

“And how was that?” asked Mr. Raleigh.

“He took it out-doors, I fancy, and called the winds to curl about it. He set its feet in morning-dew, he let in light and shade through green dancing leaves above it, he gave it glimpses of moon and star, he taught the forest-birds to chirp and whistle in its ear, and finally he steeped it in sunshine.”

“Sunshine, then, was the vivifying stroke?”

Helen nodded.

“You are mistaken,” said he; “the man never found a soul in his work till he put his own there first.”

“I always wonder,” remarked Mrs. Laudersdale here, “that every artist, in brooding over his marble, adding, touching, bringing out effects, does not end by loving it,—absorbingly, because so beautiful to him,—despairingly, because to him forever silent.”

“You needn’t wonder anything about it,” said Helen, mischievously. “All that you have to do is to make the most of your sunshine.”

Mr. McLean, struck with some sudden thought, inspected the three as they stood in a blaze of the midsummer noon, then crossed over to his little wife, drew her arm in his, and held it with cautious imprisonment. The other wife did as she was bidden, and made the most of her sunshine.

If, on first acquaintance, Mrs. Laudersdale had fascinated by her repose, her tropical languor, her latent fire, the charm was none the less, when, turning, it became one dazzle of animation, of careless freedom, of swift and easy grace. Nor, unfamiliar as were such traits, did they seem at all foreign to her, but rather, when once donned, never to have been absent; as if, indeed, she had always been this royal creature, this woman bright and winning as some warm, rich summer’s day. The fire that sleeps in marble never flashes and informs the whole mass so fully; if a pearl—lazy growth and accretion of amorphous life—should fuse and form again in sparkling crystals, the miracle would be less. And with what complete unconsciousness had she stepped from passive to positive existence, and found this new state to be as sweet and strange as any child has found it! Long a wife, she had known, nevertheless, nothing but quiet



custom or indifference, and had dreamed of love only as the dark and silent side of the moon might dream of light. Now she grew and unfolded in the warmth of this season, like a blossom perfumed and splendid. Sunbeams seemed to lance themselves out of heaven and splinter about her. She queened it over demesnes of sprite-like



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revelry; the life they led was sylvan; at their *fetes* the sun assisted. The summer held to her lips a glass whose rosy effervescence, whose fleeting foam, whose tingling spirit exhaled a subtle madness of joy,—a draught whose lees were despair. So nearly had she been destitute of emotion hitherto that she had scarcely a right to be classed with humanity; now, indeed, she would win that right. Not only her character, but her beauty, became another thing under all this largess; one remembered the very Persian rose, in looking at her, and thought of gardens amid whose clouds of rich perfume the nightingales sang all night long; her manner, too, became strangely gracious, and a sweetness lingered after her presence, delicate and fine as the drop of honey in some flower's nectary. So she woke from her icy trance; but, alas! what had wakened her?

The summer was passing. Every day the garden-scenes of Watteau became vivid and real; every evening Venice was made possible, when shadowy barks slipped down dusk tides, freighted with song and laughter, and snatches of guitar-tinkling; and when some sudden torch, that for an instant had summoned with its red fire all fierce lights and strong glooms, dipped, hissed, and quenched below, and, a fantastic flotilla, they passed on into the broad brilliance of a rising moon, all Middle-Age mythology rose and wafted them back into the obscurity. It was a life too fine for every day, fare too rich for health; they must be exotics who did not wither in such hot-house air. It was rapidly becoming unnatural. They performed in the daylight stray clarified bits from Fletcher or Moliere, drama of an era over-ripe; they sang only from an old book of madrigals; their very reading was fragmentary,—now an emasculated Boccaccio, then a curdling phantasm of Poe's, and after some such scenic horror as the "Red Death" Helen Heath dashed off the Pesther Waltzes.

If, finally, on one of the last August-nights, we had passed, Asmodeus-like, over the roofs, looking down, we should have seen three things. First, that Mrs. Laudersdale slept like any innocent dreamer, and, wrapped with white moonlight, in her long and flowing outline, in her imperceptible breath, resembling some perfect statue that we fancy to be instinct with suspended life. Next, that Mr. Raleigh did not sleep at all, but absorbed himself, to the entire disturbance of Capua's slumbers, in the rapture of reproducing as he could the turbulent passion and joy of souls larger than his own. And, lastly, that Mrs. McLean woke with visions of burglars before her eyes, to find her pillow deserted and her husband sitting at a writing-table.

"How startled I was!" she exclaimed. "What are you doing, dear?"

"Writing to Laudersdale," he said, in reply.

"Why, what for?—what can you be writing to him for?"

"I think it best he should come and take his wife off my hands."

“How absurd! how contemptible! how all you husbands band together like a parcel of slaveholders, and hunt down each other’s runaways!”



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Mr. McLean laughed.

“Now, John, you’re not making mischief?”

“No, child, I am preventing it.” And therewith the worthy man, dropping the wax on the envelope, imprinted it with a Scotch crest, and put out the light “That’s off my mind!” said he.

At last September came; a few more weeks, and they would separate, perhaps, to the four corners of the earth. Mr. Raleigh arrived one afternoon at the Bawn, and finding no one to welcome him,—that is to say, Mrs. Laudersdale had gone out, and Helen Heath was invisible,—he betook himself to a solitary stroll, and, by a short cut through the woods, to the highway, and just before emerging from the green shadows he met Mrs. Laudersdale.

“Whither now, Wandering Willie?” said she; for, singularly enough, they seemed to avoid speaking each other’s name in direct address, using always some title suggested by their reading or singing, or some sportive impromptu.

“I am going to take the road.”

“Like a gallant highwayman?” And without more ado, and naturally enough, she accompanied him.

The conversation, this afternoon, was sufficiently insignificant; indeed, Mrs. Laudersdale always affected you more by her silence than her speech, by what she was rather than by what she said; and it is only the impression produced on her by this walk with which we have any concern.

The road, narrow and winding in high banks fringed with golden-rod and purple asters, was at first completely shadowed,—an old, deep-rutted, cross country road, birch-trees shivering at either side, and every now and then a puff of pine-breath drifting in between. After a time it rose gradually into the turnpike, and became a long, dusty track, stretching as far as the eye could see, a straight, dazzling line, burnt white by summer-heats, powdered by travel. There was no wind stirring; the sky was lost in a hot film stained here and there with sulphurous wreaths; the distant fields, skirted by low hills, were bathed in an azure mist; nearer, a veil of dun and dimmer smoke from burning brush hung motionless; around their feet the dust whirled and fell again. Bathed in soft, voluptuous tints, hazed and mellowed, into what weird, strange country were they hastening? What visionary land of delight, replete with perfume and luxury, lay ever beyond?—what region rich, unknown, forbidden, whose rank vegetation steamed with such insidious poison? And on what arid, barren road, what weary road, —but, alas, long worn and beaten by the feet of other wayfarers! a road that ran real and strong through this noxious and seducing mirage!



A sudden blast of wind lifted a cloud of dust from before them and twisted it down among the meadows; the sun thrust aside his shroud and burnt for an instant on a scarlet maple-bough that hung in premature brilliance across the way. The hasty color, true and fine, was like a spell against enchantment; it was the drop that tested the virtue of this chemistry and proved it naught.



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Mrs. Laudersdale looked askance at her companion, then turned and met his gaze. Slowly her lashes fell, the earth seemed to fail beneath her feet, the light to swoon from her eyes, her lips shook, and a full flush swept branding and burning up throat and face, stinging her very forehead, and shooting down her fingertips. In an instant it had faded, and she shone the pallid, splendid thing she was before. In that instant, for the first time this summer, she comprehended that her husband's existence imported anything to her. Behind the maple-tree, the wood began again; without a syllable, she stepped aside, suffered him to pass, and hastened to bury herself in its recesses.

What lover ever accounted for his mistress's caprices? Mr. Raleigh proceeded on his walk alone. And what was her husband to him? He did not know that such a man existed. For him there had been no deadly allurements in the fervid scene; it had stretched a land of promise veiled in its azure ardors, with intimations of rapture and certainty of rest. Now, as he wandered on and turned down another lane to the woods, the tints grew deeper; his eyes, bent inward, saw all the world in the color of his thought; he would have affirmed that the bare brown banks were lined in deep-toned indigo flower-bells whose fragrance rose visible above them or curled from stem to stem, and that the hollows in which the path hid itself at last were of the same soft gloom. But, finally, when not far distant from the Bawn again, he shook off his reverie and struck another path that he might avoid rencontre. Perhaps the very sound that awoke him was the one he wished to shun; at the next step it became more distinct,—a child's voice singing some tuneless song; and directly a tiny apparition appeared before him, as if it had taken shape, with its wide, light eyes and corn-silk hair, from the most wan and watery of sunbeams. But what had a child to do in this paradise, thought he, and from whence did it come? Impossible to imagine. Her garments, of rich material, hung freshly torn, it may be, but in shreds; her skin, if that of some fair and delicate nursling, was stained with berries and smeared with soil; she seemed to have no destination; and after surveying him a moment, she mounted a fallen tree, and, bending and swinging forward over a bough, still surveyed him.

"Ah, ha!" said Mr. Roger Raleigh; "what have we here?"

The child still looked in his face, but vouchsafed, in her swinging, no reply.

"What is the little lady's name?" he asked then.

This query, apparently more comprehensible, elicited a response. She informed him that her name was "Dymom, Pink, and Beauty."

"Indeed! And anything else?"

"Rose Pose," she added, as if soliciting the aid of memory by lifting her hands near her temples.



“Is that all?”

“Little silly Daffodilly.”

“No more?”

“Rite.”



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“Rite,—ah, that is it! Rite what?”

“Rite!” said the child, authoritatively, bringing down her foot and shaking back her hair.

“And how old is Rite?”

“One, two, four, twenty. Maman is twenty;—Rite is twenty, too.”

“When was Rite four?”

“A great while ago. She went to heaven in the afternoon,” was added, confidentially, after a moment’s inspection to see if he were worthy.

“Ah! And what was there there?”

“Pitchtures, and music, and peoples, and a great house.”

“And where is Rite going now?”

“Going away in a ship.”

“Rite will have to wash her face first.”

But at this proposition the child flashed open her pale-blue orbs, half-closed them as a sleepy cat does, and, with no other change of countenance to mark her indignation, appeared to shut him out from her contemplation. Directly afterward, she opened them again, bent forward and back over the swinging, and recommenced her song, as if there were not another person than herself within a hundred miles. Half-hidden in the great hemlock-bough, this tiny, fantastic creature, so fair, so supercilious, seemed in her waywardness a veritable fay, mate for any of the little men in green, bibbers of dewdrops, lodgers in bean-blossoms, Green-Jacket, Red-Cap, and White-Owl’s-Feather.

Mr. Raleigh hesitated whether or not he should remain and watch her fade away into the twilight, wondered if she were bewitching him, then rubbed his hand across his eyes and said, in a disenchanted, matter-of-fact manner,—

“Do you know your way home, child?” and obtained, of course, no reply. For an instant he had half the mind to leave her to find it; but at once convicted of his absurdity, “Then I shall take you with me,” he said, making a step toward her,—“because you are, or will be, lost.”

At the motion, she darted past and stood defiantly just out of his reach. Mr. Raleigh attempted to seize her, but he might as easily have put his hand on a butterfly; she eluded him always when within his grasp, and led him such a dance up and down the



forest-path as none other than a will-o'-the-wisp, it seemed, could have woven. All at once a dark figure glided out from another alley and snatched the sprite into its arms. It was a colored nurse, who poured out a torrent of broken French and English over the runaway, and made her acknowledgments to Mr. Raleigh in the same jargon. As she turned to go, the child stretched her arms toward her late pursuer, making the nurse pause, and, putting up her little lips, touched with them his own; then, picturesque as ever, and thrown into relief by the scarlet sack, snowy turban, and sable skin of her bearer, she disappeared. It is doubtful if in all his life Mr. Raleigh would ever receive a purer, sweeter kiss.



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He had promised to be at the Bawn that evening, and now accordingly sought the shore, where the Arrow lay, and was soon within the shelter of his own house. The arrangement of toilet was a brief matter; and that concluded, Mr. Raleigh entered his library, an apartment now slightly in disarray, and therefore, perhaps, not uncongenial with his present mood. After strolling round the place, Mr. Raleigh paused at the window an instant, the window overhung with clematis, and commanding the long stretch of water between him and the Bawn, which last was, however, too distant for any movement to be discerned there. Soon Mr. Raleigh turned his back upon the scene that lay pictured in such beauty below, and, throwing himself into a deep armchair, remained motionless and plunged in thought for many moments. Rising at last, he took from the table a package of letters from India that had arrived in his absence. Glancing absently at the superscriptions, breaking the seal of one, he replaced them: it would take too long to read them now; they must wait. Then Mr. Raleigh had recourse to a universal panacea, and walked to and fro across the room, with measured, unvarying steps, till the striking clock warned him that time was passing. Mr. Raleigh drew near his desk again, took up the pen, and hesitated; then recalling his gaze that had seemed to search his own inmost soul, he drew the paper nearer and wrote.

What he wrote, the very words, may not signify; with the theme one is sufficiently acquainted. Perhaps he poured out there all that had so often trembled on his lips without finding utterance; perhaps, if ever passionate heart flashed its own fire into its implements, this pen and paper quivered beneath the current throbbing through them. The page was brief, but therein all was said. Sealing it hastily, he summoned Capua.

“Capua,” said he, giving him the note, “you are to go with me across the lake now. We shall return somewhere between eleven and twelve. Just as we leave, you are to give this note to Mrs. Laudersdale. Do you understand?”

“Yah, Massa, let dis chile alone,” responded Capua, grinning at the prospect of society, and speedily following his master.

The breeze had fallen, so that they rowed the whole distance, with the idle sail hanging loosely, and arrived only just as the red sunset painted the lake behind them with blushing shadows. Mr. Raleigh joined Helen Heath and his cousin in the hall; Capua, superb with the importance of his commission, sought another entrance. But just as the latter individual had crossed the threshold, he encountered the nurse whom his master had previously met in the wood. Nothing could have been more acceptable in his eyes than this addition to the circle below-stairs. Capua’s hat was in his hand at once, and bows and curtsies and articulations and gesticulations followed with such confusing rapidity, that, when the mutually pleased pair turned in company toward the kitchens, a scrap of white paper, that had fluttered down in the disorder, was suffered to remain unnoticed on the floor. The courier had lost his despatch. Coming in from her walk, not five minutes later, Mrs. Laudersdale’s eye was caught thereby; stooping to take it, she read with surprise her own name thereon, and ascended the stairs possessed thereof.



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What burden of bliss, what secret of sorrow, lay infolded there, that at the first thought she covered it with sudden kisses, and the next, crushing it against her heart, burst into a wild weeping? Again and again she read it, and at every word its intense magnetic strength thrilled her, rapt her from remembrance, conquered her. She seized a pencil and wrote hurriedly:—

“You are right. With you I live, without you I die. You shut heaven out from me; make earth, then, heaven. Come to me, for I love you. Yes, I love you.”

She did not stay to observe the contrast between her fervent sentences and the weak, faint characters that expressed them, but hastily sought the servant who was accustomed to act as postman, gave him directions to acquaint her of its reception, and watched him out of sight. All that in the swiftness of a fever-fit. Scarcely had the boat vanished when old thoughts rushed over her again and she would have given her life to recall it. Returning, she found Capua eagerly searching for the lost letter, and thus learned that she was not to have received it until several hours later.

Perhaps no other woman in her situation could have done what Mrs. Laudersdale had done, without incurring more guilt. There could be few who had been reared in such isolation as she,—whose intellect, naturally subject to her affection, had become more so through the absence of systematic education,—whose morality had been allowed to be merely one of instinct,—to whom introspection had been till now a thing unknown,—and who, accepting a husband as another child accepts a parent, had, in the whirl of gay life where she afterward reigned, found so little time for thought, and remained in such mental unsophistication as to experience now her first passion.

As Mrs. Laudersdale entered her room again, the opposite door opened and admitted that individual the selfishness of whose marriage was but half expiated when he found himself on the surplus side of the world.

In the mean while, Mr. Raleigh was gayly passing the time with Helen Heath. There were to be some guests from the town that evening, and they were the topic of her discourse.

“I wonder if we are never to have tea,” said she at last, looking at her watch.

“I didn’t know you were attached to the custom,” said he, indifferently, as he had said everything else, while intently listening for a footstep.

“Ah! but I like to see other folks take their bitters.”

“Do not even the publicans the same?”

“You will become a proficient chemist, converting the substance of my remarks to airy nothings through your gospel-retorts.”



“Oh, I understand your optics as well. You like to see other folks; taking the bitters is another thing. The tea-bell is a tocsin.”

“Pshaw! *You* don't care to see any one! But shall there be no more cakes and ale? Haven't you any sympathy for a sweet tooth?”



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“None at all.”

“Not even in Mrs. Laudersdale’s instance?”

“Mrs. Laudersdale has a sweet tooth, then?” Mr. Raleigh asked in return, as if there were any trivial thing concerning her in which he could yet be instructed.

“I’m not going to tell you anything about Mrs. Laudersdale.”

“There comes that desired object, the tea-tray. It’s not to be formal, then, to-night. That’s a blessing! What shall I bring you?” he continued,—“tea or cocoa?”

“Neither. You may have the tea, and I’ll leave the cocoa for Mrs. Laudersdale.”

“Mrs. Laudersdale drinks cocoa, then?”

“You may bring me some milk and macaroons.”

As Mr. Raleigh was about to obey, his little apparition of the wood suddenly appeared in the doorway, followed by her nurse,—having arisen from the discipline of bath and brush, fair and spotless as a snowflake. She flitted by him with a mocking recognition.

“Rite!” cried a voice from above, familiar, but with how strange a tone in it! “Little Rite!”

“Maman!” cried the sprite, and went dancing up the stairs.

Mr. Raleigh’s face, as he turned, darkened with a heavier flush than half a score of Indian summers branded upon it afterward.

“That is Mrs. Laudersdale’s little maid?” asked he, when, after a few moments, he brought the required salver.

“Yes,—would you ever suspect it?” Numberless as had been the times he had heard her speak of Rite, he never had suspected it, but had always at the name pictured some indifferent child, some baby-friend, or cousin by courtesy.

“She is not like her mother,” said he, coolly.

“The very antipodes,—all her father.—Bless me! What is this? A real Laudersdale mess,—custards and cheesecakes,—and I detest them both.”

“Blame my unfortunate memory. I thought I had certainly pleased you, Miss Helen.”

“When you forgot my orders? Well, never mind. Isn’t she exquisite?”



“Isn’t who exquisite? Oh, the little maid? Quite! Why hasn’t she been here all summer?”

“She was always a sickly, ailing thing, and has been at one of those rich Westchester farms where health and immortality are made. And now she is going away to Martinique, where her grandmother will take charge of her, bottle up those spirits, and make her a second edition of her mother. By the way, how that mother has effervesced this summer!” continued Helen, as the detested custard disappeared. “I wonder what made her. Do you suppose it was because her husband was away?”

At that instant Mrs. Laudersdale came sailing down the stairs.



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A week previously, when, to repay the civilities of their friends in the neighboring city, Mrs. McLean had made a little fancy-party, Helen, appearing as Champagne, all in rosy gauzes with a veiling foam of dropping silver lace, had begged Mrs. Laudersdale to give her prominence by dressing for Port; and accordingly that lady had arrayed herself in velvet, out of which her shoulders rose like snow, and whose rich duskiness made her perfect pallor more apparent, while its sumptuous body of color was sprinkled with glittering crystal drops and coruscations; and wreathing her forehead with crisp vine-leaves and tendrils, she had bunched together in intricate splendor all the amethysts, carbuncles, garnets, and rubies in the house, for grape-clusters at the ear, till she seemed, with her smile and her sunshine, the express and incarnate spirit of vintage. To-night, stripped of its sparkling drops, she wore the same dress, and in her hair a wreath of fresh white roses. Behind her descended a tall and stately gentleman. She swept forward. "Mr. Raleigh," she murmured, while her eyes diffused their gloom and fell, "let me introduce you to my husband!"

The blow had come previously. Mr. Raleigh bowed almost to the ground, without a word, then looked up and offered his hand. Mr. Laudersdale comprehended the whole matter at a heartbeat, and took it. Then they moved on toward other friends, whom, while waiting for knowledge of his wife's return from her walk, Mr. Laudersdale had not seen. Mr. Raleigh went in search of Capua, and ere long reappeared.

It grew quite dark; the candles were lighted. Rite slipped in, and, after having flown about like a thistle-down for a while, mounted a chair and put her arms about her mother's shoulders. Then Mr. Raleigh, sitting silently on a sofa, attracted her, and shortly afterward she had curled herself beside him and fallen asleep with her head upon his knee; otherwise he did not touch her. Mrs. Laudersdale stood by an open casement; the servant who had carried her note came up the lawn and spoke to her from without. There was no one in the house, and he had left it on the library-table. The pressure of those tender little arms was yet warm about the mother's neck; she glanced sidelong at the sleeping child. "He shall never see that note!" she murmured, and slipped through the casement.

Accustomed to all rash and intrepid adventure during this summer, it was nothing for her to unmoor a boat, enter it, and lift the oars, not pausing to observe that it was the Arrow. Just then, however, a little wind ruffled down and shook the sail, a wind not quite favorable, but in which she could tack across and back; she drew in the oars, put to the proof all her new boat-craft, and recklessly dashed through the dark element that curled and seethed about her. She had to make but two tacks in that hour's impetuous progress, before the house rose, as it had frequently done before, glooming at but a few rods' distance,



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and loading with odorous breath the air that tossed its vines ere stealing across the lake. She trembled now, and remembered that she alone of all the party had always unconsciously evaded entering Mr. Raleigh's house, had never seen the house nearer than now, and never been its guest. It was entering some dark, unknown place; it was to intrude on a sacred region. But the breeze hurried her along while she thought, and the next moment the keel was buried in the sand. There was no time to lose; she left the boat, ascended a flight of stone steps close at hand, and was in the garden. Low, ripe greenery was waving over her here, deep alluring shadows opening around, full fresh fragrance fanning idly to and fro and stealing her soul away. Beyond, the lake gleamed darkly, the water lapped gently, the wind sighed and fell like a fluttering breath. She would have lingered forever,—she dared not linger a moment. She brushed the dew from the heavy blossoms as she swept on, then the drenching branches swayed and closed behind her; she found a door ajar, and hastily entered the first room which appeared.

There were stray starbeams in this apartment; her eyes were accustomed to the gloom; she could dimly discern the great book-cases lining the wall,—an antique chair,—the glittering key-board of a grand-piano that stood apart, yet thrilling perhaps with recent harmonies,—a colossal head of Antinous, that self-involved dreamer, stone-entranced in a calm of passion. She had been feverishly agitated; but as this white silence dawned upon her, so strong, yet voluptuous, never sad, making in its masque of marble one intense moment eternal, some of the same power spread soothingly over her. She paused a moment to gather the thronging thoughts. How still the room was! she had not known that music was at his command before. How sweet the air that blew in at the window! what late flowers bore such pungent balm? That portrait leaning half-startled from the frame, was it his mother? These books, were they the very ones that had fed his youth? How everything was yet warm from his touch! how his presence yet lingered! how much of his life had passed into the dim beauty of the place! How each fresh waft from the blooms without came drowned in fine perfume, laden with delicious languor! What heaven was there! and, ah! what heaven was yet possible there!

Something that had flitted from the table in the draught, and had hovered here and there along the floor, now lay at her foot; she caught it absently; it was her letter. To snatch it from its envelope, and so tear it the more easily to atoms, was her first thought; but as suddenly she paused. Was it hers? Though written and sealed by her hand, had she any longer possession therein? Had she more authority over it than over any other letter that might be in the room? Absurd refinement of honor! She broke the seal. Yet stay! Was there no justice due to him? That letter which had been read long



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before the intended time, whose delivery any accident might have frustrated, whose writer might have recalled it, —did it demand no magnanimity of reply on her part? Had he now no claim to the truth from her? As she knew what he never would have told her an hour later, had she a right to recede from the position she had taken in response, simply because she could and he could not? Should she ignobly refuse him his right?

Whether this were a sophism of sin or the logic of highest virtue, she, who would have blotted out her writing with her heart's blood, did not wait to weigh.

“To him, also, I owe a duty!” she exclaimed, dropped the letter where she had found it, and fled,—fled, hurrying through all the bewildering garden-walks, down from the fragrance, the serenity, the bowery seclusion, from all this conspiring loveliness that tempted her to dally and commanded her to stay,—fled from this dream of passion, this region of joy,—fled forever, as she thought, out into the wide, chill, lonely night.

Pushing off the boat and springing in, once more the water curled beneath the parting prow, and she shot with her flashing sail and hissing wake heedlessly, like a phantom, past another boat that was making more slowly in to shore.

“This way, Helen,” murmurs a subdued voice. “There are some steps, Mr. Laudersdale. Here we are; but it's dark as Erebus. Give me your hand; I'm half afraid; after that spectre that walked the water just now, these shadows are not altogether agreeable. There's the door,—careful housekeeper, this Mr. Raleigh! I wonder what McLean would say. Don't believe he'd like it.”

“What made you come, then?” asks Helen, as they step within.

“Oh, just for the frolic; it was getting stupid, too. I suppose we've ruined our dresses. But there! we must hurry and get back. I didn't think it would take so long. He can't manage a boat so well as Roger,” adds Mrs. McLean, in a whisper.

“Goodness!” exclaims Helen. “I can't see an inch of the way. We shall certainly deal devastation.”

“I've been exploring a mantel-shelf; here's a candle, but how to light it? Haven't you a match, Mr. Laudersdale?”

That gentleman produces one from a little pocket-safe; it proves a failure,—and so a second, and a third.

“This is the last, Mrs. McLean. Have your candle ready.”

The little jet of flame flashes up.



“Quick, Helen! a scrap of paper, quick!”

“I don’t know where to find any. Here’s a billet on the floor; the seal’s broken; Mr. Raleigh don’t read his letters, you know; shall I take it?”

“Anything, yes! My fingers are burning! Quick, it’s the last match! There!”

Helen waves a tiny flambeau, the candle is lighted, the flame whirled down upon the hearth and trodden out.

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"I wonder what it was, though," adds Mrs. McLean, stooping over it. "Some of our correspondence. No matter, then. Now for that Indian mail. Here,—no,—this must be it. 'Mr. Roger Raleigh,'—'Roger Raleigh, Esq.,'—that's not it. 'Day, Knight, & Co., for Roger Raleigh.' Why, Mr. Laudersdale, that's your firm. Aren't you the Co. there? Ah, here it is, —'Mrs. Catherine McLean, care of Mr. Roger Raleigh.' Doesn't that look handsomely, Helen?" contemplating it with newly married satisfaction.

"Now you have it, come!" urges Helen.

"No, indeed! I must find that Turkish tobacco, to reward Mr. Laudersdale for his heroic exertions in our behalf."

Mr. Laudersdale, somewhat fastidious and given to rigid etiquette, looks as if the exertions would be best rewarded by haste. Mrs. McLean takes the candle in hand and proceeds on a tour of the apartment.

"There! isn't this the article? John says it's pitiful stuff, not to be compared with Virginia leaf. Look at this meerschaum, Mr. Laudersdale; there's an ensample. Prettily colored, is it not?"

"Now are you coming?" asks Helen.

"Would you? We've never been here without my worshipful cousin before; I should like to investigate his domestic arrangements. Needle and thread. Now what do you suppose he is doing with needle and thread? Oh, it's that little lacework that Mrs.—— Sketches! I wonder whom he's sketching. You, Helen? Me? Upside down, of course. No, it's——Yes, we may as well go. Come!"

And in the same breath Mrs. McLean blows out the candle and precedes them. Mr. Laudersdale scorns to secure the sketch; and holding back the boughs for Miss Heath, and assisting her down the steps, quietly follows.

Meantime, Mrs. Laudersdale has reached her point of departure again, has stolen up out of the white fog now gathering over the lake, slipped into her former place, and found all nearly as before. The candles had been taken away, so that light came merely from the hall and doorways. Some of the guests were in the brilliant dining-room, some in the back-parlor. Mr. Raleigh, while Fate was thus busying herself about him, still sat motionless, one hand upon the sofa's side, one on the back, little Rite still sleeping on his knee. Capua came and exchanged a few words with his master; then the colored nurse stepped through the groups, sought the child, and carried her away, head and arms hanging heavy with slumber. Still Mr. Raleigh did not move. Mrs. Laudersdale stood in the window, vivid and glowing. There were no others in the room.



“Where is Mrs. McLean?” asked Mary Purcell at the door, after the charade in which she had been engaged was concluded.

“Gone across the lake with Nell and Mr. Laudersdale for a letter,” replied Master Fred Heath, who had returned that afternoon from the counting-room, with his employer, and now sauntered by.

Mrs. Laudersdale started; she had not escaped too early; but then——Her heart was beating in her throat.



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“What letter?” asked Mrs. Heath, with amiable curiosity, as she joined them.

“Do you know what letter, Mr. Raleigh?”

“One from India, Madame,” was his response.

“Strange! Helen gone without permission! What was in the letter, I wonder. Do you know what was in the letter, Mr. Raleigh?”

“Congratulations, and a recommendation of Mrs. McLean’s cousin to her good graces,” he said.

“Oh, it was not Helen’s, then?”

“No.”

“My young gentleman’s not in good humor to-night,” whispered Mrs. Heath to Miss Purcell, with a significant nod, and moving off.

“How did you know what was in Mrs. McLean’s letter, Sir?” asked Mary Purcell.

“I conjectured. In Mrs. Heath’s place, I should have known.”

“There they come!—you can always tell Mrs. McLean’s laugh. You’ve lost all the charades, Helen!”

They came in, very gay, and seemed at once to arouse an airier and finer spirit among the humming clusters. Mr. Laudersdale did not join his wife, but sat on the piazza talking with Mr. McLean. People were looking at an herbal, others coquetting, others quiet. Some one mentioned music. Directly afterward, Mr. Raleigh rose and approached the piano. Every one turned. Taking his seat, he threw out a handful of rich chords; the instrument seemed to diffuse a purple cloud; then, buoyed over perfect accompaniment, the voice rose in that one love-song of the world. What depth of tenderness is there from which the “Adelaide” does not sound? What secret of tragedy, too? Singing, he throbbed through it a vitality as if the melody surcharged with beauty grew from his soul, and were his breath of life, indeed. The thrilling strain came to penetrate and fill one heart; the passionate despair surged round her; the silence following was like the hand that closes the eyes of the dead.

Mr. Raleigh did not rise, nor look up, as he finished.

“How melancholy!” said Helen Heath, breaking the hush.

“All music should be melancholy,” said he.



“How absurd, Roger!” said his cousin. “There is much music that is only intensely beautiful.”

“Intense beauty at its height always drops in pathos, or rather the soul does in following it,—since that is infinite, the soul finite.”

“Nonsense! There’s that song, Number Three in Book One”——

“I don’t remember it.”

“Well, there’s no pathos there! It’s just one trill of laughter and merriment, a sunbeam and effect. Play it, Helen.”

