

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 08, No. 47, September, 1861 eBook

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 08, No. 47, September, 1861

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Page 1

THE BATH.

Off, fetters of the falser life,—
Weeds that conceal the statue's form!
This silent world with truth is rife,
This wooing air is warm.

Now fall the thin disguises, planned
For men too weak to walk unblamed;
Naked beside the sea I stand,—
Naked, and not ashamed.

Where yonder dancing billows dip,
Far-off, to ocean's misty verge,
Ploughs Morning, like a full-sailed ship,
The Orient's cloudy surge.

With spray of scarlet fire before
The ruffled gold that round her dies,
She sails above the sleeping shore,
Across the waking skies.

The dewy beach beneath her glows;
A pencilled beam, the light-house burns:
Full-breathed, the fragrant sea-wind blows,—
Life to the world returns!

I stand, a spirit newly born,
White-limbed and pure, and strong, and fair,—
The first-begotten son of Morn,
The nursling of the air!

There, in a heap, the masks of Earth,
The cares, the sins, the griefs, are thrown
Complete, as, through diviner birth,
I walk the sands alone.

With downy hands the winds caress,
With frothy lips the amorous sea,
As welcoming the nakedness
Of vanished gods, in me.

Along the ridged and sloping sand,
Where headlands clasp the crescent cove,



A shining spirit of the land,
A snowy shape, I move:

Or, plunged in hollow-rolling brine,
In emerald cradles rocked and swung,
The sceptre of the sea is mine,
And mine his endless song.

For Earth with primal dew is wet,
Her long-lost child to rebaptize:
Her fresh, immortal Edens yet
Their Adam recognize.

Her ancient freedom is his fee;
Her ancient beauty is his dower:
She bares her ample breasts, that he
May suck the milk of power.

Press on, ye hounds of life, that lurk
So close, to seize your harried prey!
Ye fiends of Custom, Gold, and Work,
I hear your distant bay!

And like the Arab, when he bears
To the insulted camel's path
His garment, which the camel tears,
And straight forgets his wrath;

So, yonder badges of your sway,
Life's paltry husks, to you I give:
Fall on, and in your blindness say,
We hold the fugitive!

But leave to me this brief escape
To simple manhood, pure and free,—
A child of God, in God's own shape,
Between the land and sea!

SACCHARISSA MELLASYS.

I.

THE HERO.

When I state that my name is A. Bratley Chylde, I presume that I am already sufficiently introduced.

My patronymic establishes my fashionable position. Chylde, the distinguished monosyllable, is a card of admission everywhere,— everywhere that is anywhere.



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And my matronymic, Bratley, should have established my financial position for life. It should have—allow me a vulgar term—“indorsed” me with the tradesmen who have the honor to supply me with the glove, the boot, the general habiliment, and all the requisites of an elegant appearance upon the carpet or the *trottoir*.

But, alas! I am not so indorsed—pardon the mercantile aroma of the word—by the name Bratley.

The late Mr. A. Bratley, my grandfather, was indeed one of those rude, laborious, and serviceable persons whose office is to make money—or perhaps I should say to accumulate the means of enjoyment—for the upper classes of society.

But my father, the late Mr. Harold Chylde, had gentlemanly tastes.

How can I blame him? I have the same.

He loved to guide the rapid steed along the avenue.

I also love to guide the rapid steed.

He could not persuade his delicate lungs—pardon my seeming knowledge of anatomy—to tolerate the confined air in offices, counting-houses, banks, or other haunts of persons whose want of refinement of taste impels them to the crude distractions of business-life.

I have the same delicacy of constitution. Indeed, unless the atmosphere I breathe is rendered slightly narcotic by the smoke of Cabanas and slightly stimulating by the savor of heeltaps,—excuse the technical term,—I find myself debilitated to a degree. The open air is extremely offensive to me. I confine myself to clubs and billiard-rooms.

My late father, being a man distinguished for his clear convictions, was accustomed to sustain the statement of those convictions by wagers. The inherent generosity of his nature obliged him often to waive his convictions in behalf of others, and thus to abandon the receipt of considerable sums. He also found the intellectual excitement of games of chance necessary to his mental health.

I cannot blame him for these and similar gentlemanly tastes. My own are the same.

The late Mr. A. Bratley, at that time in his dotage, and recurring to the crude idioms of his homely youth, constantly said to my father,—

“Harold, you are a spendthrift and a rake, and are bringing up your son the same.”



I object, of course, to his terms; but since he foresaw that my habits would be expensive, it is to be regretted that he did not make suitable provision for their indulgence.

He did not, however, do so. Persons of low-breeding never can comprehend their duties to the more refined.

The respective dusts of my father and grandfather were consigned to the tomb the same week, and it was found that my mother's property had all melted away, as—allow me a poetical figure—ice-cream melts between the lips of beauty heated after the German.

Yes,—all was gone, except a small pittance in the form of an annuity. I will not state the ridiculously trifling amount. I have seen more than our whole annual income lost by a single turn of a card at the establishment of the late Mr. P. Hearn, and also in private circles.



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Something must be done. Otherwise, that deprivation of the luxuries of life which to the aristocratic is starvation.

I stated my plans to my mother. They were based in part upon my well-known pecuniary success at billiards—I need not say that I prefer the push game, as requiring no expenditure of muscular force. They were also based in part upon my intimacy with a distinguished operator in Wall Street. Our capital would infallibly have been quadrupled,—what do I say? decupled, centupled, in a short space of time.

My mother is a good, faithful creature. She looks up to me as a Bratley should to a Chylde. She appreciates the honor my father did her by his marriage, and I by my birth. I have frequently remarked a touching fidelity of these persons of the lower classes of society toward those of higher rank.

“I would make any sacrifice in the world,” she said, “to help you, my dear A——”

“Hush!” I cried.

I have suppressed my first name as unmelodious and connecting me too much with a religious persuasion meritorious for its wealth alone. Need I say that I refer to the faith of the Rothschild?

“All that I have is yours, my dear Bratley,” continued my mother.

Quite touching! was it not? I was so charmed, that I mentally promised her a new silk when she went into half-mourning, and asked her to go with me to the opera as soon as she got over that feeble tendency to tears which kept her eyes red and unpresentable.

“I would gladly aid you,” the simple-hearted creature said, “in any attempt to make your fortune in an honorable and manly way.”

“Brava! brava!” I cried, and I patted applause, as she deserved. “And you had better make over your stocks to me at once,” I continued.

“I cannot without your Uncle Bratley’s permission. He is my trustee. Go to him, my dear son.”

I went to him very unwillingly. My father and I had always as much as possible ignored the Bratley connection. They live in a part of New York where self-respect does not allow me to be seen. They are engaged in avocations connected with the feeding of the lower classes. My father had always required that the females of their families should call on my mother on days when she was not at home to our own set, and at hours when they were not likely to be detected. None of them, I am happy to say, were ever seen at our balls or our dinners.



I nerved myself, and penetrated to that Ultima Thule where Mr. Bratley resides. His house already, at that early hour of two, smelt vigorously of dinner. Nothing but the urgency of my business could have induced me to brave these odors of plain roast and boiled.

A mob of red-faced children rushed to see me as I entered, and I heard one of them shouting up the stairs,—

“Oh, pa! there’s a stiffy waiting to see you.”

The phrase was new to me. I looked for a mirror, to see whether any inaccuracy in my toilet might have suggested it.



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Positively there was no mirror in the *salon*.

Instead of it, there were nothing but distressingly bright pictures by artists who had had the bad taste to paint raw Nature just as they saw it.

My uncle entered, and quite overwhelmed me with a robust cordiality which seemed to ignore my grief.

“Just in time, my boy,” said he, “to take a cut of rare roast beef and a hot potato and a mug of your Uncle Sam’s beer with us.”

I shuddered, and rebuked him with the intelligence that I had just lunched at the club, and should not dine till six.

Then I stated my business, curtly.

He looked at me with a stare, which I have frequently observed in persons of limited intelligence.

“So you want to gamble away your mother’s last dollar,” said he.

In vain I stated and restated to him my plans. The fellow, evidently jealous of my superior financial ability, constantly interrupted me with ejaculations of “Pish!” “Bosh!” “Pshaw!” “No go!” and finally, with a loud thump on a table, covered with such costly but valueless objects as books and plates, he cried,

“What a d—d fool!”

I was glad to perceive that he began to admit my wisdom and his stolidity. And so I told him.

“A—,” said he, using my abhorred name in full, “I believe you are a greater ass than your father was.”

“Sir,” said I, much displeased, “these intemperate ebullitions will necessarily terminate our conference.”

“Conference be hanged!” he rejoined. “You may as well give it up. You are not going to get the first red cent out of me.”

“Have I referred, Sir,” said I, “to the inelegant coin you name?”

The creature grinned. “I shall pay your mother’s income quarterly, and do the best I can by her,” he continued; “and if you want to make a man of yourself, I’ll give you a chance



in the bakery with me; or Sam Bratley will take you into his brewery; or Bob into his pork-packery.”

I checked my indignation. The vulgarian wished to drag me, a Chylde, down to the Bratley level. But I suppressed my wrath, for fear he might find some pretext for suppressing the quarterly income, and alleged my delicate health as a reason for my refusing his insulting offer.

“Well,” said he, “I don’t see as there is anything else for you to do, except to find some woman fool enough to marry you, as Betsey did your father. There’s a hundred dollars!”

I have seldom seen dirtier bills than those he produced and handed to me. Fortunately I was in deep mourning and my gloves were dark lead color.

“That’s right,” says he,—“grab ’em and fob ’em. Now go to Newport and try for an heiress, and don’t let me see your tallow face inside of my door for a year.”

He had bought the right to be despotic and abusive. I withdrew and departed, ruminating on his advice. Singularly, I had not before thought of marrying. I resolved to do so at once.

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Newport is the mart where the marriageable meet. I took my departure for Newport next day.

II.

THE HEROINE.

I need hardly say, that, on arriving at Newport, one foggy August morning, I drove at once to the Millard.

The Millard attracted me for three reasons: First, it was new; second, it was fashionable; third, the name would be sure to be in favor with the class I had resolved to seek my spouse among. The term *spouse* I select as somewhat less familiar than *wife*, somewhat more permanent than *bride*, and somewhat less amatory than *the partner of my bosom*. I wish my style to be elevated, accurate, and decorous. It is my object, as the reader will have already observed, to convey heroic sentiments in the finest possible language.

It was upon some favored individual of the class Southern Heiress that I designed to let fall the embroidered handkerchief of affectionate selection. At the Millard I was sure to find her. That enormously wealthy and highly distinguished gentleman, her father, would naturally avoid the Ocean House. The adjective *free*, so intimately connected with the *substantive* ocean, would constantly occur to his mind and wound his sensibilities. The Atlantic House was still more out of the question. The name must perpetually remind the tenants of that hotel of a certain quite objectionable periodical devoted to propagandism. In short, not to pursue this process of elimination farther, and perhaps offend some friend of the class Hotel-Keeper, the Millard was not only about the cheese, *per se*,—I punningly allude here to the creaminess of its society,—but inevitably the place to seek my charmer.

The clock of the Millard was striking eleven as I entered the *salle a manger* for a late breakfast after my night-journey from New York by steamboat.

I flatter myself that I produced, as I intended, a distinct impression. My deep mourning gave me a most interesting look, which I heightened by an air of languor and abstraction as of one lost in grief. My shirt-studs were jet. The plaits of my shirt were edged with black. My Clarendon was, of course, black, and from its breast-pocket appeared a handkerchief dotted with spots, not dissimilar to black peppermint-drops on a white paper. In consequence of the extreme heat of the season, I wore waistcoat and trousers of white duck; but they, too, were qualified with sombre contrasts of binding and stripes.

The waiters evidently remarked me. It may have been the hope of pecuniary reward, it may have been merely admiration for my dress and person; but several rushed forward, diffusing that slightly oleaginous perfume peculiar to the waiter, and drew chairs for me.

I had, however, selected my position at the table at the moment of my entrance. It was *vis-a-vis* a party of four persons,—two of the sterner, two of the softer sex. A back view interpreted them to me. There is much physiognomy in the backs of human heads, because—and here I flatter myself that I enunciate a profound truth—people wear that well-known mask, the human countenance, on the front of the human head alone, and think it necessary to provide such concealment nowhere else.

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“A rich Southern planter and his family!” I said to myself, and took my seat opposite them.

“Nothing, Michel,” I replied to the waiter’s recital of his bill-of-fare. “Nothing but a glass of iced water and bit of dry toast. Only that, thank you, Michel.”

My appetite was good, particularly as, in consequence of the agitation of the water opposite Point Judith, my stomach had ceased to be occupied with relics of previous meals. My object in denying myself, and accepting simply hermit fare, was to convey to observers my grief for my bereavement. I have always deemed it proper for persons of distinguished birth to deplore the loss of friends in public. Hunger, if extreme, can always be reduced by furtive supplies from the pastry-cook.

I could not avoid observing that the party opposite had each gone through the whole breakfast bill-of-fare in a desultory, but exhaustive manner.

As I ordered my more delicate meal, the younger of the two gentlemen cast upon me a look of latent truculence, such as I have often remarked among my compatriots of the South. He seemed to detect an unexpressed sarcasm in the contrast between my gentle refection and his robust *dejeuner*.

I hastened to disarm such a suspicion by a half-articulate sigh. No one, however crass, could have failed to be touched by this token of a grief so bitter as to refuse luxurious nutriment.

As I sighed, I glanced with tender meaning at the young lady. Her feminine heart, I hoped, would interpret and pity me.

I fancied, that, at my look, her cheeks, though swarthy, blushed. She was certainly interested, and somewhat confused, and paused a moment in her mastication. Ham was the viand she was engaged upon, and she (playfully, I have no doubt) ate with her knife. I have remarked the same occasional superiority to what might be called Fourchettism and its prejudices in others of established position in society.

I lavished a little languid and not too condescending civility upon the party by passing them, when Michel was absent, the salt, the butter, the bread, and other commonplace condiments. Presently I withdrew, that my absence might make me desired. Before I did so, however, I took pains, by the exhibition of the “New York Herald” in my hands, to show that my political sentiments were unexceptionable.

I lost no time in consulting the books of the hotel for the names and homes of the strangers.

I read as follows:—



Sachary Mellasys and Lady, } *Bayou La*
Miss Saccharissa Mellasys, } *Farouche,*
Mellasys Plickaman, } *La.*

Saccharissa Mellasys! I rolled the name like a sweet morsel under my tongue. I forgot that she was not beautiful in form, feature, or complexion. How slight, indeed, is the charm of beauty, when compared with other charms more permanent! Ah, yes!

The complexion of Miss Mellasys announced a diet of alternate pickles and *pralines* during her adolescent years,—the pickles taken to excite an appetite for the *pralines*, the *pralines* absorbed to occupy the interval until pickle-time approached. Neither her form nor her features were statuesque. But the name glorified the person.



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Sachary Mellasys was, as I was well aware, the great sugar-planter of Louisiana, and Saccharissa his only child.

I am an imaginative man. I have never doubted, that, if I should ever give my fancies words, they would rank with the great creations of genius. At the dulcet name of Mellasys a fairy scene grew before my eyes. I seemed to see an army of merry negroes cultivating the sugar-cane to the inspiring music of a banjo band. Ever and anon a company of the careless creatures would pause and dance for pure gayety of heart. Then they would recline under the shade of the wild bandanna-tree,—I know this vegetable only through the artless poetry of the negro minstrels,—while sleek and sprightly negresses, decked with innocent finery, served them beakers of iced *eau sucre*.

As I was shaping this Arcadian vision, Mr. Mellasys passed me on his way to the bar-room. I hastened to follow, without the appearance of intention.

My reader is no doubt aware that at the fashionable bar-room the cigars are all of the same quality, though the prices mount according to the ambition of the purchaser. I found Mr. Mellasys gasping with efforts to light a dime cigar. Between his gasps, profane expressions escaped him.

“Sir,” said I, “allow a stranger to offer you a better article.”

At the same time I presented my case filled with choice Cabanas,—smuggled. My limited means oblige me to employ these judicious economies.

Mr. Mellasys took a cigar, lighted, whiffed, looked at me, whiffed again,—

“Sir,” says he, “dashed if that a’n’t the best cigar I’ve smoked sence I quit Bayou La Farouche!”

“Ah! a Southerner!” said I. “Pray, allow the harmless weed to serve as a token of amity between our respective sections.”

Mr. Mellasys grasped my hand.

“Take a drink, Mr. ——?” said he.

“Bratley Chylde,” rejoined I, filling the hiatus,—“and I shall be most happy.”