Helen went, and, extending her hands before Mr. Raleigh, played a couple of bars; he continued where she left it, as one might a dream, and, strangely enough, the little, gushing sparkle of joy became a phantom of itself, dissolving away in tears.

“Oh, of course,” said Mrs. McLean, “you can make mouths in a glass, if you please; but I, for one, detest melancholy! Don’t you, Mrs. Laudersdale?”



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Mrs. Laudersdale had shrunk into the shadow of the curtain. Perhaps she did not hear the question; for her reply, that did not come at once, was the fragment of a Provençal romance, sung,—and sung in a voice neither sweet nor rich, but of a certain personal force as potent as either, and a stifled strength of tone that made one tremble.

“We’re all alone, we’re all alone!
The moon and stars are dead and gone,
The night’s at deep, the winds asleep,
And thou and I are all alone!

“What care have we, though life there be?
Tumult and life are not for me!
Silence and sleep about us creep:
Tumult and life are not for thee!

“How late it is since such as this
Had topped the height of breathing bliss!
And now we keep an iron sleep,—
In that grave thou, and I in this!”

Her voice yet shivered through the room, he struck a chord of dead conclusion, the curtain stirred, she emerged from the gloom and was gone.

Mr. Raleigh rose and bade his cousin good-night. Mrs. McLean, however, took his arm and sauntered with him down the lawn.

“I thought Capua came with you,” she remarked.

“He returned in a spare wherry, some time since,” he replied; and thereon they made a few paces in silence.

“Roger,” said the little lady, taking breath preparatory to wasting it, “I thought Helen was a coquette. I’ve changed my mind. The fault is yours.”

He turned and looked down at her with some surprise.

“You know we haven’t much more time, and certainly”——

“Kate!”

“Yes,—don’t scold!—and if you are going to propose, I really think you ought to, or else”——

“You think I ought to marry Miss Heath?”



“Why—I—well——Oh, dear! I wish I had held my peace!”

“That might have been advisable.”

“Don’t be offended now, Roger!”

“Is there any reason to suppose her—to suppose me”——

“Yes, there!” replied Mrs. McLean, desperately.

He was silent a moment.

“Good God, Kate!” said he, then, clasping his hands behind his head, and looking up the deep transparence of the unanswering night. “What a blessing it is that life don’t last forever!”

“But it does, Roger,” she uttered under her breath,—terrified at his abrupt earnestness, and unwitting what storm she had aroused.

“The formula changes,” he replied, with his old air, and retracing their steps.

The guests were all gone. Helen Heath was eating an ice; he bent over her chair and said,—

“Good-night, Miss Helen!”

“Oh, good-night, Mr. Raleigh! You are going? Well, we’re all going soon. What a glorious summer it has been! Aren’t you sorry we must part?”

“Why must we part?” he asked in a lower tone. “Where is the necessity of our parting? Why won’t you stay forever, Helen?”



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She turned and surveyed him quickly, while a red—whether of joy or anger he could not tell—flashed up her cheek.

“Do you mean”——

“Miss Heath, I mean, will you marry me?”

“Mr. Raleigh, no!”

With a bow he passed on.

Mr. Raleigh trimmed the Arrow's sail, for the breeze had sunk again, and swept slowly out with one oar suspended. A waning moon was rising behind the trees, it fell upon the little quay that had been built that summer, and seemed with its hollow beams still to continue the structure upon the water. The Arrow floated in the shadow just beyond. Mr. Raleigh's eyes were on the quay; he paused, nerveless, both oars trailing, a cold damp starting on his forehead. Some one approached as if looking out upon the dim sheet,—some one who, deceived by the false light, did not know the end to be so near, and walked forward firmly and confidently. Indeed, the quay had been erected in Mr. Laudersdale's absence. The water was deep there, the bottom rocky.

“Shout and warn him of his peril!” urged a voice in Mr. Raleigh's heart.

“Let him drown!” urged another voice.

If he would have called, the sound died a murmur in his throat. His eyes were on the advancing figure; it seemed as if that object were to be forever branded on the retina. Still as he gazed, he was aware of another form, one sitting on the quay, unseen in shadow like himself, and seeing what he saw, and motionless as he. Would Mrs. Laudersdale dip her hands in murder? It all passed in a second of time; at the next breath he summoned every generous power in his body, sprang with the leap of a wild creature, and confronted the recoiling man. Ere his foot touched the quay, the second form had glided from the darkness, and seized her husband's arm.

“A thousand pardons, Sir,” said Mr. Raleigh, then. “I thought you were in danger. Mrs. Laudersdale, good-night!”

It was an easy matter to regain the boat, to gather up his oars, and shoot away. Till they faded from sight, he saw her still beside him; and so they stood till the last echo of the dipping oars was muffled in distance and lost.

Summer-nights are brief; breakfast was late on the next morning,—or rather, Mrs. Laudersdale was late, as usual, to partake it.

“Shall I tell you some news?” asked Helen Heath.



She lifted her heavy eyes absently.

“Mrs. McLean has made her husband a millionaire. There was an Indian mail yesterday. Mr. Raleigh read his letters last night, after going home. His uncle is dying, —old, unfortunate, forlorn. Mr. Raleigh has abandoned everything, and must hew his own way in the world from this day forward. He left this morning for India.”

When you saw Mrs. Laudersdale for the first time, at a period thirteen years later, would you have imagined her possessed of this little drama? You fancy now that in this flash all the wealth of her soul burned out and left her a mere volition and motive power? You are mistaken, as I said.



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[To be continued.]

* * * * *

GONE.

A silent, odor-laden air,
From heavy branches dropping balm;
A crowd of daisies, milky fair,
That sunward turn their faces calm,
So rapt, a bird alone may dare
To stir their rapture with its psalm.

So falls the perfect day of June,
To moonlit eve from dewy dawn;
With light winds rustling through the noon,
And conscious roses half-withdrawn
In blushing buds, that wake too soon,
And flaunt their hearts on every lawn.

The wide content of summer's bloom,
The peaceful glory of its prime,—
Yet over all a brooding gloom,
A desolation born of time,
As distant storm-caps tower and loom
And shroud the sun with heights sublime.

For they are vanished from the trees,
And vanished from the thronging flowers,
Whose tender tones thrilled every breeze,
And sped with mirth the flying hours;
No form nor shape my sad eye sees,
No faithful spirit haunts these bowers.

Alone, alone, in sun or dew!
One fled to heaven, of earth afraid;
And one to earth, with eyes untrue
And lips of faltering passion, strayed:
Nor shall the strenuous years renew
On any bough these leaves that fade.

Long summer-days shall come and go,—
No summer brings the dead again;



I listen for that voice's flow,
And ache at heart, with deepening pain;
And one fair face no more I know,
Still living sweet, but sweet in vain.

EXPRESSION.

The law of expression is the law of degrees,—of much, more, and most.

Nature exists to the mind not as an absolute realization, but as a condition, as something constantly becoming. It is neither entirely this nor that. It is suggestive and prospective; a body in motion, and not an object at rest. It draws the soul out and excites thought, because it is embosomed in a heaven of possibilities, and interests without satisfying. The landscape has a pleasure to us, because in the mind it is canopied by the ideal, as it is here canopied by the sky.

The material universe seems a suspense, something arrested on the point of transition from nonentity to absolute being,—wholly neither, but on the confines of both, which is the condition of its being perceptible to us. We are able to feel and use heat, because it is not entirely heat; and we see light only when it is mixed and diluted with its opposite. The condition of motion is that there be something at rest; else how could there be any motion? The river flows, because its banks do not. We use force, because it is only in part that which it would be. What could we do with unmixed power? Absolute space is not cognizable to the mind; we apprehend space only when limited and imprisoned in geometrical figures. Absolute life we can have no conception of; the absolute must come down and incarnate itself in the conditioned, and cease to be absolute, before it comes within the plane of our knowledge. The unconscious is not knowable; as soon as it is thought, it becomes conscious.



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And this is God's art of expression. We can behold nothing pure; and all that we see is compounded and mixed. Nature stands related to us at a certain angle, and a little remove either way—back toward its grosser side, or up toward its ideal tendency—would place it beyond our ken. It is like the rainbow, which is a partial and an incomplete development,— pure white light split up and its colors detached and dislocated, and which is seen only from a certain stand-point.

We remark, therefore, that all things are made of one stuff, and on the principle that a difference in degree produces a difference in kind. From the clod and the rock up to the imponderable, to light and electricity, the difference is only more or less of selection and filtration. Every grade is a new refinement, the same law lifted to a higher plane. The air is earth with some of the coarser elements purged away. From the zooephyte up to man, more or less of spirit gives birth to the intervening types of life. All motion is but degrees of gravitating force; and the thousand colors with which the day paints the earth are only more or less of light. All form aspires toward the circle, and realizes it more or less perfectly. By more or less of heat the seasons accomplish their wonderful transformations on the earth and in the air. In the moral world, the eras and revolutions that check history are only degrees in the development of a few simple principles; and the variety of character that diversifies the world of men and manners springs from a greater or less predominance of certain individual traits.

This law of degrees, pushed a little farther, amounts to detachment and separation, and gives birth to contrast and comparison. This is one aspect in which the law manifests itself in the individual. The chairs and the pictures must come out from the wall before we can see them. The tree must detach itself from the landscape, either by form or color, before it becomes cognizable to us. There must be irregularity and contrast. Our bodily senses relate us to things on this principle; they require something brought out and disencumbered from the mass. The eye cannot see where there is no shade, nor the hand feel where there is no inequality of surface, nor the palate taste where there is no predominance of flavor, nor the ear hear where there is no silence. Montaigne has the following pertinent passage, which also comes under this law:—"Whoever shall suppose a pack-thread equally strong throughout, it is utterly impossible it should break; for where will you have the breaking to begin? And that it should break altogether is not in Nature."

The palpableness and availableness of an object are in proportion as it is separated from its environments. We use water as a motive power by detaching a part from the whole and placing ourselves in the way of its tendency to unite again. All force and all motion are originated on this principle. It is by gravity that we walk and move and overcome resistance, and, in short, perform all mechanical action; yet the condition is that we destroy the settled equilibrium of things for the moment, and avail ourselves of the impulse that restores it again. The woodman chops by controlling and breaking the force which he the next moment yields to.

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So in higher matters. We are conscious of pain and pleasure only through the predominance of some feeling. There must be degrees and differences again, and some part more relieved than another, to catch an expression on. Entire pain or an equal degree of physical suffering in every part of the body would be a perfect blank, complete numbness; and entire pleasure we could not be conscious of, and for the same reason. How could there be any contrast, any determining hue, any darker or brighter side? If the waters of the earth were all at the same altitude, how could there be any motion among the parts? Hence the fullest experience is never defined, and cannot be spoken. It is like the sphere, which, as it merges all possible form in itself, is properly of no form, as white is no color, and cannot be grasped and used as parts and fragments can; there are no angles and outlines to define and give emphasis.

Hence the pain or pleasure that is definitely shaped in the consciousness and that can be spoken is necessarily partial, and does not go the full circle of our being. We are not conscious of our health and growth, because they are general and not local, and are not rendered prominent by contrast.

The dictionary and the sciences, in fact the whole province of human knowledge, hinge upon this principle. To know a thing is but to separate and distinguish it from something else; and classifying and systematizing are carrying the same law from the particular to the general. We cannot know one thing alone; two ideas enter into every distinct act of the understanding,—one latent and virtual, the other active and at the surface. To use familiar examples, we cannot distinguish white without having known black, nor evil without having known good, nor beauty without having known deformity. Thus every principle has two sides, like a penny, and one presupposes the other, which it covers.

When we come to the intellect and the expression of thought, the same law of detachment and separation prevails. In contemplation and enjoyment there are unity and wholeness; but in thinking, never. Our thoughts lie in us, like the granite rock in the earth, whole and continuous, without break or rupture, and shaped by a law of the spheres; but when they come to the surface in utterance, and can be grasped and defined, they lose their entireness and become partial and fragmentary, and hint a local and not a general law. We cannot speak entire and unmixed truth, because utterance separates a part from the whole, and consequently in a measure distorts and exaggerates and does injustice to other truths. The moment we speak, we are one-sided and liable to be assailed by the reverse side of the fact. Hence the hostility that exists between different sects and religions; their founders were each possessed of some measure of truth, and consequently stood near to a common ground of agreement, but in the statement it became vitiated and partial; and the more their disciples



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have expounded and sought to lodge their principles in a logical system, the more they have diverged from the primitive sentiment. If the sects would let logic alone and appeal only to the consciousness of men, there would be no very steep difference between them, and each would promote the good of the other. But the moment we rest with the reason and the understanding there must be opposition and divergence, for they apprehend things by parts, and not by the mass; they deal with facts, and not with laws.

The fullest truth, as we have already hinted, never shapes itself into words on our lips. What we can speak is generally only foam from the surface, with more or less sediment in it; while the pure current flows untouched beneath. The deepest depths in a man have no tongue. He is like the sea, which finds expression only on its shoals and rocks; the great heart of it has no voice, no utterance.

The religious creeds will never be reconciled by logic; the more emphatically they are expressed, the more they differ. Ideas, in this respect, resemble the trees, which branch and diverge more and more widely as they proceed from the root and the germinal state. Men are radically the same in their feelings and sentiments, but widely different in their logic. Argument is reaction, and drives us farther and farther apart.

As the intellect expresses by detachment and contrast, it follows, that, the more emphatically an idea is expressed, the more it will be disencumbered of other ideas and stand relieved like a bust chiselled from a rock. It is suggestive and prospective, and, by being detached itself, will relieve others and still others. It makes a breach in the blank wall, and the whole is now pregnable. New possibilities are opened, a new outlook into the universe. Nothing, so to speak, has become something; one base metal has been transmuted into gold, and so given us a purchase on every other. When one thought is spoken, all others become speakable. After one atom was created, the universe would grow of its own accord. The difficulty in writing is to utter the first thought, to break the heavy silence, to overcome the settled equilibrium, and disentangle one idea from the embarrassing many. It is a struggle for life. There is no place to begin at. We are burdened with unuttered and unutterable truth, but cannot, for the life of us, grasp it. It is a battle with Chaos. We plant shaft after shaft, but to no purpose. We get an idea half-defined, when it slips from us, and all is blank again in that direction. We seem to be struggling with the force of gravity, and to come not so near conquering as to being conquered. But at last, when we are driven almost to despair, and in a semi-passive state inwardly settling and composing ourselves, the thought comes. How much is then revealed and becomes possible! New facts and forces are commanded by it; much of our experience, that was before meaningless and unavailable,



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assumes order and comes to our use; and as long as the breach can be kept open and the detachment perfect, how easily we write! But if we drop the thread of our idea without knotting it, or looping it to some fact,—if we stop our work without leaving something inserted to keep the breach open, how soon all becomes a blank! the wound heals instantly; the equilibrium which we had for a moment arrested again asserts itself, and our work is a fragment and must always remain so. Neither wife nor friends nor fortune nor appetite should call one from his work, when he is possessed by this spirit and can utter his thought. We are caught up into these regions rarely enough; let us not come down till we are obliged.

The fullest development of this law, as it appears in the intellect, is Analogy. Analogy is the highest form of expression, the poetry of speech; and is detachment carried so far that it goes full circle and gives a sense of unity and wholeness again. It is the spherical form appearing in thought. The idea is not only detached, but is wedded to some outward object, so that spirit and matter mutually interpret each other. Nothing can be explained by itself, or, in the economy of Nature, is explained by itself. The night explains the day, and the day interprets the night. Summer gives character to winter, and in winter we best understand the spirit of summer. The shore defines and emphasizes the sea, and the sea gives form and meaning to the shore.

To measure grain, we must have a bushel; and to confine water and air, we must have other than water and air to do it with. The bird flies by balancing itself against something else; the mountain is emphasized by the valley; and one color is brought out and individualized by another. Our mood of yesterday is understood and rendered available by our mood of to-day; and what we now experience will be read aright only when seen from the grounds of an opposite experience. Our life here will not be duly appreciated and its meaning made clear till seen from the life beyond.

The spiritual canopies the material as the sky canopies the earth, and is reached and expressed only by its aid. And this is Analogy,—the marrying of opposite facts, the perception of the same law breaking out in a thousand different forms,—the completing of the circle when only a segment is given. The visible and the invisible make up one sphere of which each is a part. We are related to both; our root is in one, our top in the other. Our ideas date from spirit and appear in fact. The ideal informs the actual. This is the way the intellect detaches and gets expressed. It is not its own interpreter, and, like everything else, is only one side of a law which is explained by the other side. The mind is the cope and the world the draw, to use the language of the moulder. The intellect uses the outward, as the sculptor uses marble, to embody and speak its thought. It seizes upon a fact as upon a lever, to separate and lift up some fraction of its meaning. From Nature, from science, from experience, it traces laws, till they appear in itself, and thus finds a thread to string its thought on.



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Without Analogy, without this marrying of the inward and the outward, there can be no speech, no expression. It is a necessity of our condition. Spirit is cognizable by us only when endowed with a material body; so an idea or a feeling can be stated only when it puts on the form and definiteness of the sensuous, the empirical. Hence the highest utterance is a perpetual marrying of thought with things, as in poetry,—a lifting up of the actual and a bringing down of the ideal,—giving a soul to the one and a body to the other. This takes place more or less in all speech, but only with genius is it natural and complete. Ordinary minds inherit their language and form of expression; but with the poet, or natural sayer, a new step is taken, and new analogies, new likenesses must be disclosed. He is distinguished from the second-hand man by the fulness and completeness of his expression; his words are round and embrace the two hemispheres, the actual and the ideal. He points out analogies under our feet, and presents the near and the remote wedded in every act of his mind. Nothing is old with him, but Nature is forever new like the day, and gives him pure and fresh thoughts as she gives him pure and fresh water. Hence the expressiveness of poetry and its power over the human heart. It differs from prose only in degree, not in essence. It goes farther and accomplishes more. It is the blossom of which prose is the bud, and comes with sincerity, simplicity, purity of motive, and a vital relation to Nature.

As men grow earnest and impassioned, and speak from their inmost heart, and without any secondary ends, their language rises to the dignity of poetry and employs tropes and figures. The more emphatic the statement, the more the thought is linked with things. The ideas of men in their ordinary mood are only half-expressed, like a stone propped up, but still sod-bound; but when they are fired and glowing with the heat of some great passion, the operation of the mind is more complete and the detachment more perfect. The thought is not only evolved, but is thrown into the air,—disencumbered from the understanding, and set off against the clear blue of the imagination. Hence the direct and unequivocal statement of a man writing under the impulse of some strong feeling, or speaking to a thrilled and an excited audience. Nature, the world, his experience, is no longer hard and flinty, but plastic and yielding, and takes whatever impress his mind gives it. Facts float through his head like half-pressed grapes in the wine-press, steeped and saturated with meaning, and his expression becomes so round and complete as to astonish himself in his calmer moments.

People differ not so much in material as in this power of expressing it. The secret of the best writer lies in his art. He is not so much above the common stature; his experience is no richer than ours; but he knows how to put handles to his ideas, and we do not. Give a peasant his power of expression, or of welding the world within to the world without, and there would be no very precipitous inequality between them. The great writer says what we feel, but could not utter. We have pearls that lie no deeper than his, but have not his art of bringing them to the surface. We are mostly like an inland lake that has no visible outlet; while he is the same lake gifted with a copious channel.

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The secret seems to lie in the temperament and in the transmuting and modifying medium. More or less of filtration does it all. Nature makes the poet, not by adding to, but by taking from; she takes all blur and opacity out of him; condenses, intensifies; lifts his nerves nearer the surface, sharpens his senses, and brings his whole organization to an edge. Sufficient filtration would convert charcoal into diamonds; and we shall everywhere find that the purest, most precious substances are the result of a refining, sorting, condensing process.

Our expression is clogged by the rubbish in our minds, the foolish personal matters we load the memory with. Ideas are not clearly defined, as the drift-wood in the river spoils the reflected image. We feel nothing intensely; our experience is a blur without distinct form and outline; in short we are incumbered with too much clay. Hence, when a slow disease burns the dross and earth out of one, how keen and susceptible his organization becomes! The mud-wall grows transparent. Our senses lose their obtuseness, our capacity both for experience and expression is enlarged, and we not only live deeper, but nearer the surface.

It appears, then, that, as a general rule, our ability to express ourselves is in proportion to the fineness of our organization. Women, for this reason, are more adequate in expressing themselves than men; they stand removed one degree farther from the earth, and are conscious of feelings and sentiments that are never defined in our minds; the detachment is more perfect; shades and boundaries are more clearly brought out, and consequently the statement is more round and full.

One's capacity for expression is also affected by his experience,—not experience in time and space, but soul-experience,—joy, sorrow, pleasure, pain, love, hope, aspiration, and all intense feeling by which the genesis of the inward man unfolded. What one has lived, that alone can he adequately say. The outward is the measure of the inward; it is as the earth and sky: so much earth as we see, so much sky takes form and outline. The spiritual, it is true, is illimitable, but the actual is the measure of that part of which we are made conscious. Experience furnishes the handle, but the intellect must supply the blade.

Intense feeling of any kind afterward gives us more entire command over some thought or power within us. Every inundation of passion enriches and gives us a deeper soil. The most painful experiences are generally the most productive. Cutting teeth is by no means a pleasant operation, yet it increases our tools. Our lives are not thoroughly shaped out and individualized till we have lived and suffered in every part of us. A great feeling reveals new powers in the soul, as a deep breath fills air-cells in the lungs that are not reached by an ordinary inhalation. Love first revealed the poetic gift in Novalis; and in reading the Autobiography of Goethe, one can but notice the quickening of his powers after every new experience: a new love was a new push given the shuttle, and a new thread was added.

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When we come nearer the surface of our subject and speak of language, we remark that pure English, so far as such is possible, is the most convenient and expressive. Saxon words cannot be used too plentifully. They abridge and condense and smack of life and experience, and form the nerve and sinew of the best writing of our day; while the Latin is the fat. The Saxon puts small and convenient handles to things, handles that are easy to grasp; while your ponderous Johnsonian phraseology distends and exaggerates, and never peels the chaff from the wheat. Johnson's periods act like a lever of the third kind,—the power applied always exceeds the weight raised; while the terse, laconic style of later writers is eminently a lever on the first principle, and gives the mind the utmost purchase on the subject in hand.

The language of life, and of men who speak to be understood, should be used more in our books. A great principle anchored to a common word or a familiar illustration never looses its hold upon the mind; it is like seeing the laws of Astronomy in the swing of a pendulum, or in the motion of the boy's ball,—or the law of the tides and the seasons appearing in the beating of the pulse, or in inspiring and expiring the breath. The near and the remote are head and tail of the same law, and good writing unites them, giving wholeness and continuity. The language of the actual and the practical applied to the ideal brings it at once within everybody's reach, tames it, and familiarizes it to the mind. If the writers on metaphysics would deal more in our every-day speech, use commoner illustrations, seek to find some interpreter of the feelings and affections of the mind in Nature, out of the mind itself, and thus keep the life-principle and the thought-principle constantly wedded, making them mutually elucidate and explain each other, they would be far more fruitful and satisfying. Cousin is the only writer we know of who has made any attempt at this, and we believe him to be the most consistent and intelligent metaphysician that has yet appeared. Surely, one cannot reasonably object to the height in the heavens from which a man steals his fire, if he can feed it with his own fuel and cook meat with it. Though the genealogy of our ideas be traceable to Jove and Olympus, they must marry their human sisters, the facts of common life and experience, before they can be productive of anything positive and valuable.

Proverbs give us the best lessons in the art of expression. See what vast truths and principles informing such simple and common facts! It reminds one of suns and stars engraved on buttons and knife-handles. Proverbs come from the character, and are alive and vascular. There is blood and marrow in them. They give us pocket-editions of the most voluminous truths. Theirs is a felicity of expression that comes only at rare moments, and that is bought by long years of experience.

There is no waste material in a good proverb; it is clear meat, like an egg,—a happy result of logic, with the logic left out; and the writer who shall thus condense his wisdom, and as far as possible give the two poles of thought in every expression, will most thoroughly reach men's minds and hearts.



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ITALIAN EXPERIENCES IN COLLECTING “OLD MASTERS.”

As the taste for collecting objects of art is rapidly developing in America, it may be not without profit to point out some of the pitfalls which attend the amateur in this pursuit, especially in Italy, that exhaustless quarry of “originals” and “old masters”; though it should be remembered that a work of art may be both original and old and very bad too, —its intrinsic worth being a separate question from its age and authenticity. The results given are drawn from an actual experience of many years.

The most obvious risk is from the counterfeiter,—not from the vulgar shams distributed so widely over the world from the well-known *manufactories* of paintings in France, England, and other parts, which can deceive only the most ignorant or credulous, but from talent itself debased to forgery and trickery.

Many of the antique bronzes, terra-cottas, vases, classical and medieval relics, so jealously cared for in the collections of Europe, are the clever imitations of a poor and honest artist in one of the Italian cities, whose miniature studio might almost be put inside one of our old-fashioned omnibuses. His designs, taken from genuine antiques, are reproduced with fidelity, and the coatings and marks of time counterfeited by chemical means and skilful manipulation. He sells his productions as imitations, at prices that barely provide him with daily bread, eking out his subsistence by repairs and restorations, in which he is equally happy. Living in obscurity, without the capital or sagacity to make himself known to the public, he is at the mercy of those who are interested in keeping him in privacy and buying his artistic labors at the wages of a clodhopper. His own responsibility goes not beyond fulfilling orders for the imitation of certain objects, the process of which he frankly explains to the inquisitive visitor. But, once in dishonest hands, antiquity and authenticity replace modernism and imitation.

There are two ways of seduction and deceit. The one and safer for the operator is the *suggestive*, in which appearances are made by consummate tact and artful flattery to excite the imagination of the buyer so that he is led to believe what he desires without compromising the agent. The other is positive intrigue and absolute lying, so nicely done that the wealthy amateur is fleeced often in a fashion that confers a pleasure, and which, though he may subsequently detect it, gives him but a lame chance at redress. In most instances he deserves none. For, stimulated by vanity or fashion, without any true regard for art, he has offered so large a premium for a name, that it would indeed be wonderful, if a corresponding supply were not created. The living artist is sometimes sorely tempted to pander to illusions to secure that appreciation which the world gives more lavishly to fashion than to merit. Michel Angelo tested this



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disposition, even more current in his time than now; though some say it was done unknown to him. At all events, having finished the statue of a Cupid, after breaking off an arm, it was buried, and in due time discovered, disinterred, and brought to the notice of a distinguished Roman dignitary, who pronounced it to be a genuine antique and paid a large price for it, well pleased, as he had reason to be, with his prize. But afterwards, the deception being exposed, and the proof by means of the missing arm given that it was the work of the then unknown Florentine sculptor, the disenchanted connoisseur was furiously indignant, and disposed to take prompt vengeance upon the parties concerned.

To come back to our own day. Let us suppose a rich collector to have arrived in some well-known Italian market for art,—picture-jockeying is much the same everywhere,—in pursuit of “originals.”

Great is the commotion among dealers and their *sensali* or jackals. These latter are versed in intrigue and mystification, with enough intelligence to tell a good picture from a bad one, and a parrot-like acquaintance with names and schools. They are of all classes, from the decayed gentleman and artist, to shopkeepers, cobblers, cooks, and tailors, who find in the large commissions gained a temptation to forsake their petty legitimate callings for the lottery-like excitements and *finesse* of picture-dealing. No sooner has the stranger gone to his hotel than a watch is put upon his movements, and bribery and cajolery used to get access to him. It is the *sensale's* business to discover and offer pictures. He is supposed to know the locality of every one, good or bad, in his neighborhood. However jealous of each other, all are loyally pledged together to take in the stranger. Leagued with the dealer, artist, owner, courier, or servant, with any one, in fact, that by any possibility can stand between the buyer and his object, it has become almost an impossibility, especially for transient visitors, to purchase anything whatever without paying a heavy toll to intermediates. When the conspiracy is widely extended, the augmentation of price above what would be required in direct dealing with the owner is sometimes double or even quadruple. Occasionally, however, by way of compensation for their general evil, the *sensali*, having scented a prize, offer it first to the amateur, in view of their own increase of gain over what the dealer would allow. In this way, good pictures not unfrequently escape the merchant, and reach the collector at a lower price than if they had gone directly to the former.



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The *sensali* are not without their use in another respect. So indirect and underhand is the Italian's mode of dealing in these matters, and so eccentric his notions as to value, that a foreigner is apt to be speedily disgusted or driven away by the magnitude of demands which in reality the seller never expects to realize. Hence the negotiation is best done through an agent, the buyer having fixed his price, leaving the *sensale* to make what he can for himself. No purchaser, however, should give heed to any statement about the history or authenticity of the works offered to him through such channels, but rely both for value and facts upon his own resources; otherwise he will be deceived to an extent that would appear almost fabulous to the uninitiated.

Such are the preliminary difficulties that beset the amateur. We will suppose him in connection with the seller, and trace his progress. First, the quality of his judgment and the impressibility of his imagination are tested by a series of experiments as delicate as the atmospherical gauges of a barometer. He is of course not to be entrapped by copies or fabrications. He has a shrewd distrust of dealers, and therefore prefers to buy family pictures or originals directly from chapels and convents. All Italians have a patriotic pride in getting rid of trash at the expense of the foreigner. The more common baits to entrap—by bringing pictures mysteriously boxed, grandly baptized, and liberally decorated with aristocratic seals and eloquent with academical certificates, anointed with refined flattery and obsequious courtesy—having failed, his *Eccellenza* being too knowing to be seduced into buying the ostentatiously furbished-up *roba* of shops, they set about to accommodate him with originals from first hands. By substituting old frames for new, dirtying the pictures, and other ingenious processes familiar to the initiated, and then putting them out to board in noble villas, antique palaces, or other localities the most natural for good pictures to be *discovered* in, spiced with a romance of decayed family-grandeur,—by employing new agents, and by hints sagaciously conveyed to the buyer, his curiosity is excited, hopes raised, and, finally, with much trouble and enhanced expense, he triumphantly carries off the very pictures which in a shop he could not be tempted to look at for fear of being caught with chaff, but which now, from a well-got-up romance, have acquired a peculiar value in his eyes. Not that this sort of delicate mystification is reserved exclusively for foreigners. For we have detected in an altar-piece, borne away as a great prize by an Italian friend from a secluded little chapel attached to a noble villa in the vicinity of Florence, a worthless specimen of an old painter, from one of the secret depositories of the city, which had long been wholly unsalable on any terms.



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Honest dealing exists in Italy, as elsewhere, and there are men whose statements may safely be received. But let the purchaser be cautious when led into out-of-the-way places to see newly found originals, and be slow to give heed to stories of churches being permitted to sell this or that work of art because they have a *facade* to repair or an altar to decorate,—and particularly if there be said anything of an inheritance to divide, or a sad tale of family distress requiring the sacrifice of long-cherished treasures, backed up by a well-gotten-up pantomime of unlockings and lockings, passages through mysterious corridors and vast halls, cautious showings amid a crowd of family-retainers or a retinue of monks. Sometimes the most wary is thus seduced into offering tenfold its worth for a common object thus seen by a carefully arranged light and with artificial surroundings.

Many good pictures are still to be had in Italy, if properly approached by those who know thoroughly the habits of the country. There are, however, but two means of procuring them: either to pay their full value as fixed by rival collectors, or to secure them by fortuitous circumstances for trifling sums. The extraordinary chances of discovery and the extreme variations of price attending this pursuit are curious and instructive. A few examples are worth relating. In 1856, a small picture, by Niccolo d'Alunno, was sold in Florence, by an artist to a dealer, for forty dollars; in a few weeks resold to an Englishman for five hundred; exhibited at the Manchester Exhibition, whence it subsequently passed into the gallery of a distinguished personage for twenty-five hundred dollars. The "Leda" of Leonardo, repainted from motives of prudery by the great-grandfather of Louis-Philippe, was bought at the sale of that ex-king's pictures in Paris, in 1849, for thirty dollars, restored to its primitive condition, and sold, we are informed, for one hundred thousand francs. Ten years ago, an Angel, by the same artist, was found in the old-clothes market at Florence by an artist, bought for a few pence, cleaned and sold to Prince Galitzin for twenty-two thousand francs. The "Fortune" of Michel Angelo, or what was supposed to be, not long since was discovered in the same locality in a disastrous condition, secured for a few shillings, put in such order as was possible, and parted with to a French gentleman for three hundred dollars and a pension of one dollar a day during the lives of the seller and his son. Quite recently one of Correggio's most beautiful works was discovered under the canvas of a worthless picture acquired at a public auction in Rome for a few dimes, at the sale by a princely family of discarded pictures, and resold by its fortunate discoverer for fifteen thousand dollars, although the original proprietor instituted a suit against him for its recovery, but without success. In Florence, within three years past, a fine portrait, by Titian, of the Doge Andrea Gritti, was picked out from a large lot of worthless canvases for six dollars. The Madonna del Gran Duca, at the Pitti, was bought by the father of the late Grand Duke, with some other pictures, of a widow, for a few dollars. Instances like these might be multiplied, to show that in all times prizes do strangely and unexpectedly occur, and that pictures in their fortunes resemble their authors, often passing from extreme poverty into princely homes.



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The changes in the money value placed upon the same works in different epochs are also curious. Indeed, a history of the *caprices* of art would be vastly entertaining. In 1740, at the sale in Paris of M. Crozat's collection, a drawing by Raphael brought only ten francs. The same drawing, at the sale of the King of Holland's gallery, in 1850, fetched fourteen thousand francs. For the "Ezekiel," Raphael, in 1510, had but eight *scudi d'oro*, equivalent now to thirty dollars. At present, it would bring a fabulous sum, if sold. Within the memory of those now living, gold background pictures of the schools of Giotto and his successors, owing to the contempt the pseudo-classical French taste had excited for them, were brought out of suppressed churches and convents and publicly burned to obtain the trifling amount of gold which remained in the ashes. Amateurs are now more inclined to pay their weight in gold for such as have escaped the ravages of time and Vandalism; and the same government that permitted this destruction in 1859 passed stringent decrees to prevent their leaving the country, sequestering all in public buildings as national property.

Without cautious study and much well-paid-for experience, the stranger has small chance of successfully coping with the artifices that beset his every step. He must be well-grounded in the history of Italian painting, and possess a practical knowledge of the technical execution of its various masters. Haste and ignorance, united to wealth and vanity, are a rich mine for the *sensali*. To such collectors America—not to speak of Europe—owes many of its galleries of great names, to the very natural astonishment and skepticism of the spectators and the defamation of great reputations. Many of these purchases are the speculations of couriers, who, having artfully inoculated their employers with a taste for originals, take care to supply the demand, greatly to the benefit of their own pockets and the gratitude of those with whom they bring their masters into connection. We have been called by a countryman to admire his gallery of Claudes, Poussins, Rembrandts, Murillos, and Titians, for which he had expended a princely sum, but which there was no difficulty in recognizing as the shop *roba* got up expressly to entrap the unwary. One picture, worth, perhaps, for mere decoration, fifty dollars, had been secured as a great favor for twenty-two hundred dollars, the "last price" asked for it being three thousand. Another, by a feeble artist of the Carlo Dolce school, had been converted, by a substitution of names and sundry touchings-up, into a brilliant Guercino, at the cost of nearly one thousand dollars, of which the owner got about one-third, the confederates pocketing the rest.

Some amateurs deceive themselves after a manner which acquits the dealer of any participation in their illusions. A gentleman entered a well-known studio in Florence, not many years since, and inquired the price of a picture.

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“Sixty dollars: the painting is by Furini,” was the reply.

“I will take it,” said the gentleman, eagerly insisting upon paying for it on the spot; which was no sooner done, than he turned round to the amused artist and triumphantly exclaimed, “Do you know you have sold me a Murillo for nothing?”

Benvenuti, President of the Academy of Florence, was once asked to attest the originality of an Andrea brought to him by some speculators. “I should be happy to gratify you, gentlemen,” he replied, “but unfortunately I saw the picture painted.” Nevertheless, certificates were obtained from more facile authorities, and the painting officially baptized for a market.

Certificates and documents need to be received as cautiously as the pictures themselves; perhaps more so,—for they are more easily forged. When genuine, the former are valuable only as they are the opinions of honest and competent judges; and both are trustworthy only so far as they are attached to the pictures to which they legitimately belong.

Genuine pictures have been sold and their documentary evidence kept for skilful imitations. We have even detected in certificates the fraudulent substitution of names. And sometimes, when honestly given, their testimony is of no value. One professional certificate in our possession, of the last century, ascribes the portrait in question to Masaccio or Sauti di Tito: as sensible a decision as if an English critic had decided that a certain picture of his school was either by Hogarth or Sir Thomas Lawrence. Cases are indeed rare, even in the public galleries, in which, outside of the picture itself, there is any trustworthy historical testimony as to its genealogy.

Counterfeits of the old masters of the later Italian schools, supported by false evidence, have at various times deceived good judges and obtained posts of honor in the galleries of Europe. Even when detected, their owners do not always repudiate their spurious treasures. They give their collections the benefit of doubts or of public ignorance. The most noted imitator of this class was Micheli of Florence. In view of his success and the use for a time made of his works, he must rank as a forger, though they are now in esteem solely for their intrinsic cleverness. Some still linger in remote galleries, with the savor of authenticity about them. A Raphael of his make long graced the Imperial Gallery of Russia. He did not confine himself to literal repetitions, but concocted new “originals” by combining parts of several pictures in worm-eaten panels or time-stained canvases, with such variations of motive or design as their supposed authors would naturally have made in repeating their ideas in fresher combinations,—sometimes leaving portions unfinished, ingeniously dirtying their surfaces, and giving to them that cracked-porcelain appearance common to the old masters. One thus prepared was bought at his studio for one hundred dollars, consigned to a priest in the country, in due time *discovered*, and the rumor of a great master in an exceedingly dirty and somewhat dilapidated state, but believed to be intact beneath the varnishes and grime of centuries,

brought to the ears of a Russian, who after a delicate and wearisome negotiation obtained it for eight hundred dollars, and perhaps paid half as much more to the manufacturer for cleaning and restoring it.

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Another sort of deception is the alteration of pictures by artists less-known or of inferior reputations to suit more fashionable and profitable names. In this way many works of much local interest, and often indeed of equal merit to those they are made to represent, are exterminated, to the serious detriment of the history of art, Lombardy, Umbria, and the Legations especially have suffered in this way.

Though no deception be intended, if pedigrees are lost, criticism is often sorely perplexed to decide upon authorship. Out of the multitudes of pictures in the European galleries, which are so decidedly baptized in catalogues, the public would be surprised to learn how few comparatively can be historically traced to their authors. The majority are named upon the authority of local judges, whose acquaintance with art may be limited to one speciality, or who rely upon such opinions as can be gathered from the best available sources. Hence the frequent changes in the nomenclatures. We cannot, therefore, accept such documents as infallible, except in those cases where internal evidence and historic record are alike unimpeachable.

The difficulty of deciding often arises from repetitions, and the excellence of pupils painting from the designs of their masters, and not unfrequently assisted by them. As we go back in art, this difficulty increases, from the oblivion which has overtaken once well-known names, and from the greater uniformity of processes and the more limited range of motives of the earliest artists.

The great religious masters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries gathered around them crowds of scholars, who travelled with them from city to city, partaking in their commissions and executing their designs, especially of *ex-voto* pictures, multiplied in that age by the piety of noble families, to commemorate some special interposition of divine power in their behalf and to honor their patron saints. Their usual compositions were the Madonna enthroned with the infant Jesus in her arms, surrounded by holy personages or angels, with the portraits of those who ordered the paintings, in general of diminutive size to express humility, and kneeling in adoration with clasped hands and upraised eyes. Unless the characteristics of the master-hand are unmistakable in this class of works, they are to be ranked as of the schools of the great men whose general features they bear. And it must not be forgotten that frequently pupils developed into distinguished masters themselves. Taddeo Gaddi and Puccio Capanna worked under Giotto while he lived, and afterwards acquired distinction in an independent career.

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A like close relation between master and scholar, the effect of which was to multiply works by joint labor, obtained among the contemporaries of Raphael as well as of Giotto. The precise number of the genuine works of Raphael, owing to the cleverness of many of his pupils, will perhaps never be known. Coindet ascribes to him from one hundred and eighty to two hundred Holy Families alone. Some writers compute the entire number of his paintings at from five hundred to six hundred; others quote twelve hundred as authentic. These exaggerated estimates only prove how extremely popular his designs became and the great number of pictures ordered from them, some of which no doubt had the advantage of being touched by his hand, while all in some way or other bear his mental impress.

Moreover, the great masters frequently changed their methods and styles, so that one might be mistaken for another, and at times studied and copied each other. Andrea del Sarto's copy of Raphael's Leo Tenth passed undetected even by Giulio Romano, who had himself worked on the latter. Rubens and Velasquez imitated and copied the great Italian masters, particularly Paul Veronese and Titian; the Caracci and their followers multiplied Correggios, Raphaels, and the chief Venetians; Girolamo da Carpi of Ferrara the same; and all with a degree of success that has greatly perplexed later generations: their own works, in turn, as they became popular, experiencing from subsequent artists the same process of multiplication. Of the celebrated Madonna of Loreto there are not fewer than ten rival claimants for authenticity; while sketches, studies, and works not directly imitated from, but partaking of the character of great artists, and often clever enough to be confounded with their undoubted works, are not rare. Portraits, being direct studies from Nature, are difficult to decide upon. Hence it is that criticism is so variable in its decisions.

Beside the above sources of perplexity, it encounters another obstacle from the restorations pictures have undergone. Injured by time or obscured by repeated varnishings, they often require some degree of cleaning to make them intelligible. Unfortunately, in most instances, the process is sheer assassination. Many of the best works of public galleries have been subjected to scrubblings more analogous to the labors of a washtub than to the delicate and scientific treatment requisite to preserve intact the virgin surface of the painting. Mechanical operators have passed over them with as little remorse as locusts blight fields of grain. Their rude hands in numberless instances have skinned the pictures, obliterating those peerless tints, lights, and shadows, and those delicate but emphatic touches that bespeak the master-stroke, leaving instead cold, blank, hard surfaces and outlines, opaque shadows and crude coloring, out of tone, and in consequence with deteriorated sentiment as well as execution. The profound knowledge and vigorous

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or fairy-like handling which made their primary reputation are now forever gone, leaving little behind them except the composition to sustain it in competition with modern work. As bad, however, as is this wanton injury, that of repainting is greater. Inadequate to replace the delicate work he has rubbed off, to harmonize the whole and make it look fresh and new, the restorer passes his own brush over the entire picture, and thus finally obscures whatever of technical originality there might still have been preserved after the cleaning. The extent of injury European galleries have thus received is incalculable. One instance will suffice as an example of many. Some years gone by, the Titian's *Bella Donna* of the Pitti was intact. Unluckily it got into the hands of a professional cleaner. A celebrated dealer happened to be standing by when it was rehung. Looking at it, he exclaimed,—“Two weeks ago I would have given the Grand Duke two thousand pounds for that picture on speculation; now I would not give two hundred.”

Each restoration displaces more of the original and replaces it with the restorer. As the same hands generally have a monopoly of a public gallery, the contents of some are beginning to acquire a strange uniformity of external character, while the old masters in the same degree are vanishing from them. These remarks, however, are more applicable to past than to present systems; for a reform founded on true artistic principles is being everywhere inaugurated.

Oil-paintings gradually deepen in tone; while tempera, if protected from humidity, retain their brilliancy and clearness as long as the material on which they rest endures. The true occupation of the restorer is to put the work given to him in a condition as near as possible to its original state, carefully abstaining from obliterating the legitimate marks of age, and limiting himself to just what is sufficient for the actual conservation of the picture. One of the chief needs of many old pictures is the removal of old repaintings. This done, the less added the better, unless, if a piece be wanting, it can be so harmonized with the original as to escape observation. But this is a special art, and to be done only by those acquainted with the old methods. In perfect condition ancient paintings cannot be. We must receive them for what they are, with the corrodings and changes of time upon them. How interesting in this respect is the Sienese Gallery! Here the restorer has been stayed, and we find the pictures genuine as time itself, and more precious by far to the student than the most glaring and “refreshed” surfaces of those works in other galleries which are the wonder and admiration of superficial observers.

The greatest difficulty of the restorer is to harmonize *permanently* the new vehicles with the old; for the fresh tints are always liable to assume a different tone from the original, which have already been chemically acted upon by time.



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It may be said that the skill which can escape detection in restoration is adequate to successful counterfeiting. This is true only in part; for *mending* is very different from *creating*. Instances, however, do occur of such attempts; but they seldom long escape detection, and never impose upon those who have experience in the arts of the restorer. Some years ago a Roman artist for a while successfully passed off his imitations of Claude, Salvator Rosa, and their schools, as originals, at large prices, with the usual guaranties of authenticity. To disarm suspicion, he was accustomed to allow himself to be seen at work only upon cheap, vulgar pictures, pretending he was competent to nothing better. Having sold one of his Claudes for four thousand dollars, the trick being detected, he was threatened with a public prosecution, the fear of which brought on his death.

The favorite field of the early masters was fresco-painting. Unlike painting in oils, it has no resources of transparency, brilliancy, and richness of coloring, but depends for its nobility of effect upon the hardier virtues of art and the more robust genius of the artist. His success lies in strong and eloquent design and composition, with but feeble aid from color. Fresco and tempera paintings were chiefly intended for the interiors of churches or public buildings, whose dim light harmonized their more or less crude and positive tones. It was, however, only through the breadth and freedom of wall-painting that the ambition of the early masters was fully aroused and their powers found ample scope. Out of it they created a world of art unknown and unappreciable by those who cannot view it as it exists in the consecrated localities and amid the solemn associations whence it originated. All over Italy, by the road-side and in the sanctuary, there exists untold treasure of this sort, pure, grand or quaint, telling truth with the earnestness of conviction, and exhaling beauty through aroused feeling and refined sentiment, overflowing with virgin power and exalted efforts. Everywhere untransportable, often in localities untrodden except by the feet of the stolid peasant or the heavy-jawed monk, seen only by enthusiastic seekers, these monuments of a noble art are once more being awakened into vital existence by the piety and taste of a generation whose great joy it is to uncover and restore to the light of day those precious remains which were so often barbarously whitewashed by the clergy of the past two centuries, from no more cogent motive than to give greater light to their churches. Especially in Tuscany every souvenir of ancestral greatness is now cared for with a jealous patriotism honorable alike to the feeling and knowledge of its population. The chief desire of the country is now to reinvest her republican monuments with the character and aspect which best recall her olden freedom and enterprise. And the highest glory that can be bestowed upon these monuments is their careful conservation or restoration as they originally were designed; nothing being added or taken away except to their loss.



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Not merely patriotism, but selfish acquisition demands of Italy the strict conservation of art. Her monuments are funds at interest for posterity. Indeed, her livelihood depends in no stinted measure upon her artistic attractions. And nowhere is there a livelier feeling for artistic beauty, greater respect for the past, and a wider-spread knowledge of art. In all times will other peoples come within her borders to enjoy and study that which she can still so lavishly bestow.

Tourists soundly rate Italians for their sordid indifference to their art, attributing to the people at large the spirit of the mercenary or ignorant class with whom they are most in contact. It is true that others may hear, as we have heard, from a noble marquis, in reply to a question about his family-pictures, "Ask my majordomo; had your question been about horses, I could have told you." They may meet aristocratic personages not above acting the picture-dealer in a covert manner, and, still worse, receive propositions to buy works of art robbed from public places. But such instances are uncommon. The common feeling is an enthusiastic pride in, and profound respect for, the names and the works that have done so much for the good and glory of Italy. Even the spirited deportment of the Signorina Borgherini, as told by Vasari, towards a dealer, who, during the siege of Florence, attempted to get possession of certain paintings belonging to her husband, to speculate upon by sending them to the king of France, may still find its counterpart in feeling, if not in fact, among some of the living daughters of that city.

"How, then," she exclaimed, "dost thou, Giovanni Battista, thou vile broker of frippery, miserable huckster of farthings, dost thou presume to come hither with the intent to lay thy fingers on the ornaments which belong to the chambers of gentlemen,—despoiling, as thou hast long done and art ever doing, our city of the fairest ornaments to embellish strange lands therewith? I prize these pictures from reverence to the memory of my father-in-law, from whom I had them, and from the love I bear to my husband; I mean to defend them, while I have life, with my own blood. Away with thee, then, base creature of nothingness! If again thou shouldst be so bold as to come on a similar errand to this house, thou shalt be taught what is the respect due to the dwelling of a gentleman, and that to thy serious discomfort; make sure of it!"

And so she drove the intriguing bargainer away, with "reproaches of such intolerable bitterness, that the like had never before been hurled at man alive." Be it remembered, too, that Vasari was a good judge of the quality of a Florentine dame's scolding, for he had himself in his younger days passed a painful apprenticeship under the weight of Lucretia Feti's tongue.



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Criticism is too often local in its tone, being pledged, as it were, to the admiration of its favorite subjects and a corresponding disregard of those with which it is not familiar. Particularly in Italy, where the municipal feeling has been so strong, the partisans of each school were greatly prejudiced. Each people also very naturally prefers its own to another's art, and does not always question its motives of preference. The Florentines have overlooked the merits of their rivals, the Venetians and Sieneese,—who, in turn, have reciprocated; while Italy, as a whole, has had but small regard for the works of other nations. England has been slow to recognize the great merits of the Southern schools; and France, Holland, and Germany are equally in the bondage of local tastes or transitory fashions. But true criticism is cosmopolitan. It tests merit according to the standard of the nature on which it is founded, not overlooking excellence in whatever respect or degree. A truly catholic view of art is the result only of its universal study. The critic may be just to all inspirations, and yet enjoy his own preferences. But, as Blackwood observes, too many “are self-endowed with the capacity to judge all matters relating to the fine arts just in proportion to the extent of their ignorance, because it is not difficult to condemn in general terms and to attain notoriety by shallow pretence.” Neither “the narrowness of sect nor the noise of party” should be heard in this matter. As a great gallery should represent all phases of art through their several stages of progress and decay, meeting all wants and tastes, so criticism should be based upon a foundation equally broad,—not proud of its erudition nor dictatorial, but with due humility uttering its opinions, prompt to sustain them, and yet ever ready to listen and learn.

“Old masters” are almost a by-word of doubt or contempt in America, owing to the influx of cheap copies and pseudo-originals of no artistic value whatever. It is the more important, therefore, that they should be represented among us by such characteristic specimens as are still to be procured. Some modern artists are jealous of or indifferent to past genius, and sedulously disparage it in view of their own immediate interests. Bayle St. John, in his “Louvre,” relates that he heard an associate of the Royal Academy deliberately and energetically declare, that, if it were in his power, he would slash with his knife all the works of the old masters, and thus compel people to buy modern. This spirit is both ungenerous and impolitic. If neither respect nor care for the works of departed talent be bestowed, what future has the living talent itself to look forward to? Art is best nourished by a general diffusion of aesthetic taste and feeling. There can be no invidious rivalry between the dead and the living. Alfred Tennyson looks not with evil eye upon John Milton. Why should a modern be jealous of a mediaeval artist? The public can love and appreciate both. Nor should it be forgotten that it is precisely in those countries where old art is most appreciated that the modern is most liberally sustained.



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'TENTY SCRAN'.

"Patience hath borne the bruise, and I the stroke."

"I think she's a-sinkin', Doctor," sobbed old Aunt Rhody, the nurse, as she came out of Mary Scranton's bed-room into the clean kitchen, where Doctor Parker sat before the fire, a hand on either knee, staring at the embers, and looking very grave.

Doctor Parker got up from the creaky chair, and went into the bed-room. It was very small, very clean, and two sticks of wood on the old iron dogs burned away gradually, and softened the cool April air.

Before this pretence of a fire sat an elderly woman, with grave, set features, an expression of sense and firmness, but a keen dark eye that raised question of her temper. Miss Lovina Perkins was her style, being half-aunt to the unpleasant-colored baby she now tended, rolled up in a flannel shawl, and permitted to be stupid undisturbedly, since its mother was dying.

Dying, evidently; she had not been conscious for several hours. Her baby had not had its welcome; she knew nothing, cared for nothing, felt nothing but the chill of the blood that stood still in her veins, and the choking of the heart that hardly beat.

Poor child! poor widow! Her head lay on the pillow, white as the linen, but of a different tint,—the indescribable pallor that you know and I know, who have seen it drawn over a dear face,—a tint that is best unknown, that cannot be reproduced by pen or pencil. Yet, for all its pallor, you saw at once that this face was still young, had been lovely, a true New-England beauty, quaint and trim and delicate as the slaty-gray snow-bird, with its white breast, and soft, bright eyes, that haunts the dusky fir-trees and dazzling hill-side slopes when no other bird dare show itself,—a quiet, shy creature, full of innocent trust and endurance, its chirp and low repetition dearer than the gay song of lark or robin, because a wintry song.

But Mary Perkins had never been called handsome in Deerfield; if they said she was "a real pretty girl," it only meant kindly and gentle, in the Connecticut vernacular; and Tom Scranton, the village joiner, was first to find out that the delicate, oval face, with its profuse brown hair, its mild hazel eyes, and smiling mouth, was "jest like a pictur'." So Tom and Mary duly fell in love, got married,—nobody objecting,—went West, and eight months afterward Mary came home with a coffin. Tom had fallen from a ladder, been taken up and brought home dead, and she had travelled back five hundred miles to bury him in Deerfield, beside his father and mother; for he was their only son.

There were about a hundred dollars left for Mary. She could not work now, and she went to board with her half-sister, the Deerfield tailoress.



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Mary Scranton was only nineteen; but she did not want to live,—not even for her baby's sake. All her sunshine and her strength went out of this world with Tom, and she had no energy to care to live without him. She did not say so to her sister,—for Miss 'Viny would have scolded her smartly,—nor did she tell Doctor Parker; but she prayed about it, and kept it in her heart all those silent days that she sat sewing baby-clothes, and looking forward to an hour that should, even through a death-agony, take her to Tom. She thought the baby would die, too, and then they should all be together;—for Mary had a positive temperament, without hope, because without imagination; what she had possessed and lost eclipsed with her all uncertainties of the future; and she thought seven times of Tom where she once thought of her child, though she took pains to make its garments ready, and knit its tiny socks, and lay the lumbering old cradle, that she had been rocked in, with soft and warm wrappings, lest, indeed, the child should live longer than its mother. So she sat in Miss 'Viny's bed-room in an old rush-bottomed rocking-chair, sewing and sewing, day after day, the persistent will and intent to die working out its own fulfilling, her white lips growing more and more bloodless, her transparent cheek more wan, and the temples, from which her lustreless hair was carelessly knotted away, getting more hollow and clear and sharp-angled.

And now she lay on the bed, one hand under her cheek, the other picking restlessly at the blanket,—for consciousness was fluttering back.

“Give me the brandy, Aunt Rhody,” said Doctor Parker, softly.

He poured a few drops into the spoon she brought, and held it to Mary's lips. The potent fluid stung the nerves into life again, and quickened the flickering circulation; her thin fingers lay quiet, her eyes opened and looked clear and calm at the Doctor. He tried to rouse her with an interest deeper to most women than their own agony or languor.

“You've got a nice little girl, Mary,” said he, cheerfully.

The ghost of a smile lit her face.

“I'm content,” said she, in a low whisper.

Aunt Rhody brought the baby and laid it on its mother's arm. The child stirred and cried, but Mary took no notice; her eyes were fixed and glazing. Suddenly she smiled a brilliant smile, stretched both arms upward, dropping her baby from its place. Only for one moment that recognizing look defied death and welcomed life; her arms dropped, her jaw fell;—it was over.

“I guess you'd better take the baby into the kitchen, Miss Loviny,” said Aunt Rhody; “'tisn't considered lucky to keep 'em round where folks has died.”



“Luck a’n’t anything,” grimly returned Lovina, who had squeezed her tears back, lest the two or three that inclined to fall should spot the baby’s blanket; “but I’m goin’ to take her out into the kitchen, because I calculate to open the winder in here.”



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So the baby and Aunt 'Viny went out.

It was a new thing and a hard thing for Lovina Perkins to have a baby on her hands; she would rather have charged herself with the care of a farm, or the building of a house; she could work, she could order, plan, regulate, and execute; but what to do with a baby? There it lay, helpless, soft, incapable, not to be scolded, or worked, or made responsible in any way, the most impracticable creature possible: a kitten she could have put into a basket at night, and set in the shed; a puppy she could and would have drowned; but a baby, an unlucky, red, screeching creature, with a soul, was worse than all other evils. However, she couldn't let it die; so she went after some milk, and, with Aunt Rhody's help, after much patient disgust, taught the child how to live, and it lived.

Mary Scranton was buried next to Tom, and the June grass grew over both their graves, and people thought no more about it; only every now and then Doctor Parker came to Miss Perkins's house to ask after "baby," who grew daily fat and fair and smiling; and on one of these occasions he met the minister, Parson Goodyear, who had come, as Miss 'Viny expressed it, "o' purpose to take me to do, because I ha'n't presented the child for baptism."

"Fact is," continued she, "I ha'n't an idea what *to* call her. I don't favor callin' of her Mary, because that was her mother's name, and I couldn't think of two on 'em at once; and Scriptor names are generally rather ha'sh. Miss Parker, Doctor, kind of favored her bein' called Aribelly, because there was one of that name rather come over in the Mayflower; but I think it's too mighty for a child that's got to work;—what do you say?"

"I think you're right, Miss 'Viny," said the Doctor, as gravely as he could.

"I don't believe in fine names myself. I should think you might do worse than to call the baby Content;—that was your own mother's name, wasn't it? and it was the last word Mary spoke."

"Well, now, that's quite an idea, Doctor! I guess I will."

"And you will present her on the first Sabbath in May?" said Parson Goodyear.

"Well, yes, if I'm spared," said Aunt 'Viny; and, being spared, on that sweet May-Sunday she carried the smiling little child up the aisle of the meeting-house, and had it baptized Content.

Strange to say,—yet not all strange,—before it was a year old, the baby had found its way quite down into the middle of Aunt 'Viny's heart. To be sure, it was a deal of trouble; it would ache and cry in a reasonless way, when nobody could tell what ailed it; it would take a great amount of caring-for with ungrateful silence and utter want of demonstration for a long time;—but then it was so helpless! —irresistible plea to a

woman!—and under all Miss 'Viny's rough exterior, her heart was as sweet as the kernel of a butternut, though about as hard to discover. True, she was



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hard of feature, and of speech, as hundreds of New-England women are. Their lives are hard, their husbands are harder and stonier than the fields they half-reclaim to raise their daily bread from, their existence is labor and endurance; no grace, no beauty, no soft leisure or tender caress mitigates the life that wears itself away on wash-tubs, cheese-presses, churns, cooking-stoves, and poultry; but truth and strength and purity lie clear in these rocky basins, and love lurks like a jewel at the bottom,—visible only when some divine sun-ray lights it up,—love as true and deep and healthy as it is silent and unknown.

So Miss 'Viny's hardness gave way before "baby." She could not feel unmoved the tiny groping hands about her in the night, the soft beatings of the little heart against her arm, the round downy head that would nestle on her neck to be rocked asleep; she could not resist that exquisite delight of miserable, exacting, feminine nature,—the knowledge that one thing in the world loved her better than anybody else. Sorry am I to betray this weakness of Aunt 'Viny's,—sorry to know how many strong-minded, intellectual, highly educated and refined women will object to this mean and jealous sentiment in a woman of like passions with themselves. I know, myself, that a lofty love will regard the good of the beloved object first, and itself last,—that jealousy is a paltry and sinful emotion; but, my dear creatures, I can't help it,—so it was. And if any one of you can, with a serene countenance and calm mind, see your husband devote himself to a much prettier, more agreeable, younger woman than yourself,—or hear your own baby scream to go from you to somebody else,—or even behold your precious female friend, your "congenial soul," as the Rosa Matilda literature hath it, fascinated by a young woman or young man to the neglect of yourself,—although in one and all of these instances the beloved object seeks his or her best good,—then let that superhuman female throw a stone at Aunt 'Viny;—but for the present she will not be lapidated.

Never, indeed, had she been quite as happy as now. Her life had been a routine of hard work. Love and marriage had never looked over the palings at her; and—to tell the truth—she had not suffered by their neglect, in her own estimation. She was one of those supernumerary women who are meant to do other people's work in life: servants, nurses, consolers; accepting their part with unconscious humility as a matter of course; quite as good as the Santas and Santissimas of legend and chronicle, and not nearly so intrusive. So this new phase had its own sweetness and special charm for Aunt 'Viny; the happiest hour in her day lying between daylight and dark, when waistcoats and jackets and trousers were laid aside, the dim light forbidding her to sew, and economy delaying the lamp,—so she could with a clear conscience spare half an hour, while the tea-kettle boiled, for undressing "baby,"



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rubbing the little creature down,—much as a groom might have done, only with a loving touch not kept for horses,—enduing it with a long night-gown, and toasting its shell-pink feet at the fire, till, between the luxury of ease and warmth and tending, “baby” cooed herself to sleep, and lay along Miss 'Viny's lap like a petted kitten, the firelight playing soft lights over its fair head, sealed eyelids, and parted lips, tinting the relaxed arm and funny dimpled fist with a rosy glow, while Aunt 'Viny's face took on a tender brooding gleam that nobody who had seen her in church on Sunday, severely crunching fennel, or looking daggers at naughty boys, could have believed possible. But this expression is an odd wonder-worker. I saw but the other day a bad-eyed, bronzed, “hard-favored” Yankee, with a head all angles, a dirty face, the air of a terrified calf, and the habiliments of a poor farmer; I looked at him aristocratically, and thanked the Lord for my mind, my person, and my manners, in true Pharisaic triumph,—when his little blue-eyed daughter came round the corner and pulled at the tail of his ragged coat. Why, the man was transfigured! I wondered he was willing to shake hands with me when I left him; I knew before that his hands were brown and big and dirty, and mine were little and white and soap-scented; but I thought afterwards I'd as lief have been Peter as myself just then, —and I think so still. Wherefore, young ladies all, learn from this that the true cestus, fabled—No! I shall make an essay on that matter some day; I will not inflict it here.