The name evidently struck him. It was a combination of all aristocracy and all plutocracy. As I gave my name, I produced and presented my card. I was aware, that, with the uncultured, the possession of a card is a proof of gentility, as the wearing of a coat-of-arms proves a long line of distinguished ancestry.



Mr. Mellasys took my card, studied it, and believed in it with refreshing *naivete*.

"I'm proud to know you, Mr. Chylde," said he. "I haven't a card; but Mellasys is my name, and I'll show it to you written on the hotel-books."

"We will waive that ceremony," said I. "And allow me to welcome you to Newport and the Millard. Shall we enjoy the breeze upon the piazza?"

Before our second cigar was smoked, the great planter and I were on the friendliest terms. My political sentiments he found precisely in accord with his own. Indeed, our general views of life harmonized.

"I dare say you have heard," said Mellasys, "from some of the bloated aristocrats of my section that I was a slave-dealer once."



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“Such a rumor has reached me,” rejoined I. “And I was surprised to find, that, in some minds of limited intelligence and without development of the logical faculty, there was a prejudice against the business.”

“You think that buyin’ and sellin’ ’em is just the same as ownin’ ’em?”

“I do.”

“Your hand!” said he, fervently.

“Mr. Mellasys,” said I, “let me take this opportunity to lay down my platform,—allow me the playful expression. Meeting a gentleman of your intelligence from the sunny South, I desire to express my sentiments as a Christian and a gentleman.”

Here I thought it well to pause and spit, to keep myself in harmony with my friend.

“A gentleman,” I continued, “I take to be one who confines himself to the cultivation of his tastes, the decoration of his person, and the preparation of his whole being to shine in the *salon*. Now to such a one the condition of the laboring classes can be of no possible interest. As a gentleman, I cannot recognize either slaves or laborers. But here Christianity comes in. Christianity requires me to read and interpret my Bible. In it I find such touching paragraphs as, ‘Cursed be Canaan!’ Canaan is of course the negro slave of our Southern States. Curse him! then, I say. Let us have no weak and illogical attempts to elevate his condition. Such sentimentalism is rank irreligion. I view the negro as *a man permanently upon the rack*, who is to be punished just as much as he will bear without diminishing his pecuniary value. And the allotted method of punishment is hard work, hard fare, the liberal use of the whip, and a general negation of domestic privileges.”

“Mr. Chylde,” said Mr. Mellasys, rising, “this is truth! this is eloquence! this is being up to snuff! You are a high-toned gentleman! you are an old-fashioned Christian! you should have been my partner in slave-driving! Your hand!”

The quality of the Mellasys hand was an oleaginous clamminess. My only satisfaction, in touching it, was, that it seemed to suggest a deficient circulation of the blood. Mr. Mellasys would probably go off early with an apoplexy, and the husband of Miss Mellasys would inherit without delay.

“And now,” continued the planter, “let me introduce you to my daughter.”

I felt that my fortune was made.

I knew that she would speedily yield to my fascinations.



And so it proved. In three days she adored me. For three days more I was coy. In a week she was mine.

III.

THE SUNNY SOUTH.

We were betrothed, Saccharissa Mellasys and I.

In vain did Mellasys Plickaman glower along the corridors of the Millard. I pitied him for his defeat too much to notice his attempts to pick a quarrel. Firm in the affection of my Saccharissa and in the confidence of her father, I waived the insults of the aggrieved and truculent cousin. He had lost the heiress. I had won her. I could afford to be generous.

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We were to be married in December, at Bayou La Farouche. Then we were to sail at once for Europe. Then, after a proud progress through the principal courts, we were to return and inhabit a stately mansion in New York. How the heart of my Saccharissa throbbed at the thought of bearing the elevated name of Chylde and being admitted to the sacred circles of fashion, as peer of the most elevated in social position!

I found no difficulty in getting a liberal credit from my tailor. Upon the mere mention of my engagement, that worthy artist not only provided me with an abundant supply of raiment, but, with a most charming delicacy, placed bank-notes for a considerable amount in the pockets of my new trousers. I was greatly touched by this attention, and very gladly signed an acknowledgment of debt.

I regret, that, owing to circumstances hereafter to be mentioned, the diary kept jointly by Saccharissa and myself during our journey to the sunny South has passed out of my possession. Its pages overflowed with tenderness. How beautiful were our dreams of the balls and *soirees* we were to give! How we discussed the style of our furniture, our carriage, and our coachman! How I fed Saccharissa's soul with adulation! She was ugly, she was vulgar, she was jealous, she was base, she had had flirtations of an intimate character with scores; but she was rich, and I made great allowances.

At last we arrived at Bayou La Farouche.

I cannot state that the locality is an attractive one. Its land scenery is composed of alligators and mud in nearly equal proportions.

I never beheld there my fancy realized of a band of gleeful negroes hoeing cane to the music of the banjo. There are no wild bandanna-trees, and no tame ones, either. The slaves of Mr. Mellasys never danced, except under the whip of a very noisome person who acted as overseer. There were no sleek and sprightly negresses in gay turbans, and no iced *eau sucre*. Canaan was cursed with religious rigor on the Mellasys plantation at Bayou La Farouche.

All this time Mellasys Plickaman had been my *bete noir*.

I know nothing of politics. Were our country properly constituted, I should be in the House of Peers. The Chylde family is of sublime antiquity, and I am its head in America. But, alas! we have no hereditary legislators; and though I feel myself competent to wear the strawberry-leaves, or even to sit upon a throne, I have not been willing to submit to the unsavory contacts of American political life. Mr. Mellasys Plickaman took advantage of my ignorance.

When several gentlemen of the neighborhood were calling upon me in the absence of Mr. Mellasys, my defeated rival introduced the subject of politics.



“I suppose you are a good Democrat, Mr. Chylde?” said one of the strangers.

“No, I thank you,” replied I, sportively,—meaning, of course, that they should understand I was a good Aristocrat.



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“Who’s your man for President?” my interlocutor continued, rather roughly.

I had heard in conversation, without giving the fact much attention, that an election for President was to take place in a few days. These struggles of commonplace individuals for the privilege of residing in a vulgar town like Washington were without interest to me. So I answered,—

“Oh, any of them. They are all alike to me.”

“You don’t mean to say,” here another of the party loudly broke in, “that Breckenridge and Lincoln are the same to you?”

The young man wore long hair and a black dress-coat, though it was morning. His voice was nasal, and his manner intrusive. I crushed him with a languid “Yes.” He was evidently abashed, and covered his confusion by lighting a cigar and smoking it with the lighted end in his mouth. This is a habit of many persons in the South, who hence are called Fire-Eaters.

Mellasys Plickaman here changed the subject to horses, which I *do* understand, and my visitors presently departed.

“How happily the days of Thalaba went by!”

as the poet has it. My Saccharissa and myself are both persons of a romantic and dreamy nature. Often for hours we would sit and gaze upon each other with only occasional interjections,—“How warm!” “How sleepy!” “Is it not almost time for lunch?” As Saccharissa was not in herself a beautiful object, I accustomed myself to see her merely as a representative of value. Her yellowish complexion helped me in imagining her, as it were, a golden image which might be cut up and melted down. I used to fancy her dresses as made of certificates of stock, and her ribbons as strips of coupons. Thus she was always an agreeable spectacle.

So time flew, and the sun of the sixth of November gleamed across the scaly backs of the alligators of Bayou La Farouche.

In three days I was to be made happy with the possession of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) on the nail,—excuse the homely expression,—great expectations for the future, and the hand of my Saccharissa.

For these I exchanged the name and social position of a Chylde, and my own, I trust, not unattractive person.

I deemed that I gave myself away dirt-cheap,—excuse again the colloquialism; the transaction seems to require such a phrase,—for there is no doubt that Mr. Mellasys was greatly objectionable. It was certainly very illogical; but his neighbors who owned



slaves insisted upon turning up their noses at Mellasys, because he still kept up his slave-pen on Touchpitchalas Street, New Orleans. Besides,—and here again the want of logic seems to culminate into rank absurdity,—he was viewed with a purely sentimental abhorrence by some, because he had precluded a reclaimed fugitive from repeating his evasion by roasting the soles of his feet before a fire until the fellow actually died. The fact, of course, was unpleasant, and the loss considerable,—a

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prime field-hand, with some knowledge of carpentry and a good performer on the violin,—but evasions must be checked, and I cannot see why Mr. Mellasys's method was too severe. Mr. Mellasys was also considered a very unscrupulous person in financial transactions,—indeed, what would be named in some communities a swindler; and I have heard it whispered that the estimable, but somewhat obese and drowsy person who passed as his wife was not a wife, ceremonially speaking. The dusky hues of her complexion were also attributed to an infusion of African blood. There was certainly more curl in her hair than I could have wished; and Saccharissa's wiggly looks waged an irrepressible conflict with the unguents which strove to reduce their crispness.

Indeed, why should I not be candid? Mellasys *per se* was a pill, Mrs. Mellasys was a dose, and Saccharissa a bolus, to one of my refined and sensitive taste.

But the sugar coated them.

To marry the daughter of the great sugar-planter of Louisiana I would have taken medicines far more unpalatable and assafoetidique than any thus far offered.

Meanwhile Mr. Mellasys Plickaman, cousin of my betrothed, had changed his tactics and treated me with civility and confidence. We drank together freely, sometimes to the point of inebriation. Indeed, unless he put me to bed, on the evening before the day of the events I am about to describe, I do not know how I got there.

Morning dawned on the sixth of November.

I was awakened, as usual, by the outcries of the refractory negroes receiving their matinal stripes in the whipping-house. Feeling a little languid and tame, I strolled down to witness the spectacle.

It stimulated me quite agreeably. The African cannot avoid being comic. He is the grotesque element in our civilization. He will be droll even under the severest punishment. His contortions of body, his grimaces, his ejaculations of "O Lor'! O Massa!" as the paddle or the lash strikes his flesh, are laughable in the extreme.

I witnessed the flagellation of several pieces of property of either sex. The sight of their beating had the effect of a gentle tickling upon me. The tone of my system was restored. I grew gay and lightsome. I exchanged jokes with the overseer. He appreciated my mood, and gave a farcical turn to the incidents of the occasion.

I enjoyed my breakfast enormously. Saccharissa never looked so sweet; Mr. Mellasys never so little like—pardon the expression—a cross between a hog and a hyena; and I began to fancy that my mother-in-law's general flabbiness of flesh and drapery was not so very offensive.



After breakfast, Mr. Mellasys left us. It was, he said, the day of the election for President. How wretched that America should not be governed by hereditary sovereigns and an order of nobles trained to control!

The day passed. It was afternoon, and I sat reading one of the novels of my favorite De Balzac to my Saccharissa. At the same time my imagination, following the author, strayed to Paris, and recalled to me my bachelor joys in that gay capital. I resolved to repeat them again, on our arrival there, at my bride's expense. How charming to possess a hundred thousand dollars, (\$100,000,) even burdened with a wife!

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My reading and my reverie were interrupted by the tramp of horses without. Six persons in dress-coats rode up, dismounted, and approached. All were smoking cigars with the lighted ends in their mouths. Mellasys Plickaman led the party. I recognized also the persons who had questioned me as to my politics. They entered the apartment where I sat alone with Saccharissa.

"Thar he is!" said Mellasys Plickaman. "Thar is the d—d Abolitionist!"

Seeing that he indicated me, and that his voice was truculent, I looked to my betrothed for protection. She burst into tears and drew a handkerchief.

An odor of musk combated for an instant with the whiskey reek diffused by Mr. Plickaman and his companions. The balmy odor was, however, quelled by the ruder scent.

"I am surprised, Mr. Plickaman," said I, mildly, but conscious of tremors, "at your use of opprobrious epithets in the presence of a lady."

"Oh, you be blowed!" returned he, with unpardonable rudeness. "You can't skulk behind Saccharissy."

"To what is this change in tone and demeanor owing, Sir?" I asked, with dignity.

"Don't take on airs, you little squirt!" said he.

It will be observed that I quote his very language. His intention was evidently insulting.

"Mr. Chylde," remarked Judge Pyke, one of the gentlemen who had been inquisitive as to my political sentiments, "The Vigilance Committee of Fire-Eaters of Bayou La Farouche have come to the conclusion that you are a spy, an Abolitionist, and a friend of Beecher and Phillips. We intend to give you a fair trial; but I may as well state that we have all made up our minds as to the law, the facts, and the sentence. Therefore, prepare for justice. Colonel Plickaman, have you given directions about the tar?"

"It'll be b'ilin' in about eight minutes," replied my quondam rival, with a boo-hoo of vulgar laughter.

"Culprit!" said Judge Pyke, looking at me with a truly terrible expression, "I have myself heard you avow, with insolent audacity, that you were not a Democrat. Do you not know, Sir, that nothing but Democrats are allowed to breathe the zephyrs of Louisiana? Silence, culprit! Not a word! The court cannot be interrupted. I have also heard you state that the immortal Breckenridge, Kentucky's favorite son, was the same to you as the tiger Lincoln, the deadly foe of Southern institutions. Silence, culprit!"



Here Saccharissa moaned, and wafted a slight flavor of musk to me from her cambric wet with tears.

“Colonel Plickaman,” continued the Judge, “produce the letters and papers of the culprit.”

I am aware that a rival has rights, and that a defeated suitor may, according to the code, calumniate and slander the more fortunate one. I have done so myself. But it seems to me that there should be limits; and I cannot but think that Mr. Mellasys Plickaman overstepped the limits of fair play, when he took advantage of my last night’s inebriety to possess himself of my journal and letters. I will not, however, absolutely commit myself on this point. Perhaps everything is fair in love. Perhaps I may desire to avail myself of the same privilege in future.

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I had spoken quite freely in my journal of the barbarians of Bayou La Farouche. Each of the gentlemen now acting upon my jury was alluded to. Colonel Plickaman read each passage in a pointed way, interjecting,—“Do you hear that, Billy Sangaree?” “How do you like yourself now, Major Licklickin?” “Here’s something about your white cravat, Parson Butterfut.”

The delicacy and wit of my touches of character chafed these gentlemen. Their aspect became truly formidable.

Meantime I began to perceive an odor which forcibly recalled to me the asphaltum-kettles of the lively Boulevards of Paris.

“Wait awhile, Fire-Eaters,” said Plickaman, “the tar isn’t quite ready yet.”

The tar! What had that viscous and unfragrant material to do with the present interview?

“I won’t read you what he says of me,” resumed the Colonel.

“Yes,—out with it!” exclaimed all.

Suffice it to say that I had spoken of Mr. Mellasys Plickaman as a person so very ill-dressed, so very lavish in expectoration, so entirely destitute of the arts and graces of the higher civilization, merited. His companions required that he should read his own character. He did so. I need not say that I was suffering extremities of apprehension all this time; but still I could not refrain from a slight sympathetic smile of triumph as the others roared with laughter at my accurate analysis of my rival.

“You’ll pay for this, Mr. A. Bratley Chylde!” says Plickaman.

So long as my Saccharissa was on my side, I felt no special fear of what my foes might do. I knew the devoted nature of the female sex. “*Elles meurent, ou elles s’attachent*,”—beautiful thought! These riflers of journals would, I felt confident, be unable to produce anything reflecting my real sentiments about my betrothed. I had spoken of her and her family freely—one must have a vent somewhere—to Mr. Derby Deblore, my other self, my *Pylades*, my *Damon*, my *fidus Achades* in New York; but, unless they found Derby and compelled him to testify, they could not alienate my Saccharissa.

I gave her a touching glance, as Mellasys Plickaman closed his reading of my private papers.

She gave me a touching glance,—or rather, a glance which her amorphous features meant to make touching,—and, waving musk from her handkerchief through the apartment, cried,—



“Never mind, Arthur dear! I don’t like you a bit the less for saying what barbarous creatures these men are. They may do what they please,—I’ll stand by you. You have my heart, my warm Southern heart, my Arthur!”

“Arthur!” shouted that atrocious Plickaman,—“the loafer’s name’s Aminadab, after that old Jew, his grandfather.”

Saccharissa looked at him and smiled contemptuously.

I tried to smile. I could not. Aminadab was my name. That old dotard, my grandfather, had borne it before me. I had suppressed it carefully.



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“Aminadab’s his name,” repeated the Colonel. “His own mother ought to know what he was baptized, and here is a letter from her which the postmaster and I opened this morning. Look!—‘My dear Aminadab.’”

“Don’t believe it, Saccharissa,” said I, faintly, “It is only one of those tender nicknames, relics of childhood, which the maternal parent alone remembers.”