So, by dint of hard work, Aunt 'Viny brought up her dead sister's child in the way it should go, nor ever for one moment grudged her labor or her time. Neither did she spoil Content by over-indulgence; her good sense kept the child unharmed, taught her hardy and self-reliant habits, made her useful all the time, and, even if Nature had not been beforehand with her, would have made her happy. But 'Tenty had her father's firm and sunny character; she never cried but for good reason, and then screamed lustily and was over with it; fretting was out of the question,—she did not know how; her special faults were a strong will and a dogged obstinacy,—faults Miss 'Viny trained, instead of eradicating; so that 'Tenty emerged from district-school into the “'Cademy's” higher honors as healthy and happy an individual as ever arrived at the goodly age of fourteen without a silk dress or a French shoe to peacock herself withal. Every morning, rain or shine, she carried her tin pail to Doctor Parker's for milk, hung on the tea-kettle, set the table, wiped the dishes, weeded a bit of the prolific onion-bed, then washed her hands and brushed her hair, put on the green sun-bonnet or the blue hood, as the weather pleased, and trotted off to school, where she plodded over fractions, and wearied herself out with American history, and crammed geography, and wrote copies, for a whole year, when Aunt 'Viny thought she might learn her trade, being a stout girl of fifteen, and the 'Cademy knew her no more.



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There is but little incident in a New-England village of the Deerfield style and size,—full of commonplace people, who live commonplace lives, in the same white and brown and red houses they were born in, and die respectably in their beds, and are quietly buried among the mulleins and dewberry-vines in the hill-side graveyard. Mary Scranton's life and death, though they possessed the elements of a tragedy, were divested of their tragic interest by this calm and pensive New-England atmosphere. Nothing so romantic had happened there for many years, or did occur again for more; yet nobody knew a romance had come and gone. People in Deerfield lived their lives with a view to this world and the next, after the old Puritanic fashion somewhat modified, and so preserved the equilibrium. No special beauty of the town attracted summer-visitors. It was a village of one street, intended to be straight, crossing a decorous brook that turned the mill, and parting itself just below the church and the "store," to accommodate a small "green," where the geese waddled, hissed, and nibbled Mayweed all summer, and the boys played ball sometimes after school. There was a post-office in the "store," beside boots, sugar, hams, tape, rake-tails, ploughs, St. Croix molasses, lemons, calico, cheese, flour, straw hats, candles, lamp-oil, crackers, and rum,—a good assortment of needles and thread, a shelf of school-books, a seed-drawer, tinware strung from the ceiling, apples in a barrel, coffee-mills and brooms in the windows, and hanging over the counter, framed and glazed, the following remarkable placard, copied out in a running hand:—

No Credit Will be Given in This Store after This Date. Under no circumstances whatever. My Reasons

I cannot buy goods or do business without cash, and as the bulk of my capital is now trusted out with the promise to pay which that promise has never been full filled I deem it a duty to myself and my Cash paying customers to sell goods for cash at the lowest market price.

I shall endeavor make it an interest of my customers to pay cash for all goods purchas by them. I shall offer goods at reduced rates as an inducement for all to pay cash.

If I am asked if I give credit I want this to be my answer

No Never.

ELKANAH MILLS.

Distrust not, O reader! This is *verbatim et literatim* a copy.

In front of the "store" was a hay-scale, across the way a tavern, and, at respectful distances along the street, white or red houses, with the inevitable front-door, south-door, kitchen-and shed-floor, lilacs and altheas before the windows, fennel, tiger-lilies, sweet-brier, and Bar_gun_dy rosebushes, with red "pinies" and livid hydrangeas, or now



and then a mat of stonecrop and “voilets” along the posy-bed that edged cabbage and potato-plots, while, without the fence, Bouncing-Bets adorned the road-side, or blue sea-pinks from the pasture-lot strayed beyond its rails.



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Nothing happened in Deerfield; so nothing happened to “Tenty Scran’,” as the school-children nicknamed her. She earned her living now at tailoring and dress-making; for Miss ‘Viny was much “laid up with rheumatiz,” and could not go about as was her wont. Also, the art and mystery of housekeeping became familiar to the child, and economy of the domestic sort was a virtue she learned unconsciously by continual practice. She went to church on Sundays in a clean calico frock and a white cape, sat in the singers’ seat and uplifted her voice in Lenox and Mear, Wells and Bethesda, shared her fennel with the children in the gallery, looked out the text in her Bible, and always thought Parson Goodyear’s sermon was intended for her good, and took it in accordingly.

I should like to say that ‘Tenty Scran’ was pretty; in fact, I have always regarded it as one of the chief pleasures of a literary calling, that you are not obliged to take people as they are, but can make them to order, since it takes no more pen-scratches to describe luxuriant curls and celestial eyes and roseate lips than it does to set forth much less lovely things; but when it comes to stubborn facts, why, there you have to come down to this world, and proceed accordingly,—so I must say ‘Tenty was not handsome. She had fresh rosy cheeks and small brown eyes, hair to match the eyes, a nose undeniably pug, a full, wide mouth, and strong, white teeth,—fortunately, since every one showed when she laughed, and she laughed a great deal. Then she had a dumpy figure, and good large hands and feet, a look of downright honesty and good-temper, and a nice, clear voice in speech or singing, though she only sang hymns. But for all this, everybody in Deerfield liked ‘Tenty Scran’; old and young, men and maidens, all had a kindly welcome for her; and though Aunt ‘Viny did not say much, she felt the more.

But “everybody has their sorrers,” as Hannah-Ann Hall remarked, in one of her “Cademy” compositions, and ‘Tenty came to hers when she was about twenty-two. Miss Lovina was almost bed-ridden with the rheumatism that year, and ‘Tenty had to come back twice a day from her work to see to her, so that she made it up by staying evenings, against her usual rules. Now about the middle of that May, Doctor Parker’s scapegrace son Ned came home from sea,—a great, lazy, handsome fellow, who had run away from Deerfield in his fifteenth year, because it was so “darned stupid,” to use his own phrase. Doctor Parker was old, and Mrs. Parker was old, too, but she called it nervous; and home was stupider than ever to Ned, particularly as he had broken his ankle and was laid on the sofa for a good six weeks at least. About the second of those weeks, Content Scranton came to “do over” Mrs. Parker’s summer-gowns, and put her caps together after their semi-annual starching.

Of course ‘Tenty sat in the “keeping-room,” where the old sofa was; and of course Ned had nothing better to do than to watch the gay, good little bee at her toil, hear her involuntary snatches of hymn-singing, laugh at her bright simplicity, and fall in love with her, sailor-fashion,—“here to-day, and gone tomorrow.”



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'Tenty stayed a long time at Mrs. Parker's that summer; she seemed to get on so slowly with her work, but, as Mrs. Parker said,—

“Why, the fact of it is, 'Tenty is so handy and so spry, I can't see how to spare her. Ed'ard, he wants a sight of waitin' on; and I am so nervous, and husband is afflicted with neuralogy, beside that he is considerable in years, so we can't be around as we used to be; and 'Tenty steps about and gets Ed'ard his books, and his victuals, and fixes his pillows, and keeps the light out of his eyes, so't he isn't contented a moment of time without she's right there.”

And while Mrs. Parker was conveying these ideas to Miss 'Viny, they were being illustrated in her own house after this fashion:—

“'Tenty,” (three weeks had abolished the Miss,) “won't you give me that blue book off the shelf?”

'Tenty sprang up and handed the book, and went to her work again, beginning under her breath to hum

“Sweet fields beyond”——

“Dear me! this pillow has slipped away. 'Tenty, won't you fix it?”

Jump the second;—the pillow is put straight under Ned's dark curls, though he is so helpless she has to raise his head with one arm and arrange the cushion with the other; then the seam and hymn recommence.

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling”——

“I wish I had a drink of cold water.”

Jump the third;—'Tenty finishes her hymn on the way to the well, and brings the water, and holds the invalid up to drink it, and then the pillows fall again, and the book slips down, and everything goes wrong and has to be re-arranged, and at length 'Tenty goes back to her place by the window quite indisposed to sing, but glowing with a new, shy pleasure, for Ned had looked up at her with those great gray eyes that said so much more than his lips did, and laid his cheek against the stubbed hand that arranged his pillows, and said,—“Oh, 'Tenty! how good you are!” in tones that meant, “and how I love you!” as well, though he did not say it.

So matters progressed from day to day, Ned needing more and more care, till he made his first progress across the room with a cane and the help of 'Tenty's shoulder; after which experiment he began to recover rapidly, impelled by the prospect of getting away from that house and being free to go where he chose again.



For 'Tenty had ceased to amuse or interest him as much as she had done; six weeks had done away with the novelty of her deepening color and shy dropping eyes; beside, she laughed less, almost ceased to sing, sighed softly, and looked quiet and grave, instead of gay and unconscious. It was the old fable of sport to the boys and death to the frogs. She thought he was in earnest; he knew he was amusing himself.

Miss 'Viny noticed the change in her darling, but she was a woman who had acquired wisdom by experience, and she said nothing; she only grew more exacting of 'Tenty's presence, wanted her earlier in the evening, found fault with her food, and behaved generally so unlike her usual stern patience, that Content was really roused out of her dreaminess to wonder what ailed Aunt 'Viny.



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As soon as Ned Parker was able to get out of doors again, he was heard of in every house in the village, making himself agreeable after his own fashion,—drinking hard cider with the old farmers, praising their wives' gingerbread and spruce-beer, holding skeins for the girls, going on picnics, huckleberrings, fishing-excursions, apple-bees, riding Old Boker, his father's horse, bare-backed down the street, playing ball on the green, and frequenting singing-school with one pretty girl and another, till all Deerfield shook its head and remarked that "That 'ere Ned Parker was a master-hand for carryin' on." And 'Tenty sewed harder than ever.

What makes me always put love into a story, Aunt Grundy? Why, because love is popular; because nine-tenths of the people who read smile to see the first and faintest hint of the tender passion in what they read; because a story without love is like bricks without straw; because a life without it is a life no doubt comfortable to lead, but uninteresting to hear. Love is your only democrat; Ethelinda in Fifth Avenue, glittering with the clear splendor of diamonds, and rustling like a white-birch-swamp with pale silks, gleaming through the twilight before an opera, and looking violets at Sydney Hamilton over the top of her inlaid fan, is no more thrilled and rapt and tortured by the Disturber in Wings, than Bidy in the kitchen, holding tryst with her "b'y" at the sink-room window. Thousands of years ago, Theseus left Ariadne tearing the ripples of her amber-bright hair, and tossing her white arms with the tossing surf, in a vain agony of distraction and appeal: poets have sung the flirtation, painters have painted it; the story is an eternal legend of pain and passion, illuminated with lucent tints of age and the warm South, outlined with the statuesque purity of classic scenery and classic diction: but I myself never for a moment believed that Ariadne was a particle more unhappy or pitiable than Nancy Bunker, our seamstress, was, when Hiram Fenn went West to peddle essences, and married a female Hoosier whose father owned half a prairie. They would by no means make as lovely a picture; for Nancy's upper jaw projects, and she has a wart on her nose, very stiff black hair, and a shingle figure, none of which adds grace to a scene; and Hiram went off in the Slabtown stage, with a tin-box on his knees, instead of in a shell-shaped boat with silken sails; but I know Nancy reads love-stories with great zest, and I know she had a slow fever after Hiram was married. For, after all, love is the same thing ever since Paradise,—the unwearied tradition, the ever new presence, the rapture or the anguish unspeakable; and while 'Tenty Scran' sat and sewed at Squire Hall's new linen pantaloons, she set every stitch with a sigh, and sewed on every button with a pang that would have made Ariadne put both arms round her, and kiss her long and close, a sister in bonds,—though purple robes with jewelled borders, crescented pearls, and armlets of gold, would not have been at all congruous hugging a sixpenny calico with a linen collar.



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Not that Ned neglected 'Tenty; he could not follow her about from house to house, and she had done sewing for his mother, and in the evening Aunt 'Viny always needed her. But more than once he joined her after church, walked home to the door with her, and cheered her simple soul with his familiar looks and tones, and words of praise that made Adriadne Scran' think Theseus Parker a little more than mere man, something altogether adorable. However, she knew he was having a very good time when he didn't see her at all. The real reason why she ached and sighed over Squire Hall's pantaloons was, that she heard Ned in the next room helping Hannah-Ann Hall pack up the dinner for their grand Snake Hill picnic, and diverting the same Hannah-Ann with such wit and humor and frolic, that she declared several times she should split, and begged him not to be so funny.

Now 'Tenty never had a pleasant day, unless Ned was with her,—it had got as far as that; and the idea that he could and did enjoy himself so thoroughly and heartily without her was a dull pang that ate into her soul continually, and made her forlorn. Oh, these women! these pitiful creatures! not magnanimity enough in a whole race of them to be visible to the naked eye! jealous dogs-in-the-manger! If they weren't useful domestically, I should vote for having them exterminated from this great generous world, and give place to some better institution, which no doubt could be got up by the india-rubber companies or the scientific conventions. But as Alphonso of Castile did not make the world, one must take it as it is; and I will say, for the encouragement of philosophers, that I have known one magnanimous woman, and she a beautiful woman, moreover.

So 'Tenty sewed, and ached, and made Aunt 'Viny's bed and her gruel, read her Bible and prayed for Ned Parker, and thought she was growing very old, till one night he asked her to go to singing-school with him; whereupon she put on a pink calico dress, and began to recover her youth most wonderfully.

They went to Master Solon's singing-school, it is true; but they never got home to Aunt 'Viny's till half past nine, and 'Tenty never could remember what tunes they sang; and the singers in church next Sunday asked her why she didn't come in when she got as far as the door, and 'Tenty said she thought the benches were all full! Truth, stern tutor of the historian, compels me to confess that 'Tenty and Ned Parker were sitting on the meeting-house steps most of that evening, in a touching attitude; for Ned was telling her how his ship had come into port and was going to sail again for South America, and he had an offer to join her as second mate; so he had got to say goodbye to his kind little nurse, and so forth and so on, with admonitions never to forget him, and how he never should forget her, and here was a little locket; and finally, sobered by her stifled sobs, Ned bent down his handsome head, and said, softly,—



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“Won’t you kiss me for good-bye, ’Tenty?”

Dear me! of course she kissed him, and thought how good he was to kiss her, and told him so. Whereupon he got better and better; and when the sexton came to ring the bell for nine o’clock, they only just heard his steps in time to steal away unobserved through the starry darkness, and go round past the pine-grove. So reaching home at the aforesaid late hour, where Mr. Ned became good again when he stooped to unlatch the gate, ’Tenty looked so fresh and rosy and sweet when she came in, that Aunt ’Viny growled to herself, found fault with her gruel, scolded at the blanket, tipped over the teacup, and worried ’Tenty back into stern reality, till the girl stole off to her bed. Not to sleep,—oh, no! Waste such sweetness on sleep? Never! She lay there, broad awake, and thought it all over, and how very nice it was to have anybody love her so much, and how she should like to be handsome and smart and worthy so much honor, till the cock crowed for dawn, and then she fell asleep, nowise daunted by the recollection that Ned had said nothing to her except that she was as sweet as a ripe blackberry and as pretty as a daisy; for to her innocent logic actions spoke louder than words, and she knew that anybody who did so (?) must love her enough to marry her.

So Ned sailed for Valparaiso, and ’Tenty stayed at home. Aunt ’Viny got no better in all those winter-snows and blows; they are not favorable to rheumatism, these New-England airs; so ’Tenty had enough to do; but she was happy and contented. And winter crept by and merged into spring, and spring into autumn, before Deerfield heard any news of Ned Parker; though, in the mean time, one report after another of his being engaged to various girls, at length settling with marked weight on Hannah-Ann Hall, spread over the village and was the theme of Sunday-noon gossips and sewing-society meetings, greatly to ’Tenty’s contempt and amusement,—though the contempt was too bitter and the amusement too tremulous to be pleasant. For did not she know better? People don’t kiss people when they don’t like them: a self-evident proposition, but one that required some assertion and repetition to weigh its right weight in her mind.

Poor little ’Tenty! In that cold November there came a letter to Doctor Parker just as he was getting out of his gig, after a round of visits. The postmaster, going home to dinner, handed it to him, and, going back from dinner, was called in to lift him up-stairs to his bed. Ned Parker had been wrecked off the Horn, the crew took to their boats, and only one boat, with one surviving man to tell the tale, was picked up by a whaler coming back to New Bedford from the Pacific; all the rest were gone. Doctor Parker was old and feeble; this only child was all he had; paralysis smote his body when the smitten mind bowed before that dire knowledge, and he never looked up again. Content would have given anything



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to go and nurse him; but she, too, was stunned, and in the whirl of that great grief even Aunt 'Viny's demands were no more to her than a dull mechanic routine that she could hardly force her trembling steps to carry through. So she stayed at home, sewing all day and crying all night, and looking generally miserable, though she said nothing; for whom could she speak to? Aunt 'Viny had resolutely kept her suspicions about Ned Parker to herself, though well she knew who had walked home from meeting with 'Tenty in those pleasant autumn Sundays now gone, pleasure and all. But Miss 'Viny believed in silence on such matters, and had held her peace; now it was too late to break it. Nor was 'Tenty disposed to tell her anything; for it occurred for the first time to her innocent soul that she had nothing to tell. So they both went on their way, with secret pity and still endurance.

After a brief illness of three days, poor old Doctor Parker's weary soul and body gave out; he died on a Thursday afternoon, and, in country-fashion, it was proposed to bury him on Sunday, from the church. Sunday came, cold and raw and blustering. 'Tenty took her usual seat in the gallery, but took it early, that she might see the "mourners" come in and fill the front pews kept for them. She wiped away the tears from her eyes, and looked on with a feeling of half envy, thinking of the son to whom no funeral honors should ever now be paid, slumbering in the cruel seas that break and roar about the Horn. She counted the bearers, all known faces; she watched Parson Goodyear into the pulpit; she saw Mrs. Parker on her brother's arm. But there was one other veiled female figure, shrouded also in black, whose presence she could no way account for; and when Parson Goodyear made his first long prayer, and sent up an earnest petition for the doubly bereaved woman before him, what did he mean by adding,—“And Thine other handmaid, in the bloom of her years bereaved of hope and promise,—her whom Thou hast afflicted from afar off, and made a widow before Thee”? What *did* it mean? 'Tenty's breath fluttered, and she turned cold. Just at that moment, one of her neighbors murmured under her bonnet,—“That's Hanner-Ann, next to Miss Parker; only to think how sly she's kep' it a hull year! And she engaged to Ed'ard all that time! I wouldn't never ha' believed it, ef she hadn't had his letters to show for't, an' a gold watch he gin her; an' Miss Parker says she's knowed it all the time.”

Little more did 'Tenty know of psalm or sermon; some whirling sounds passed her, and then a rush of people. She was last to leave the church; and when she got home, and went to make Miss 'Viny's tea, as she tilted the long well-sweep down and up to draw her pail of water, she looked earnestly down the depths of crystal, as if to see what lay below, then quietly opened her left hand above it;—something bright fell, dashed the clear drops from a fern that grew half-way down, tinkled against a projecting stone, made a little splash, and was gone. 'Tenty took up her pail and went into the shed; and Ned Parker's locket lies at the bottom of the well, for all I know, to this day. Thenceforth 'Tenty cried no more; though for many weeks she was grave, wretched, pining.



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Winter set in with furious storms and heavy snows, but, strange to say, Aunt 'Viny grew better; she could sit up; at length could move about; and at last, one night when she sat by the fire knitting, suddenly looked up at 'Tenty and said,—

“You haven't seen Miss Parker lately, have you, Content?”

'Tenty shivered a little.

“No, I have not, Aunt 'Viny.”

“Well, it appears as though you should go and see her; she's a weakly woman, but she can set her back up dreadful against the Lord's doings, and I don't know but what such kind of people need comfortin' more 'n others. It's a world full o' gales, this is, and everybody hasn't learnt the grass's lesson, to bend when the wind blows.”

“The Lord sends the wind, Aunt 'Viny.”

“The Lord sends everything, only folks don't allow it; they'd ruther lay it to the door of man, so's to feel free to worry. But the worst thing He ever does send to people is their own way, 'Tenty; and you'll know it before you die.”

'Tenty turned away to her work, hardly convinced by Miss 'Viny's wisdom, and inwardly thinking she should like to try her own way for all that. However, 'Tenty suffered far less than she might have done, for indignation helped her; the feeling that Ned Parker had deliberately amused himself with her, while she was in mortal earnest, had lowered him not a little from his height. Then Aunt 'Viny's care diverted her sad thoughts from herself, by sending her upon daily errands to the poor and the sick, so that 'Tenty's pleasant face and voice became the hope of the hour to more than one poverty-stricken or dying woman; and so her own grief, measured by theirs, shrank and withdrew itself day by day, and became something she could now and then forget. And more than all, her naturally sweet temperament and healthy organization helped her to recover.

Myriads have died of a broken heart, no doubt, but it was physiologically broken; grief torments into sleeplessness, sleeplessness destroys the appetite, then strength goes, the circulation fails, and any latent evil lurking in the constitution springs on the helpless and willing victim and completes its work. This is a shockingly unromantic and material view to take of the matter, and brings to nought poems by the hundred and novels by the thousand; but is it not, after all, more true to God and human nature to believe in this view than to think He made men or women to be the sport of passion and circumstance, even to their destruction?

'Tenty Scran' was too healthy to break her heart,—and too unselfish; so she gradually recovered her bright bloom, and went to her work, and took care of Aunt 'Viny, as energetically and gayly as ever. Hannah-Ann Hall married a lawyer from Meriden, and



moved away, quite consoled for Ned, within three years; but 'Tenty favored no lovers, though one or two approached her. There are some—women who are like the aloe,—their life admits



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of but one passion. It comes late and lasts long, but never is repeated; the bloom dies out of its resplendence and odor, but no second flowering replaces it. She was one of these. But what one man lost in her love, a thousand of her fellow-creatures gained. 'Tenty was the Deerfield blessing, though she never knew it herself. All the sick wanted her; all the children pulled at her gown, and smiled at her from their plays; her heart and her hands were so full, no regret found place to nestle there, and silence brooded dove-like over that sorrowful time gone by.

After a while, some ten years after Ned Parker's death, Miss 'Viny took to her bed again,—this time never to rise. Slow consumption had fastened on her, and she knew well what was before her, for so had her mother died; but no saint was ever more patient than she. 'Tenty was the best of nurses, and had even learned to speak of her aunt's death without a tremor in her voice, the last triumph of her unselfishness; for Miss 'Viny could bear no agitation, and yet needed to speak of the event she neither dreaded nor desired.

"'Tenty," said she, one day, "I feel a sight easier to leave you than if you'd married Ned Parker."

"Why, Aunty?" said Content, a light blush only testifying her surprise at this address.

"Because he was a selfish feller; he always was. I believe some women are better off to marry, though I can't say but what I believe a single state is as good; but a woman that gets a real lazy, selfish feller gets pretty near the worst thing there is. I seemed kind of hard, 'Tenty, them days, but I had feelin' enough."

"I don't doubt but what you had, Aunt 'Viny; only one can't see far ahead, you know, when it rains. I'm sure I've been as happy as a clam these last six years, and I don't calculate to resk that by gettin' married, never. Besides, I've learned what you used to call the grass's lesson, pretty well."

Here Parson Goodyear interrupted the conversation, and it never was resumed; for the week after, Miss 'Viny died, and Content was left alone in her little house, "to battle with the world," as people say. But no conflict ensued, since it takes two to make a quarrel, and 'Tenty was on good terms with the Deerfield world. So she lived on, peaceful and peace-making, till forty found her as comely and as happy as ever, a source of perpetual wonder to the neighbors, who said of her, "She has got the dreadfulest faculty of gettin' along I ever see," and thereby solved the problem, for all except one, and that other one 'Tenty's opposite in every trait, Miss Mehitable Hall, Hannah-Ann's older sister, an old maid of the straitest sect, and one who was nowise sustained under the inflictions of life by the consciousness of enough money to support her, and friends to care for her approaching age.



It was Miss Hitty Hall's delight to be miserable: rather an Irish expression, but the only one that suits her case. One bright October afternoon she came over to see Content, bringing her blue knitting, sure symptom of a visitation. 'Tenty welcomed her with her usual cordial homeliness, gave her the easiest chair she had, and commenced hospitalities.



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“Do lay off your things, Miss Hall, and set awhile; I haven’t seen you for quite a spell.”

“Well, I don’t really know how to,” replied Miss Hitty. “I don’t know but what everything will go to rack while I’m away. My help is dreadful poor,—I can’t calculate for her noway. I shouldn’t wonder if she was settin’ in the keepin’-room this minute, looking at my best books.”

“Oh, I guess not, Miss Hitty. Now do let me take off your bunnet, and make yourself easy. Bridget can’t do much harm, and you’re such a stranger.”

“Well, I don’t know but what I will,—there! Don’t put yourself out for me, ’Tenty,—I’ll set right here. Dear me! what a clever house this is! A’n’t you lonesome? I do think it’s dreadful to be left all alone in this wicked world; it appears as though I couldn’t endure it noways, sometimes.”

“Why, Miss Hitty! I’m sure you’re extreme well off. Supposing, now, you had married a poor man, and had to work all your life,—or a cross man, always a-findin’ fault, or”——

“Well, that’s a consideration, re’llly.—Now there’s Hanner-Ann’s husband,—he’s always nag-naggin’ at her for something she’s done or ha’n’t done, the whole enduring time. She’s real ailing, and he ha’n’t no patience,—but then he’s got means, and she wants for nothing. She had, to say, seven silk dresses, when I was there last time, and things to match,—that’s something.—But I’m sure you have to work as hard as though you was a minister’s wife, ’Tenty. I don’t see how you do keep up.”

“Oh, I like work, Miss Hitty. It kind of keeps my spirits up; and all the folks in Deerfield are as clever to me as though I belonged to ’em. I have my health, and I don’t want for anything. I think I’m as well off as the Queen.”

“You haven’t had no great of troubles,” groaned Miss Hitty. “I’ve suffered so many ’flections I’m most tired out; them is what wears on people, ’flections by death.”

“I don’t know,” meekly answered ’Tenty; “I’ve had some, but I haven’t laid ’em up much. I felt bad while they lasted; but I knew other folks’s was so much worse, I was kind of shy about feelin’ too bad over my troubles.”

“Well, you’ve got a real faculty at takin’ things easy; now I’m one of the feelin’ kind. I set down often and often to knit, and get a-thinkin’ over times back, and things people said and did years ago, and how bad I felt, till I feel jest so ag’in, and I get a-cryin’ till it seems as though I should screech right out, and I can’t sleep, nor I can’t do nothing.”

“A’n’t you borrowin’ trouble a little bit, Miss Hitty? I’ve kind of figured it out that it’s best to let the things that’s dead and done for stay so. I don’t know as we’ve got any call to remember ’em. ’The Lord requireth that which is past,’ it says in the Bible; and I’ve



always looked upon that as a kind of a hint to men that it wa'n't their business, but the Lord's."

"Oh, it's all very well to talk, 'Tenty Scranton!—talk, do!—but 'tisn't so mighty easy to practise on't."



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“Why, now, I think it’s the easiest way, by a sight, Miss Hitty. I didn’t mean to cast it up against you, for I know it’s partly natur’, but I do think folks can help natur’ more’n they’re generally willing to allow. I know it does seem as if you couldn’t help thinkin’ about troubles sometimes, and it’s quite a chore to keep bright; but then it seems so much more cheery not to be fretted over things you can’t help, and it is such a sight pleasanter for everybody else! I declare, it does seem jest as though the Lord had made this world for folks to have a good time in, only they don’t all know how, and I always feel a call to help ’em.”

“You’re a master-piece to talk, ’Tenty,—but it don’t make the difference with me it does with some folks; it seems as if I should ha’ had a better time almost any way beside my way. I get more and more failin’ every day,—I’m pretty near gone now. I don’t know but what I shall die any time. I suffer so with rheumatiz, and I’m troubled considerable with a risin’ of the lungs; and sometimes I do think I’ve got a spine in my back, it aches and creaks so nights.”

“Why, I was thinking, since you set here, Miss Hitty, how spry you be, and you’ve got a real ’hullsome look to your face; I should say you’d grown fat.”

“Fat!” exclaimed the indignant spinster; “about as fat as a hen’s forehead! Why, Content Scranton! I’m dreadful poor,—poor as Job’s turkey; why, my arms is all bones and sinners.”

“You don’t say so! I guess that’s knitting, Miss Hitty; you do knit beautiful. Is that worsted or cotton you’re at now?”

Praise allayed Miss Hitty’s wounded self-pity. She grew amiable under its slow-dropping dews always, as ’Tenty knew.

“Oh, this a’n’t anything to boast of. I call this common knitting; it’s a pair of socks I promised Miss Warner for her boy. Speakin’ of her boy Ned makes me think;—have you heard the news, ’Tenty?”

“No, I haven’t heard any.”

“Well, it’s jest like a story-book. Ned Parker,—he’t was Doctor Parker’s son, an’ promised to our Hanner-Ann,—he’s turned up, it appears. He wa’n’t drownded, but he was washed ashore, and the Indians they took him, and he wasn’t able to get away for ten year; then a whaler’s crew caught sight of him, havin’ slopped there, for water, and took him aboard, and he’s been the world over since. He calculated everybody to Deerfield was dead and married, so he didn’t come back; but now he is a-comin’ back, for he’s lost a leg, and he’s got some money, and they say he is a-goin’ to settle down here.”



“Has he come yet, Miss Hitty?”

“No, they’re expectin’ of him to Miss Warner’s every day;—you know she was Miss Parker’s half-brother’s wife.”

“Yes, I have heared she was. But, Miss Hitty, don’t roll up your work.”

“Oh, I must be a-goin’,—it’s time; my help will be standin’ on her head by this time, like enough. I don’t see but what one Irish girl is about as confinin’ as seven children, I’m sure.”



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With which despairing remark, Miss Hitty put on her shawl and calash and departed; while Content filled her teakettle and prepared for supper.

But while the kettle boiled, she sat down by the window, and thought about Miss Hitty's news. Her first feeling was one of surprise at herself, a sort of sad surprise, to feel how entirely the love that once threatened to wreck her life had died out of it. Hard, indeed, it is to believe that love can ever die! The young girl clings passionately even to her grief, and rejects as an insult the idea that such deep regret can become less in all a lifetime,—that love, immortal, vital, all-pervading, can perish from its prime, and flutter away into dust like the dead leaves of a rose. Yet is it not the less true. Time, cold reason, bitter experience, all poison its life-springs; respect, esteem, admiration, all turn away from a point that offers no foothold for their clinging; and she who weeps to-day tears hot as life-blood ten years hereafter may look with cool distaste at the past passion she has calmly weighed and measured, and thank God that her wish failed and her hope was cut down. Yet there is a certain price to pay for all such experience, to such a heart as sat in the quieted bosom of Content. Had it been possible for her to love again, she would have felt the change in her nature far less; but with the stream, the fountain also had dried, and she was conscious that an aridness, unpleasant and unnatural, threatened to desolate her soul, and her conflict with this had been the hardest battle of all. It is so hard to love voluntarily,—to satisfy one's self with minor affections,—to know that life offers no more its grandest culmination, its divinest triumph,—to accept a succession of wax-lights because the sun and the day can return no more,—above all, to feel that the capacity of receiving that sunlight is fled,—that, so far, one's own power is eternally narrowed, like the loss of a right hand or the blinding of a right eye! Patience endures it, but even patience weeps to think how the fair intent of the Maker is marred,—to see the mutilated image, the brokenness of perfection!

Not that 'Tenty was conscious of all these ideas. They simplified themselves to her simple nature in a brief soliloquy, as she sat looking at the splendid haze of October, glorifying the scarlet maples and yellow elms of Deerfield Street, now steeped in a sunset of purpled crimson that struck its level rays across the sapphire hill-tops and transfigured briefly that melancholy earth dying into winter's desolations.

“Well, it is curious to think I ever cared so much for anybody as I did for Ned Parker! poor, selfish cre'tur', just playing with me for fun, as our kitty does with a mouse! and I re'lly thought he was a fine man! Live and learn, I declare for't! He let me know what kind of cre'turs men are, though. I haven't had to be pestered with one all my life, I'm thankful: that's one good thing to come out of evil. I don't know but what I should like to feel as wide awake again as I did then; but 't isn't worth the price.”



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Saying which, Miss 'Tenty brewed her tea, spread her bread and butter, and with a bit of cheese made her savory meal, cleared it away, washed the dishes, and resumed her work as peacefully as if her life had been all as serene as today.

Ned Parker did come back to Deerfield, and settled there,—a coarse, red-faced, stout, sailor-like man, with a wooden leg. Ten years in Patagonia and ten years of whaling had not improved his aspect or his morals. He swore like a pirate, chewed, smoked a pipe, and now and then drank to excess; and by way of elegant diversion to these amusements, fell in love with Content Scranton! Her trim figure, her bright, cheerful face, her pretty, neat little house and garden, the rumored “interest-money,” that was the fruit of years of hard work and saving, all attracted this lazy, selfish man, who, remembering his youth, fancied he had only to ask, to receive; and was struck with astonishment to hear,—

“No, thank you,” in a very calm, clear tone, answered to his proposition.

“Good Lord! you women are queer craft! I swear, I thought you'd lay to when I h'isted signals; I ha'n't forgot past times and the meetin'-house steps, if you have, 'Tenty Scranton.”

“You've forgotten Hannah-Ann Hall, I guess,” retorted the indignant little woman.

Ned Parker swore a great oath; he *had* forgotten that passage,—though only for a moment.

“Look here!” said 'Tenty, coloring with quiet wrath. “I cannot be friendly, even, with a man that talks that way. You had your sport, makin' believe you liked me, and I didn't know better than to believe you was an honest man. I did think a sight of you then, Ed'ard Parker. I a'n't ashamed to own it. I had reason to,—for your actions was louder than words. But when I come to know you hadn't meant nothing by all your praises and kisses and fine words, except just to have your own fun while you stayed, no matter what become of me, I see, after I'd got the tears out of my eyes, what kind of a self-seekin', mean, paltry man it was that could carry on so with an innocent young girl, and I hadn't no more respect for you than I have for a potato-peeling. I've lived to bless the Lord that kept me from you, and I a'n't going to take my blessings back. It's because I do remember them times that I say No, now. Your locket is at the bottom of our well; but any love I had with it is drowned deeper, down to the bottom of nothing. I wish you well, and to mend your ways; but I don't want to see you here, never!”

After this pungent dismissal, nothing was left for Ned Parker but to hobble from the house, cursing to himself for shame, while 'Tenty buried her face in her apron and cried as bitterly as if fifteen, instead of fifty, assailed her with its sorrows.



Why did she cry? Who knows? Perhaps, if you, my dear friend, longing for the face that bloomed, the lips that kissed, the eyes that smiled for you, years ago, should suddenly be confronted by those features, after years of death and decay had done their ghastly work on them, bones grinning from their clinging morsels of clay, you, too, might hide your head and cry with terror and disgust and regret. And again you might not. As I said before, who knows?



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But after this, Content subsided into her peaceful routine. Ned Parker drank himself into delirium-tremens, spent all his money, and came upon the town. But at that juncture, the Reverend Everett Goodyear, Parson Goodyear's son and successor, interfered in his behalf, hired a room and a nurse for him, and had him taken care of in the most generous and faithful way for the remaining year-and-a-half of his life. Mr. Goodyear said he was acting for Parker's friends; some said he had a rich uncle, who was moved to compassion at last; some thought it was Hannah-Ann Hall; but only one person knew, and she said nothing.

The day Ned Parker died, the young minister stepped in to see 'Tenty Scran', and told her he was gone. Content did not cry nor smile.

"I'm glad he's rested," said she; "though I haven't no certainty about his state hereafter."

"You must leave that with the Lord, Miss Content," said Mr. Goodyear. "You have done what was right; you can't think He will do less."

"That's a fact; and now I expect my last trouble is over."

"But it has taken almost all your money," hesitatingly replied the minister.

"Well, that's the least of my concerns, Mr. Goodyear," smiled 'Tenty. "I'm spared my hands yet, and I sha'n't want for nothing while they last. When I get helpless, I expect the Lord will take care of me. I sha'n't worry about it till it comes."

"That is philosophy, certainly," said Mr. Goodyear.

"I don't know as it's that; but I guess it's six of common-sense and half-a-dozen of religion; I always thought they was near about the same thing. Fact is, people don't die of troubles in this world; they die of frettin' at 'em, only they don't seem to know it."

"According to that rule, you won't die this long time, Miss 'Tenty," said the minister, unable to resist a smile.

"Well, I don't know, Sir. I guess I shall live as long as I want to; and I expect I shall die content. I a'n't troubled."

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," murmured Mr. Goodyear, as he walked away.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF IRVING.

BY HIS PUBLISHER.

You are aware that one of the most interesting reunions of men connected with literary pursuits in England is at the annual dinner of the "Literary Fund,"—the management of which has been so often dissected of late by Dickens and others. It is a fund for disabled authors; and, like most other British charities, requires to be fed annually by a public dinner. A notable occasion of this kind happened on the 11th of May, 1842. It was at this that I first met Mr. Irving in Europe. The president of the festival was no less than the Queen's young husband, Prince Albert,—his first appearance in that (presidential) capacity. His three speeches were more than respectable,



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for a prince; they were a *positive* success. In the course of the evening we had speeches by Hallam and Lord Mahon for the historians; Campbell and Moore for the poets; Talfourd for the dramatists and the bar; Sir Roderick Murchison for the *savans*; Chevalier Bunsen and Baron Brunnow for the diplomatists; G. P. R. James for the novelists; the Bishop of Gloucester; Gally Knight, the antiquary; and a goodly sprinkling of peers, *not* famed as authors. Edward Everett was present as American Minister; and Washington Irving (then on his way to Madrid in diplomatic capacity) represented American authors. Such an array of speakers in a single evening is rare indeed, and it was an occasion long to be remembered.

The toasts and speeches were, of course, very precisely arranged beforehand, as etiquette requires, I suppose, being in the presence of "His Royal Highness," yet most of them were animated and characteristic. When "Washington Irving and American Literature" was propounded by the fogleman at the elbow of H.R.H., the cheering was vociferously hearty and cordial, and the interest and curiosity to see and hear Geoffrey Crayon seemed to be intense. His name appeared to touch the finest chords of genial sympathy and good-will. The other famous men of the evening had been listened to with respect and deference, but Mr. Irving's name inspired genuine enthusiasm. We had been listening to the learned Hallam, and the sparkling Moore,—to the classic and fluent author of "Ion," and to the "Bard of Hope,"—to the historic and theologic diplomate from Prussia, and to the stately representative of the Czar. A dozen well-prepared sentiments had been responded to in as many different speeches. "The Mariners of England," "And doth not a meeting like this make amends," had been sung, to the evident satisfaction of the authors of those lyrics—(Campbell, by-the-way, who was near my seat, had to be "regulated" in his speech by his friend and publisher, Moxon, lest H.R.H. should be scandalized). And now everybody was on tiptoe for the author of "Bracebridge Hall." If his speech had been proportioned to the cheers which greeted him, it would have been the longest of the evening. When, therefore, he simply said, in his modest, beseeching manner, "I beg to return you my very sincere thanks," his brevity seemed almost ungracious to those who didn't know that it was physically impossible for him to make a speech. It was vexatious that routine had omitted from the list of speakers Mr. Everett, who was at Irving's side; but, as diplomate, the Prussian and Russian had precedence, and as American author, Irving, of course, was the representative man. An Englishman near me said to his neighbor,—"Brief?" "Yes, but you can tell the *gentleman* in the very tone of his voice."

In the hat-room I was amused to see "little Tom Moore" in the crowd, appealing, with mock-pathos, to Irving, as the biggest man, to pass his ticket, lest he should be demolished in the crush. They left the hall together to encounter a heavy shower; and Moore, in his "Diary," tells the following further incident.



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“The best thing of the evening (as far as I was concerned) occurred after the whole grand show was over. Irving and I came away together, and we had hardly got into the street, when a most pelting shower came on, and cabs and umbrellas were in requisition in all directions. As we were provided with neither, our plight was becoming serious, when a common cad ran up to me, and said,—‘Shall I get you a cab, Mr. Moore? Sure, a’n’t I the man that patronizes your Melodies?’ He then ran off in search of a vehicle, while Irving and I stood close up, like a pair of male caryatides, under the very narrow protection of a hall-door ledge, and thought, at last, that we were quite forgotten by my patron. But he came faithfully back, and while putting me into the cab, (without minding at all the trifle I gave him for his trouble,) he said confidentially in my ear,—‘Now mind, whenever you want a cab, Misthur Moore, just call for Tim Flaherty, and I’m your man.’—Now, this I call *fame*, and of somewhat more agreeable kind than that of Dante, when the women in the street found him out by the marks of hell-fire on his beard.”

When I said that Mr. Irving could not speak in public, I had forgotten that he did once get through with a very nice little speech on such an occasion as that just alluded to. It was at an entertainment given in 1837, at the old City Hotel in New York, by the New York booksellers to American authors. Many of “the Trade” will remember the good things said on that evening, and among them Mr. Irving’s speech about Halleck, and about Rogers the poet, as the “friend of American genius.” At my request, he afterwards wrote out his remarks, which were printed in the papers of the day. Probably this was his last, if not his best effort in this line; for the Dickens-dinner remarks were not *complete*.

In 1845, Mr. Irving came to London from his post at Madrid, on a short visit to his friend, Mr. McLane, then American Minister to England. It was my privilege at that time to know him more domestically than before. It was pleasant to have him at my table at “Knickerbocker Cottage.” With his permission, a quiet party of four was made up;—the others being Dr. Beattie, the friend and biographer of Campbell; Samuel Carter Hall, the *litterateur*, and editor of the “Art Journal”; and William Howitt. Irving was much interested in what Dr. Beattie had to tell about Campbell, and especially so in Carter Hall’s stories of Moore and his patron, Lord Lansdowne. Moore, at this time, was in ill-health and shut up from the world. I need not attempt to quote the conversation. Irving had been somewhat intimate with Moore in former days, and found him doubtless an entertaining and lively companion,—but his replies to Hall about the “patronage” of my Lord Lansdowne, *etc.*, indicated pretty clearly that he had no sympathy with the *small* traits and parasitical tendencies of Moore’s character. If there was anything specially detestable to Irving and at variance with his very nature, it was that self-seeking deference to wealth and station which was so characteristic of the Irish poet.



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I had hinted to one of my guests that Mr. Irving was sometimes “caught napping” even at the dinner-table, so that such an event should not occasion surprise. The conversation proved so interesting that I had almost claimed a victory, when, lo! a slight lull in the talk disclosed the fact that our respected guest was nodding. I believe it was a habit with him, for many years, thus to take “forty winks” at the dinner-table. Still, the conversation of that evening was a rich treat, and my English friends frequently thanked me afterwards for the opportunity of meeting “the man of all others whom they desired to know.”

The term of Mr. Irving’s contract with his Philadelphia publishers expired in 1843, and, for five years, his works remained *in statu quo*, no American publisher appearing to think them of sufficient importance to propose definitely for a new edition. Surprising as this fact appears now, it is actually true that Mr. Irving began to think his works had “rusted out” and were “defunct,”—for nobody offered to reproduce them. Being, in 1848, again settled in Now York, and apparently able to render suitable business-attention to the enterprise, I ambitiously proposed an arrangement to publish Irving’s Works. My suggestion was made in a brief note, written on the impulse of the moment; but (what was more remarkable) it was promptly accepted without the change of a single figure or a single stipulation. It is sufficient to remark, that the number of volumes since printed of these works (including the later ones) amounts to about eight hundred thousand.

The relations of friendship—I cannot say intimacy—to which this arrangement admitted me were such as any man might have enjoyed with proud satisfaction. I had always too much earnest *respect* for Mr. Irving ever to claim familiar intimacy with him. He was a man who would unconsciously and quietly command deferential regard and consideration; for in all his ways and words there was the atmosphere of true refinement. He was emphatically a gentleman, in the best sense of that word. Never forbidding or morose, he was at times (indeed always, when quite well) full of genial humor,—sometimes overflowing with fun. But I need not, here at least, attempt to sum up his characteristics.

That “Sunnyside” home was too inviting to those who were privileged there to allow any proper opportunity for a visit to pass unimproved. Indeed, it became so attractive to strangers and lion-hunters, that some of those whose *entree* was quite legitimate and acceptable refrained, especially during the last two years, from adding to the heavy tax which casual visitors began to levy upon the quiet hours of the host. Ten years ago, when Mr. Irving was in his best estate of health and spirits, when his mood was of the sunniest, and Wolfert’s Roost was in the spring-time of its charms, it was my fortune to pass a few days there with my wife. Mr. Irving himself



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drove a snug pair of ponies down to the steamboat to meet us—(for, even then, Thackeray's "one old horse" was not the only resource in the Sunnyside stables). The drive of two miles from Tarrytown to that delicious lane which leads to the Roost,—who does not know all that, and how charming it is? Five hundred descriptions of the Tappan Sea and the region round about have not exhausted it. The modest cottage, almost buried under the luxuriant Melrose ivy, was then just made what it is,—a picturesque and comfortable retreat for a man of tastes and habits like those of Geoffrey Crayon,—snug and modest, but yet, with all its surroundings, a fit residence for a gentleman who had means to make everything suitable as well as handsome about him. Of this a word anon.

I do not presume to write of the home-details of Sunnyside, further than to say that this delightful visit of three or four days gave us the impression that Mr. Irving's element seemed to be at home, as head of the family. He took us for a stroll over the grounds,—some twenty acres of wood and dell, with babbling brooks,—pointing out innumerable trees which he had planted with his own hands, and telling us anecdotes and reminiscences of his early life:—of his being taken in the Mediterranean by pirates;—of his standing on the pier at Messina, in Sicily, and looking at Nelson's fleet sweeping by on its way to the Battle of Trafalgar;—of his failure to see the interior of Milan Cathedral, because it was being decorated for the coronation of the first Napoleon;—of his adventures in Rome with Allston, and how near Geoffrey Crayon came to being an artist;—of Talleyrand, and many other celebrities;—and of incidents which seemed to take us back to a former generation. Often at this and subsequent visits I ventured to suggest, (not professionally,) after some of these reminiscences, "I hope you have taken time to make a note of these";—but the oracle nodded a sort of humorous No.—A drive to Sleepy Hollow—Mr. Irving again managing the ponies himself—crowned our visit; and with such a coachman and guide, in such regions, we were not altogether unable to appreciate the excursion.

You are aware that in "Knickerbocker," especially, Mr. Irving made copious revisions and additions, when the new edition was published in 1848. The original edition (1809) was dedicated with mock gravity to the New York Historical Society; and the preface to the revision explains the origin and intent of the work. Probably some of the more literal-minded grandsons of Holland were somewhat unappreciative of the precise scope of the author's genius and the bent of his humor; but if this "veritable history" really elicited any "doubts" or any hostility, at the time, such misapprehension has doubtless been long since removed. It has often been remarked that Diedrich Knickerbocker had really enlisted more practical interest in the early annals of his native State than all other historians together, down to his time. But for him we might never have had an O'Callaghan or a Brodhead.



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The "Sketch-Book" also received considerable new matter in the revised edition; and the story, in the preface, of the author's connection with Scott and with Murray added new interest to the volume, which has always been *the* favorite with the public. You will remember Mr. Bryant's remark about the change in the tone of Mr. Irving's temperament shown in this work as contrasted with Knickerbocker, and the probable cause of this change. Mr. Bryant's very delicate and judicious reference to the fact of Mr. Irving's early engagement was undoubtedly correct. A miniature of a young lady, intellectual, refined, and beautiful, was handed me one day by Mr. Irving, with the request that I would have a slight injury repaired by an artist and a new case made for it, the old one being actually worn out by much use. The painting (on ivory) was exquisitely fine. When I returned it to him in a suitable velvet case, he took it to a quiet corner and looked intently on the face for some minutes, apparently unobserved, his tears falling freely on the glass as he gazed. That this was a miniature of the lady,—Miss Hoffman, a sister of Ogden Hoffman,—it is not now, perhaps, indelicate to surmise. It is for a poet to characterize the nature of an attachment so loyal, so fresh, and so fragrant, *forty years* after death had snatched away the mortal part of the object of affection.

During one of his visits to the city, Mr. Irving suddenly asked if I could give him a bed at my house at Staten Island. I could. So we had a nice chatty evening, and the next morning we took him on a charming drive over the hills of Staten Island. He seemed to enjoy it highly, for he had not been there, I believe, since he was stationed there in a military capacity, during the War of 1812, as aid of Governor Tompkins. He gave us a humorous account of some of his equestrian performances, and those of the Governor, while on duty at the island; but neither his valor nor the Governor's was tested by any actual contact with the enemy.

In facility of composition, Mr. Irving, I believe, was peculiarly influenced by "moods." When in his usual good health, and the spirit was on him, he wrote very rapidly; but at other times composition was an irksome task, or even an impossible one. Dr. Peters says he frequently rose from his bed in the night and wrote for hours together. Then again he would not touch his pen for weeks. I believe his most rapidly written work was the one often pronounced his most spirited one, and a model as a biography, the "Life of Goldsmith." Sitting at my desk one day, he was looking at Forster's clever work, which I proposed to reprint. He remarked that it was a favorite theme of his, and he had half a mind to pursue it, and extend into a volume a sketch he had once made for an edition of Goldsmith's Works. I expressed a hope that he would do so, and within sixty days the first sheets of Irving's "Goldsmith" were in the printer's hands. The press (as he says) was "dogging at his heels," for in two or three weeks the volume was published.



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Visiting London shortly after the "Life of Mahomet" was prepared for the press, I arranged with Mr. Murray, on the author's behalf, for an English edition of "Mahomet," "Goldsmith," etc., and took a request from Mr. Irving to his old friend Leslie, that he would make a true sketch of the venerable Diedrich Knickerbocker. Mr. Irving insisted that the great historian of the Manhattoes was not the vulgar old fellow they would keep putting on the omnibuses and ice-carts; but that, though quaint and old-fashioned, he was still of gentle blood. Leslie's sketches, however, (he made two,) did not hit the mark exactly; Mr. Irving liked Darley's better.

Among the briefer visits to Sunnyside which I had the good-fortune to enjoy was one with the estimable compiler of the "Dictionary of Authors." Mr. Irving's amiable and hospitable nature prompted him always to welcome visitors so kindly, that no one, however dull, and however uncertain his claims, would fail to be pleased with his visit. But when the genial host was in good health and in his best moods, and the visitor had any magnetism in his composition, when he found, in short, a kindred spirit, his talk was of the choicest. Of Sir Walter Scott, especially, he would tell us much that was interesting. Probably no two writers ever appreciated each other more heartily than Scott and Irving. The sterling good sense, and quiet, yet rich humor of Scott, as well as his literary tastes and wonderful fund of legendary lore, would find no more intelligent and discriminating admirer than Irving; while the rollicking fun of the veritable Diedrich and the delicate fancy and pathos of Crayon were doubtless unaffectedly enjoyed by the great Scotsman. I wish I could tell you accurately one-half of the anecdotes which were so pleasantly related during those various brief visits at "the Cottage"; but I did not go there to take notes, and it is wicked to spoil good stories by misquotation. One story, however, I may venture to repeat.

You remember how the author of the "Pleasures of Hope" was once hospitably entertained by worthy people, under the supposition that he was the excellent missionary Campbell, just returned from Africa,—and how the massive man of state, Daniel Webster, had repeated occasion, in England, to disclaim honors meant for Noah, the man of words. Mr. Irving told, with great glee, a little story against himself, illustrating these uncertainties of distant fame. Making a small purchase at a shop in England, not long after his second or third work had given currency to his name, he gave his address ("Mr. Irving, Number," etc.) for the parcel to be sent to his lodgings. The salesman's face brightened: "Is it possible," said he, "that I have the pleasure of serving Mr. Irving?" The question, and the manner of it, indicated profound respect and admiration. A modest and smiling acknowledgment was inevitable. A few more remarks indicated still more deferential interest on the part of the



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man of tape; and then another question, about Mr. Irving's "latest work," revealed the pleasant fact that he was addressed as the famous Edward Irving, of the Scotch Church,—the man of divers tongues. The very existence of the "Sketch-Book" was probably unknown to his intelligent admirer. "All I could do," added Mr. Crayon, with that rich twinkle in his eye,—“all I could do was to take my tail between my legs and slink away in the smallest possible compass.”

A word more about Mr. Irving's manner of life. The impression given by Thackeray, in his notice (genial enough, and well-meant, doubtless) of Irving's death, is absurdly inaccurate. His picture of the "one old horse," the plain little house, *etc.*, would lead one to imagine Mr. Irving a weak, good-natured old man, amiably, but parsimoniously, saving up his pennies for his "eleven nieces," (!) and to this end stinting himself, among other ways, to "a single glass of wine," *etc.*, *etc.* Mr. Thackeray's notions of style and state and liveried retinues are probably not entirely un-English, notwithstanding he wields so sharp a pen against England's snobs; and he may naturally have looked for more display of greatness at the residence of an ex-ambassador. But he could scarcely appreciate that simple dignity and solid comfort, that unobtrusive *fitness*, which belonged to Mr. Irving's home-arrangements. There were no flunkies in gold and scarlet; but there were four or five good horses in the stable, and as many suitable carriages. Everything in the cottage was peculiarly and comfortably elegant, without the least pretension. As to the "single glass of wine," Mr. Irving, never a professed teetotaler, was always temperate on instinct both in eating and drinking; and in his last two years I believe he did not taste wine at all. In all financial matters, Mr. Irving's providence and preciseness were worthy of imitation by all professional literary men; but with exactness and punctuality he united a liberal disposition to make a suitable use of money, and to have all around him comfortable and appropriate. Knowing that he could leave a handsome independence for those nearest to him, he had no occasion for any such anxious care as Mr. Thackeray intimates.

Thackeray had been invited to Yonkers, to give his lecture on "Charity and Humor." At this "Ancient Dorp" he was the guest of Cozzens, and I had the honor of accompanying the greater and lesser humorist in a drive to Sunnyside, nine miles. (This call of an hour, by-the-way, was Thackeray's only glimpse of the place he described.) The interview was in every way interesting. Mr. Irving produced a pair of antiquated spectacles, which had belonged to Washington, and Major Pendennis tried them on with evident reverence. The hour was well filled with rapid, pleasant chat; but no profound analysis of the characteristics of wit and humor was elicited either from the Stout Gentleman or from Vanity Fair.



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Mr. Irving went down to Yonkers, to hear Thackeray's lecture in the evening, after we had all had a slice of bear at Mr. Sparrowgrass's, to say nothing of sundry other courses, with a slight thread of conversation between. At the lecture, he was so startled by the eulogistic presentation of the lecturer to the audience, by the excellent chief of the committee, that I believe he did not once nod during the evening. We were, of course, proud to have as our own guest for the night such an embodiment of "Charity and Humor" as Mr. Thackeray saw in the front bench before him, but whom he considerably spared from holding up as an illustration of his subject.

Charity, indeed, practical "good-will toward men," was an essential part of Mr. Irving's Christianity,—and in this Christian virtue he was sometimes severely tested. Nothing was more irksome to him than to be compelled to endure calls of mere curiosity, or to answer letters either of fulsome eulogy of himself or asking for his eulogy of the MSS. or new work of the correspondent. Some letters of that kind he probably never did answer. Few had any idea of the *fagging* task they imposed on the distinguished victim. He would worry and fret over it trebly in anticipation, and the actual task itself was to him probably ten times as irksome as it would be to most others. Yet it would be curious to know how many letters of suggestion and encouragement he actually did write in reply to solicitations from young authors for his criticism and advice, and his recommendation, or, perhaps, his pecuniary aid. Always disposed to find merit, even where any stray grains of the article lay buried in rubbish, he would amiably say the utmost that could justly be said in favor of "struggling genius." Sometimes his readiness to aid meritorious young authors into profitable publicity was shamefully abused,—as in the case of Maitland, an Englishman, who deliberately forged an absurdly distorted paraphrase of a note of Mr. Irving's, besides other disreputable use of the signature which he had enticed from him in answer to urgent appeals. But these were among the penalties of honorable fame and influence which he might naturally expect to pay. The sunny aspect on the "even tenor of his way" still prevailed; and until the hand of disease reached him in the last year of his life, very few probably enjoyed a more tranquil and unruffled existence.

It became almost a proverb, that Mr. Irving was a nearly solitary instance of a long literary career (half a century) untouched by even a breath of ill-will or jealousy on the part of a brother-author. The annals of the *genus irritabile* scarcely show a parallel to such a career. The most prominent American contemporary of Mr. Irving in imaginative literature, I suppose, was Fenimore Cooper,—whose genius raised the American name in Europe more effectively even than Irving's, at least on the Continent. Cooper had a right to claim respect and admiration,



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if not affection, from his countrymen, for his brilliant creations and his solid services to American literature; and he knew it. But, as we all know,—for it was patent,—when he returned from Europe, after sending his “Letter to his Countrymen,” and gave us “Home as Found,” his reception was much less marked with warmth and enthusiasm than Mr. Irving’s was; and while he professed indifference to all such whims of popular regard, yet he evidently brooded a little over the relative amount of public attention extended to his brother-author. At any rate, he persistently kept aloof from Mr. Irving for many years; and not unfrequently discoursed, in his rather authoritative manner, about the humbuggery of success in this country, as exhibited in some shining instances of popular and official favor. With great admiration for Cooper, whose national services were never recognized as they deserved to be, I trust no injustice is involved in the above suggestion, which I make somewhat presumptuously,—especially as Mr. Irving more than once spoke to me in terms of strong admiration of the works and genius of Cooper, and regretted that the great novelist seemed to cherish some unpleasant feeling towards him. One day, some time after I had commenced a library edition of Cooper’s best works, and while Irving’s were in course of publication in companionship, Mr. Irving was sitting at my desk, with his back to the door, when Mr. Cooper came in, (a little bustlingly, as usual,) and stood at the office-entrance, talking. Mr. Irving did not turn, (for obvious reasons,) and Cooper did not see him. Remembering his “Mr. Sharp, Mr. Blunt,—Mr. Blunt, Mr. Sharp,” I had acquired caution as to introductions without mutual consent; but with a brief thought of how matters stood, (they had not met for several years,) and a sort of instinct that reduced the real difference between the parties to a baseless fabric of misapprehension, I stoutly obeyed the impulse of the moment, and simply said,—“Mr. Cooper, here is Mr. Irving.” The latter turned,—Cooper held out his hand cordially, dashed at once into an animated conversation, took a chair, and, to my surprise and delight, the two authors sat for an hour, chatting in their best manner about almost every topic of the day and some of former days. They parted with cordial good wishes, and Mr. Irving afterwards frequently alluded to the incident as being a very great gratification to him. He may have recalled it with new satisfaction, when, not many months afterwards, he sat on the platform at the “Cooper Commemoration,” and joined in Bryant’s tribute to the genius of the departed novelist.

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Mr. Irving was never a systematic collector of books, and his little library at Sunnyside might have disappointed those who would expect to see there rich shelves of choice editions, and a full array of all the favorite authors among whom such a writer would delight to revel. Some rather antiquated tomes in Spanish,—in different sets of Calderon and Cervantes, and of some modern French and German authors,—a presentation-set of Cadell's "Waverley," as well as that more recent and elegant emanation from the classic press of Houghton,—a moderate amount of home-tools for the "Life of Washington," (rarer materials were consulted in the town-libraries and at Washington,)—and the remainder of his books were evidently a hap-hazard collection, many coming from the authors, with their respects, and thus sometimes costing the recipient their full (intrinsic) value in writing a letter of acknowledgment.

The little apartment had, nevertheless, become somewhat overcrowded, and a suggestion for a general renovation and pruning seemed to be gladly accepted,—so I went up and passed the night there for that purpose. Mr. Irving, in his easy-chair in the sitting-room, after dinner, was quite content to have me range at large in the library and to let me discard all the "lumber" as I pleased; so I turned out some hundred volumes of *un*-classic superfluity, and then called him in from his nap to approve or veto my proceedings. As he sat by, while I rapidly reported the candidates for exclusion, and he nodded assent, or as, here and there, he would interpose with "No, no, not *that*," and an anecdote or reminiscence would come in as a reason against the dismissal of the book in my hand, I could not help suggesting the scene in Don Quixote's library, when the priest and the barber entered upon their scrutiny of its contents. Mr. Irving seemed to be highly amused with this pruning process, and his running commentary on my "estimates of value" in weighing his literary collections was richly entertaining.

Observing that his library-table was somewhat antiquated and inadequate, I persuaded him to let me make him a present of a new one, with the modern conveniences of drawers and snug corners for keeping his stray papers. When I sent him such a one, my stipulation for the return of the old one as a present to me was pleasantly granted. This relic was of no great intrinsic value; but, as he had written on this table many of his later works, including "Mahomet," "Goldsmith," "Wolfert's Roost," and "Washington," I prize it, of course, as one of the most interesting mementos of Sunnyside.

As an illustration of habit, it may be added, that, some time after the new table had been installed, I was sitting with him in the library, when he searched long and fruitlessly for some paper which had been "so *very* carefully stowed away in some *very* safe drawer" that it was not to be found, and the search ended in a sort of half-humorous, half-earnest denunciation of all "modern conveniences";—the simple old table, with its primitive facilities, was, after all, worth a dozen of these elegant contrivances for memory-saving and neatness.