“Silence, culprit!” exclaimed Judge Pyke. “And now, Colonel, read the letter upon which our sentence is principally based,—that traitorous document which you and our patriotic postmaster arrested.”

The ruffian, with a triumphant glance at me, took from his pocket a letter from Derby Deblore. He cleared his throat by a plenteous expectoration, and then proceeded to read as follows:—

“Dear Bratley,—Nigger ran like a hound. Marshall and the rest only saw his heels. I’m going on to Toronto to see how he does there. Keep your eyes peeled, when you come through Kentucky. There’s more of the same stock there, only waiting for somebody to say, ‘Leg it!’ and they’ll go like mad.”

Here the audience interrupted,—“Hang him! hang him! tar and feathers a’n’t half bad enough for the dam’ nigger-thief!”

I began to comprehend Deblore’s innocent reference to his favorite horse Nigger; and a successful race he had made with the well-known racer Marshall—not Rynders—was construed by my jury into a knowledge on my part of the operations of the “Underground Railroad.” What could have been more absurd? I endeavored to protest. I endeavored to show them, on general and personal grounds, how utterly devoted I was to the “Peculiar Institution.”

“Billy Sangaree,” said Judge Pyke, “do you and Major Licklickin stand by the low-lived Abolitionist, and if he says another word, blow out his Black Republican heart.”

They did so. I was silent. Saccharissa gave me a glance expressive of continued devotion. So long as I kept her and her hundred thousand dollars, (\$100,000,) I little cared for the assaults of these noisy and ill-bred persons.

“Continue, Colonel,” said Judge Pyke, severely.

Plickaman resumed the reading of my friend’s letter.

“Well, Bratley,” Deblore went on, “I hope you’ll be able to stand Bayou La Farouche till you’re married. I couldn’t do it. I roar over your letters. But I swear I respect your powers of humbug. I suppose, if you didn’t let out to me, you never could lie so to your



dear Saccharissa. Do you know I think you are a little too severe in calling her a mean, spiteful, slipshod, vulgar, dumpy little flirt?"

"Read that again!" shrieked Saccharissa.

"You are beginning to find out your Aminadab!" says Plickaman.

I moved my lips to deny my name; but the pistol of Billy Sangaree was at my right temple, the pistol of Major Licklickin at my left. I was silent, and bore the scornful looks of my persecutors with patience and dignity.



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Plickaman repeated the sentence.

“But hear the rest,” said he, and read on:—

“From what you say of her tinge of African blood and other charming traits, I have constructed this portrait of the future Mrs. Bratley Chylde, as the Hottentot Venus. Behold it!”

And Mellasys held up a highly colored caricature, covering one whole side of my friend’s sheet.

Saccharissa rose from the sofa where she had been sitting during the whole of my trial.

She stood before me,—really I cannot deny it,—a little, ugly, vulgar figure, overloaded with finery, and her laces and ribbons trembled with rage.

She seemed not to be able to speak, and, by way of relieving herself of her overcharge of wrath, smote me several times on either ear with that pudgy hand I had so often pressed in mine or tenderly kissed.

At this exhibition of a resentment I can hardly deem feminine, the Fire-Eaters roared with laughter and cheered her to continue. A circle of negroes also, at the window, expressed their amusement at the scene in the guttural manner of their race.

I could not refrain from tears at these unhappy exhibitions on the part of my betrothed. They augured ill for the harmony of our married life.

“Hit him again, Rissy! he’s got no friends,” that vulgar Plickaman urged.

She again advanced, seized me by the hair, and shook me with greater muscular force than I should have expected of one of her indolent habits. Delicacy for her sex of course forbade my offering resistance; and besides, there were my two sentries, roaring with vulgar laughter, but holding their pistols with a most unpleasant accuracy of aim at my head.

“Saccharissa, my love,” I ventured to say, in a pleading tone, “these momentary ebullitions of a transitory rage will give the bystanders unfavorable impressions of your temper.”

“You horrid little wretch!” she screeched, “you sneak! you irreligious infidel! you Black Republican! you Aminadab!”——

Here her unnecessary passion choked her, and she took advantage of the pause to handle my hair with extreme violence. The sensation was unpleasant, but I began to



hope that no worse would befall me, and I knew that with a few dulcet words in private I could remove from Saccharissa's mind the asperity induced by my friend's caricature.

"I leave it to you, gentlemen," said she, "whether I am vulgar, as this fellow's correspondence asserts."

"Certainly not," said Judge Pyke. "You are one of the most high-toned beauties in the sunny South, the land of the magnolia and the papaw."

"Your dignity," said Major Licklickin, "is only surpassed by your grace, and both by your queenly calmness."

The others also gave her the best compliments they could, poor fellows! I could have taught them what to say.

Here a grinning negro interrupted with,—

"De tar-kittle's a b'ilin' on de keen jump, Mas'r Mellasys."



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“Gentlemen of the Jury,” said Judge Pyke, “as you had agreed upon your verdict before the trial, it is not requisite that you should retire to consult. Prisoner at the Bar, rise to receive sentence.”

I thought it judicious to fall upon my knees and request forgiveness; but my persecutors were blinded by what no doubt seemed to them a religious zeal.

“Git up!” said Major Licklickin; and I am ashamed, for his sake, to say that there was an application of boot accompanying this remark.

“Prisoner,” continued my Rhadamanthus, “you have had a fair trial, and you are found guilty on all the counts of the indictment. First: Of disloyalty to the South. Second: Of indifference to the Democratic candidate for the Presidency. Third: Of maligning the character of Southern patriots in a book intended, no doubt, for universal circulation through the Northern States. Fourth: Of holding correspondence with an agent of the Underground Railroad, who, as he himself avows, has recently run off a nigger to Toronto.—Silence, Sir! Choke him, Billy Sangaree, if he says a word!—Fifth: Of defaming a Southern lady, while at the same time you were endeavoring to win her most attractive property and person from those who should naturally acquire them. Sixth: Of Agrarianism, Abolitionism, Atheism, and Infidelity. Prisoner at the Bar, your sentence is, that you be tarred and cottoned and leave the State. If you are caught again, you will be hung by the neck, and Henry Ward Beecher have mercy on your soul!”

I was now marched along by my two sentries to a huge tree, not of the bandanna species. Beneath it a sugar-kettle filled with ebullient tar was standing.

My persecutors, with tranquil brutality, proceeded to disrobe me. As my nether garments were removed, Mellasys Plickaman succeeded in persuading Saccharissa to retire. She, however, took her station at a window and peered through the blinds at the spectacle. I do not envy her sensations. All her bright visions of fashionable life were destroyed forever. She would now fall into the society from which I had endeavored to lift her. Poor thing! knowing, too, that I, and my friend Derby Deblore, perhaps the most elegant young man in America, regarded her as a Hottentot Venus. Poor thing! I have no doubt that she longed to rush out, fling herself at my feet, and pray me to forgive her and reconsider my verdict of dumpiness and vulgarity.

Meantime I had been reduced to my shirt and drawers,—excuse the nudity of my style in stating this fact. Mellasys Plickaman took a ladle-full of the viscous fluid and poured it over my head.

“Aminadab,” said he, “I baptize thee!”



I have experienced few sensations more unpleasant than this application. The tar descended in warm and sluggish streams, trickling over my forehead, dropping from my eyelids, rolling over my cheeks, sealing my mouth, gluing my ears to my skull, identifying itself with my hair, pursuing the path indicated by my spine beneath my shirt, —in short, enveloping me with a close-fitting armor of a glutinous and most unsavory material.

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Each of the jury followed the example of my detested rival. In a few moments the tarring was complete. Few can see themselves mentally or physically as others see them; but, judging from the remarks made, I am convinced that I must have afforded an entertaining spectacle to the party. They roared with laughter, and jeered me. I, however, preserved a silence discreet, and, I flatter myself, dignified.

The negroes, particularly those at whose fustigation I had assisted in the morning, joined in the scoffs of their masters, calling me Bobolitionist, Black Republican, Liberator, and other nicknames by which these simple-hearted and contented creatures express dislike and distrust.

“Bring the cotton!” now cried Mellasys Plickaman.

A bag of that regal product was brought.

“Roll him in it!” said Billy Sangaree.

“Let the Colonel work his own tricks,” Major Licklickin said. “He’s an artist, he is.”

I must admit that he was an artist. He fabricated me an elaborate wig of the cotton. He arranged me a pair of bushy white eyebrows. He stuck a venerable beard upon my chin, and a moustache upon my lip. Then he proceeded to indicate my ribs with lines of cotton, and to cap my shoulders with epaulets. It would be long to describe the fantastic tricks he played with me amid the loud laughter of his crew.

Occasionally, also, I heard suppressed giggles from Saccharissa at the window.

I have no doubt that I should have strangled my late *fiancee*, if such an act had been consistent with my personal safety.

When I was completely cottoned, in the decorative manner I have described, Mellasys took a banjo from an old negro, and, striking it, not without a certain unsophisticated and barbaric grace appropriate to the instrument, commanded me to dance.

I essayed to do so. But my heart was heavy; consequently my heels were not light. My faint attempts at pirouettes were not satisfactory.

“Dance jollier, or we’ll hang you,” said Plickaman.

“No,” says Judge Pyke,—“the sentence of the Court has been executed. In the sacred name of Justice I protest against proceeding farther. Culprit,” continued he, in a voice of thunder, “cut for the North Star, and here’s passage-money for you.”



He stuck a half-eagle into the tarry integument of my person. Billy Sangaree, Major Licklickin, and others of the more inebriated, imitated him. My dignity of bearing had evidently made a favorable impression.

I departed amid cheers, some ironical, some no doubt sincere. But to the last, these chivalric, but prejudiced and misguided gentlemen declined to listen to my explanations. Mellasys Plickaman had completely perverted their judgments against me.

The last object I saw was Saccharissa, looking more like a Hottentot Venus than ever, waving her handkerchief and kissing her hand to me. Did she repent her brief disloyalty? For a moment I thought so, and resolved to lie in wait, return by night, and urge her to fly with me. But while I hesitated, Mellasys Plickaman drew near her. She threw herself into his arms, and there, before all the Committee of Fire-Eaters of Bayou La Farouche, she kissed him with those amorphous lips I had often compelled myself to taste. Faugh!

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I deemed this scene a token that my engagement was absolutely terminated.

There was no longer any reason why I should degrade myself by remaining in this vulgar society. I withdrew into the thickets of the adjoining wood and there for a time abandoned myself to melancholy reminiscences.

Presently I heard footsteps. I turned and saw a black approaching, bearing the homely viand known as corn-dodger. He offered it. I accepted it as a tribute from the inferior race to the superior.

I recognized him as one whose fustigation had so revived my crapulous spirits in the morning. He seemed to bear no malice. Malignity is perhaps a mark of more highly developed character. I, for example, possess it to a considerable degree.

The black led me to a lair in the wood. He took my half-eagles from my tar. He scraped and cleansed me by simple methods of which he had the secret. He clothed me in rude garments. Gunny-bag was, I think, the material. He gave me his own shoes. The heels were elongated; but this we remedied by a stuffing of leaves. He conducted me toward the banks of Bayou La Farouche.

On our way, we were compelled to pass not far from the Mellasys mansion. There was a sound of revelry. It was night. I crept cautiously up and peered into the window.

There stood the Reverend Onesimus Butterfut, since a prominent candidate for the archbishopric of the Southern Confederacy. Saccharissa, more over-dressed than usual, and her cousin Mellasys Plickaman, somewhat unsteady with inebriation, stood before him. He was pronouncing them man and wife,—why not ogre and hag?

How fortunate was my escape!

As my negro guide would not listen to my proposal to set the Mellasys establishment on fire while the inmates slept, I followed him to the banks of the Bayou. He provided me with abundant store of the homely food already alluded to. He launched me in a vessel; known to some as a dug-out, to some as a gundalow. His devotion was really touching. It convinced me more profoundly than ever of the canine fidelity and semi-animal characteristics of his race.

I floated down the Bayou. I was picked up by a cotton-ship in the Gulf. I officiated as assistant to the cook on the homeward voyage.

At the urgent solicitation of my mother, I condescended, on my return, to accept a situation in my Uncle Bratley's cracker-bakery. The business is not aristocratic. But what business is? I cannot draw the line between the baker of hard tack—such is the familiar term we employ—and the seller of the material for our product, by the barrel or



the cargo. From the point of view of a Chylde, all avocations for the making of money seem degrading, and only the spending is dignified.

As my conduct during the Mellasys affair has been maligned and scoffed at by persons of crude views of what is *comme il faut*, I have drawn up this statement, confident that it will justify me to all of my order, which I need not state is distinctively that of the Aristocrat and the Gentleman.



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MY ODD ADVENTURE WITH JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH.

More than twenty years ago, being pastor of a church in one of our Western cities, I was sitting, one evening, meditating over my coal fire, which was cheerfully blazing up and gloomily subsiding again, in the way that Western coal fires in Western coal grates were then very much in the habit of doing. I was a young, and inexperienced minister. I had come to the West, fresh from a New England divinity-school, with magnificent ideas of the vast work which was to be done, and with rather a vague notion of the way in which I was to do it. My views of the West were chiefly derived from two books, both of which are now obsolete. When a child, with the omnivorous reading propensity of children, I had perused a thin, pale octavo, which stood on the shelves of our library, containing the record of a journey by the Rev. Thaddeus Mason Harris, of Dorchester, from Massachusetts to Marietta, Ohio. Allibone, whom nothing escapes, gives the title of the book, "Journal of a Tour into the Territory Northwest of the Allegheny Mountains in 1803, Boston, 1805." That a man should write an octavo volume about a journey to Marietta now strikes us as rather absurd; but in those days the overland journey to Ohio was as difficult as that to California is now. The other book was a more important one, being Timothy Flint's "Ten Years' Recollections of the Mississippi Valley," published in 1826. Mr. Flint was a man of sensibility and fancy, a sharp observer, and an interesting writer. His book opened the West to us in its scenery and in its human interest.

I was sitting in my somewhat lonely position, watching my coal fire, and thinking of the friends I had left on the other side of the mountains. I had not succeeded as I had hoped in my work. I came to the West expecting to meet with opposition, and I found only indifference. I expected infidelity, and found worldliness. I had around me a company of good Christian friends, but they were no converts of mine; they were from New England, like myself, and brought their religion with them. Upon the real Western people I had made no impression, and could not see how I should make any. Those who were religious seemed to be bigots; those who were not religious cared apparently more for making money, for politics, for horseracing, for duelling, than for the difference between Homoousians and Homoiousians. They were very fond of good preaching, but their standard was a little different from that I had been accustomed to. A solid, meditative, carefully written sermon had few attractions for them. They would go to hear our great New England divines on account of their reputation, but they would run in crowds to listen to John Newland Maffit. What they wanted, as one of them expressed it, was "an eloquent divine and no common orator." They liked sentiment run out into sentimentalism, fluency, point, plenty of illustration, and knock-down argument. How could a poor boy, fresh from the groves of our Academy, where Good Taste reigned supreme, and where to learn how to manage one's voice was regarded as a sin against sincerity, how could he meet such demands as these?

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I was more discouraged than I need to have been; for, after all, the resemblances in human beings are more than their differences. The differences are superficial,—the resemblances radical. Everywhere men like, in a Christian minister, the same things,—sincerity, earnestness, and living Christianity. Mere words may please, but not long. Men differ in taste about the form of the cup out of which they drink this wine of Divine Truth, but they agree in their thirst for the same wine.

But to my story.

I was sitting, therefore, meditating somewhat sadly, when a knock came at the door. On opening it, a negro boy, with grinning face, presented himself, holding a note. The great fund of good-humor which God has bestowed on the African race often makes them laugh when we see no occasion for laughter. Any event, no matter what it is, seems to them amusing. So this boy laughed merely because he had brought me a note, and not because there was anything peculiarly amusing in the message which the note contained. It is true that you sometimes meet a melancholy negro. But such, I fancy, have some foreign blood in them,—they are not Africans *pur sang*. The race is so essentially joyful, that centuries of oppression and hardship cannot depress its good spirits. It is cheerful in spite of slavery, and in spite of cruel prejudice.

The note the boy brought me did not seem adapted to furnish much provocation for laughter. It was as follows:—

“United States Hotel, Jan. 4th, 1834.

“SIR,—I hope you will excuse the liberty of a stranger addressing you on a subject he feels great interest in. It is to require a place of interment for his friend[s] in the church-yard, and also the expense attendant on the purchase of such place of temporary repose.

“Your communication on this matter will greatly oblige,

“Sir,

“Your respectful and

“Obedient Servant,

“J.B. BOOTH.”