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One rather curious characteristic of Mr. Irving was excessive, unaffected modesty and distrust of himself and of his own writings. Considering how many a *debutant* in letters, not yet out of his teens, is so demonstratively self-confident as to the prospective effect of his genius on an expecting and admiring world, it was always remarkable to hear a veteran, whose fame for half a century had been cosmopolitan, expressing the most timid doubts as to his latest compositions, and fearing they were unequal to their position,—so unwilling, too, to occupy an inch of ground to which any other writer might properly lay claim. Mr. Irving had planned and made some progress in a work on the Conquest of Mexico, when he learned of Mr. Prescott's intentions, and promptly laid his project aside. His "Life of Washington," originating more than thirty years ago, was repeatedly abandoned, as the successive works of Mr. Sparks, Mr. Pading, and others, appeared; and though he was subsequently induced to proceed with his long-considered plan of a more dramatic and picturesque narrative from a new point of view, yet he was more than once inclined to put his MSS. into the fire, in the apprehension that the subject had been worn threadbare by the various compilations which were constantly coming out. When he ventured his first volume, the cordial and appreciative reception promptly accorded to it surprised as much as it cheered and pleased him; for though he despised hollow flattery, no young writer was more warmly sensitive than he to all discriminating, competent, and honest applause or criticism. When "Wolfert's Roost" was published, (I had to entice the papers of that volume from his drawers, for I doubt whether he would have collected them himself,) I saw him affected actually to tears, on reading some of the hearty and well-written personal tributes which that volume called forth. But though every volume was received in this spirit by the press and the public, he was to the last apprehensive of failure, until a reliable verdict should again reassure him. The very last volume of his works (the fifth of "Washington") was thus timidly permitted to be launched; and I remember well his expression of relief and satisfaction, when he said that Mr. Bancroft, Professor Felton, and Mr. Duyckinck had been the first to assure him the volume was all that it should be. His task on this volume had perhaps extended beyond the period of his robust health,—it had *fagged* him,—but he had been spared to write every line of it with his own hand, and my own copy is enriched by the autograph of his valedictory.



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To refer, however briefly, to Mr. Irving's politics or religion, even if I had intimate knowledge of both, (which assuredly I had not,) would be, perhaps, to overstep decorous limits. It may, however, properly be mentioned, that, in the face of all inherent probabilities as to his comfortable conservatism, and his earnest instincts in favor of fraternal conciliation and *justice*, (which was as marked a quality in him as in the great man whom he so faithfully portrayed,) in spite of all the considerations urged by timid gentlemen of the old school in favor of Fillmore and the *status quo*, he voted in 1856, as he told me, for Fremont. In speaking of the candidates then in the field, he said of Fremont, that his comparative youth and inexperience in party-politics were points in his favor; for he thought the condition of the country called for a man of nerve and energy, one in his prime, and unfettered by party-traditions and bargains for "the spoils." His characterization of a more experienced functionary, who had once served in the State Department, was more severe than I ever heard from him of any other person; and severity from a man of his judicious and kindly impulses had a meaning in it.

Favored once with a quiet Sunday at "the Cottage," of course there was a seat for us all in the family-pew at Christ Church in the village (Tarrytown). Mr. Irving's official station as Church-Warden was indicated by the ex-ambassador's meek and decorous presentation of the plate for the silver and copper offerings of the parishioners. At subsequent successive meetings of the General (State) Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, (to which I had been delegated from a little parish on Staten Island,) the names of Washington Irving and Fenimore Cooper were both recorded,—the latter representing Christ Church, Cooperstown. Mr. Irving for several years served in this capacity, and as one of the Missionary Committee of the Convention, his name was naturally sought as honoring any organization. He was the last person to be demonstrative or conspicuous either as to his faith or his works; but no disciple of Christ, perhaps, felt more devoutly than he did the reverential aspiration of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Passing a print-window in Broadway one day, his eye rested on the beautiful engraving of "Christus Consolator." He stopped and looked at it intently for some minutes, evidently much affected by the genuine inspiration of the artist in this remarkable representation of the Saviour as the consoler of sorrow-stricken humanity. His tears fell freely. "Pray, get me that print," said he; "I must have it framed for my sitting-room." When he examined it more closely and found the artist's name, "It's by my old friend Ary Scheffer!" said he,—remarking further, that he had known Scheffer intimately, and knew him to be a true artist, but had not expected from him anything so excellent



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as this. I afterwards sent him the companion, "Christus Remunerator"; and the pair remained his daily companions till the day of his death. To me, the picture of Irving, amid the noise and bustle of noon in Broadway, shedding tears as he studied that little print, so feelingly picturing human sorrow and the source of its alleviation, has always remained associated with the artist and his works. If Irving could enjoy wit and humor and give that enjoyment to others, no other writer of books had a heart more tenderly sensitive than his to the sufferings and ills which flesh is heir to.

Of his later days,—of the calmly received premonitions of that peaceful end of which only the precise moment was uncertain,—of his final departure, so gentle and so fitting,—of that "Washington-Irving-day" so dreamily, blandly still, and almost fragrant, December though it was, when with those simple and appropriate obsequies his mortal remains were placed by the side of his brothers and sisters in the burial-ground of Sleepy Hollow, while thousands from far and near silently looked for the last time on his genial face and mourned his loss as that of a personal friend and a national benefactor, yet could hardly for *his* sake desire any more enviable translation from mortality,—of the many beautiful and eloquent tributes of living genius to the life and character and writings of the departed author,—of all these you have already an ample record. I need not repeat or extend it. If you could have "assisted" at the crowning "Commemoration," on his birthday, (April 3d,) at the Academy of Music, you would have found it in many respects memorably in accordance with the intrinsic fitness of things. An audience of five thousand, so evidently and discriminatingly intelligent, addressed for two hours by Bryant, with all his cool, judicious, deliberate criticism, warmed into glowing appreciation of the most delicate and peculiar beauties of the character and literary services he was to delineate,—and this rich banquet fittingly *desserted* by the periods of Everett,—such an evening was worthy of the subject, and worthy to be remembered. The heartiness and the genial insight into Irving's best traits which the poet displayed were peculiarly gratifying to the nearer friends and relatives. His sketch and analysis, too, had a remarkable completeness for an address of that kind, while its style and manner were models of chaste elegance. Speaking of Irving's contemporaries and predecessors, he warms into poetry, thus:—

"We had but one novelist before the era of the 'Sketch-Book': their number is now beyond enumeration by any but a professed catalogue-maker, and many of them are read in every cultivated form of human speech. Those whom we acknowledge as our poets—one of whom is the special favorite of our brothers in language who dwell beyond the sea—appeared in the world of letters and won its attention after Irving had become famous. We have wits and humorists



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and amusing essayists, authors of some of the airiest and most graceful contributions of the present century,—and we owe them to the new impulse given to our literature in 1819. I look abroad on these stars of our literary firmament,—some crowded together with their minute points of light in a galaxy, some standing apart in glorious constellations; I recognize Arcturus and Orion and Perseus and the glittering jewels of the Southern Crown, and the Pleiades shedding sweet influences; but the Evening Star, the soft and serene light that glowed in their van, the precursor of them all, has sunk below the horizon. The spheres, meanwhile, perform their appointed courses; the same motion which lifted them up to the mid-sky bears them onward to their setting; and they, too, like their bright leader, must soon be carried by it below the earth.”

Let me quote also Mr. Bryant’s closing remarks:—

“Other hands will yet give the world a bolder, more vivid, and more exact portraiture. In the mean time, when I consider for how many years he stood before the world as an author, with still increasing fame,—half a century in this most changeful of centuries,—I cannot hesitate to predict for him a deathless renown. Since he began to write, empires have arisen and passed away; mighty captains have appeared on the stage of the world, performed their part, and been called to their account; wars have been fought and ended which have changed the destinies of the human race. New arts have been invented and adopted, and have pushed the old out of use; the household economy of half mankind has undergone a revolution. Science has learned a new dialect and forgotten the old; the chemist of 1807 would be a vain babbling among his brethren of the present day, and would in turn become bewildered in the attempt to understand them. Nation utters speech to nation in words that pass from realm to realm with the speed of light. Distant countries have been made neighbors; the Atlantic Ocean has become a narrow strait, and the Old World and the New shake hands across it; the East and the West look in at each other’s windows. The new inventions bring new calamities, and men perish in crowds by the recoil of their own devices. War has learned more frightful modes of havoc, and armed himself with deadlier weapons; armies are borne to the battle-field on the wings of the wind, and dashed against each other and destroyed with infinite bloodshed. We grow giddy with this perpetual whirl of strange events, these rapid and ceaseless mutations; the earth seems to be reeling under our feet, and we turn to those who write like Irving for some assurance that we are still in the same world into which we were born; we read, and are quieted and consoled. In his pages we see that the language of the heart never becomes obsolete; that Truth and Good and Beauty, the offspring of God, are not subject to the changes which beset the inventions of men. We become satisfied that he whose works were the delight of our fathers, and are still ours, will be read with the same pleasure by those who come after us.”



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IRENE ANADYOMENE.

O'er far Pacific waves the wanderer holding
His steady course before the strong monsoon,
Entranced, beholds the coral isle unfolding
Its ring of emerald and its bright lagoon.

At first their shadowy helms in the faint distance
The tree-tops rear; then, as he nearer glides,
The white surf gleams where the firm reef's resistance
Meets and hurls back the fiercely charging tides.

He sees outspread the wide sea-beach, all sparkling
With coral sand and many-tinted shells,
While high above, in tropic rankness darkling,
A cloud of verdure ever-brooding dwells,

With growing wonder and delight the stranger,
While his swift shallop nears the enchanted strand,
Sees the white surf cleared with one flash of danger,
And a broad portal opening through the land.

And deftly through the verdurous gateway steering,
The strong-armed oarsmen urge their flying boat,
Till now, the broad horizon disappearing,
On the still island-lake they pause and float.

The gun booms loud. With wishful eyes receding,
They watch from their swift boat the lessening isle.
The yards are squared. Again the good ship speeding
Sees the chafed waves beneath her counter file.

Long musing o'er his scientific pages,
The curious voyager pursues the theme,
And learns whate'er the geologic sages
Have found or fancied,—building each his scheme.

The Professor's Story.

This pleased him best:—In earth's red primal morning,
When Nature's forces wrought with youthful heat,
A mighty continent outspread, adorning
Our planet's face, where now the surges beat:



A land of wondrous growths, of strange creations,
Of ferns like oaks, of saurians huge and dire,
Of marshes vast, their dreary habitations,
Of mountains flaming with primeval fire.

At length, by some supernal fiat banished,
The land sank down in one great cataclysm;
The vales, the plains, the mountains slowly vanished,
Buried and quenched in the wide sea's abysm.

'Twas then (so ran the scheme) on each lost crater
The coral-builders laid their marvellous pile;
Millions on millions wrought, till ages later
Saw reared to light and air the circling isle.

Thus Science dreams: but from the dream upflashes
On his swift thought the subtly shadowed truth,
That all serener joys bloom on the ashes,
The lava, and spent craters of lost youth.

The heart, long worn by fierce volcanic surges,
Feels its old world slow sinking from the sight,
Till o'er the wreck a home of peace emerges,
Bright with unnumbered shapes of new delight.

THE PROFESSOR'S STORY.



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CHAPTER XXI.

THE WIDOW BOWENS GIVES A TEA-PARTY.

There was a good deal of interest felt, as has been said, in the lonely condition of Dudley Venner in that fine mansion-house of his, and with that strange daughter, who would never be married, as many people thought, in spite of all the stories. The feelings expressed by the good folks who dated from the time when they “buried aour little Anny Mari,” and others of that homespun stripe, were founded in reason, after all. And so it was natural enough that they should be shared by various ladies, who, having conjugated the verb *to live* as far as the preterpluperfect tense, were ready to change one of its vowels and begin with it in the present indicative. Unfortunately, there was very little chance of showing sympathy in its active form for a gentleman who kept himself so much out of the way as the master of the Dudley Mansion.

Various attempts had been made, from time to time, of late years, to get him out of his study, which had, for the moat part, proved failures. It was a surprise, therefore, when he was seen at the Great Party at the Colonel’s. But it was an encouragement to try him again, and the consequence had been that he had received a number of notes inviting him to various smaller entertainments, which, as neither he nor Elsie had any fancy for them, he had politely declined.

Such was the state of things when he received an invitation to take tea *sociably*, with a few friends, at Hyacinth Cottage, the residence of the Widow Rowens, relict of the late Beeri Rowens, Esquire, better known as Major Rowens. Major Rowens was at the time of his decease a promising officer in the militia, in the direct line of promotion, as his waistband was getting tighter every year; and, as all the world knows, the militia-officer who splits off most buttons and fills the largest sword-belt stands the best chance of rising, or, perhaps we might say, spreading, to be General.

Major Rowens united in his person certain other traits that help a man to eminence in the arm of the service referred to. He ran to high colors, to wide whisker, to open pores; he had the saddle-leather skin common in Englishmen, rarer in Americans,—never found in the Brahmin caste, oftener in the military and the commodores: observing people know what is meant; blow the seed-arrows from the white-kid-looking button which holds them on a dandelion-stalk, and the pricked-pincushion surface shows you what to look for. He had the loud, gruff voice which implies the right to command. He had the thick hand, stubbed fingers, with bristled pads between their joints, square, broad thumb-nails, and sturdy limbs, which mark a constitution made to use in rough out-door work. He had the never-failing predilection for showy switch-tailed horses that step high, and sidle about, and act as if they were going to do something



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fearful the next minute, in the face of awed and admiring multitudes gathered at mighty musters or imposing cattle-shows. He had no objection, either, to holding the reins in a wagon behind another kind of horse,—a slouching, listless beast, with a strong slant to his shoulder and a notable depth to his quarter and an emphatic angle at the hock, who commonly walked or lounged along in a lazy trot of five or six miles an hour; but, if a lively colt happened to come rattling up alongside, or a brandy-faced old horse-jockey took the road to show off a fast nag, and threw his dust into the Major's face, would pick his legs up all at once, and straighten his body out, and swing off into a three-minute gait, in a way that "Old Blue" himself need not have been ashamed of.

For some reason which must be left to the next generation of professors to find out, the men who are knowing in horse-flesh have an eye also for,—let a long dash separate the brute creation from the angelic being now to be named,—for lovely woman. Of this fact there can be no possible doubt; and therefore you shall notice, that, if a fast horse trots before two, one of the twain is apt to be a pretty bit of muliebrity, with shapes to her, and eyes flying about in all directions.

Major Rowens, at that time Lieutenant of the Rockland Fusileers, had driven and "traded" horses not a few before he turned his acquired skill as a judge of physical advantages in another direction. He knew a neat, snug hoof, a delicate pastern, a well-covered stifle, a broad haunch, a deep chest, a close ribbed-up barrel, as well as any other man in the town. He was not to be taken in by your thick-jointed, heavy-headed cattle, without any go to them, that suit a country-parson, nor yet by the "galinted-up," long-legged animals, with all their constitutions bred out of them, such as rich greenhorns buy and cover up with their plated trappings.

Whether his equine experience was of any use to him in the selection of the mate with whom he was to go in double harness so long as they both should live, we need not stop to question. At any rate, nobody could find fault with the points of Miss Marilla Van Deusen, to whom he offered the privilege of becoming Mrs. Rowens. The *Van* must have been crossed out of her blood, for she was an out-and-out brunette, with hair and eyes black enough for a Mohawk's daughter. A fine style of woman, with very striking tints and outlines,—an excellent match for the Lieutenant, except for one thing. She was marked by Nature for a widow. She was evidently got up for mourning, and never looked so well as in deep black, with jet ornaments.

The man who should dare to marry her would doom himself; for how could she become the widow she was bound to be, unless he would retire and give her a chance? The Lieutenant lived, however, as we have seen, to become Captain and then Major, with prospects of further advancement. But Mrs. Rowens often said she should never look well in colors. At last her destiny fulfilled itself, and the justice of Nature was vindicated. Major Rowens got overheated galloping about the field on the day of the Great Muster,



and had a rush of blood to the head, according to the common report,—at any rate, something which stopped him short in his career of expansion and promotion, and established Mrs. Rowens in her normal condition of widowhood.



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The Widow Rowens was now in the full bloom of ornamental sorrow. A very shallow crape bonnet, frilled and froth-like, allowed the parted raven hair to show its glossy smoothness. A jet pin heaved upon her bosom with every sigh of memory, or emotion of unknown origin. Jet bracelets shone with every movement of her slender hands, cased in close-fitting black gloves. Her sable dress was ridged with manifold flounces, from beneath which a small foot showed itself from time to time, clad in the same hue of mourning. Everything about her was dark, except the whites of her eyes and the enamel of her teeth. The effect was complete. Gray's *Elegy* was not a more perfect composition.

Much as the Widow was pleased with the costume belonging to her condition, she did not disguise from herself that under certain circumstances she might be willing to change her name again. Thus, for instance, if a gentleman not too far gone in maturity, of dignified exterior, with an ample fortune, and of unexceptionable character, should happen to set his heart upon her, and the only way to make him happy was to give up her weeds and go into those unbecoming colors again for his sake,—why, she felt that it was in her nature to make the sacrifice. By a singular coincidence it happened that a gentleman was now living in Rockland who united in himself all these advantages. Who he was, the sagacious reader may very probably have divined. Just to see how it looked, one day, having bolted her door, and drawn the curtains close, and glanced under the sofa, and listened at the keyhole to be sure there was nobody in the entry,—just to see how it looked, she had taken out an envelope and written on the back of it *Mrs. Marila Venner*. It made her head swim and her knees tremble. What if she should faint, or die, or have a stroke of palsy, and they should break into the room and find that name written? How she caught it up and tore it into little shreds, and then could not be easy until she had burned the small heap of pieces! But these are things which every honorable reader will consider imparted in strict confidence.

The Widow Rowens, though not of the mansion-house set, was among the most genteel of the two-story circle, and was in the habit of visiting some of the great people. In one of these visits she met a dashing young fellow with an olive complexion at the house of a professional gentleman who had married one of the white necks and pairs of fat arms from a distinguished family before referred to. The professional gentleman himself was out, but the lady introduced the olive-complexioned young man as Mr. Richard Venner.

The Widow was particularly pleased with this accidental meeting. Had heard Mr. Venner's name frequently mentioned. Hoped his uncle was well, and his charming cousin,—was she as original as ever? Had often admired that charming creature he rode: we had had some fine horses. Had never got over her taste for riding, but could find nobody that liked a good long gallop since—well—she couldn't help wishing she was alongside of him, the other day, when she saw him dashing by, just at twilight.



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The Widow paused; lifted a flimsy handkerchief with a very deep black border so as to play the jet bracelet; pushed the tip of her slender foot beyond the lowest of her black flounces; looked up; looked down; looked at Mr. Richard, the very picture of artless simplicity,—as represented in well-played genteel comedy.

“A good bit of stuff,” Dick said to himself,—“and something of it left yet; *caramba!*” The Major had not studied points for nothing, and the Widow was one of the right sort. The young man had been a little restless of late, and was willing to vary his routine by picking up an acquaintance here and there. So he took the Widow’s hint. He should like to have a scamper of half a dozen miles with her some fine morning.

The Widow was infinitely obliged; was not sure that she could find any horse in the village to suit her; but it was so kind in him! Would he not call at Hyacinth Cottage, and let her thank him again there?

Thus began an acquaintance which the Widow made the most of, and on the strength of which she determined to give a tea-party and invite a number of persons of whom we know something already. She took a half-sheet of note-paper and made out her list as carefully as a country “merchant’s” “clerk” adds up two and threepence (New-England nomenclature) and twelve and a half cents, figure by figure, and fraction by fraction, before he can be sure they will make half a dollar, without cheating somebody. After much consideration the list reduced itself to the following names: Mr. Richard Venner and Mrs. Blanche Creamer, the lady at whose house she had met him,—mansion-house breed,—but will come,—soft on Dick; Dudley Venner,—take care of him herself; Elsie,—Dick will see to her,—won’t it fidget the Creamer woman to see him round her? the old Doctor,—he’s always handy; and there’s that young master there, up at the school,—know him well enough to ask him,—oh, yes, he’ll come. One, two, three, four, five, six,—seven; not room enough, without the leaf in the table; one place empty, if the leaf’s in. Let’s see,—Helen Darley,—she’ll do well enough to fill it up,—why, yes, just the thing,—light brown hair, blue eyes,—won’t my pattern show off well against her? Put her down,—she’s worth her tea and toast ten times over,—nobody knows what a “thunder-and-lightning woman,” as poor Major used to have it, is, till she gets alongside of one of those old-maidish girls, with hair the color of brown sugar, and eyes like the blue of a teacup.

The Widow smiled with a feeling of triumph at having overcome her difficulties and arranged her party,—arose and stood before her glass, three-quarters front, one-quarter profile, so as to show the whites of the eyes and the down of the upper lip. “Splendid!” said the Widow, —and to tell the truth, she was not far out of the way, and with Helen Darley as a foil anybody would know she must be foudroyant and pyramidal,—if these French adjectives may be naturalized for this one particular exigency.



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So the Widow sent out her notes. The black grief which had filled her heart and overflowed in surges of crape around her person had left a deposit half an inch wide at the margin of her note-paper. Her seal was a small youth with an inverted torch, the same on which Mrs. Blanche Creamer made her spiteful remark, that she expected to see that boy of the Widow's standing on his head yet; meaning, as Dick supposed, that she would get the torch right-side up as soon as she had a chance. That was after Dick had made the Widow's acquaintance, and Mrs. Creamer had got it into her foolish head that she would marry that young fellow, if she could catch him. How could he ever come to fancy such, a quadroon-looking thing as that, she should like to know?

It is easy enough to ask seven people to a party; but whether they will come or not is an open question, as it was in the case of the "vasty spirits." If the note issues from a three-story mansion-house, and goes to two-story acquaintances, they will all be in an excellent state of health, and have much pleasure in accepting this very polite invitation. If the note is from the lady of a two-story family to a three-story one, the former highly respectable person will find that an endemic complaint is prevalent, not represented in the weekly bills of mortality, which occasions numerous regrets in the bosoms of eminently desirable parties that they *cannot* have the pleasure of and-so-forth-ing.

In this case there was room for doubt,—mainly as to whether Elsie would take a fancy to come or not. If she should come, her father would certainly be with her. Dick had promised, and thought he could bring Elsie. Of course the young schoolmaster will come, and that poor tired-out looking Helen,—if only to get out of sight of those horrid Peckham wretches. They don't get such invitations every day. The others she felt sure of,—all but the old Doctor,—he might have some horrid patient or other to visit; tell him Elsie Venner's going to be there,—he always likes to have an eye on her, they say,—oh, he'd come fast enough, without any more coaxing.

She wanted the Doctor, particularly. It was odd, but she was afraid of Elsie. She felt as if she should be safe enough, if the old Doctor were there to see to the girl; and then she should have leisure to devote herself more freely to the young lady's father, for whom all her sympathies were in a state of lively excitement.

It was a long time since the Widow had seen so many persons round her table as she had now invited. Better have the plates set and see how they will fill it up with the leaf in.—A little too scattering with only eight plates set; if she could find two more people now that would bring the chairs a little closer,—snug, you know,—which makes the company sociable. The Widow thought over her acquaintances. Why! how stupid! there was her good minister, the same that had married her, and might—might—bury her for



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ought she knew, and his granddaughter staying with him,—nice little girl, pretty, and not old enough to be dangerous;—for the Widow had no notion of making a tea-party and asking people to it that would be like to stand between her and any little project she might happen to have on anybody's heart,—not she! It was all right now;—Blanche was married and so forth; Letty was a child; Elsie was his daughter; Helen Darley was a nice, worthy drudge,—poor thing!—faded, faded,—colors wouldn't wash,—just what she wanted to show off against. Now, if the Dudley mansion-house people would only come,—that was the great point.

“Here's a note for us, Elsie,” said her father, as they sat round the breakfast-table. “Mrs. Rowens wants us all to come to tea.”

It was one of “Elsie's days,” as Old Sophy called them. The light in her eyes was still, but very bright. She looked up so full of perverse and wilful impulses, that Dick knew he could make her go with him and her father. He had his own motives for bringing her to this determination,—and his own way of setting about it.

“I don't want to go,” he said. “What do you say, Uncle?”

“To tell the truth, Richard, I don't much fancy the Major's widow. I don't like to see her weeds flowering out quite so strong. I suppose you don't care about going, Elsie?”

Elsie looked up in her father's face with an expression which he knew but too well. She was just in the state which the plain sort of people call “contrary,” when they have to deal with it in animals. She would insist on going to that tea-party; he knew it just as well before she spoke as after she had spoken. If Dick had said he wanted to go and her father had seconded his wishes, she would have insisted on staying at home. It was no great matter, her father said to himself, after all; very likely it would amuse her; the Widow was a lively woman enough,—perhaps a little *comme il ne faut pas* socially, compared with the Thorntons and some other families; but what did he care for these petty village distinctions?

Elsie spoke.

“I mean to go. You must go with me, Dudley. You may do as you like, Dick.”

That settled the Dudley-mansion business, of course. They all three accepted, as fortunately did all the others who had been invited.

Hyacinth Cottage was a pretty place enough, a little too much choked round with bushes, and too much overrun with climbing-roses, which, in the season of slugs and rose-bugs, were apt to show so brown about the leaves and so coleopterous about the flowers, that it might be questioned whether their buds and blossoms made up for these



unpleasant animal combinations,—especially as the smell of whale-oil soap was very commonly in the ascendant over that of the roses. It had its patch of grass called “the lawn,” and its glazed closet known as “the conservatory,” according to that system of harmless fictions characteristic



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of the rural imagination and shown in the names applied to many familiar objects. The interior of the cottage was more tasteful and ambitious than that of the ordinary two-story dwellings. In place of the prevailing hair-cloth covered furniture, the visitor had the satisfaction of seating himself upon a chair covered with some of the Widow's embroidery, or a sofa luxurious with soft caressing plush. The sporting tastes of the late Major showed in various prints on the wall: Herring's "Plenipotentiary," the "red bullock" of the '34 Derby; "Cadland" and "The Colonel"; "Crucifix"; "West-Australian," fastest of modern racers; and ugly, game old "Boston," with his straight neck and ragged hips; and gray "Lady Suffolk," "extending" herself till she measured a rod, more or less, skimming along within a yard of the ground, her legs opening and shutting under her with a snap, like the four blades of a compound jack-knife.

These pictures were much more refreshing than those dreary fancy death-bed scenes, common in two-story country-houses, in which Washington and other distinguished personages are represented as obligingly devoting their last moments to taking a prominent part in a tableau, in which weeping relatives, attached servants, professional assistants, and celebrated personages who might by a stretch of imagination be supposed present, are grouped in the most approved style of arrangement about the chief actor's pillow.

A single glazed bookcase held the family library, which was hidden from vulgar eyes by green silk curtains behind the glass. It would have been instructive to get a look at it, as it always is to peep into one's neighbor's bookshelves. From other sources and opportunities a partial idea of it has been obtained. The Widow had inherited some books from her mother, who was something of a reader: Young's "Night-Thoughts"; "The Preceptor"; "The Task, a Poem," by William Cowper; Hervey's "Meditations"; "Alonzo and Melissa"; "Buccaneers of America"; "The Triumphs of Temper"; "La Belle Assemblee"; Thomson's "Seasons"; and a few others. The Major had brought in "Tom Jones" and "Peregrine Pickle"; various works by Mr. Pierce Egan; "Boxiana"; "The Racing Calendar"; and a "Book of Lively Songs and Jests." The Widow had added the Poems of Lord Byron and T. Moore; "Eugene Aram"; "The Tower of London," by Harrison Ainsworth; some of Scott's Novels; "The Pickwick Papers"; a volume of Plays, by W. Shakspeare; "Proverbial Philosophy"; "Pilgrim's Progress"; "The Whole Duty of Man" (a present when she was married); with two celebrated religious works, one by William Law and the other by Philip Doddridge, which were sent her after her husband's death, and which she had tried to read, but found that they did not agree with her. Of course the bookcase held a few school manuals and compendiums, and one of Mr. Webster's Dictionaries. But the gilt-edged Bible always lay on the centre-table, next to the magazine with the fashion-plates and the scrapbook with pictures from old annuals and illustrated papers.



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The reader need not apprehend the recital, at full length, of such formidable preparations for the Widow's tea-party as were required in the case of Colonel Sprowle's Social Entertainment. A tea-party, even in the country, is a comparatively simple and economical piece of business. As soon as the Widow found that all her company were coming, she set to work, with the aid of her "smart" maid-servant and a daughter of her own, who was beginning to stretch and spread at a fearful rate, but whom she treated as a small child, to make the necessary preparations. The silver had to be rubbed; also the grand plated urn,—her mother's before hers,—style of the Empire,—looking as if it might have been made to hold the Major's ashes. Then came the making and baking of cake and gingerbread, the smell whereof reached even as far as the sidewalk in front of the cottage, so that small boys returning from school snuffed it in the breeze, and discoursed with each other on its suggestions; so that the Widow Leech, who happened to pass, remembered she hadn't called on Marilly Raowens for a consid'ble spell, and turned in at the gate and rang three times with long intervals,—but all in vain, the inside Widow having "spotted" the outside one through the binds, and whispered to her aides-de-camp to let the old thing ring away till she pulled the bell out by the roots, but not to stir to open the door.

Widow Rowens was what they called a real smart, capable woman, not very great on books, perhaps, but knew what was what and who was who as well as another,—knew how to make the little cottage look pretty, how to set out a tea-table, and, what a good many women never can find out, knew her own style and "got herself up tip-top," as our young friend Master Geordie, Colonel Sprowle's heir-apparent, remarked to his friend from one of the fresh-water colleges. Flowers were abundant now, and she had dressed her rooms tastefully with them. The centre-table had two or three gilt-edged books lying carelessly about on it, and some prints, and a stereoscope with stereographs to match, chiefly groups of picnics, weddings, *etc.*, in which the same somewhat fatigued-looking ladies of fashion and brides received the attentions of the same unpleasant-looking young men, easily identified under their different disguises, consisting of fashionable raiment such as gentlemen are supposed to wear habitually. With these, however, were some pretty English scenes,—pretty except for the old fellow with the hanging under-lip who infests every one of that interesting series; and a statue or two, especially that famous one commonly called the Lahcoon, so as to rhyme with moon and spoon, and representing an old man with his two sons in the embraces of two monstrous serpents.

There is no denying that it was a very dashing achievement of the Widow's to bring together so considerable a number of desirable guests. She felt proud of her feat; but as to the triumph of getting Dudley Venner to come out for a visit to Hyacinth Cottage, she was surprised and almost frightened at her own success. So much might depend on the impressions of that evening!



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The next thing was to be sure that everybody should be in the right place at the tea-table, and this the Widow thought she could manage by a few words to the older guests and a little shuffling about and shifting when they got to the table. To settle everything the Widow made out a diagram, which the reader should have a chance of inspecting in an authentic copy, if these pages were allowed under any circumstances to be the vehicle of illustrations. If, however, he or she really wishes to see the way the pieces stood as they were placed at the beginning of the game, (the Widow's gambit,) he or she had better at once take a sheet of paper, draw an oval, and arrange the characters according to the following schedule.

At the head of the table, the Hostess, Widow Marilla Rowens. Opposite her, at the other end, Rev. Dr. Honeywood. At the right of the Hostess, Dudley Venner, next him Helen Darley, next her Dr. Kittredge, next him Mrs. Blanche Creamer, then the Reverend Doctor. At the left of the Hostess, Bernard Langdon, next him Letty Forester, next Letty Mr. Richard Venner, next him Elsie, and so to the Reverend Doctor again.

The company came together a little before the early hour at which it was customary to take tea in Rockland. The Widow knew everybody, of course: who was there in Rockland she did not know? But some of them had to be introduced: Mr. Richard Venner to Mr. Bernard, Mr. Bernard to Miss Letty, Dudley Venner to Miss Helen Darley, and so on. The two young men looked each other straight in the eyes,—both full of youthful life, but one of frank and fearless aspect, the other with a dangerous feline beauty alien to the New England half of his blood.

The guests talked, turned over the prints, looked at the flowers, opened the "Proverbial Philosophy" with gilt edges, and the volume of Plays by W. Shakspeare, examined the horse-pictures on the walls, and so passed away the time until tea was announced, when they paired off for the room where it was in readiness. The Widow had managed it well; everything was just as she wanted it. Dudley Venner was between herself and the poor tired-looking schoolmistress with her faded colors. Blanche Creamer, a lax, tumble-to-pieces, *Greuze*-ish looking blonde, whom the Widow hated because the men took to her, was purgatoried between the two old Doctors, and could see all the looks that passed between Dick Venner and his cousin. The young schoolmaster could talk to Miss Letty: it was his business to know how to talk to school-girls. Dick would amuse himself with his cousin Elsie. The old Doctors only wanted to be well fed and they would do well enough.



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It would be very pleasant to describe the tea-table; but the truth is, it did not pretend to offer a plethoric banquet to the guests. The Widow had not visited at the mansion-houses for nothing, and she had learned there that an overloaded tea-table may do well enough for farm-hands when they come in at evening from their work and sit down unwashed in their shirt-sleeves, but that for decently bred people such an insult to the memory of a dinner not yet half-assimilated is wholly inadmissible. There was no lump of meat on the table, no wedge of cheese, no dish of pickles. Everything was delicate, and almost everything of fair complexion: white bread and biscuits, frosted and sponge cake, cream, honey, straw-colored butter; only a shadow here and there, where the fire had crisped and browned the surfaces of a stack of dry toast, or where a preserve had brought away some of the red sunshine of the last year's summer. The Widow shall have the credit of her well-ordered tea-table, also of her bountiful cream-pitchers; for it is well known that city-people find cream a very scarce luxury in a good many country-houses of more pretensions than Hyacinth Cottage. There are no better maxims for ladies who give tea-parties than these:—

Cream is thicker than water.

Large heart never loved little cream-pot.

There is a common feeling in genteel families that the third meal of the day is not so essential a part of the daily bread as to require any especial acknowledgment to the Providence that bestows it. Very devout people, who would never sit down to a breakfast or a dinner without the grace before meat which honors the Giver of it, feel as if they thanked Heaven enough for their tea and toast by partaking of them cheerfully without audible petition or ascription. But the Widow was not exactly mansion-house-bred, and so thought it necessary to give the Reverend Doctor a peculiar look which he understood at once as inviting his professional services. He, therefore, uttered a few simple words of gratitude, very quietly,—much to the satisfaction of some of the guests, who had expected one of those elaborate effusions, with rolling up of the eyes and rhetorical accents, so frequent with eloquent divines when they address their Maker in genteel company.

Everybody began talking with the person sitting next at hand. Mr. Bernard naturally enough turned his attention first to the Widow; but somehow or other the right side of the Widow seemed to be more wide awake than the left side, next him, and he resigned her to the courtesies of Mr. Dudley Venner, directing himself, not very unwillingly, to the young girl next him on the other side. Miss Letty Forester, the granddaughter of the Reverend Doctor, was city-bred, as anybody might see, and city-dressed, as any woman would know at sight; a man might only feel the general effect of clear, well-matched colors, of harmonious proportions, of the cut which makes everything cling



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like a bather's sleeve where a natural outline is to be kept, and ruffle itself up like the hackle of a pitted fighting-cock where art has a right to luxuriate in silken exuberance. How this city-bred and city-dressed girl came to be in Rockland Mr. Bernard did not know, but he knew at any rate that she was his next neighbor and entitled to his courtesies. She was handsome, too, when he came to look, very handsome when he came to look again,—endowed with that city beauty which is like the beauty of wall-fruit, something finer in certain respects than can be reared off the pavement.

The truth is, the miserable routinists who keep repeating invidiously Cowper's

“God made the country and man made the town,”

as if the town were a place to kill out the race in, do not know what they are talking about. Where could they raise such Saint-Michael pears, such Saint-Germains, such Brown Beurres, as we had until within a few years growing within the walls of our old city-gardens? Is the dark and damp cavern where a ragged beggar hides himself better than a town-mansion that fronts the sunshine and backs on its own cool shadow, with gas and water and all appliances to suit all needs?

God made the *cavern* and man made the *house*! What then? The truth is, the pavement keeps a deal of mischief from coming up out of the earth, and, with a dash off of it in summer, just to cool the soles of the feet when it gets too hot, is the best place for many constitutions, as some few practical people have already discovered. And just so these beauties that grow and ripen against the city-walls, these young fellows with cheeks like peaches and young girls with cheeks like nectarines, show that the most perfect forms of artificial life can do as much for the human product as garden-culture for strawberries and blackberries.

If Mr. Bernard had philosophized or prosed in this way, with so pretty, nay, so lovely a neighbor as Miss Letty Forester waiting for him to speak to her, he would have to be dropped from this narrative as a person unworthy of his good-fortune, and not deserving the kind reader's further notice. On the contrary, he no sooner set his eyes fairly on her than he said to himself that she was charming, and that he wished she were one of his scholars at the Institute. So he began talking with her in an easy way; for he knew something of young girls by this time, and, of course, could adapt himself to a young lady who looked as if she might be not more than fifteen or sixteen years old, and therefore could hardly be a match in intellectual resources for the seventeen and eighteen year-old first-class scholars of the Apollinean Institute. But city-wall-fruit ripens early, and he soon found that this girl's training had so sharpened her wits and stored her memory, that he need not be at the trouble to stoop painfully in order to come down to her level.



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The beauty of good-breeding is that it adjusts itself to all relations without effort, true to itself always, however the manners of those around it may change. Self-respect and respect for others,—the sensitive consciousness poises itself in these as the compass in the ship's binnacle balances itself and maintains its true level within the two concentric rings that suspend it on their pivots. This thoroughbred school-girl quite enchanted Mr. Bernard. He could not understand where she got her style, her way of dress, her enunciation, her easy manners. The minister was a most worthy gentleman, but this was not the Rockland native-born manner; some new element had come in between the good, plain, worthy man and this young girl, fit to be a Crown Prince's partner where there were a thousand to choose from.

He looked across to Helen Barley, for he knew she would understand the glance of admiration with which he called her attention to the young beauty at his side; and Helen knew what a young girl could be, as compared with what too many a one is, as well as anybody.

This poor, dear Helen of ours! How admirable the contrast between her and the Widow on the other side of Dudley Venner! But, what was very odd, that gentleman apparently thought the contrast was to the advantage of this poor, dear Helen. At any rate, instead of devoting himself solely to the Widow, he happened to be just at that moment talking in a very interested and, apparently, not uninteresting way to his right-hand neighbor, who, on her part, never looked more charmingly,—as Mr. Bernard could not help saying to himself,—but, to be sure, he had just been looking at the young girl next him, so that his eyes were brimful of beauty, and may have spilled some of it on the first comer: for you know M. Becquerel has been showing us lately how everything is phosphorescent; that it soaks itself with light in an instant's exposure, so that it is wet with liquid sunbeams, or, if you will, tremulous with luminous vibrations, when first plunged into the negative bath of darkness, and betrays itself by the light which escapes from its surface.

Whatever was the reason, this poor, dear Helen never looked so sweetly. Her plainly parted brown hair, her meek, blue eyes, her cheek just a little tinged with color, the almost sad simplicity of her dress, and that look he knew so well,—so full of cheerful patience, so sincere, that he had trusted her from the first moment as the believers of the larger half of Christendom trust the Blessed Virgin,—Mr. Bernard took this all in at a glance, and felt as pleased as if it had been his own sister Dorothea Elizabeth that he was looking at. As for Dudley Venner, Mr. Bernard could not help being struck by the animated expression of his countenance. It certainly showed great kindness, on his part, to pay so much attention to this quiet girl, when he had the thunder-and-lightning Widow on the other side of him.



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Mrs. Marilla Rowens did not know what to make of it. She had made her tea-party expressly for Mr. Dudley Venner. She had placed him just as she wanted, between herself and a meek, delicate woman who dressed in gray, wore a plain breastpin with hair in it, who taught a pack of girls up there at the school, and looked as if she were born for a teacher,—the very best foil that she could have chosen; and here was this man, polite enough to herself, to be sure, but turning round to that very undistinguished young person, as if he rather preferred her conversation of the two!

The truth was that Dudley Venner and Helen Darley met as two travellers might meet in the desert, wearied, both of them, with their long journey, one having food, but no water, the other water, but no food. Each saw that the other had been in long conflict with some trial; for their voices were low and tender, as patiently borne sorrow and humbly uttered prayers make every human voice. Through these tones, more than by what they said, they came into natural sympathetic relations with each other. Nothing could be more unstudied. As for Dudley Venner, no beauty in all the world could have so soothed and magnetized him as the very repose and subdued gentleness which the Widow had thought would make the best possible background for her own more salient and effective attractions. No doubt, Helen, on her side, was almost too readily pleased with the confidence this new acquaintance she was making seemed to show her from the very first. She knew so few men of any condition! Mr. Silas Peckham: he was her employer, and she ought to think of him as well as she could; but every time she thought of him it was with a shiver of disgust. Mr. Bernard Langdon: a noble young man, a true friend, like a brother to her,—God bless him, and send him some young heart as fresh as his own! But this gentleman produced a new impression upon her, quite different from any to which she was accustomed. His rich, low tones had the strangest significance to her; she felt sure he must have lived through long experiences, sorrowful like her own. Elsie's father! She looked into his dark eyes, as she listened to him, to see if they had any glimmer of that peculiar light, diamond-bright, but cold and still, which she knew so well in Elsie's. Anything but that! Never was there more tenderness, it seemed to her, than in the whole look and expression of Elsie's father. She must have been a great trial to him; yet his face was that of one who had been saddened, not soured, by his discipline. Knowing what Elsie must be to him, how hard she must make any parent's life, Helen could not but be struck with the interest Mr. Dudley Venner showed in her as his daughter's instructress. He was too kind to her; again and again she meekly turned from him, so as to leave him free to talk to the showy lady at his other side, who was looking all the while

“like the night Of cloudless realms and starry skies”;



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but still Mr. Dudley Venner, after a few courteous words, came back to the blue eyes and brown hair; still he kept his look fixed upon her, and his tones grew sweeter and lower as he became more interested in talk, until this poor, dear Helen, what with surprise, and the bashfulness natural to one who had seen little of the gay world, and the stirring of deep, confused sympathies with this suffering father, whose heart seemed so full of kindness, felt her cheeks glowing with unwonted flame, and betrayed the pleasing trouble of her situation by looking so sweetly as to arrest Mr. Bernard's eye for a moment, when he looked away from the young beauty sitting next him.

Elsie meantime had been silent, with that singular, still, watchful look which those who knew her well had learned to fear. Her head just a little inclined on one side, perfectly motionless for whole minutes, her eyes seeming to grow small and bright, as always when she was under her evil influence, she was looking obliquely at the young girl on the other side of her cousin Dick and next to Bernard Langdon. As for Dick himself, she seemed to be paying very little attention to him. Sometimes her eyes would wander off to Mr. Bernard, and their expression, as old Dr. Kittredge, who watched her for a while pretty keenly, noticed, would change perceptibly. One would have said that she looked with a kind of dull hatred at the girl, but with a half-relenting reproachful anger at Mr. Bernard.

Miss Letty Forester, at whom Elsie had been looking from time to time in this fixed way, was conscious meanwhile of some unusual influence. First it was a feeling of constraint,—then, as it were, a diminished power over the muscles, as if an invisible elastic cobweb were spinning round her,—then a tendency to turn away from Mr. Bernard, who was making himself very agreeable, and look straight into those eyes which would not leave her, and which seemed to be drawing her towards them, while at the same time they chilled the blood in all her veins.

Mr. Bernard saw this influence coming over her. All at once he noticed that she sighed, and that some little points of moisture began to glisten on her forehead. But she did not grow pale perceptibly; she had no involuntary or hysteric movements; she still listened to him and smiled naturally enough. Perhaps she was only nervous at being stared at. At any rate, she was coming under some unpleasant and unnatural influence or other, and Mr. Bernard had seen enough of the strange impression Elsie sometimes produced to wish this young girl to be relieved from it, whatever it was. He turned toward Elsie and looked at her in such a way as to draw her eyes upon him. Then he looked steadily and calmly into them. It was a great effort, for some perfectly inexplicable reason. At one instant he thought he could not sit where he was; he must go and speak to Elsie. Then he wanted to take his eyes away from hers; there was something intolerable in the light



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that came from them. But he was determined to look her down, and he believed he could do it, for he had seen her countenance change more than once when he had caught her gaze steadily fixed on him. All this took not minutes, but seconds. Presently she changed color slightly,—lifted her head, which was inclined a little to one side,—shut and opened her eyes two or three times, as if they had been pained or wearied,—and turned away baffled, and shamed, as it would seem, and shorn for the time of her singular and formidable or at least evil-natured power of swaying the impulses of those around her.

It takes too long to describe these scenes where a good deal of life is concentrated into a few silent seconds. Mr. Richard Venner had sat quietly through it all, although this short pantomime had taken place literally before his face. He saw what was going on well enough, and understood it all perfectly well. Of course the schoolmaster had been trying to make Elsie jealous, and had succeeded. The little school-girl was a decoy-duck,—that was all. Estates like the Dudley property were not to be had every day, and no doubt the Yankee usher was willing to take some pains to make sure of Elsie. Doesn't Elsie look savage? Dick involuntarily moved his chair a little away from her, and thought he felt a pricking in the small white scars on his wrist. A dare-devil fellow, but somehow or other this girl had taken strange hold of his imagination, and he often swore to himself, that, when he married her, he would carry a loaded revolver with him to his bridal chamber.

Mrs. Blanche Creamer raged inwardly at first to find herself between the two old gentlemen of the party. It very soon gave her great comfort, however, to see that Marilla Rowens had just missed it in her calculations, and she chuckled immensely to find Dudley Venner devoting himself chiefly to Helen Darley. If the Rowens woman should hook Dudley, she felt as if she should gnaw all her nails off for spite. To think of seeing her barouching about Rockland behind a pair of long-tailed bays and a coachman with a band on his hat, while she, Blanche Creamer, was driving herself about in a one-horse "carriage"! Recovering her spirits by degrees, she began playing her surfaces off at the two old Doctors, just by way of practice. First she heaved up a glaring white shoulder, the right one, so that the Reverend Doctor should be stunned by it, if such a thing might be. The Reverend Doctor was human, as the Apostle was not ashamed to confess himself. Half-devoutly and half-mischievously he repeated inwardly, "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." As the Reverend Doctor did not show any lively susceptibility, she thought she would try the left shoulder on old Dr. Kittredge. That worthy and experienced student of science was not at all displeased with the manoeuvre, and lifted his head so as to command the exhibition through his glasses. "Blanche is good for half a dozen years or so, if she is careful," the Doctor said to himself, "and then she must take to her prayer-book." After this spasmodic failure of Mrs. Blanche Creamer's to stir up the old Doctors, she returned again to the pleasing task of watching the Widow in her evident discomfiture. But dark as the Widow looked

in her half-concealed pet, she was but as a pale shadow, compared to Elsie in her silent concentration of shame and anger.



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“Well, there is one good thing,” said Mrs. Blanche Creamer; “Dick doesn’t get much out of that cousin of his this evening! Doesn’t he look handsome, though?”

So Mrs. Blanche, being now a good deal taken up with her observations of those friends of hers and ours, began to be rather careless of her two old Doctors, who naturally enough fell into conversation with each other across the white surfaces of that lady,—perhaps not very politely, but, under the circumstances, almost as a matter of necessity.

When a minister and a doctor get talking together, they always have a great deal to say; and so it happened that the company left the table just as the two Doctors were beginning to get at each other’s ideas about various interesting matters. If we follow them into the other parlor, we can, perhaps, pick up something of their conversation.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHY DOCTORS DIFFER.

The company rearranged itself with some changes after leaving the tea-table Dudley Venner was very polite to the Widow; but that lady having been called off for a few moments for some domestic arrangement, he slid back to the side of Helen Darley, his daughter’s faithful teacher. Elsie had got away by herself, and was taken up in studying the stereoscopic Lahcoon. Dick, being thus set free, had been seized upon by Mrs. Blanche Creamer, who had diffused herself over three-quarters of a sofa and beckoned him to the remaining fourth. Mr. Bernard and Miss Letty were having a snug *tete-a-tete* in the recess of a bay-window. The two Doctors had taken two armchairs and sat squared off against each other. Their conversation is perhaps as well worth reporting as that of the rest of the company, and, as it was earned on in a louder tone, was of course more easy to gather and put on record.

It was a curious sight enough to see those two representatives of two great professions brought face to face to talk over the subjects they had been looking at all their lives from such different points of view. Both were old; old enough to have been moulded by their habits of thought and life; old enough to have all their beliefs “fretted in,” as vintners say,—thoroughly worked up with their characters. Each of them looked his calling. The Reverend Doctor had lived a good deal among books in his study; the Doctor, as we will call the medical gentleman, had been riding about the country for between thirty and forty years. His face looked tough and weather-worn; while the Reverend Doctor’s, hearty as it appeared, was of finer texture. The Doctor’s was the graver of the two; there was something of grimness about it,—partly owing to the northeasters he had faced for so many years, partly to long companionship with that stern personage who never deals in sentiment or pleasantry. His speech was apt to be brief and peremptory; it was a way he had got by ordering patients; but he could discourse somewhat, on occasion,



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as the reader may find out. The Reverend Doctor had an open, smiling expression, a cheery voice, a hearty laugh, and a cordial way with him which some thought too lively for his cloth, but which children, who are good judges of such matters, delighted in, so that he was the favorite of all the little rogues about town. But he had the clerical art of sobering down in a moment, when asked to say grace while somebody was in the middle of some particularly funny story; and though his voice was so cheery in common talk, in the pulpit, like almost all preachers, he had a wholly different and peculiar way of speaking, supposed to be more acceptable to the Creator than the natural manner. In point of fact, most of our anti-papal and anti-prelatical clergymen do really *intone* their prayers, without suspecting in the least that they have fallen into such a Romish practice.

This is the way the conversation between the Doctor of Divinity and the Doctor of Medicine was going on at the point where these notes take it up.

“*Ubi tres medici, duo athei*, you know, Doctor. Your profession has always had the credit of being lax in doctrine,—though pretty stringent in *practice*, ha! ha!”

“Some priest said that,” the Doctor answered, dryly. “They always talked Latin when they had a bigger lie than common to get rid of.”

“Good!” said the Reverend Doctor; “I’m afraid they would lie a little sometimes. But isn’t there some truth in it, Doctor? Don’t you think your profession is apt to see ‘Nature’ in the place of the God of Nature,—to lose sight of the great First Cause in their daily study of secondary causes?”

“I’ve thought about that,” the Doctor answered, “and I’ve talked about it and read about it, and I’ve come to the conclusion that nobody believes in God and trusts in God quite so much as the doctors; only it isn’t just the sort of Deity that some of your profession have wanted them to take up with. There was a student of mine wrote a dissertation on the Natural Theology of Health and Disease, and took that old lying proverb for his motto. He knew a good deal more about books than ever I did, and had studied in other countries. I’ll tell you what he said about it. He said the old Heathen Doctor, Galen, praised God for his handiwork in the human body, just as if he had been a Christian, or the Psalmist himself. He said they had this sentence set up in large letters in the great lecture-room in Paris where he attended: *I dressed his wound and God healed him*. That was an old surgeon’s saying. And he gave a long list of doctors who were not only Christians, but famous ones. I grant you, though, ministers and doctors are very apt to see differently in spiritual matters.”

“That’s it,” said the Reverend Doctor; “you are apt to see ‘Nature’ where we see God, and appeal to ‘Science’ where we are contented with Revelation.”



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“We don’t separate God and Nature, perhaps, as you do,” the Doctor answered. “When we say that God is omnipresent and omnipotent and omniscient, we are a little more apt to mean it than your folks are. We think, when a wound heals, that God’s *presence* and *power* and *knowledge* are there, healing it, just as that old surgeon did. We think a good many theologians, working among their books, don’t see the facts of the world they live in. When we tell ’em of these facts, they are apt to call us materialists and atheists and infidels, and all that. We can’t help seeing the facts, and we don’t think it’s wicked to mention ’em.”

“Do tell me,” the Reverend Doctor said, “some of these facts we are in the habit of overlooking, and which your profession thinks it can see and understand.”

“That’s very easy,” the Doctor replied. “For instance: you don’t understand or don’t allow for idiosyncrasies as we learn to. We know that food and physic act differently with different people; but you think the same kind of truth is going to suit, or ought to suit, all minds. We don’t fight with a patient because he can’t take magnesia or opium; but you are all the time quarrelling over your beliefs, as if belief did not depend very much on race and constitution, to say nothing of early training.”

“Do you mean to say that every man is not absolutely free to choose his beliefs?”

“The men you write about in your studies are, but not the men we see in the real world. There is some apparently congenital defect in the Indians, for instance, that keeps them from choosing civilization and Christianity. So with the Gypsies, very likely. Everybody knows that Catholicism or Protestantism is a good deal a matter of race. Constitution has more to do with belief than people think for. I went to a Universalist church, when I was in the city one day, to hear a famous man whom all the world knows, and I never saw such pews-full of broad shoulders and florid faces, and substantial, wholesome-looking persons, male and female, in all my life. Why, it was astonishing. Either their creed made them healthy, or they chose it because they were healthy. Your folks have never got the hang of human nature.”

“I am afraid this would be considered a degrading and dangerous view of human beliefs and responsibility for them,” the Reverend Doctor replied. “Prove to a man that his will is governed by something outside of himself, and you have lost all hold on his moral and religious nature. There is nothing bad men want to believe so much as that they are governed by necessity. Now that which is at once degrading and dangerous cannot be true.”



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“No doubt,” the Doctor replied, “all large views of mankind limit our estimate of the absolute freedom of the will. But I don’t think it degrades or endangers us, for this reason, that, while it makes us charitable to the rest of mankind, our own sense of freedom, whatever it is, is never affected by argument. *Conscience won’t be reasoned with.* We feel that we can practically do this or that, and if we choose the wrong, we know we are responsible; but observation teaches us that this or that other race or individual has not the same practical freedom of choice. I don’t see how we can avoid this conclusion in the instance of the American Indians. The science of Ethnology has upset a good many theoretical notions about human nature.”

“Science!” said the Reverend Doctor, “science! that was a word the Apostle Paul did not seem to think much of, if we may judge by the Epistle to Timothy: ‘Oppositions of science falsely so called.’ I own that I am jealous of that word and the pretensions that go with it. Science has seemed to me to be very often only the handmaid of skepticism.”

“Doctor!” the physician said, emphatically, “science is knowledge. Nothing that is not *known* properly belongs to science. Whenever knowledge obliges us to doubt, we are always safe in doubting. Astronomers foretell eclipses, say how long comets are to stay with us, point out where a new planet is to be found. We see they *know* what they assert, and the poor old Roman Catholic Church has at last to knock under. So Geology *proves* a certain succession of events, and the best Christian in the world must make the earth’s history square with it. Besides, I don’t think you remember what great revelations of himself the Creator has made in the minds of the men who have built up science. You seem to me to hold his human masterpieces very cheap. Don’t you think the ‘inspiration of the Almighty’ gave Newton and Cuvier ‘understanding’?”

The Reverend Doctor was not arguing for victory. In fact, what he wanted was to call out the opinions of the old physician by a show of opposition, being already predisposed to agree with many of them. He was rather trying the common arguments, as one tries tricks of fence merely to learn the way of parrying. But just here he saw a tempting opening, and could not resist giving a horn-thrust.

“Yes; but you surely would not consider it inspiration of the same kind as that of the writers of the Old Testament?”

That cornered the Doctor, and he paused a moment before he replied. Then he raised his head, so as to command the Reverend Doctor’s face through his spectacles, and said,—

“I did not say that. You are clear, I suppose, that the Omniscient spoke through Solomon, but that Shakspeare wrote without his help?”

The Reverend Doctor looked very grave. It was a bold, blunt way of putting the question. He turned it aside with the remark, that Shakspeare seemed to him at times to come as near inspiration as any human being not included among the sacred writers.



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“Doctor,” the physician began, as from a sudden suggestion, “you won’t quarrel with me, if I tell you some of my real thoughts, will you?”

“Say on, my dear Sir, say on,” the minister answered, with his most genial smile; “your real thoughts are just what I want to get at. A man’s real thoughts are a great rarity. If I don’t agree with you, I shall like to hear you.”

The Doctor began; and in order to give his thoughts more connectedly, we will omit the conversational breaks, the questions and comments of the clergyman, and all accidental interruptions.

“When the old ecclesiastics said that where there were three doctors there were two atheists, they lied, of course. They called everybody that differed from them atheists, until they found out that not believing in God wasn’t nearly so ugly a crime as not believing in some particular dogma; then they called them *heretics*, until so many good people had been burned under that name that it began to smell too strong of roasting flesh,—and after that *infidels*, which properly means people without faith, of whom there are not a great many in any place or time. But then, of course, there was some reason why doctors shouldn’t think about religion exactly as ministers did, or they never would have made that proverb. It’s very likely that something of the same kind is true now; whether it is so or not, I am going to tell you the reasons why it would not be strange, if doctors should take rather different views from clergymen about some matters of belief. I don’t, of course, mean all doctors nor all clergymen. Some doctors go as far as any old New-England divine, and some clergymen agree very well with the doctors that think least according to rule.

“To begin with their ideas of the Creator himself. They always see him trying to help his creatures out of their troubles. A man no sooner gets a cut, than the Great Physician, whose agency we often call *Nature*, goes to work, first to stop the blood, and then to heal the wound, and then to make the scar as small as possible. If a man’s pain exceeds a certain amount, he faints, and so gets relief. If it lasts too long, habit comes in to make it tolerable. If it is altogether too bad, he dies. That is the best thing to be done under the circumstances. So you see, the doctor is constantly in presence of a benevolent agency working against a settled order of things, of which pain and disease are the accidents, so to speak. Well, no doubt they find it harder than clergymen to believe that there can be any world or state from which this benevolent agency is wholly excluded. This may be very wrong; but it is not unnatural. They can hardly conceive of a permanent state of being in which cuts would never try to heal, nor habit render suffering endurable. This is one effect of their training.



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“Then, again, their attention is very much called to human limitations. Ministers work out the machinery of responsibility in an abstract kind of way; they have a kind of algebra of human nature, in which *friction* and *strength* (or *weakness*) of *material* are left out. You see, a doctor is in the way of studying children from the moment of birth upwards. For the first year or so he sees that they are just as much pupils of their Maker as the young of any other animals. Well, their Maker trains them to *pure selfishness*. Why? In order that they may be sure to take care of themselves. So you see, when a child comes to be, we will say a year and a day old, and makes his first choice between right and wrong, he is at a disadvantage; for he has that *vis a tergo*, as we doctors call it, that force from behind, of a whole year’s life of selfishness, for which he is no more to blame than a calf is to blame for having lived in the same way, purely to gratify his natural appetites. Then we see that baby grow up to a child, and, if he is fat and stout and red and lively, we expect to find him troublesome and noisy, and, perhaps, sometimes disobedient more or less; that’s the way each new generation breaks its eggshell; but if he is very weak and thin, and is one of the kind that may be expected to die early, he will very likely sit in the house all day and read good books about other little sharp-faced children just like himself; who died early, having always been perfectly indifferent to all the out-door amusements of the wicked little red-cheeked children. Some of the little folks we watch grow up to be young women, and occasionally one of them gets nervous, what we call hysterical, and then that girl will begin to play all sorts of pranks,—to lie and cheat, perhaps, in the most unaccountable way, so that she might seem to a minister a good example of total depravity. We don’t see her in that light. We give her iron and valerian, and get her on horseback, if we can, and so expect to make her will come all right again. By-and-by we are called in to see an old baby, three-score years and ten or more old. We find this old baby has never got rid of that first year’s teaching which led him to fill his stomach with all he could pump into it, and his hands with everything he could grab. People call him a miser. We are sorry for him; but we can’t help remembering his first year’s training, and the natural effect of money on the great majority of those that have it. So while the ministers say he ‘shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven’ we like to remind them that ‘with God all things are possible.’



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“Once more, we see all kinds of monomania and insanity. We learn from them to recognize all sorts of queer tendencies in minds supposed to be sane, so that we have nothing but compassion for a large class of persons condemned as sinners by theologians, but considered by us as invalids. We have constant reasons for noticing the transmission of qualities from parents to offspring, and we find it hard to hold a child accountable in any moral point of view for inherited bad temper or tendency to drunkenness,—as hard as we should to blame him for inheriting gout or asthma. I suppose we are more lenient with human nature than theologians generally are. We know that the spirits of men and their views of the present and the future go up and down, with the barometer, and that a permanent depression of one inch in the mercurial column would affect the whole theology of Christendom.

“Ministers talk about the human will as if it stood on a high look-out, with plenty of light, and elbow-room reaching to the horizon. Doctors are constantly noticing how it is tied up and darkened by inferior organization, by disease, and all sorts of crowding interferences, until they get to look upon Hottentots and Indians—and a good many of their own race—as a kind of self-conscious blood-clocks with very limited power of self-determination. That’s the *tendency*, I say, of a doctor’s experience. But the people to whom they address their statements of the results of their observation belong to the thinking class of the highest races, and *they* are conscious of a great deal of liberty of will. So in the face of the fact that civilization with all it offers has proved a dead failure with the aboriginal races of this country,—on the whole, I say, a dead failure,—they talk as if they knew from their own will all about that of a Digger Indian! We are more apt to go by observation of the facts in the case. We are constantly seeing weakness where you see depravity. I don’t say we’re *right*; I only tell what you must often find to be the fact, right or wrong, in talking with doctors. You see, too, our notions of bodily and moral disease, or sin, are apt to go together. We used to be as hard on sickness as you were on sin. We know better now. We don’t look at sickness as we used to, and try to poison, it with everything that is offensive,—burnt toads and earth-worms and viper-broth, and worse things than these. We know that disease has something back of it which the body isn’t to blame for, at least in most cases, and which very often it is trying to get rid of. Just so with sin. I will agree to take a hundred new-born babes of a certain stock and return seventy-five of them in a dozen years true and honest, if not ‘pious’ children. And I will take another hundred, of a different stock, and put them in the hands of certain Ann-Street teachers, and seventy-five of them will be thieves and liars at the end of the same dozen years. I have heard



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of an old character, Colonel Jaques, I believe it was, a famous cattle-breeder, who used to say he could breed to pretty much any pattern he wanted to. Well, we doctors see so much of families, how the tricks of the blood keep breaking out, just as much in character as they do in looks, that we can't help feeling as if a great many people hadn't a fair chance to be what is called 'good,' and that there isn't a text in the Bible better worth keeping always in mind than that one, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'

"As for our getting any quarter at the hands of theologians, we don't expect it, and have no right to. You don't give each other any quarter. I have had two religious books sent me by friends within a week or two. One is Mr. Brownson's; he is as fair and square as Euclid; a real honest, strong thinker, and one that knows what he is talking about,—for he has tried all sorts of religions, pretty much. He tells us that the Roman Catholic Church is the one 'through which alone we can hope for heaven.' The other is by a worthy Episcopal rector, who appears to write as if he were in earnest, and he calls the Papacy the 'Devil's Masterpiece,' and talks about the 'Satanic scheme' of that very Church 'through which alone,' as Mr. Brownson tells us, 'we can hope for heaven!' What's the use in *our* caring about hard words after this,—'atheists,' heretics, infidels, and the like? They're, after all, only the cinders picked up out of those heaps of ashes round the stumps of the old stakes where they used to burn men, women, and children for not thinking just like other folks. They'll 'crock' your fingers, but they can't burn us.