It will be observed that after the word “friend” an [s] follows in brackets. In the original the word was followed by a small mark which might or might not give it the plural form. It could be read either “friend” or “friends”; but as we do not usually find ourselves called upon to bury more than one friend at a time, the hasty reader would not notice the mark,



but would read it “friend.” So did I; and only afterward, in consequence of the *denouement*, did I notice that it might be read in the other way.

Taking my hat, I stepped into the street. Gas in those days was not; an occasional lantern, swung on a wire across the intersection of the streets, reminded us that the city was once French, and suggested the French Revolution and the cry, “*A la lanterne!*” First I went to my neighbor, the mayor of the city, in pursuit of the desired information. A jolly mayor was he,—a Yankee melted down into a Western man, thoroughly Westernized by a rough-and-tumble



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life in Kentucky during many years. Being obliged to hold a mayor's court every day, and knowing very little of law, his chief study was, as he expressed it, "how to choke off the Kentucky lawyers." Mr. Mayor not being at home, I turned next to the office of another naturalized Yankee,—a Yankee naturalized, but never Westernized. He was one of those who do not change their mind with their sky, who, exiled from the dear hills of New England, can never get away from the inborn, inherent Yankee. He was a Plymouth man, and religiously preserved every opinion, habit, and accent which he had brought from Plymouth Rock. When Kentucky was madly Democratic and wept over the dead Jefferson as over her saint, he had expressed the opinion that it would have been well for the country, if he had died long before,—for which expression he came near being lynched. He was the most unpopular and the most indispensable man in the city,—they could live neither with him nor without him. He founded and organized the insurance companies, the public schools, the charitable associations, the great canal, the banking-system,—in short, all Yankee institutions. The city was indebted to him for much of its prosperity, but disliked him while it respected him. For he spared no Western prejudice; he remorselessly criticized everything that was not done as Yankees do it: and the most provoking thing of all was that he never made a mistake; he was always right.

Finding no one at home, and so not being able to learn about the price of lots in the church-yard, I walked on to the hotel, and asked to see Mr. J.B. Booth. I was shown into a private parlor, where he and another gentleman were sitting by a table. On the table were candles, a decanter of wine, and glasses, a plate of bread, cigars, and a book. Mr. Booth rose when I announced myself, and I at once recognized the distinguished actor. I had met him once before, and travelled with him for part of a day. He was a short man, but one of those who seem tall when they choose to do so. He had a clear blue eye and fair complexion. In repose there was nothing to attract attention to him; but when excited, his expression was so animated, his eye was so brilliant, and his figure so full of life, that he became another man.

Having told him that I had not been successful in procuring the information he desired, but would bring it to him on the following morning, he thanked me, and asked me to sit down. It passed through my mind, that, as he had lost a friend and was a stranger in the place, I might be of use to him. Perhaps he needed consolation, and it was my office to sympathize with the bereaved. So I sat down. But it did not appear that he was disposed to seek for such comfort, or engage in such discourse. Once or twice I endeavored, but without success, to turn the conversation to his presumed loss. I asked him if the death of his friend was sudden.

"Very," he replied.



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“Was he a relative?”

“Distant,” said he, and changed the subject.

It is twenty-seven years since these events took place, and I do not pretend to give the conversation very accurately, but what occurred was very much like this. It was a dialogue between Booth and myself, the third party saying not a word during the evening. Mr. Booth first asked me to take a glass of wine, or a cigar, both of which I declined.

“Well,” said he, “let me try to entertain you in another way. When you came in, I was reading aloud to my friend. Perhaps you would like to hear me read.”

“I certainly should,” said I.

“What shall I read?”

“Whatever you like best. What you like to read I shall like to hear.”

“Then suppose I attempt Coleridge’s ‘Ancient Mariner’? Have you time for it? It is long.”

“Yes, I should like it much.”

So he read aloud the whole of this magnificent poem. I have listened to Macready, to Edmund Kean, to Rachel, to Jenny Lind, to Fanny Kemble,—to Webster, Clay, Everett, Harrison Gray Otis,—to Dr. Channing, Henry Ward Beecher, Wendell Phillips, Father Taylor, Ralph Waldo Emerson,—to Victor Hugo, Coquerel, Lacordaire; but none of them affected me as I was affected by this reading. I forgot the place where I was, the motive of my coming, the reader himself. I knew the poem almost by heart, yet I seemed never to have heard it before. I was by the side of the doomed mariner. I was the wedding-guest, listening to his story, held by his glittering eye. I was with him in the storm, among the ice, beneath the hot and copper sky. Booth became so absorbed in his reading, so identified with the poem, that his tone and manner were saturated with a feeling of reality. He actually thought himself the mariner,—so I am persuaded,—while he was reading. As the poem proceeded, and we plunged deeper and deeper into its mystic horrors, the actual world receded into a dim, indefinable distance. The magnetism of this marvellous interpreter had caught up himself, and me with him, into Dreamland, from which we gently descended at the end of Part VI., and “the spell was snapt.”

“And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land,”—



returned from a voyage into the inane. Again I found myself sitting in the little hotel parlor, by the side of a man with glittering eye, with a third somebody on the other side of the table.

I drew a long breath.

Booth turned over the leaves of the volume. It was the collected Works of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats.

“Did you ever read,” said he, “Shelley’s argument against the use of animal food, at the end of ‘Queen Mab’?”

“Yes, I have read it.”

“And what do you think of the argument?”

“Ingenious, but not satisfactory.”

“To me it *is* satisfactory. I have long been convinced that it is wrong to take the life of an animal for our pleasure. I eat no animal food. There is my supper,”—pointing to the plate of bread. “And, indeed,” continued he, “I think the Bible favors this view. Have you a Bible with you?”



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I had not.

Booth thereupon rang the bell, and when the boy presented himself, called for a Bible. *Garcon* disappeared, and came back soon with a Bible on a waiter.

Our tragedian took the book, and proceeded to argue his point by means of texts selected skilfully here and there, from Genesis to Revelation. He referred to the fact that it was not till after the Deluge men were allowed, “for the hardness of their hearts,” as he maintained, to eat meat. But in the beginning it was not so; only herbs were given to man, at first, for food. He quoted the Psalmist (Psalm civ. 14) to show that man’s food came from the earth, and was the green herb; and contended that the reason why Daniel and his friends were fairer and fatter than the children who ate their portion of meat was that they ate only pulse (Daniel i. 12-15). These are all of his Scriptural arguments which I now recall; but I thought them very ingenious at the time.

The argument took some time. Then he recited one or two pieces bearing on the same subject, closing with Byron’s Lines to his Newfoundland Dog.

“In connection with that poem,” he continued, “a singular event once happened to me. I was acting in Petersburg, Virginia. My theatrical engagement was just concluded, and I dined with a party of friends one afternoon before going away. We sat after dinner, singing songs, reciting poetry, and relating anecdotes. At last I recited those lines of Byron on his dog. I was sitting by the fireplace, my feet resting against the jamb, and a single candle was burning on the mantel. It had become dark. Just as I came to the end of the poem,—

“To mark a friend’s remains these stones arise,
I never knew but one, and here he lies,—

“my foot slipped down the jamb, and struck a *dog*, who was lying beneath. The dog sprang up, howled, and ran out of the room, and at the same moment the candle went out. I asked whose dog it was. No one knew. No one had seen the dog till that moment. Perhaps you will smile at me, Sir, and think me superstitious,—but I could not but think that the animal was brought there by *occult sympathy*.”

Having uttered these oracular words in a very solemn tone, Booth rose, and, taking one of the candles, said to me, “Would you like to look at the remains?”

I assented. Asking our silent friend to excuse us, he led me into an adjoining chamber. I looked toward a bed in the corner of the room, expecting to see a corpse. There was none there. But Booth went to another corner of the room, where, spread out upon a large sheet, I saw—what do you suppose, dear reader?

About a bushel of Wild Pigeons!

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Booth knelt down by the side of the birds, and with every evidence of sincere affliction began to mourn over them. He took them up in his hands tenderly, and pressed them to his heart. For a few moments he seemed to forget my presence. For this I was glad, for it gave me a little time to recover from my astonishment, and to consider rapidly what it might mean. As I look back now, and think of the oddity of the situation, I rather wonder at my own self-possession. It was a sufficiently trying position. At first I thought it was a hoax, an intentional piece of practical fun, of which I was to be the object. But even in the moment allowed me to think, I decided that this could not be. For I recalled the long and elaborate Bible argument against taking the life of animals, which could hardly have been got up for the occasion. I considered also that as a joke it would be too poor in itself, and too unworthy a man like Booth. So I decided that it was a sincere conviction,—an idea, exaggerated perhaps to the borders of monomania, of the sacredness of all life. And I determined to treat the conviction with respect, as all sincere and religious convictions deserve to be treated.

I also saw the motive for this particular course of action. During the week immense quantities of the Wild Pigeon (Passenger Pigeon, *Columba Migratoria*) had been flying over the city, in their way to and from a *roost* in the neighborhood. These birds had been slaughtered by myriads, and were for sale by the bushel at the corners of every street in the city. Although all the birds which could be killed by man made the smallest impression on the vast multitude contained in one of these flocks,—computed by Wilson to consist of more than twenty-two hundred millions,—yet to Booth the destruction seemed wasteful, wanton, and from his point of view was a wilful and barbarous murder.

Such a sentiment was perhaps an exaggeration; still I could not but feel a certain sympathy with its humanity. It was an error in a good direction. If an insanity, it was better than the cold, heartless sanity of most men. By the time, therefore, that Booth was ready to speak, I was prepared to answer.

“You see,” said he, “these innocent victims of man’s barbarity. I wish to testify in some public way against this wanton destruction of life. And I wish you to help me. Will you?”

“Hardly,” I replied. “I expected something very different from this, when I received your note. I did not come to see you expecting to be called to assist at the funeral solemnities of birds.”

“Nor did I send for you,” he answered. “I merely wrote to ask about the lot in the graveyard. But now you are here, why not help me? Do you fear the laugh of man?”

“No,” I returned. “If I agreed with you in regard to this subject, I might, perhaps, have the courage to act out my convictions. But I do not look at it as you do. There is no reason, then, why I should have anything to do with it. I respect your convictions, but do not share them.”



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“That is fair,” he said. “I cannot ask anything more. I am obliged to you for coming to see me. My intention was to purchase a place in the burial-ground, and have them put into a coffin and carried in a hearse. I might do it without any one’s knowing that it was not a human body. Would you assist me, then?”

“But if no one *knew* it,” I said, “how would it be a public testimony against the destruction of life?”

“True, it would not. Well, I will consider what to do. Perhaps I may wish to bury them privately in some garden.”

“In that case,” said I, “I will find you a place in the grounds of some of my friends.”

He thanked me, and I took my leave,—exceedingly astonished and amused by the incident, but also interested in the earnestness of conviction of the man.

I heard, in a day or two, that he had actually purchased a lot in the cemetery, two or three miles below the city, that he had had a coffin made, hired a hearse and carriage, and had gone through all the solemnity of a regular funeral. For several days he continued to visit the grave of his little friends, and mourned over them with a grief which did not seem at all theatrical.

Meantime he acted every night at the theatre, and my friends told me that his acting was of unsurpassed excellence. A vein of insanity began, however, to mingle in his conduct. His fellow-actors were afraid of him. He looked terribly in earnest on the stage; and when he went behind the scenes, he spoke to no one, but sat still, looking sternly at the ground. During the day he walked about town, giving apples to the horses, and talked to the drivers, urging them to treat their animals with kindness.

An incident happened, one day, which illustrated still further his sympathy for the humbler races of animals. One of the sudden freshets which come to the Ohio, caused commonly by heavy rains melting the snow in the valleys of its tributary streams, had raised the river to an unusual height. The yellow torrent rushed along its channel, bearing on its surface logs, boards, and the *debris* of fences, shanties, and lumber-yards. A steamboat, forced by the rapid current against the stone landing, had been stove, and lay a wreck on the bottom, with the water rising rapidly around it. A horse had been left, fastened on the boat, and it looked as if he would be drowned. Booth was on the landing, and he took from his pocket twenty dollars, and offered it to any one who would get to the boat and cut the halter, so that the horse might swim ashore. Some one was found to do it, and the horse’s life was saved.

So this golden thread of human sympathy with all creatures whom God had made ran through the darkening moods of his genius. He had well laid to heart the fine moral of his favorite poem,—that



“He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast.

“He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”



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In a week or less the tendency to derangement in Booth became more developed. One night, when he was to act, he did not appear; nor could he be found at his lodgings. He did not come home that night. Next morning he was found in the woods, several miles from the city, wandering through the snow. He was taken care of. His derangement proved to be temporary, and his reason returned in a few days. He soon left the city. But before he went away he sent to me the following note, which I copy from the original faded paper, now lying before me:—

“—*Theatre*,

“January 18, 1834.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Allow me to return you my grateful acknowledgments for your prompt and benevolent attention to my request last Wednesday night. Although I am convinced *your* ideas and *mine* thoroughly coincide as to the *real* cause of man’s bitter degradation, yet I fear human means to redeem him are now fruitless. The Fire must burn, and Prometheus endure his agony. The Pestilence of Asia must come again, ere the savage will be taught humanity. May *you* escape! God bless you, Sir!

“J.B. BOOTH.”

Certainly I may call this “an odd adventure” for a young minister, less than six months in his profession. But it left in my mind a very pleasant impression of this great tragedian. It may be asked why he came to me, the youngest and newest clergyman in the place. The reason he gave me himself. I was a Unitarian. He said he had more sympathy with me on that account, as he was of Jewish descent, and a Monotheist.

MY OUT-DOOR STUDY.

The noontide of the summer-day is past, when all Nature slumbers, and when the ancients feared to sing, lest the great god Pan should be awakened. Soft changes, the gradual shifting of every shadow on every leaf, begin to show the waning hours. Ineffectual thunder-storms have gathered and gone by, hopelessly defeated. The floating-bridge is trembling and resounding beneath the pressure of one heavy wagon, and the quiet fishermen change their places to avoid the tiny ripple that glides stealthily to their feet above the half-submerged planks. Down the glimmering lake there are miles of silence and still waters and green shores, overhung with a multitudinous and scattered fleet of purple and golden clouds, now furling their idle sails and drifting away into the vast harbor of the South. Voices of birds, hushed first by noon and then by possibilities of tempest, cautiously begin once more, leading on the infinite melodies of the June afternoon. As the freshened air invites them forth, so the smooth and stainless



water summons us. “Put your hand upon the oar,” says Charon in the old play to Bacchus, “and you shall hear the sweetest songs.” The doors of the boathouse swing softly open, and the slender wherry, like a water-snake, steals silently in the wake of the dispersing clouds.



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The woods are hazy, as if the warm sunbeams had melted in among the interstices of the foliage and spread a soft film throughout the whole. The sky seems to reflect the water, and the water the sky; both are roseate with color, both are darkened with clouds, and between them both, as the boat recedes, the floating-bridge hangs suspended, with its motionless fishermen and its moving team. The wooded islands are poised upon the lake, each belted with a paler tint of softer wave. The air seems fine and palpitating; the drop of an oar in a distant row-lock, the sound of a hammer on a dismantled boat, pass into some region of mist and shadows, and form a metronome for delicious dreams.

Every summer I launch my boat to seek some realm of enchantment beyond all the sordidness and sorrow of earth, and never yet did I fail to ripple with my prow at least the outskirts of those magic waters. What spell has fame or wealth to enrich this midday blessedness with a joy the more? Yonder barefoot boy, as he drifts silently in his punt beneath the drooping branches of yonder vine-clad bank, has a bliss which no Astor can buy with money, no Seward conquer with votes,—which yet is no monopoly of his, and to which time and experience only add a more subtle and conscious charm. The rich years were given us to increase, not to impair, these cheap felicities. Sad or sinful is the life of that man who finds not the heavens bluer and the waves more musical in maturity than in childhood. Time is a severe alembic of youthful joys, no doubt; we exhaust book after book and leave Shakespeare unopened; we grow fastidious in men and women; all the rhetoric, all the logic, we fancy we have heard before; we have seen the pictures, we have listened to the symphonies: but what has been done by all the art and literature of the world towards describing one summer day? The most exhausting effort brings us no nearer to it than to the blue sky which is its dome; our words are shot up against it like arrows, and fall back helpless. Literary amateurs go the tour of the globe to renew their stock of materials, when they do not yet know a bird or a bee or a blossom beside their homestead-door; and in the hour of their greatest success they have not an horizon to their life so large as that of yon boy in his punt. All that is purchasable in the capitals of the world is not to be weighed in comparison with the simple enjoyment that may be crowded into one hour of sunshine. What can place or power do here? “Who could be before me, though the palace of Caesar cracked and split with emperors, while I, sitting in silence on a cliff of Rhodes, watched the sun as he swung his golden censer athwart the heavens?”