"Doctors are the best-natured people in the world, except when they get fighting with each other. And they have some advantages over you. You inherit your notions from a set of priests that had no wives and no children, or none to speak of, and so let their humanity die out of them. It didn't seem much to them to condemn a few thousand millions of people to purgatory or worse for a mistake of judgment. They didn't know what it was to have a child look up in their faces and say 'Father!' It will take you a hundred or two more years to get decently humanized, after so many centuries of dehumanizing celibacy.

"Besides, though our libraries are, perhaps, not commonly quite so big as yours, God opens one book to physicians that a good many of you don't know much about,—the Book of Life. That is none of your dusty folios with black letters between pasteboard and leather, but it is printed in bright red type, and the binding of it is warm and tender to every touch. They reverence that book as one of the Almighty's infallible revelations. They will insist on reading you lessons out of it, whether you call them names or not. These will always be lessons of charity. No doubt, nothing can be more provoking to listen to. But do beg your folks to remember that the Smithfield fires are all out, and that the cinders are very dirty and not in the least dangerous. They'd a great deal better be civil, and not be throwing old proverbs in the doctors' faces, when they say that the man of the old monkish notions is one thing and the man they watch from his cradle to his coffin is something very different."



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It has cost a good deal of trouble to work the Doctor's talk up into this formal shape. Some of his sentences have been rounded off for him, and the whole brought into a more rhetorical form than it could have pretended to, if taken as it fell from his lips. But the exact course of his remarks has been followed, and as far as possible his expressions have been retained. Though given in the form of a discourse, it must be remembered that this was a conversation, much more fragmentary and colloquial than it seems as just read.

The Reverend Doctor was very far from taking offence at the old physician's freedom of speech. He knew him to be honest, kind, charitable, self-denying, wherever any sorrow was to be alleviated, always reverential, with a cheerful trust in the great Father of all mankind. To be sure, his senior deacon, old Deacon Shearer,—who seemed to have got his Scripture-teachings out of the "Vinegar Bible," (the one where *Vineyard* is misprinted *Vinegar*, which a good many people seem to have adopted as the true reading,)—his senior deacon had called Dr. Kittredge an "infidel." But the Reverend Doctor could not help feeling, that, unless the text, "By their fruits ye shall know them," were an interpolation, the Doctor was the better Christian of the two. Whatever his senior deacon might think about it, he said to himself that he shouldn't be surprised if he met the Doctor in heaven yet, inquiring anxiously after old Deacon Shearer.

He was on the point of expressing himself very frankly to the Doctor, with that benevolent smile on his face which had sometimes come near giving offence to the readers of the "Vinegar" edition, but he saw that the physician's attention had been arrested by Elsie. He looked in the same direction himself, and could not help being struck by her attitude and expression. There was something singularly graceful in the curves of her neck and the rest of her figure, but she was so perfectly still that it seemed as if she were hardly breathing. Her eyes were fixed on the young girl with whom Mr. Bernard was talking. He had often noticed their brilliancy, but now it seemed to him that they appeared dull, and the look on her features was as of some passion which had missed its stroke. Mr. Bernard's companion seemed unconscious that she was the object of this attention, and was listening to the young master as if he had succeeded in making himself very agreeable.

Of course Dick Venner had not mistaken the game that was going on. The schoolmaster meant to make Elsie jealous,—and he had done it. That's it: get her savage first, and then come wheedling round her,—a sure trick, if he isn't headed off somehow. But Dick saw well enough that he had better let Elsie alone just now, and thought the best way of killing the evening would be to amuse himself in a little lively talk with Mrs. Blanche Creamer, and incidentally to show Elsie that he could make himself acceptable to other women, if not to herself.



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The Doctor presently went up to Elsie, determined to engage her in conversation and get her out of her thoughts, which he saw, by her look, were dangerous. Her father had been on the point of leaving Helen Darley to go to her, but felt easy enough when he saw the old Doctor at her side, and so went on talking. The Reverend Doctor, being now left alone, engaged the Widow Rowens, who put the best face on her vexation she could, but was devoting herself to all the underground deities for having been such a fool as to ask that pale-faced thing from the Institute to fill up her party.

There is no space left to report the rest of the conversation. If there was anything of any significance in it, it will turn up by-and-by, no doubt. At ten o'clock the Reverend Doctor called Miss Letty, who had no idea it was so late; Mr. Bernard gave his arm to Helen; Mr. Richard saw to Mrs. Blanche Creamer; the Doctor gave Elsie a cautioning look, and went off alone, thoughtful; Dudley Venner and his daughter got into their carriage and were whirled away. The Widow's gambit was played, and she had not won the game.

REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

Reminiscences of the late Thomas Assheton Smith, Esq.; or, The Pursuits of an English Country-Gentleman. By Sir J.E. EARDLEY-WILMOT. London: Murray. 1860.

We are somewhat doubtful whether Charles Lamb would have included this handsome volume in a list of *books*. It is evidently the work of an eager sportsman, one learned in all the minutiae of the chase. Much of it is taken up with enthusiastic description of Mr. Smith's favorite horses and hounds, of the astonishing qualities of Rory O'More, of the splendid runs made by Fireship and Lightboat, of the notable improvement made in the Suffolk pack by Mr. Smith's judicious system of crossing. All this part of the book will doubtless interest any English gentleman who delights in pink and buckskins, and will especially please those who recollect the famous Tom Smith, as he was called, when,

“on a morning
Ruddy as health, he rode into the field
And then pursued the chase,”

over and through swamp, hedge, and ditch, with that dare-devil speed and recklessness that won for him the reputation of being the best rider, the hardest seat, and the first sportsman in all England.

And even to us, who never chased the fox nor ever crossed a thoroughbred, this portion of the work is not without a certain interest; for we take a species of pleasure in hearing or learning the technical terms of any art, trade, or pursuit whatsoever, and not often to American eyes comes the chance of becoming acquainted with the huntsman, the whipper-in, the ride to cover, and the eager, toilsome, dangerous chase.



Still we cannot help regarding the over-abundance of these things as not only a blemish in the book as a work of art, which indeed it scarcely pretends to be, but also as a hindrance to the attainment of its object, which is the vindication of Mr. Smith's character from certain charges made against it by the "Times" and other London newspapers, which spoke but slightly of him, pronouncing him to have been a mere fox-hunting squire, and nothing more.



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To contradict these and similar aspersions, his widow put all of Mr. Smith's correspondence into the hands of his warm friend, Sir J.E. Eardley-Wilmot, and left to him the task of defending the name and fame of her husband. These memoirs are the result, and we are of opinion, that, with the exception of the superabundant cricketing and hunting technicalities before mentioned, the work has been exceedingly well performed. The book is written in an unambitious, straightforward, gentlemanly style, that carries conviction with it; and as we rise from a perusal of it, with occasional stoppings, we feel that the "Times" correspondent has now at least no excuse for harsh judgment of Mr. Smith, and that, if he was a reckless rider and a mighty hunter, he was also very much more and better.

Thomas Assheton Smith was born of sturdy and right English stock, as the following anecdote makes patent. His father opposed the building of the Menai Bridge, did not believe, in fact, that it could be built, considered the ferry good enough, and declared, that, if it should be finished, he for one would never set foot upon it. The possibility of building a bridge having been demonstrated to Mr. Smith by the completed structure, he, for the remainder of his life, when his occasions took him across the strait, made use of a boat. Other such anecdotes are told of him, setting forth his obstinacy and courage in a strong light, so that we are not surprised when we are informed that his son had a stern temper and was somewhat dictatorial in the field. We could have accounted for Tom Smith's severe countenance, though we had never heard of that two hours' battle at Eton, of which the school-traditions yet speak, when he fought a drawn fight with Jack Musters, who, the Squire always declared, spoiled his beauty for him. Neither do we wonder when we hear that he fought a six-foot carter in the street and beat him, or that, when nearly eighty years of age, he jumped off his horse and put up his hands to a farm-laborer who had insulted him, or that, when he ran as candidate for Parliament, for Nottingham, and was hissed and groaned in that radical city, he stepped down from the hustings and proposed a set-to with any voter in the crowd. This was good crowing, but the old cock had taught him.

From Eton young Smith was removed to Oxford, where we are told he often rode out with the hounds and began his practice of keeping close up to them at the risk of his own and his horse's neck. Clearly the subject of these memoirs was not intended to shine in the schools and wisely did not make the attempt. Leaving college, Mr. Smith for a few years devoted himself to the improvement of his horses and hounds, and, as the author says, to "creating a new country near Salisbury Plain." The thread of his life is then followed down to the death of his father and his entrance upon the manifold duties of a large landed proprietor, owner of immense quarries, and landlord of some hundreds of tenants,—the

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pursuits, in short, of an English country-gentleman. Here is the real interest of the book. It is interesting to note the difference between this country-squire and that typical country-squire with which the plays and novels of the last hundred and fifty years have made us familiar. We all know him. Purple with Port, beef-witted, tyrannical, intolerant, ignorant, never happy unless when on horseback or drunk, nor looking happy then.

But the “glorious gains” of the nineteenth century have come to fox-hunters as well as to other men, and Squire Smith is a very much ameliorated Squire Western, though we see plain enough evidence that the original stock is the same in both. Both are good Tories, hate the French, and would fight for the Church; but we are sure that Squire Western considers a curate as but a poor creature, and we fear Squire Smith has not any Puritanical reverence for the clergy,—for curates, at least; for we are told, that, when the Reverend Mr. T. Dyson preached his first sermon, the Squire walked up to him in the church-porch, and, clapping him on the back, said to the young parson, “Well done, my boy! you shall have a mount on Rory next Tuesday for this!” But we do not think that Squire Western would have been liberal or politic enough to have given land and money to several neighboring congregations of Dissenters, or that he would have given away to his quarrymen several thousand acres of good land together with building-materials. Nor have we such faith in the ability of the Georgian Squire as to believe that he, from his own observation and acute reasoning on facts which he had noticed when a boy in school, would ever have given to the world the famous wave-line bow to be a pattern on which all nations should model their vessels. Yet this our Victorian Squire has done, and he loses no credit by the fact that Mr. Scott Russell, the great naval architect, had at nearly the same time, working from entirely different premises, arrived at the same result.

Mr. Smith seems to us well worth knowing as the type of a great class of Englishmen, —that class to which the author of “School-Days at Rugby” gives the comprehensive patronymic of Brown,—a class bold, honest, energetic, not too affectionate, not too intellectual, perhaps, but, by virtue of their strength of hand, head, and will, and their inborn honesty of soul, the masters in some important respects of all the men that live.

Essays and Reviews. The Second Edition. London: 1860. 8vo. pp. 434.

The second English and the first American edition of the volume bearing the modest title given above have followed quickly its original publication. The title-page, indicating only the form of the matter in the volume, compels a reference to the table of contents in order to learn its substance. From this it appears that the *Essays and Reviews* are seven in number, each by a different author, and that they treat chiefly of topics connected with the study of



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Scripture,—the only one not directly indicating its relation to this study by its title being the first, on “The Education of the World,” by the Reverend Frederick Temple, Head Master of Rugby School. The names of several of the authors, those, for instance, of the late Baden Powell, of Dr. Rowland Williams, and of Mr. Jowett, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford, are well known as among those of the most advanced and ablest leaders of thought in the most liberal section of the English Church. It is not strange that a volume to which such men have contributed should have excited a general and deep interest among all who are interested in the present position of scholarship in England and of thought in regard to the most important subjects which can occupy the intellects of men.

Whatever expectations the announcement of the volume excited are well supported by its contents. It is the most important contribution made during the present generation in England to the establishment of a sound religious philosophy, and to the advance of religious truth. Whatever opposition some of the speculations contained in it may excite, whether the main views of its authors be accepted or not, (and in this notice we do not propose to consider whether they be true or not,) the principles upon which their opinions and speculations are based are so incontrovertible, and the learning and ability with which they are supported are so great, that the work must inevitably produce a lasting effect upon the tendency of thought in respect to the subjects it embraces and must lead to the reconsideration of many prevalent opinions. It is a book at once to start doubts in the minds of those attached to established forms and bound by ancient creeds, and to quiet doubts in those who have been perplexed in the bewilderments of modern metaphysical philosophy or have found it difficult to reconcile the truths established by science with their faith in the Christian religion. It is a book which serves as a landmark of the most advanced point to which religious thought has yet reached, and from which to take a new observation and departure.

The most striking external characteristic of these Essays is, that, having been “written in entire independence of each other, and without concert or comparison,” they, without exception, present a close similarity in spirit and in tone. All of them are distinguished by a union of freedom with reverence, as rare as it is remarkable, in treating of subjects peculiarly likely to suffer from being handled in a conventional manner, and usually discussed with exaggerated freedom or with superstitious reverence. In tone and temper they leave nothing to be desired; they are neither hot with zeal nor rash with controversial eagerness; but they are calm without coldness, earnest without extravagance. The fairness and candor displayed in them, the freedom from party-prejudice or bias, the clearness in the statement of difficulties, the honesty in the recognition of the limits of present knowledge, all indicate most clearly the growth of a worthy spirit in the treatment of subjects which have too often heretofore been fields for the exhibition of narrowness, intolerance, and bigotry. Such a book is not only an honor

to the men engaged in its production, but of happy augury for the future progress of truth.



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The topics which these Essays discuss are of as much interest in America as in England, to those outside the English Church as to those within it. But, at the same time, most of the Essays (and this consideration is not a satisfactory one) are of a kind which it would seem could have been produced only in England, and there only within the limits of the Church. In America we have no body of men capable of work so different in its parts, and, at the same time, exhibiting such soundness and extent of scholarship, such liberality of opinion, such disciplined habits of thought. Any single Essay in the volume might, perhaps, without any extravagance of supposition, have been the work of some American scholar; but the difficulty would be to find here seven writers each capable of producing one of the Essays. The intellectual discipline of English methods of study and of English institutions still produces a greater number of men capable of the highest sort of work, than the methods in vogue and the institutions established here. We have thinkers who venture as pioneers into the uncleared wilderness. Their vigorous blows bring down many an old tree moss-grown with errors, and their ploughs for the first time turn the soil covered with the fallen leaves of decayed beliefs; but we fail in our supply of those men who are to follow the pioneers and do the higher and more lasting constructive work of civilization. Now, as in past times, we must be content, so far as we may, to have this work done for us by the thinkers and scholars of other lands. But how long is this to last? Is the same sort of makeshift to be allowed in the processes of American thought, which in the expanse of our territory we have allowed in the processes of material labor?

The publication of these "Essays and Reviews" marks, as we believe, an epoch in the history of thought in England. They will stand as the monument of the reaction of the best minds against the "Tractarian" movement on the one hand, and against the skeptical tendencies of much of the science and philosophy of recent times on the other. For while, at Oxford and elsewhere, a strong current has set back against the unimpeded progress of truth, while the attempt has been made, and not without a transient success, to rivet old fetters upon the hearts and intellects of men, another school, borrowing their metaphysics from Germany, and their notions of Christianity from the common creeds, have set up science in opposition to faith, and have treated religion, with more or less openness, as if it were a worn-out superstition. The essential value of this book is, that its various Essays are virtually an attempt—how far successful each reader must judge for himself—to show that the Christian religion is no fixed and formalized set of doctrines, but an expansive and fluent faith, adapting itself to the new needs of every generation and of each individual; not opposed to the teachings of science, but, when properly understood, entirely harmonious with them, and drawing continually fresh support from them; having nothing to fear from the progress of knowledge and the increase of light, but everything to gain; welcoming truth, whencesoever it may come, whatsoever it may be, whithersoever it may lead.

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Beside the topics of thought treated of in this volume, it suggests incidentally many others of peculiar interest. As an indication of the present condition of English scholarship, it is full of encouragement for the future. For more than a century there has been very little deep, original, and productive study of the Scriptures in England. A new impulse has now been given to it. What will be its effect, and the effect of the liberalized and more tolerant spirit of which it is a proof, upon the constitution of the English Church can be foreseen but in part. It is certain that it must lead to great changes, and to a virtual breaking-down of many of the most confining sectarian barriers. No Articles and no Creeds can stand for many generations as the authoritative expressions of belief, after the character of the compulsion which they exercise is understood, after the history of sectarian differences is fairly stated, after the interpretation of Scripture is placed upon a sound basis, and the nature of Christianity and the object of the teachings of Christ are thus brought home to the intellects and the hearts of men.

A Journey in the Back-Country. By FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED. Author of "A Journey in the Seaboard Slave-States," "A Journey in Texas," "Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England," etc. New York: Mason Brothers. 1860. pp. xvi., 492.

Mr. Olmsted is no ordinary traveller for amusement or adventure. He leaves home to instruct himself through his own eyes and ears concerning matters of general interest about which no trustworthy information was to be found in books. Looking at Slavery merely as an economist, with no political or moral prepossessions to mislead his judgment, he went to study for himself its workings and results as a form of labor, we might almost say, so cool-headed is he, as an application of forces, rather than as a social or political phenomenon. Self-possessed and wary, almost provokingly unsympathetic in his report of what he saw, pronouncing no judgment on isolated facts, and drawing no undue inferences from them, he has now generalized his results in a most interesting and valuable book. No more important contributions to contemporary American history have been made than in this volume and the two that preceded it. We know of no book that offers a parallel to them, except Arthur Young's "Travels in France." To discuss the question of Slavery without passion or even sentiment seemed an impossibility; yet Mr. Olmsted has shown that it can be done, and, having no theory to bolster, has contrived to tell us what he saw, and not what he went to see,—the rarest achievement among travellers. Without the charm of style, he has the truthfulness of Herodotus.



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We do not forget that there was wisdom as well as wit in Dr. Johnson's sarcastic classification of facts with donkeys. The great majority of so-called facts, and especially those detailed by travellers, are of no consequence whatever to man or beast. What is it to us that Mr. A. has been condescending enough to look at the Venus of Milo, or that Mr. B., with more time than he knows what to do with already on his hands, must steal a couple of good working hours from Carlyle, worth probably five guineas apiece? That Hannibal crossed the Alps was something; that Goethe did was and is also of some consequence; but the transit of Mr. Anarithmon Smith need cause no excitement in the observatories. That a man has found out, by laborious counting, which is the middle word in the New Testament, is pretty sure to get into the newspapers as a remarkable fact; that he had discovered its central thought, and made it the keystone to knit together his else incomplete outward and inward lives, would hardly be esteemed of so much consequence. Facts are such different things, especially to different persons! The truth is, that we should distinguish between real facts and the mere images of facts, though the newspapers teach us to confound them, putting side by side, as they do, Garibaldi's entry into Naples and Dennis McQuigley's into the lock-up.

The man who gives us a really new fact deserves to be classed with him who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, for it contains the germinal principle of knowledge. We owe a large debt in this kind to Mr. Olmsted. He tells us much of what he saw, little of what he thought. He has good eyes, and that something behind them that makes a good observer. As respects the South, he has the advantage of being at once native and foreigner, so that what is merely American does not divide his attention with what is local and peculiar. Making entries in his diary before impressions have had time to cool, he has preserved even the dialect of those with whom he talked, and thus given a lively reality to his narrative.

Nearly one-half of Mr. Olmsted's present volume is devoted to a discussion of the conclusions to be drawn from the mass of observations he has thus far collected. His views are entitled to the more consideration that the tone of his mind is so dispassionate. He finds himself compelled to give his verdict against Slavery, whether it be considered morally, politically, or economically. We cannot but think that the reading of his book will do great good in opening the minds of many to a perception that the agitation of the Slavery question is not a mere clash of unthinking prejudices between North and South, that Slavery itself is not a matter of purely local concern, but that it interests all parts of the Republic equally. It is certainly of paramount importance that we should understand the practical workings of a system which is converting what by natural increase will soon constitute a majority of the population in the fairest portion of our territory into a vast planting, hoeing, and cotton-picking machine.

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Mr. Olmsted's qualifications as a traveller are so remarkable that we cannot help wishing that he would make a journey through New England and make us as thoroughly acquainted with its internal condition as we ought to be. We believe there is no book of the kind since that of President Dwight, and that gives us little of the sort of information we desire. It is an insight into the manners, modes of life, and ways of thinking that is of value; and Mr. Olmsted, who goes about, like Chaucer's Somner,

"Ever inquiring upon everything,"

is just the person to supply a great want in our literature. We know less of the domestic habits of a large part of our population than of those of the Saxons in the time of Alfred. But for a few glimpses which we get from Dunton, Madam Knight, the Rev. Jacob Bailey, and the Proceedings of Synods, we should be little better acquainted with the New Englanders of the century following the Restoration than with the primitive Aryans. Bailey's account of his voyage to England is the best contemporary testimony to the truth of Smollett's pictures of sea-life that we ever met with, and we cannot sufficiently regret that the whole of his journal during his college-life was not published. Mr. Olmsted would be sure of a grateful recognition from posterity, if he would do for New England what he has done for the South. We might not be flattered by his report, but we could not fail to be benefited by it. It would, perhaps, lead to the establishment of home missions among the Bad-Bread and Foul-Air tribes, who make more wretched captives for life and kill more children than the French and Indians together ever dreamed of.

Sketches of Parisian Life. The Greatness and Decline of Cesar Birotteau. From the French of HONORE DE BALZAC. Translated by O.W. WIGHT and F.B. GOODRICH. New York: Rudd & Carleton, 130 Grand Street. 1860. pp. 387.

We are very glad to see this beginning of a translation of Balzac, or de Balzac, as he chose to christen himself. Without intending an exact parallel, he might be called the Fielding of French Literature,—intensely masculine, an artist who works outward from an informing idea, a satirist whose humor will not let him despise human nature even while he exposes its weaknesses. The story of Caesar Birotteau is well-chosen as an usher to the rest, for it is eminently characteristic, though it does not show the higher imaginative qualities of the author. It is one of the severest tests of genius to draw an ordinary character so humanly that we learn to love and respect it in spite of a thorough familiarity with its faults and absurdities. In this respect Balzac's "Birotteau" is a masterpiece. The translation, as far as we have had time to look into it, seems a very easy, spirited, and knowing one. The translators have overcome the difficulties of *slang* with great skill, rendering by equivalent vulgarisms which give the spirit where the letter would be unintelligible. We object, however, to a phrase like "vest-pocket," where we find it in the narrative, and not in the mouth of one of the personages. It is tailor's English, which is as bad as peddler's French. But this is a trifle where there is so much

to commend in essentials, and we hope the translators will be encouraged to go on in a work so excellently begun.



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Home Ballads and Poems. By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1800. pp. 206.

The natural product of a creed which ignores the aesthetical part of man and reduces Nature to a uniform drab would seem to have been Bernard Barton. *His* verse certainly infringed none of the superstitions of the sect; for from title-page to colophon, there was no sin either in the way of music or color. There was, indeed, a frugal and housewifely Muse, that brewed a cup, neither cheering unduly nor inebriating, out of the emptyings of Wordsworth's teapot. How that little busy B. improved each shining hour, how neatly he laid his wax, it gives us a cold shiver to think of,—*ancora ci raccapriccia!* Against a copy of verses signed "B.B.," as we remember them in the hardy Annuals that went to seed so many years ago, we should warn our incautious offspring as an experienced duck might her brood against a charge of B.B. shot. It behooves men to be careful; for one may chance to suffer lifelong from these intrusions of cold lead in early life, as duellists sometimes carry about all their days a bullet from which no surgery can relieve them. Memory avenges our abuses of her, and, as an awful example, we mention the fact that we have never been able to forget certain stanzas of another B.B., who, under the title of Boston Bard, whilom obtained from newspaper-columns that concession which gods and men would unanimously have denied him.

George Fox, utterly ignoring the immense stress which Nature lays on established order and precedent, got hold of a half-truth which made him crazy, as half-truths are wont. But the inward light, whatever else it might be, was surely not of that kind "that never was on land or sea." There has been much that was poetical in the lives of Quakers, little in the men themselves. Poetry demands a richer and more various culture, and, however good we may find such men as John Woolman and Elias Boudinot, they make us feel painfully that the salt of the earth is something very different, to say the least, from the Attic variety of the same mineral. Let Armstrong and Whitworth and James experiment as they will, they shall never hit on a size of bore so precisely adequate for the waste of human life as the journal of an average Quaker. Compared with it, the sandy intervals of Swedenborg gush with singing springs, and Cotton Mather is a very Lucian for liveliness.

Yet this dry Quaker stem has fairly blossomed at last, and Nature, who can never be long kept under, has made a poet of Mr. Whittier as she made a General of Greene. To make a New England poet, she had her choice between Puritan and Quaker, and she took the Quaker. He is, on the whole, the most representative poet that New England has produced. He sings her thoughts, her prejudices, her scenery. He has not forgiven the Puritans for hanging two or three of his co-sectaries, but he admires them for all that, calls on his countrymen as



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“Sons of men who sat in council with their Bibles round the board, Answering Charles’s royal mandate with a stern ‘Thus saith the Lord,’”

and at heart, we suspect, has more sympathy with Miles Standish than with Mary Dyer. Indeed,

“Sons of men who sat in meeting with their broadbrims o’er their brow, Answering Charles’s royal mandate with a *thee* instead of *thou*,”

would hardly do. Whatever Mr. Whittier may lack, he has the prime merit that he smacks of the soil. It is a New England heart he buttons his strait-breasted coat over, and it gives the buttons a sharp strain now and then. Even the native idiom crops out here and there in his verses. He makes *abroad* rhyme with *God*, *law* with *war*, *us* with *curse*, *scorner* with *honor*, *been* with *men*, *beard* with *shared*. For the last two we have a certain sympathy as archaisms, but with the rest we can make no terms whatever,—they must march out with no honors of war. The Yankee lingo is insoluble in poetry, and the accent would give a flavor of *essence-pennyryl* to the very Beatitudes. It differs from Lowland Scotch as a *patois* from a dialect.

But criticism is not a game of jerk-straws, and Mr. Whittier has other and better claims on us than as a stylist. There is true fire in the heart of the man, and his eye is the eye of a poet. A more juicy soil might have made him a Burns or a Beranger for us. New England is dry and hard, though she have a warm nook in her, here and there, where the magnolia grows after a fashion. It is all very nice to say to our poets, “You have sky and wood and waterfall and men and women,—in short, the entire outfit of Shakspeare; Nature is the same here as elsewhere”; and when the popular lecturer says it, the popular audience gives a stir of approval. But it is all *bosh*, nevertheless. Nature is *not* the same here, and perhaps never will be, as in lands where man has mingled his being with hers for countless centuries, where every field is steeped in history, every crag is ivied with legend, and the whole atmosphere of thought is hazy with the Indian summer of tradition. Nature without an ideal background is nothing. We may claim whatever merits we like, (and our orators are not too bashful,) we may be as free and enlightened as we choose, but we are certainly not interesting or picturesque. We may be as beautiful to the statistician as a column of figures, and dear to the political economist as a social phenomenon; but our hive has little of that marvellous Bee-bread that can transmute the brain to finer issues than a gregarious activity in hoarding. The Puritans left us a fine estate in conscience, energy, and respect for learning; but they disinherited us of the past. Not a single stage-property of poetry did they bring with them but the good old Devil, with his graminivorous attributes, and even he could not stand the climate. Neither horn nor hoof nor tail of him has been seen for a century. He is as dead as the goat-footed Pan, whom he succeeded, and we tenderly regret him.



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Mr. Whittier himself complains somewhere of

“The rigor of our frozen sky,”

and he seems to have been thinking of our clear, thin, intellectual atmosphere, the counterpart of our physical one, of which artists complain that it rounds no edges. We have sometimes thought that his verses suffered from a New England taint in a too great tendency to metaphysics and morals, which may be the bases on which poetry rests, but should not be carried too high above-ground. Without this, however, he would not have been the typical New England poet that he is. In the present volume there is little of it. It is more purely objective than any of its forerunners, and is full of the most charming rural pictures and glimpses, in which every sight and sound, every flower, bird, and tree, is neighborly and homely. He makes us see

“the old swallow-haunted barns, Brown-gabled, long, and full of seams
Through which the moted sunlight streams, And winds blow freshly in to shake
The red plumes of the roosted cocks And the loose hay-mow’s scented locks,”—

“the cattle-yard
With the white horns tossing above the wall,”—

the spring-blossoms that drooped over the river,

“Lighting up the swarming shad.”—

and

“the bulged nets sweeping shoreward
With their silver-sided haul.”

Every picture is full of color, and shows that true eye for Nature which sees only what it ought, and that artistic memory which brings home compositions and not catalogues. There is hardly a hill, rock, stream, or sea-fronting headland in the neighborhood of his home that he has not fondly remembered. Sometimes, we think, there is too much description, the besetting sin of modern verse, which has substituted what should be called wordy-painting for the old art of painting in a single word. The essential character of Mr. Whittier’s poetry is lyrical, and the rush of the lyric, like that of a brook, allows few pictures. Now and then there may be an eddy where the feeling lingers and reflects a bit of scenery, but for the most part it can only catch gleams of color that mingle with the prevailing tone and enrich without usurping on it. This volume contains some of the best of Mr. Whittier’s productions in this kind. “Skipper Ireson’s Ride” we hold to be by long odds the best of modern ballads. There are others nearly as good in their way, and all, with a single exception, embodying native legends. In “Telling the Bees,” Mr. Whittier has enshrined a country superstition in a poem of exquisite grace and feeling.



“The Garrison of Cape Ann” would have been a fine poem, but it has too much of the author in it, and to put a moral at the end of a ballad is like sticking a cork on the point of a sword. It is pleasant to see how much our Quaker is indebted for his themes to Cotton Mather, who belabored his un-Friends of former days with so much bad English and worse Latin. With all his faults, that conceited old pedant contrived to make one of the most entertaining books ever written on this side the water, and we wonder that no one should take the trouble to give us a tolerably correct edition of it. Absurdity is common enough, but such a genius for it as Mather had is a rare and delightful gift.



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This last volume has given us a higher conception of Mr. Whittier's powers. We already valued as they deserved his force of faith, his earnestness, the glow and hurry of his thought, and the (if every third stump-speaker among us were not a Demosthenes, we should have said Demosthenean) eloquence of his verse; but here we meet him in a softer and more meditative mood. He seems a Berserker turned Carthusian. The half-mystic tone of "The Shadow and the Light" contrasts strangely, and, we think, pleasantly, with the war-like clang of "From Perugia." The years deal kindly with good men, and we find a clearer and richer quality in these verses where the ferment is over and the *rile* has quietly settled. We have had no more purely American poet than Mr. Whittier, none in whom the popular thought found such ready and vigorous expression. The future will not fail to do justice to a man who has been so true to the present.

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