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It is pleasant to observe a sort of confused and latent recognition of all this in the instinctive sympathy which is always rendered to any indication of out-door pursuits. How cordially one sees the eyes of all travellers turn to the man who enters the railroad-station with a fowling-piece in hand, or the boy with water-lilies! There is a momentary sensation of the freedom of the woods, a whiff of oxygen for the anxious money-changers. How agreeably sounds the news—to all but his creditors—that the lawyer or the merchant has locked his office-door and gone fishing! The American temperament needs at this moment nothing so much as that wholesome training of semi-rural life which reared Hampden and Cromwell to assume at one grasp the sovereignty of England, and which has ever since served as the foundation of England's greatest ability. The best thoughts and purposes seem ordained to come to human beings beneath the open sky, as the ancients fabled that Pan found the goddess Ceres when he was engaged in the chase, whom no other of the gods could find when seeking seriously. The little I have gained from colleges and libraries has certainly not worn so well as the little I learned in childhood of the habits of plant, bird, and insect. That "weight and sanity of thought," which Coleridge so finely makes the crowning attribute of Wordsworth, is in no way so well matured and cultivated as in the society of Nature.

There may be extremes and affectations, and Mary Lamb declared that Wordsworth held it doubtful if a dweller in towns had a soul to be saved. During the various phases of transcendental idealism among ourselves, in the last twenty years, the love of Nature has at times assumed an exaggerated and even a pathetic aspect, in the morbid attempts of youths and maidens to make it a substitute for vigorous thought and action, —a lion endeavoring to dine on grass and green leaves. In some cases this mental chlorosis reached such a height as almost to nauseate one with Nature, when in the society of the victims; and surfeited companions felt inclined to rush to the treadmill immediately, or get chosen on the Board of Selectmen, or plunge into any conceivable drudgery, in order to feel that there was still work enough in the universe to keep it sound and healthy. But this, after all, was exceptional and transitory, and our American life still needs, beyond all things else, the more habitual cultivation of out-door habits.

Probably the direct ethical influence of natural objects may be overrated. Nature is not didactic, but simply healthy. She helps everything to its legitimate development, but applies no goads, and forces on us no sharp distinctions. Her wonderful calmness, refreshing the whole soul, must aid both conscience and intellect in the end, but sometimes lulls both temporarily, when immediate issues are pending. The waterfall cheers and purifies infinitely, but it marks no moments, has no reproaches for indolence, forces to no immediate decision, offers unbounded to-morrows, and the man of action must tear himself away, when the time comes, since the work will not be done for him. "The natural day is very calm, and will hardly reprove our indolence."

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And yet the more bent any man is upon action, the more profoundly he needs the calm lessons of Nature to preserve his equilibrium. The radical himself needs nothing so much as fresh air. The world is called conservative; but it is far easier to impress a plausible thought on the complaisance of others than to retain an unfaltering faith in it for ourselves. The most dogged reformer distrusts himself every little while, and says inwardly, like Luther, "Art thou alone wise?" So he is compelled to exaggerate, in the effort to hold his own. The community is bored by the conceit and egotism of the innovators; so it is by that of poets and artists, orators and statesmen; but if we knew how heavily ballasted all these poor fellows need to be, to keep an even keel amid so many conflicting tempests of blame and praise, we should hardly reproach them. But the simple enjoyments of out-door life, costing next to nothing, tend to equalize all vexations. What matter, if the Governor removes you from office? he cannot remove you from the lake; and if readers or customers will not bite, the pickerel will. We must keep busy, of course; yet we cannot transform the world except very slowly, and we can best preserve our patience in the society of Nature, who does her work almost as imperceptibly as we.

And for literary training, especially, the influence of natural beauty is simply priceless. Under the present educational systems, we need grammars and languages far less than a more thorough out-door experience. On this flowery bank, on this ripple-marked shore, are the true literary models. How many living authors have ever attained to writing a single page which could be for one moment compared, for the simplicity and grace of its structure, with this green spray of wild woodbine or yonder white wreath of blossoming clematis? A finely organized sentence should throb and palpitate like the most delicate vibrations of the summer air. We talk of literature as if it were a mere matter of rule and measurement, a series of processes long since brought to mechanical perfection: but it would be less incorrect to say that it all lies in the future; tried by the out-door standard, there is as yet no literature, but only glimpses and guideboards; no writer has yet succeeded in sustaining, through more than some single occasional sentence, that fresh and perfect charm. If by the training of a lifetime one could succeed in producing one continuous page of perfect cadence, it would be a life well spent, and such a literary artist would fall short of Nature's standard in quantity only, not in quality.



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It is one sign of our weakness, also, that we commonly assume Nature to be a rather fragile and merely ornamental thing, and suited for a model of the graces only. But her seductive softness is the last climax of magnificent strength. The same mathematical law winds the leaves around the stem and the planets round the sun. The same law of crystallization rules the slight-knit snow-flake and the hard foundations of the earth. The thistle-down floats secure upon the same summer zephyrs that are woven into the tornado. The dew-drop holds within its transparent cell the same electric fire which charges the thunder-cloud. In the softest tree or the airiest waterfall, the fundamental lines are as lithe and muscular as the crouching haunches of a leopard; and without a pencil vigorous enough to render these, no mere mass of foam or foliage, however exquisitely finished, can tell the story. Lightness of touch is the crowning test of power.

Yet Nature does not work by single spasms only. That chestnut spray is not an isolated and exhaustive effort of creative beauty: look upward and see its sisters rise with pile above pile of fresh and stately verdure, till tree meets sky in a dome of glorious blossom, the whole as perfect as the parts, the least part as perfect as the whole. Studying the details, it seems as if Nature were a series of costly fragments with no coherency,—as if she would never encourage us to do anything systematically, would tolerate no method but her own, and yet had none of her own,—were as abrupt in her transitions from oak to maple as the heroine who went into the garden to cut a cabbage-leaf to make an apple-pie; while yet there is no conceivable human logic so close and inexorable as her connections. How rigid, how flexible are, for instance, the laws of perspective! If one could learn to make his statements as firm and unswerving as the horizon-line,—his continuity of thought as marked, yet as unbroken, as yonder soft gradations by which the eye is lured upward from lake to wood, from wood to hill, from hill to heavens,—what more bracing tonic could literary culture demand? As it is, Art misses the parts, yet does not grasp the whole.

Literature also learns from Nature the use of materials: either to select only the choicest and rarest, or to transmute coarse to fine by skill in using. How perfect is the delicacy with which the woods and fields are kept, throughout the year! All these millions of living creatures born every season, and born to die; yet where are the dead bodies? We never see them. Buried beneath the earth by tiny nightly sextons, sunk beneath the waters, dissolved into the air, or distilled again and again as food for other organizations,—all have had their swift resurrection. Their existence blooms again in these violet-petals, glitters in the burnished beauty of these golden beetles, or enriches the veery's song. It is only out of doors that even death and decay become beautiful. The model farm, the

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most luxurious house, have their regions of unsightliness; but the fine chemistry of Nature is constantly clearing away all its impurities before our eyes, and yet so delicately that we never suspect the process. The most exquisite work of literary art exhibits a certain crudeness and coarseness, when we turn to it from Nature,—as the smallest cambric needle appears rough and jagged, when compared through the magnifier with the tapering fineness of the insect's sting.

Once separated from Nature, literature recedes into metaphysics, or dwindles into novels. How ignoble seems the current material of London literary life, for instance, compared with the noble simplicity which, a half-century ago, made the Lake Country an enchanted land forever! Is it worth a voyage to England to sup with Thackeray in the Pot Tavern? Compare the “enormity of pleasure” which De Quincey says Wordsworth derived from the simplest natural object with the serious protest of Wilkie Collins against the affectation of caring about Nature at all. “Is it not strange”, says this most unhappy man, “to see how little real hold the objects of the natural world amidst which we live can gain on our hearts and minds? We go to Nature for comfort in joy and sympathy in trouble, only in books.... What share have the attractions of Nature ever had in the pleasurable or painful interests and emotions of ourselves or our friends?... There is surely a reason for this want of inborn sympathy between the creature and the creation around it.”

Leslie says of “the most original landscape-painter he knew,” meaning Constable, that, whenever he sat down in the fields to sketch, he endeavored to forget that he had ever seen a picture. In literature this is easy, the descriptions are so few and so faint. When Wordsworth was fourteen, he stopped one day by the wayside to observe the dark outline of an oak against the western sky; and he says that he was at that moment struck with “the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country,” so far as he was acquainted with them, and “made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency.” He spent a long life in studying and telling these beautiful wonders; and yet, so vast is the sum of them, they seem almost as undescribed before, and men to be still as content with vague or conventional representations. On this continent, especially, people fancied that all must be tame and second-hand, everything long since duly analyzed and distributed and put up in appropriate quotations, and nothing left for us poor American children but a preoccupied universe. And yet Thoreau camps down by Walden Pond and shows us that absolutely nothing in Nature has ever yet been described,—not a bird nor a berry of the woods, nor a drop of water, nor a spicula of ice, nor summer, nor winter, nor sun, nor star.



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Indeed, no person can portray Nature from any slight or transient acquaintance. A reporter cannot step out between the sessions of a caucus and give a racy abstract of the landscape. It may consume the best hours of many days to certify for one's self the simplest out-door fact, but every such piece of knowledge is intellectually worth the time. Even the driest and barest book of Natural History is good and nutritious, so far as it goes, if it represents genuine acquaintance; one can find summer in January by poring over the Latin catalogues of Massachusetts plants and animals in Hitchcock's Report. The most commonplace out-door society has the same attraction. Every one of those old outlaws who haunt our New England ponds and marshes, water-soaked and soakers of something else,—intimate with the pure fluid in that familiarity which breeds contempt,—has yet a wholesome side when you explore his knowledge of frost and freshet, pickerel and musk-rat, and is exceedingly good company while you can keep him beyond scent of the tavern. Any intelligent farmer's boy can give you some narrative of out-door observation which, so far as it goes, fulfils Milton's definition of poetry, "simple, sensuous, passionate." He may not write sonnets to the lake, but he will walk miles to bathe in it; he may not notice the sunsets, but he knows where to search for the black-bird's nest. How surprised the school-children looked, to be sure, when the Doctor of Divinity from the city tried to sentimentalize, in addressing them, about "the bobolink in the woods"! They knew that the darling of the meadow had no more personal acquaintance with the woods than was exhibited by the preacher.

But the preachers are not much worse than the authors. The prosaic Buckle, to be sure, admits that the poets have in all time been consummate observers, and that their observations have been as valuable as those of the men of science; and yet we look even to the poets for very casual and occasional glimpses of Nature only, not for any continuous reflection of her glory. Thus, Chaucer is perfumed with early spring; Homer resounds like the sea; in the Greek Anthology the sun always shines on the fisherman's cottage by the beach; we associate the Vishnu Purana with lakes and houses, Keats with nightingales in forest dim, while the long grass waving on the lonely heath is the last memorial of the fading fame of Ossian. Of course Shakspeare's omniscience included all natural phenomena; but the rest, great or small, associate themselves with some special aspects, and not with the daily atmosphere. Coming to our own times, one must quarrel with Ruskin as taking rather the artist's view of Nature, selecting the available bits and dealing rather patronizingly with the whole; and one is tempted to charge even Emerson, as he somewhere charges Wordsworth, with not being of a temperament quite liquid and musical enough to admit the full vibration of the great harmonics. The three human



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foster-children who have been taken nearest into Nature's bosom, perhaps,—an odd triad, surely, for the whimsical nursing mother to select,—are Wordsworth, Bettine Brentano, and Thoreau. Is it yielding to an individual preference too far, to say, that there seems almost a generic difference between these three and any others,—however wide be the specific differences among themselves,—to say that, after all, they in their several paths have attained to an habitual intimacy with Nature, and the rest have not?

Yet what wonderful achievements have some of the fragmentary artists performed! Some of Tennyson's word-pictures, for instance, bear almost as much study as the landscape. One afternoon, last spring, I had been walking through a copse of young white birches,—their leaves scarce yet apparent,—over a ground delicate with wood-anemones, moist and mottled with dog's-tooth-violet leaves, and spangled with the delicate clusters of that shy creature, the Claytonia or Spring Beauty. All this was floored with last year's faded foliage, giving a singular bareness and whiteness to the foreground. Suddenly, as if entering a cavern, I stepped through the edge of all this, into a dark little amphitheatre beneath a hemlock-grove, where the afternoon sunlight struck broadly through the trees upon a tiny stream and a miniature swamp,—this last being intensely and luridly green, yet overlaid with the pale gray of last year's reeds, and absolutely flaming with the gayest yellow light from great clumps of cowslips. The illumination seemed perfectly weird and dazzling; the spirit of the place appeared live, wild, fantastic, almost human. Now open your Tennyson:—

*"And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire
in swamps and hollows gray."*

Our cowslip is the English marsh-marigold.

History is a grander poetry, and it is often urged that the features of Nature in America must seem tame because they have no legendary wreaths to decorate them. It is perhaps hard for those of us who are untravelled to appreciate how densely even the ruralities of Europe are overgrown with this ivy of associations. Thus, it is fascinating to hear that the great French forests of Fontainebleau and St. Germain are full of historic trees,—the oak of Charlemagne, the oak of Clovis, of Queen Blanche, of Henri Quatre, of Sully,—the alley of Richelieu,—the rendezvous of St. Herem,—the star of Lamballe and of the Princesses, a star being a point where several paths or roads converge. It is said that every topographical work upon these forests has turned out a history of the French monarchy. Yet surely we lose nearly as much as we gain by this subordination of imperishable beauty to the perishable memories of man. It may not be wholly unfortunate, that, in the absence of those influences which come to older nations from ruins and traditions, we must go more directly to Nature. Art may either rest upon other Art, or it may rest directly upon the original foundation; the one is easier, the other more



valuable. Direct dependence on Nature leads to deeper thought and affords the promise of far fresher results. Why should I wish to fix my study in Heidelberg Castle, when I possess the unexhausted treasures of this out-door study here?



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The walls of my study are of ever-changing verdure, and its roof and floor of ever-varying blue. I never enter it without a new heaven above and new thoughts below. The lake has no lofty shores and no level ones, but a series of undulating hills, fringed with woods from end to end. The profaning axe may sometimes come near the margin, and one may hear the whetting of the scythe; but no cultivated land abuts upon the main lake, though beyond the narrow woods there are here and there glimpses of rye-fields that wave like rolling mist. Graceful islands rise from the quiet waters,—Grape Island, Grass Island, Sharp Pine Island, and the rest, baptized with simple names by departed generations of farmers,—all wooded and bushy and trailing with festoonery of vines. Here and there the banks are indented, and one may pass beneath drooping chestnut-leaves and among alder-branches into some secret sanctuary of stillness. The emerald edges of these silent tarns are starred with dandelions which have strayed here, one scarce knows how, from their foreign home; the buck-bean perchance grows in the water, or the Rhodora fixes here one of its shy camping-places, or there are whole skies of lupine on the sloping banks;—the catbird builds its nest beside us, the yellow-bird above, the wood-thrush sings late and the whippoorwill later, and sometimes the scarlet tanager and his golden-haired bride send a gleam of the tropics through these leafy aisles.

Sometimes I rest in a yet more secluded place amid the waters, where a little wooded island holds a small lagoon in the centre, just wide enough for the wherry to turn round. The entrance lies between two hornbeam trees, which stand close to the brink, spreading over it their thorn-like branches and their shining leaves. Within there is perfect shelter; the island forms a high circular bank, like a coral reef, and shuts out the wind and the passing boats; the surface is paved with leaves of lily and pond-weed, and the boughs above are full of song. No matter what white caps may crest the blue waters of the pond, which here widens out to its broadest reach, there is always quiet here. A few oar-strokes distant lies a dam or water-break, where the whole lake is held under control by certain distant mills, towards which a sluggish stream goes winding on through miles of water-lilies. The old gray timbers of the dam are the natural resort of every boy or boatman within their reach; some come in pursuit of pickerel, some of turtles, some of bull-frogs, some of lilies, some of bathing. It is a good place for the last desideratum, and it is well to leave here the boat tethered to the vines which overhang the cove, and perform a sacred and Oriental ablution beneath the sunny afternoon.



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Oh, radiant and divine afternoon! The poets profusely celebrate silver evenings and golden mornings; but what floods on floods of beauty steep the earth and gladden it in the first hours of day's decline! The exuberant rays reflect and multiply themselves from every leaf and blade; the cows lie upon the hill-side, with their broad peaceful backs painted into the landscape; the hum of insects, "tiniest bells on the garment of silence," fills the air; the gorgeous butterflies doze upon the thistle-blooms till they almost fall from the petals; the air is full of warm fragrance from the wild-grape clusters; the grass is burning hot beneath the naked feet in sunshine, and cool as water in the shade. Diving from this overhanging beam,—for Ovid evidently meant that Midas to be cured must dive,—

"Subde caput, corpusque simul, simul elue
crinem,"—

one finds as kindly a reception from the water as in childish days, and as safe a shelter in the green dressing-room afterwards; and the patient wherry floats near by, in readiness for a reembarkation.

Here a word seems needed, unprofessionally and non-technically, upon boats,—these being the sole seats provided for occupant or visitor in my out-door study. When wherries first appeared in this peaceful inland community, the novel proportions occasioned remark. Facetious bystanders inquired sarcastically whether that thing were expected to carry more than one,—plainly implying by labored emphasis that it would occasionally be seen tenanted by even less than that number. Transcendental friends inquired, with more refined severity, if the proprietor expected to *meditate* in that thing? This doubt at least seemed legitimate. Meditation seems to belong to sailing rather than rowing; there is something so gentle and unintrusive in gliding effortless beneath overhanging branches and along the trailing edges of clematis thickets;—what a privilege of fairy-land is this noiseless prow, looking in and out of one flowery cove after another, scarcely stirring the turtle from his log, and leaving no wake behind! It seemed as if all the process of rowing had too much noise and bluster, and as if the sharp slender wherry, in particular, were rather too pert and dapper to win the confidence of the woods and waters. Time has dispelled the fear. As I rest poised upon the oars above some submerged shallow, diamonded with ripple-broken sunbeams, the fantastic Notonecta or water-boatman rests upon his oars below, and I see that his proportions anticipated the wherry, as honeycombs antedated the problem of the hexagonal cell. While one of us rests, so does the other; and when one shoots away rapidly above the water, the other does the same beneath. For the time, as our motions seem the same, so with our motives,—my enjoyment certainly not less, with the conveniences of humanity thrown in.



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But the sun is declining low. The club-boats are out, and from island to island in the distance these shafts of youthful life shoot swiftly across. There races some swift Atalanta, with no apple to fall in her path but some soft and spotted oak-apple from an overhanging tree; there the Phantom, with a crew white and ghostlike in the distance, glimmers in and out behind the headlands, while yonder wherry glides lonely across the smooth expanse. The voices of all these oarsmen are dim and almost inaudible, being so far away; but one would scarcely wish that distance should annihilate the ringing laughter of these joyous girls, who come gliding, in a safe and heavy boat, they and some blue dragon-flies together, around yonder wooded point.

Many a summer afternoon have I rowed joyously with these same maidens beneath these steep and garlanded shores; many a time have they pulled the heavy four-oar, with me as coxswain at the helm,—the said patient steersman being oft-times insulted by classical allusions from rival boats, satirically comparing him to an indolent Venus drawn by doves, while the oarswomen in turn were likened to Minerva with her feet upon a tortoise. Many were the disasters in the earlier days of feminine training;—first of toilet, straw hats blowing away, hair coming down, hair-pins strewing the floor of the boat, gloves commonly happening to be off at the precise moment of starting, and trials of speed impaired by somebody's oar catching in somebody's dress-pocket. Then the actual difficulties of handling the long and heavy oars,—the first essays at feathering, with a complicated splash of air and water, as when a wild-duck in rising swims and flies together, and uses neither element handsomely,—the occasional pulling of a particularly vigorous stroke through the atmosphere alone, and at other times the compensating disappearance of nearly the whole oar beneath the liquid surface, as if some Uncle Kuehleborn had grasped it, while our Undine by main strength tugged it from the beguiling wave. But with what triumphant abundance of merriment were these preliminary disasters repaid, and how soon outgrown! What "time" we sometimes made, when nobody happened to be near with a watch, and how successfully we tossed oars in saluting, when the world looked on from a pic-nic! We had our applauses, too. To be sure, owing to the age and dimensions of the original barge, we could not command such a burst of enthusiasm as when the young men shot by us in their race-boat;—but then, as one of the girls justly remarked, we remained longer in sight.

And many a day, since promotion to a swifter craft, have they rowed with patient stroke down the lovely lake, still attended by their guide, philosopher, and coxswain,—along banks where herds of young birch-trees overspread the sloping valley and ran down in a blaze of sunshine to the rippling water,—or through the Narrows, where some breeze rocked the boat till trailing shawls and ribbons were water-soaked,



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and the bold little foam would even send a daring drop over the gunwale, to play at ocean,—or to Davis's Cottage, where a whole parterre of lupines bloomed to the water's edge, as if relics of some ancient garden-bower of a forgotten race,—or to the dam by Lily Pond, there to hunt among the stones for snakes' eggs, each empty shell cut crosswise, where the young creatures had made their first fierce bite into the universe outside,—or to some island, where white violets bloomed fragrant and lonely, separated by relentless breadths of water from their shore-born sisters, until mingled in their visitors' bouquets,—then up the lake homeward again at nightfall, the boat all decked with clematis, clethra, laurel, azalea, or water-lilies, while purple sunset clouds turned forth their golden linings for drapery above our heads, and then unrolling sent northward long roseate wreaths to outstrip our loitering speed, and reach the floating-bridge before us.

It is nightfall now. One by one the birds grow silent, and the soft dragon-flies, children of the day, are fluttering noiselessly to their rest beneath the under sides of drooping leaves. From shadowy coves the evening air is thrusting forth a thin film of mist to spread a white floor above the waters. The gathering darkness deepens the quiet of the lake, and bids us, at least for this time, to forsake it. "*De soir fontaines, de matin montaignes,*" says the old French proverb,—Morning for labor, evening for repose.

A SERMON IN A STONE.

Harry Jones and Tom Murdock got down from the cars,
Near a still country village, and lit their cigars.
They had left the hot town for a stroll and a chat,
And wandered on looking at this and at that,—
Plumed grass with pink clover that waltzed in the breeze,
Ruby currants in gardens, and pears on the trees,—
Till a green church-yard showed them its sun-checkered gloom,
And in they both went and sat down on a tomb.
The dead name was mossy; the letters were dim;
But they spelled out "James Woodson," and mused upon him,
Till Harry said, poring, "I wish I could know
What manner of man used the bones down below."
Answered Tom,—as he took his cigar from his lip
And tapped off the ashes that crusted the tip,
His quaint face somewhat shaded with awe and with mystery,—
"You shall hear, if you will, the main points in his story."—
"You don't mean you knew him? You could not! See here!
Why, this, since he died, is the thirtieth year!"—
"I never saw him, nor the place where he lay,

Nor heard of nor thought of the man, till to-day;
But I'll tell you his story, and leave it to you
If 'tis not ten to one that my story is true.



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“The man whose old mould underneath us is hid
Meant a great deal more good and less harm than he did.
He knelt in yon church 'mid the worshipping throng,
And vowed to do right, but went out to do wrong;
For, going up of a Sunday to look at the gate
Of Saints' Alley, he stuck there and found it was strait,
And slid back of a Monday to walk in the way
That is popular, populous, smooth-paved, and gay.
The flesh it was strong, but the spirit was faint.
He first was too young, then too old, for a saint.
He wished well by his neighbors, did well by himself,
And hoped for salvation, and struggled for pelf;
And easy Tomorrow still promised to pay
The still swelling debts of his bankrupt Today,
Till, bestriding the deep sudden chasm that is fixed
The sunshiny world and the shadowy betwixt,
His Today with a pale wond'ring face stood alone,
And over the border Tomorrow had flown.
So after went he, his accounts as he could
To settle and make his loose reckonings good,
And left us his tomb and his skeleton under,—
Two boons to his race,—to sit down on and ponder.
Heaven help him! Yet heaven, I fear, he hath lost.
Here lies his poor dust; but where cries his poor ghost?
We know not. Perhaps we shall see by-and-by,
When out of our coffins we get, you and I.”

AGNES OF SORRENTO.

CHAPTER X.

THE INTERVIEW.

The dreams of Agnes, on the night after her conversation with the monk and her singular momentary interview with the cavalier, were a strange mixture of images, indicating the peculiarities of her education and habits of daily thought.

She dreamed that she was sitting alone in the moonlight, and heard some one rustling in the distant foliage of the orange-groves, and from them came a young man dressed in white of a dazzling clearness like sunlight; large pearly wings fell from his shoulders and seemed to shimmer with a phosphoric radiance; his forehead was broad and grave, and above it floated a thin, tremulous tongue of flame; his eyes had that deep, mysterious gravity which is so well expressed in all the Florentine paintings of celestial



beings: and yet, singularly enough, this white-robed, glorified form seemed to have the features and lineaments of the mysterious cavalier of the evening before,—the same deep, mournful, dark eyes, only that in them the light of earthly pride had given place to the calm, strong gravity of an assured peace,—the same broad forehead,—the same delicately chiselled features, but elevated and etherealized, glowing with a kind of interior ecstasy. He seemed to move from the shadow of the orange-trees with a backward floating of his lustrous garments, as if borne on a cloud just along the surface of the ground; and in his hand he held the lily-spray, all radiant



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with a silvery, living light, just as the monk had suggested to her a divine flower might be. Agnes seemed to herself to hold her breath and marvel with a secret awe, and, as often happens in dreams, she wondered to herself,—“Was this stranger, then, indeed, not even mortal, not even a king’s brother, but an angel?—How strange,” she said to herself, “that I should never have seen it in his eyes!” Nearer and nearer the vision drew, and touched her forehead with the lily, which seemed dewy and icy cool; and with the contact it seemed to her that a delicious tranquillity, a calm ecstasy, possessed her soul, and the words were impressed in her mind, as if spoken in her ear, “The Lord hath sealed thee for his own!”—and then, with the wild fantasy of dreams, she saw the cavalier in his wonted form and garments, just as he had kneeled to her the night before, and he said, “Oh, Agnes! Agnes! little lamb of Christ, love me and lead me!”—and in her sleep it seemed to her that her heart stirred and throbbed with a strange, new movement in answer to those sad, pleading eyes, and thereafter her dream became more troubled.

The sea was beginning now to brighten with the reflection of the coming dawn in the sky, and the flickering fire of Vesuvius was waxing sickly and pale; and while all the high points of rocks were turning of a rosy purple, in the weird depths of the gorge were yet the unbroken shadows and stillness of night. But at the earliest peep of dawn the monk had risen, and now, as he paced up and down the little garden, his morning hymn mingled with Agnes’s dreams,—words strong with all the nerve of the old Latin, which, when they were written, had scarcely ceased to be the spoken tongue of Italy.

Splendor paternae gloriae,
De luce lucem proferens,
Lux lucis et fons luminis
Dies diem illuminans!

“Votis vocemus et Patrem,
Patrem potentis gratiae,
Patrem perennis gloriae:
Culpam releget lubricam!

“Confirmet actus strenuos,
Dentes retundat invidi,
Causa secundet asperos,
Donet gerendi gratiam!

“Christus nobis sit cibus,
Potusque noster sit fides:
Laeti bibamus sobriam
Ebrietatem spiritus!



“Laetus dies hic transeat,
Pudor sit ut diluculum,
Fides velut meridies,
Crepusculum mens nesciat!”[A]

[Footnote A:

Splendor of the Father's glory,
Bringing light with cheering ray,
Light of light and fount of brightness,
Day, illuminating day!

In our prayers we call thee Father,
Father of eternal glory,
Father of a mighty grace:
Heal our errors, we implore thee!

Form our struggling, vague desires;
Power of spiteful spirits break;
Help us in life's straits, and give us
Grace to suffer for thy sake!

Christ for us shall be our food;
Faith in him our drink shall be;
Hopeful, joyful, let us drink
Soberness of ecstasy!



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Joyful shall our day go by,
Purity its dawning light,
Faith its fervid noontide glow,
And for us shall be no night!]

The hymn in every word well expressed the character and habitual pose of mind of the singer, whose views of earthly matters were as different from the views of ordinary working mortals as those of a bird, as he flits and perches and sings, must be from those of the four-footed ox who plods. The "*sobriam ebrietatem spiritus*" was with him first constitutional, as a child of sunny skies, and then cultivated by every employment and duty of the religious and artistic career to which from childhood he had devoted himself. If perfect, unalloyed happiness has ever existed in this weary, work-day world of ours, it has been in the bosoms of some of those old religious artists of the Middle Ages, whose thoughts grew and flowered in prayerful shadows, bursting into thousands of quaint and fanciful blossoms on the pages of missal and breviary. In them the fine life of color, form, and symmetry, which is the gift of the Italian, formed a rich stock on which to graft the true vine of religious faith, and rare and fervid were the blossoms.

For it must be remarked in justice of the Christian religion, that the Italian people never rose to the honors of originality in the beautiful arts till inspired by Christianity. The Art of ancient Rome was a second-hand copy of the original and airy Greek,—often clever, but never vivid and self-originating. It is to the religious Art of the Middle Ages, to the Umbrian and Florentine schools particularly, that we look for the peculiar and characteristic flowering of the Italian mind. When the old Greek Art revived again in modern Europe, though at first it seemed to add richness and grace to this peculiar development, it smothered and killed it at last, as some brilliant tropical parasite exhausts the life of the tree it seems at first to adorn. Raphael and Michel Angelo mark both the perfected splendor and the commenced decline of original Italian Art; and just in proportion as their ideas grew less Christian and more Greek did the peculiar vividness and intense flavor of Italian nationality pass away from them. They became again like the ancient Romans, gigantic imitators and clever copyists, instead of inspired kings and priests of a national development.

The tones of the monk's morning hymn awakened both Agnes and Elsie, and the latter was on the alert instantly.

"Bless my soul!" she said, "brother Antonio has a marvellous power of lungs; he is at it the first thing in the morning. It always used to be so; when he was a boy, he would wake me up before daylight, singing.

"He is happy, like the birds," said Agnes, "because he flies near heaven."



“Like enough: he was always a pious boy; his prayers and his pencil were ever uppermost: but he was a poor hand at work: he could draw you an olive-tree on paper; but set him to dress it, and any fool would have done better.”



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The morning rites of devotion and the simple repast being over, Elsie prepared to go to her business. It had occurred to her that the visit of her brother was an admirable pretext for withdrawing Agnes from the scene of her daily traffic, and of course, as she fondly supposed, keeping her from the sight of the suspected admirer.

Neither Agnes nor the monk had disturbed her serenity by recounting the adventure of the evening before. Agnes had been silent from the habitual reserve which a difference of nature ever placed between her and her grandmother,—a difference which made confidence on her side an utter impossibility. There are natures which ever must be silent to other natures, because there is no common language between them. In the same house, at the same board, sharing the same pillow even, are those forever strangers and foreigners whose whole stock of intercourse is limited to a few brief phrases on the commonest material wants of life, and who, as soon as they try to go farther, have no words that are mutually understood.

“Agnes,” said her grandmother, “I shall not need you at the stand to-day. There is that new flax to be spun, and you may keep company with your uncle. I’ll warrant me, you’ll be glad enough of that!”

“Certainly I shall,” said Agnes, cheerfully. “Uncle’s comings are my holidays.”

“I will show you somewhat further on my Breviary,” said the monk. “Praised be God, many new ideas sprang up in my mind last night, and seemed to shoot forth in blossoms. Even my dreams have often been made fruitful in this divine work.”

“Many a good thought comes in dreams,” said Elsie; “but, for my part, I work too hard and sleep too sound to get much that way.”

“Well, brother,” said Elsie, after breakfast, “you must look well after Agnes to-day; for there be plenty of wolves go round, hunting these little lambs.”

“Have no fear, sister,” said the monk, tranquilly; “the angels have her in charge. If our eyes were only clear-sighted, we should see that Christ’s little ones are never alone.”

“All that is fine talk, brother; but I never found that the angels attended to any of my affairs, unless I looked after them pretty sharp myself; and as for girls, the dear Lord knows they need a legion apiece to look after them. What with roystering fellows and smooth-tongued gallants, and with silly, empty-headed hussies like that Giulietta, one has much ado to keep the best of them straight. Agnes is one of the best, too,—a well-brought up, pious, obedient girl, and industrious as a bee. Happy is the husband who gets her. I would I knew a man good enough for her.”

This conversation took place while Agnes was in the garden picking oranges and lemons, and filling the basket which her grandmother was to take to the town. The



silver ripple of a hymn that she was singing came through the open door; it was part of a sacred ballad in honor of Saint Agnes:—



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“Bring me no pearls to bind my hair,
No sparkling jewels bring to me!
Dearer by far the blood-red rose
That speaks of Him who died for me.

“Ah! vanish every earthly love,
All earthly dreams forgotten be!
My heart is gone beyond the stars,
To live with Him who died for me.”

“Hear you now, sister,” said the monk, “how the Lord keeps the door of this maiden’s heart? There is no fear of her; and I much doubt, sister, whether you would do well to interfere with the evident call this child hath to devote herself wholly to the Lord.”

“Oh, you talk, brother Antonio, who never had a child in your life, and don’t know how a mother’s heart warms towards her children and her children’s children! The saints, as I said, must be reasonable, and oughtn’t to be putting vocations into the head of an old woman’s only staff and stay; and if they oughtn’t to, why, then, they won’t. Agnes is a pious child, and loves her prayers and hymns; and so she will love her husband, one of these days, as an honest woman should.”

“But you know, sister, that the highest seats in Paradise are reserved for the virgins who follow the Lamb.”

“Maybe so,” said Elsie, stiffly; “but the lower seats are good enough for Agnes and me. For my part, I would rather have a little comfort as I go along, and put up with less in Paradise, (may our dear Lady bring us safely there!) say I.”

So saying, Elsie raised the large, square basket of golden fruit to her head, and turned her stately figure towards the scene of her daily labors.

The monk seated himself on the garden-wall, with his portfolio by his side, and seemed busily sketching and retouching some of his ideas. Agnes wound some silvery-white flax round her distaff, and seated herself near him under an orange-tree; and while her small fingers were twisting the flax, her large, thoughtful eyes were wandering off on the deep blue sea, pondering over and over the strange events of the day before, and the dreams of the night.

“Dear child,” said the monk, “have you thought more of what I said to you?”

A deep blush suffused her cheek as she answered,—

“Yes, uncle; and I had a strange dream last night.”



“A dream, my little heart? Come, then, and tell it to its uncle. Dreams are the hushing of the bodily senses, that the eyes of the Spirit may open.”

“Well, then,” said Agnes, “I dreamed that I sat pondering as I did last evening in the moonlight, and that an angel came forth from the trees”—

“Indeed!” said the monk, looking up with interest; “what form had he?”

“He was a young man, in dazzling white raiment, and his eyes were deep as eternity, and over his forehead was a silver flame, and he bore a lily-stalk in his hand, which was like what you told of, with light in itself.”

“That must have been the holy Gabriel,” said the monk, “the angel that came to our blessed Mother. Did he say aught?”



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“Yes, he touched my forehead with the lily, and a sort of cool rest and peace went all through me, and he said, ‘The Lord hath sealed thee for his own!’”

“Even so,” said the monk, looking up, and crossing himself devoutly, “by this token I know that my prayers are answered.”

“But, dear uncle,” said Agnes, hesitating and blushing painfully, “there was one singular thing about my dream,—this holy angel had yet a strange likeness to the young man that came here last night, so that I could not but marvel at it.”

“It may be that the holy angel took on him in part this likeness to show how glorious a redeemed soul might become, that you might be encouraged to pray. The holy Saint Monica thus saw the blessed Augustine standing clothed in white among the angels while he was yet a worldling and unbeliever, and thereby received the grace to continue her prayers for thirty years, till she saw him a holy bishop. This is a sure sign that this young man, whoever he may be, shall attain Paradise through your prayers. Tell me, dear little heart, is this the first angel thou hast seen?”

“I never dreamed of them before. I have dreamed of our Lady, and Saint Agnes, and Saint Catharine of Siena; and sometimes it seemed that they sat a long time by my bed, and sometimes it seemed that they took me with them away to some beautiful place where the air was full of music, and sometimes they filled my hands with such lovely flowers that when I waked I was ready to weep that they could no more be found. Why, dear uncle, do *you* see angels often?”

“Not often, dear child, but sometimes a little glimpse. But you should see the pictures of our holy Father Angelico, to whom the angels appeared constantly; for so blessed was the life he lived, that it was more in heaven than on earth. He would never cumber his mind with the things of this world, and would not paint for money, nor for prince’s favor; nor would he take places of power and trust in the Church, or else, so great was his piety, they had made a bishop of him; but he kept ever aloof and walked in the shade. He used to say, ‘They that would do Christ’s work must walk with Christ.’ His pictures of angels are indeed wonderful, and their robes are of all dazzling colors, like the rainbow. It is most surely believed among us that he painted to show forth what he saw in heavenly visions.”

“Ah!” said Agnes, “how I wish I could see some of these things!”

“You may well say so, dear child. There is one picture of Paradise painted on gold, and there you may see our Lord in the midst of the heavens crowning his blessed Mother, and all the saints and angels surrounding; and the colors are so bright that they seem like the sunset clouds,—golden, and rosy, and purple, and amethystine, and green like the new, tender leaves of spring: for, you see, the angels are the Lord’s flowers and birds that shine and sing to gladden his Paradise, and there



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is nothing bright on earth that is comparable to them,—so said the blessed Angelico, who saw them. And what seems worthy of note about them is their marvellous lightness, that they seem to float as naturally as the clouds do, and their garments have a divine grace of motion like vapor that curls and wavers in the sun. Their faces, too, are most wonderful; for they seem so full of purity and majesty, and withal humble, with an inexpressible sweetness; for, beyond all others, it was given to the holy Angelico to paint the immortal beauty of the soul.”

“It must be a great blessing and favor for you, dear uncle, to see all these things,” said Agnes; “I am never tired of hearing you tell of them.”

“There is one little picture,” said the monk, “wherein he hath painted the death of our dear Lady; and surely no mortal could ever conceive anything like her sweet dying face, so faint and weak and tender that each man sees his own mother dying there, yet so holy that one feels that it can be no other than the mother of our Lord; and around her stand the disciples mourning; but above is our blessed Lord himself, who receives the parting spirit, as a tender new-born babe, into his bosom: for so the holy painters represented the death of saints, as of a birth in which each soul became a little child of heaven.”

“How great grace must come from such pictures!” said Agnes. “It seems to me that the making of such holy things is one of the most blessed of good works.—Dear uncle,” she said, after a pause, “they say that this deep gorge is haunted by evil spirits, who often waylay and bewilder the unwary, especially in the hours of darkness.”

“I should not wonder in the least,” said the monk; “for you must know, child, that our beautiful Italy was of old so completely given up and gone over to idolatry that even her very soil casts up fragments of temples and stones that have been polluted. Especially around these shores there is scarcely a spot that hath not been violated in all times by vilenesses and impurities such as the Apostle saith it is a shame even to speak of. These very waters cast up marbles and fragments of colored mosaics from the halls which were polluted with devil-worship and abominable revellings; so that, as the Gospel saith that the evil spirits cast out by Christ walk through waste places, so do they cling to these fragments of their old estate.”

“Well, uncle, I have longed to consecrate the gorge to Christ by having a shrine there, where I might keep a lamp burning.”

“It is a most pious thought, child.”

“And so, dear uncle, I thought that you would undertake the work. There is one Pietro hereabout who is a skilful worker in stone, and was a playfellow of mine,—though of late



grandmamma has forbidden me to talk with him,—and I think he would execute it under your direction.”

“Indeed, my little heart, it shall be done,” said the monk, cheerfully; “and I will engage to paint a fair picture of our Lady to be within; and I think it would be a good thought to have a pinnacle on the outside, where should stand a statue of Saint Michael with his sword. Saint Michael is a brave and wonderful angel, and all the devils and vile spirits are afraid of him. I will set about the devices to-day.”



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And cheerily the good monk began to intone a verse of an old hymn,—

“Sub tutela Michaelis,
Pax in terra, pax in coelis.”[B]

[Footnote B:

“Neath Saint Michael’s watch is given
Peace on earth and peace in heaven.”]

In such talk and work the day passed away to Agnes; but we will not say that she did not often fall into deep musings on the mysterious visitor of the night before. Often while the good monk was busy at his drawing, the distaff would droop over her knee and her large dark eyes become intently fixed on the ground, as if she were pondering some absorbing subject.

Little could her literal, hard-working grandmother, or her artistic, simple-minded uncle, or the dreamy Mother Theresa, or her austere confessor, know of the strange forcing process which they were all together uniting to carry on in the mind of this sensitive young girl. Absolutely secluded by her grandmother’s watchful care from any actual knowledge and experience of real life, she had no practical tests by which to correct the dreams of that inner world in which she delighted to live and move, and which was peopled with martyrs, saints, and angels, whose deeds were possible or probable only in the most exalted regions of devout poetry.

So she gave her heart at once and without reserve to an enthusiastic desire for the salvation of the stranger, whom Heaven, she believed, had directed to seek her intercessions; and when the spindle drooped from her hand, and her eyes became fixed on vacancy, she found herself wondering who he might really be, and longing to know yet a little more of him.

Towards the latter part of the afternoon, a hasty messenger came to summon her uncle to administer the last rites to a man who had just fallen from a building, and who, it was feared, might breathe his last unshriven.

“Dear daughter, I must hasten and carry Christ to this poor sinner,” said the monk, hastily putting all his sketches and pencils into her lap. “Have a care of these till I return,—that is my good little one!”

Agnes carefully arranged the sketches and put them into the book, and then, kneeling before the shrine, began prayers for the soul of the dying man.

She prayed long and fervently, and so absorbed did she become, that she neither saw nor heard anything that passed around her.



It was, therefore, with a start of surprise, as she rose from prayer, that she saw the cavalier sitting on one end of the marble sarcophagus, with an air so composed and melancholy that he might have been taken for one of the marble knights that sometimes are found on tombs.

“You are surprised to see me, dear Agnes,” he said, with a calm, slow utterance, like a man who has assumed a position he means fully to justify; “but I have watched day and night, ever since I saw you, to find one moment to speak with you alone.”

“My Lord,” said Agnes, “I humbly wait your pleasure. Anything that a poor maiden may rightly do I will endeavor, in all loving duty.”



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“Whom do you take me for, Agnes, that you speak thus?” said the cavalier, smiling sadly.

“Are you not the brother of our gracious King?” said Agnes.

“No, dear maiden; and if the kind promise you lately made me is founded on this mistake, it may be retracted.”

“No, my Lord,” said Agnes,—“though I now know not who you are, yet if in any strait or need you seek such poor prayers as mine, God forbid I should refuse them!”

“I am, indeed, in strait and need, Agnes; the sun does not shine on a more desolate man than I am,—one more utterly alone in the world; there is no one left to love me. Agnes, can you not love me a little?—let it be ever so little, it shall content me.”

It was the first time that words of this purport had ever been addressed to Agnes; but they were said so simply, so sadly, so tenderly, that they somehow seemed to her the most natural and proper things in the world to be said; and this poor handsome knight, who looked so earnest and sorrowful,—how could she help answering, “Yes”? From her cradle she had always loved everybody and every thing, and why should an exception be made in behalf of a very handsome, very strong, yet very gentle and submissive human being, who came and knocked so humbly at the door of her heart? Neither Mary nor the saints had taught her to be hard-hearted.

“Yes, my Lord,” she said, “you may believe that I will love and pray for you; but now you must leave me, and not come here any more,—because grandmamma would not be willing that I should talk with you, and it would be wrong to disobey her, she is so very good to me.”

“But, dear Agnes,” began the cavalier, approaching her, “I have many things to say to you,—I have much to tell you.”

“But I know grandmamma would not be willing,” said Agnes; “indeed, you must not come here any more.”

“Well, then,” said the stranger, “at least you will meet me at some time,—tell me only where.”

“I cannot,—indeed, I cannot,” said Agnes, distressed and embarrassed. “Even now, if grandmamma knew you were here, she would be so angry.”

“But how can you pray for me, when you know nothing of me?”

“The dear Lord knoweth you,” said Agnes; “and when I speak of you, He will know what you need.”



“Ah, dear child, how fervent is your faith! Alas for me, I have lost the power of prayer! I have lost the believing heart my mother gave me,—my dear mother who is now in heaven.”

“Ah, how can that be?” said Agnes. “Who could lose faith in so dear a Lord as ours, and so loving a mother?”

“Agnes, dear little lamb, you know nothing of the world; and I should be most wicked to disturb your lovely peace of soul with any sinful doubts. Oh, Agnes, Agnes, I am most miserable, most unworthy!”

“Dear Sir, should you not cleanse your soul by the holy sacrament of confession, and receive the living Christ within you? For He says, ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’”



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“Oh, Agnes, sacrament and prayer are not for such as me! It is only through your pure prayers I can hope for grace.”

“Dear Sir, I have an uncle, a most holy man, and gentle as a lamb. He is of the convent San Marco in Florence, where there is a most holy prophet risen up.”

“Savonarola?” said the cavalier, with flashing eyes.

“Yes, that is he. You should hear my uncle talk of him, and how blessed his preaching has been to many souls. Dear Sir, come some time to my uncle.”

At this moment the sound of Elsie’s voice was heard ascending the path to the gorge outside, talking with Father Antonio, who was returning.

Both started, and Agnes looked alarmed.

“Fear nothing, sweet lamb,” said the cavalier; “I am gone.”

He kneeled and kissed the hand of Agnes, and disappeared at one bound over the parapet on the side opposite that which they were approaching.

Agnes hastily composed herself, struggling with that half-guilty feeling which is apt to weigh on a conscientious nature that has been unwittingly drawn to act a part which would be disapproved by those whose good opinion it habitually seeks. The interview had but the more increased her curiosity to know the history of this handsome stranger. Who, then, could he be? What were his troubles? She wished the interview could have been long enough to satisfy her mind on these points. From the richness of his dress, from his air and manner, from the poetry and the jewel that accompanied it, she felt satisfied, that, if not what she supposed, he was at least nobly born, and had shone in some splendid sphere whose habits and ways were far beyond her simple experiences. She felt towards him somewhat of the awe which a person of her condition in life naturally felt toward that brilliant aristocracy which in those days assumed the state of princes, and the members of which were supposed to look down on common mortals from as great a height as the stars regard the humblest flowers of the field.

“How strange,” she thought, “that he should think so much of me! What can he see in me? And how can it be that a great lord, who speaks so gently and is so reverential to a poor girl, and asks prayers so humbly, can be so wicked and unbelieving as he says he is? Dear God, it cannot be that he is an unbeliever; the great Enemy has been permitted to try him, to suggest doubts to him, as he has to holy saints before now. How beautifully he spoke about his mother!—tears glittered in his eyes then,—ah, there must be grace there after all!”

“Well, my little heart,” said Elsie, interrupting her reveries, “have you had a pleasant day?”



“Delightful, grandmamma,” said Agnes, blushing deeply with consciousness.

“Well,” said Elsie, with satisfaction, “one thing I know,—I’ve frightened off that old hawk of a cavalier with his hooked nose. I haven’t seen so much as the tip of his shoe-tie to-day. Yesterday he made himself very busy around our stall; but I made him understand that you never would come there again till the coast was clear.”



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The monk was busily retouching the sketch of the Virgin of the Annunciation. He looked up, and saw Agnes standing gazing towards the setting sun, the pale olive of her cheek deepening into a crimson flush. His head was too full of his own work to give much heed to the conversation that had passed, but, looking at the glowing face, he said to himself,—

“Truly, sometimes she might pass for the rose of Sharon as well as the lily of the valley!”

The moon that evening rose an hour later than the night before, yet found Agnes still on her knees before the sacred shrine, while Elsie, tired, grumbled at the draft on her sleeping-time.

“Enough is as good as a feast,” she remarked between her teeth; still she had, after all, too much secret reverence for her grandchild’s piety openly to interrupt her. But in those days, as now, there were the material and the spiritual, the souls who looked only on things that could be seen, touched, and tasted, and souls who looked on the things that were invisible.

Agnes was pouring out her soul in that kind of yearning, passionate prayer possible to intensely sympathetic people, in which the interests and wants of another seem to annihilate for a time personal consciousness, and make the whole of one’s being seem to dissolve in an intense solicitude for something beyond one’s self. In such hours prayer ceases to be an act of the will, and resembles more some overpowering influence which floods the soul from without, bearing all its faculties away on its resistless tide.

Brought up from infancy to feel herself in a constant circle of invisible spiritual agencies, Agnes received this wave of intense feeling as an impulse inspired and breathed into her by some celestial spirit, that thus she should be made an interceding medium for a soul in some unknown strait or peril. For her faith taught her to believe in an infinite struggle of intercession in which all the Church Visible and Invisible were together engaged, and which bound them in living bonds of sympathy to an interceding Redeemer, so that there was no want or woe of human life that had not somewhere its sympathetic heart, and its never-ceasing prayer before the throne of Eternal Love. Whatever may be thought of the actual truth of this belief, it certainly was far more consoling than that intense individualism of modern philosophy which places every soul alone in its life-battle,—scarce even giving it a God to lean upon.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONFSSIONAL.



The reader, if a person of any common knowledge of human nature, will easily see the direction in which a young, inexperienced, and impressible girl would naturally be tending under all the influences which we perceive to have come upon her.

But in the religious faith which Agnes professed there was a modifying force, whose power both for good and evil can scarcely be estimated.



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The simple Apostolic direction, "Confess your faults one to another," and the very natural need of personal pastoral guidance and assistance to a soul in its heavenward journey, had in common with many other religious ideas been forced by the volcanic fervor of the Italian nature into a certain exaggerated proposition. Instead of brotherly confession one to another, or the pastoral sympathy of a fatherly elder, the religious mind of the day was instructed in an awful mysterious sacrament of confession, which gave to some human being a divine right to unlock the most secret chambers of the soul, to scrutinize and direct its most veiled and intimate thoughts, and, standing in God's stead, to direct the current of its most sensitive and most mysterious emotions.

Every young aspirant for perfection in the religious life had to commence by an unreserved surrender of the whole being in blind faith at the feet of some such spiritual director, all whose questions must be answered, and all whose injunctions obeyed, as from God himself. Thenceforward was to be no soul-privacy, no retirement, nothing too sacred to be expressed, too delicate to be handled and analyzed. In reading the lives of those ethereally made and moulded women who have come down to our day canonized as saints in the Roman Catholic communion, one too frequently gets the impression of most regal natures, gifted with all the most divine elements of humanity, but subjected to a constant unnatural pressure from the ceaseless scrutiny and ungenial pertinacity of some inferior and uncomprehending person invested with the authority of a Spiritual Director.

That there are advantages attending this species of intimate direction, when wisely and skilfully managed, cannot be doubted. Grovelling and imperfect natures have often thus been lifted up and carried in the arms of superior wisdom and purity. The confession administered by a Fenelon or a Francis de Sales was doubtless a beautiful and most invigorating ordinance; but the difficulty in its actual working is the rarity of such superior natures,—the fact, that the most ignorant and most incapable may be invested with precisely the same authority as the most intelligent and skilful.

He to whom the faith of Agnes obliged her to lay open her whole soul, who had a right with probing-knife and lancet to dissect out all the finest nerves and fibres of her womanly nature, was a man who had been through all the wild and desolating experiences incident to a dissipated and irregular life in those turbulent days.

It is true, that he was now with most stringent and earnest solemnity striving to bring every thought and passion into captivity to the spirit of his sacred vows; but still, when a man has once lost that unconscious soul-purity which exists in a mind unscathed by the fires of passion, no after-tears can weep it back again. No penance, no prayer, no anguish of remorse can give back the simplicity of a soul that has never been stained.



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If Padre Francesco had not failed to make those inquiries into the character of Agnes's mysterious lover which he assumed to be necessary as a matter of pastoral faithfulness.

It was not difficult for one possessing the secrets of the confessional to learn the real character of any person in the neighborhood, and it was with a kind of bitter satisfaction which rather surprised himself that the father learned enough ill of the cavalier to justify his using every possible measure to prevent his forming any acquaintance with Agnes. He was captain of a band of brigands, and, of course, in array against the State; he was excommunicated, and, of course, an enemy of the Church. What but the vilest designs could be attributed to such a man? Was he not a wolf prowling round the green, secluded pastures where as yet the Lord's lamb had been folded in unconscious innocence?

Father Francesco, when he next met Agnes at the confessional, put such questions as drew from her the whole account of all that had passed between her and the stranger. The recital on Agnes's part was perfectly translucent and pure, for she had said no word and had had no thought that brought the slightest stain upon her soul. Love and prayer had been the prevailing habit of her life, and in promising to love and pray she had had no worldly or earthly thought. The language of gallantry, or even of sincere passion, had never reached her ear; but it had always been as natural to her to love every human being as for a plant with tendrils to throw them round the next plant, and therefore she entertained the gentle guest who had lately found room in her heart without a question or a scruple.

As Agnes related her childlike story of unconscious faith and love, her listener felt himself strangely and bitterly agitated. It was a vision of ignorant purity and unconsciousness rising before him, airy and glowing as a child's soap-bubble, which one touch might annihilate; but he felt a strange remorseful tenderness, a yearning admiration, at its unsubstantial purity. There is something pleading and pitiful in the simplicity of perfect ignorance,—a rare and delicate beauty in its freshness, like the morning-glory cup, which, once withered by the heat, no second morning can restore. Agnes had imparted to her confessor, by a mysterious sympathy, something like the morning freshness of her own soul; she had redeemed the idea of womanhood from gross associations, and set before him a fair ideal of all that female tenderness and purity may teach to man. Her prayers—well he believed in them,—but he set his teeth with a strange spasm of inward passion,—when he thought of her prayers and love being given to another. He tried to persuade himself that this was only the fervor of pastoral zeal against a vile robber who had seized the fairest lamb of the sheepfold; but there was an intensely bitter, miserable feeling connected with it, that scorched and burned his higher aspirations like a stream of lava running among fresh leaves and flowers.



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The conflict of his soul communicated a severity of earnestness to his voice and manner which made Agnes tremble, as he put one probing question after another, designed to awaken some consciousness of sin in her soul. Still, though troubled and distressed by his apparent disapprobation, her answers came always clear, honest, unfaltering, like those of one who *could* not form an idea of evil.

When the confession was over, he came out of his recess to speak with Agnes a few words face to face. His eyes had a wild and haggard earnestness, and a vivid hectic flush on either cheek told how extreme was his emotion. Agnes lifted her eyes to his with an innocent wondering trouble and an appealing confidence that for a moment wholly unnerved him. He felt a wild impulse to clasp her in his arms; and for a moment it seemed to him he would sacrifice heaven and brave hell, if he could for one moment hold her to his heart, and say that he loved her,—her, the purest, fairest, sweetest revelation of God's love that had ever shone on his soul,—her, the only star, the only flower, the only dew-drop of a burning, barren, weary life. It seemed to him that it was not the longing, gross passion, but the outcry of his whole nature for something noble, sweet, and divine.

But he turned suddenly away with a sort of groan, and, folding his robe over his face, seemed engaged in earnest prayer. Agnes looked at him awe-struck and breathless.

"Oh, my father!" she faltered, "what have I done?"

"Nothing, my poor child," said the father, suddenly turning toward her with recovered calmness and dignity; "but I behold in thee a fair lamb whom the roaring lion is seeking to devour. Know, my daughter, that I have made inquiries concerning this man of whom you speak, and find that he is an outlaw and a robber and a heretic,—a vile wretch stained by crimes that have justly drawn down upon him the sentence of excommunication from our Holy Father the Pope."

Agnes grew deadly pale at this announcement.

"Can it be possible?" she gasped. "Alas! what dreadful temptations have driven him to such sins?"

"Daughter, beware how you think too lightly of them, or suffer his good looks and flattering words to blind you to their horror. You must from your heart detest him as a vile enemy."

"Must I, my father?"

"Indeed you must."



“But if the dear Lord loved us and died for us when we were his enemies, may we not pity and pray for unbelievers? Oh, say, my dear father, is it not allowed to us to pray for all sinners, even the vilest?”

“I do not say that you may not, my daughter,” said the monk, too conscientious to resist the force of this direct appeal; “but, daughter,” he added, with an energy that alarmed Agnes, “you must watch your heart; you must not suffer your interest to become a worldly love: remember that you are chosen to be the espoused of Christ alone.”



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While the monk was speaking thus, Agnes fixed on him her eyes with an innocent mixture of surprise and perplexity,—which gradually deepened into a strong gravity of gaze, as if she were looking through him, through all visible things into some far-off depth of mysterious knowledge.

“My Lord will keep me,” she said; “my soul is safe in His heart as a little bird in its nest; but while I love Him, I cannot help loving everybody whom He loves, even His enemies: and, father, my heart prays within me for this poor sinner, whether I will or no; something within me continually intercedes for him.”

“Oh, Agnes! Agnes! blessed child, pray for me also,” said the monk, with a sudden burst of emotion which perfectly confounded his disciple. He hid his face with his hands.

“My blessed father!” said Agnes, “how could I deem that holiness like yours had any need of my prayers?”

“Child! child! you know nothing of me. I am a miserable sinner, tempted of devils, in danger of damnation.”

Agnes stood appalled at this sudden burst, so different from the rigid and restrained severity of tone in which the greater part of the conversation had been conducted. She stood silent and troubled; while he, whom she had always regarded with such awful veneration, seemed shaken by some internal whirlwind of emotion whose nature she could not comprehend.

At length Father Francesco raised his head, and recovered his wonted calm severity of expression.

“My daughter,” he said, “little do the innocent lambs of the flock know of the dangers and conflicts through which the shepherds must pass who keep the Lord’s fold. We have the labors of angels laid upon us, and we are but men. Often we stumble, often we faint, and Satan takes advantage of our weakness. I cannot confer with you now as I would; but, my child, listen to my directions. Shun this young man; let nothing ever lead you to listen to another word from him; you must not even look at him, should you meet, but turn away your head and repeat a prayer. I do not forbid you to practise the holy work of intercession for his soul, but it must be on these conditions.

“My father,” said Agnes, “you may rely on my obedience”; and, kneeling, she kissed his hand.

He drew it suddenly away, with a gesture of pain and displeasure.

“Pardon a sinful child this liberty,” said Agnes.



“You know not what you do,” said the father, hastily. “Go, my daughter,—go, at once; I will confer with you some other time”; and hastily raising his hand in an attitude of benediction, he turned and went into the confessional.



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“Wretch! hypocrite! whited sepulchre!” he said to himself,—“to warn this innocent child against a sin that is all the while burning in my own bosom! Yes, I do love her,—I do! I, that warn her against earthly love, I would plunge into hell itself to win hers! And yet, when I know that the care of her soul is only a temptation and a snare to me, I cannot, will not give her up! No, I cannot!—no, I will not! Why should I *not* love her? Is she not pure as Mary herself? Ah, blessed is he whom such a woman leads! And I—I—have condemned myself to the society of swinish, ignorant, stupid monks,—I must know no such divine souls, no such sweet communion! Help me, blessed Mary!—help a miserable sinner!”

Agnes left the confessional perplexed and sorrowful. The pale, proud, serious face of the cavalier seemed to look at her imploringly, and she thought of him now with the pathetic interest we give to something noble and great exposed to some fatal danger. “Could the sacrifice of my whole life,” she thought, “rescue this noble soul from perdition, then I shall not have lived in vain. I am a poor little girl; nobody knows whether I live or die. He is a strong and powerful man, and many must stand or fall with him. Blessed be the Lord that gives to his lowly ones a power to work in secret places! How blessed should I be to meet him in Paradise, all splendid as I saw him in my dream! Oh, that would be worth living for,—worth dying for!”

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THE AQUARIUM.

The sumptuous abode of Licinius Crassus echoes with his sighs and groans. His children and slaves respect his profound sorrow, and leave him with intelligent affection to solitude,—that friend of great grief, so grateful to the afflicted soul, because tears can flow unwitnessed. Alas! the favorite sea-eel of Crassus is dead, and it is uncertain whether Crassus can survive it!

This sensitive Roman caused his beloved fish to be buried with great magnificence: he raised a monument to its memory, and never ceased to mourn for it. So say Macrobius and Aelian.

This man, we are told, who displayed so little tenderness towards his servants, had an extraordinary weakness concerning his fine sea-eels. He passed his life beside the superb fish-pond, where he lovingly fattened them from his own hand. Nor was his fondness for pisciculture exceptional in his times. The fish-pond, to raise and breed the finest varieties of fish, was as necessary an adjunct to a complete establishment as a barn-yard or hen-coop to a modern farmer or rural gentleman. Wherever there was a well-appointed Roman villa, it contained a *piscina*; while many gardens near the sea could boast also a *vivarium*, which, in this connection, means an oyster-bed.



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Fish-ponds, of course, varied with the wealth, the ingenuity, and the taste of their owners. Many were of vast size and of heterogeneous contents. The costly *Muraena*, the carp, the turbot, and many other varieties, sported at will in the great inclosures prepared for them. The greater part of the Roman emperors were very fond of sea-eels. The greedy Vitellius, growing tired of this dish, would at last, as Suetonius assures us, eat only the soft roe; and numerous vessels ploughed the seas in order to obtain it for him. The family of Licinius took their surname of *Muraena* from these fish, in order thus to perpetuate their silly affection for them. The love of fish became a real mania, and the *Murcena Helena* was worshipped.

Hortensius, who possessed three splendid country-seats, constructed in the grounds of his villa at Bauli a fish-tank so massive that it has endured to the present day, and so vast as to gain for it even then the name of *Piscina Mircihilis*. It is a subterraneous edifice, vaulted, and divided by four rows of arcades and numerous columns,—some ten feet deep, and of very great extent. Here the largest fishes could be fattened at will; and even the mighty sturgeon, prince of good-cheer, might find ample accommodations.

Lucullus, that most ostentatious of patricians, and autocrat of *bons-vivants*, had a mountain cut through in the neighborhood of Naples, so as to open a canal, and bring up the sea and its fishes to the centre of the gardens of his sumptuous villa. So Cicero well names him one of the Tritons of fish-pools. His country-seat of Pausilypum resembled a village rather than a villa, and, if of less extent, was more magnificent in luxury than the gigantic villa of Hadrian, near Tivoli. Great masses of stone-work are still visible, glimmering under the blue water, where the marble walls repelled the waves, and ran out in long arcades and corridors far into the sea. Inlets and creeks, which wear even now an artificial air, mark the site of *piscinae* and refreshing lakes. Here were courts, baths, porticoes, and terraces, in the *villa urbana*, or residence of the lord, —the *villa rustica* for the steward and slaves,—the *gallinarium* for hens,—the *apiarium* for bees,—the *suile* for swine,—the *villa fructuaria*, including the buildings for storing corn, wine, oil, and fruits,—the *horius*, or garden,—and the park, containing the fish-pond and the *vivarium*. Statues, groves, and fountains, pleasure-boats, baths, jesters, and even a small theatre, served to vary the amusements of the lovely grounds and of the tempting sea.



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But it was not to be supposed that men satiated with the brutal shows of the amphitheatre, even if enervated by their frequentation of the Suburra, could, on leaving the city, be always content with simple pleasures, rural occupations, or pleasure-sails. Habit demanded something more exciting; and the ready tragedy of a fish-pond filled with ravenous eels fed upon human flesh furnished the needed excitement. For men *blase* with the spectacles of lions and tigers lacerating the *bestiarii*. It was much more exciting to witness a swarm of sea-eels tearing to pieces an awkward or rebellious slave. Vedius Pollio, a Roman knight of the highest distinction, could find nothing better to do for his dear Muraenae than to throw them slaves alive; and he never failed to have sea-eels served to him after their odious repast, says Tertullian. It is true, these wretched creatures generally deserved this terrible punishment; for instance, Seneca speaks of one who had the awkwardness to break a crystal vase while waiting at supper on the irascible Pollio.

Pisciculture was carried so far that fish-ponds were constructed on the roofs of houses. More practical persons conducted a stream of river-water through their dining-rooms, so that the fish swam under the table, and it “was only necessary to stoop and pick them out the moment before eating them; and as they were often cooked on the table, their perfect freshness was thus insured. Martial (Lib. X., Epigram. XXX., vv. 16-25) alludes to this custom, as well as to the culture and taming of fish in the *piscina*.

“Nec seta largo quaerit in mari praedam,
Sed e cubiculo lectuloque jactatam
Spectatus alte lineam trahit piscis.
Si quando Nereus sentit Aeoli regnum,
Ridet procellas tula de suo mensa.
Piscina rhombum pascit et lupos vernas,
Nomenclator mugilem citat notum
Et adesse jussi prodeunt senes nulli.”

It having been remarked that the red mullet passed through many changes of color in dying, like the dolphin, fashion decreed that it should die upon the table. Served alive, inclosed in a glass vessel, it was cooked in the presence of the attentive guests, by a slow fire, in order that they might gloat upon its sufferings and expiring hues, before satisfying their appetites with its flesh.

It will not surprise us to learn that the eminent *gourmand* Apicius offered a prize to the inventor of a new sauce made of mullets' livers.

But we may remark, that fish, like all other natural objects, were studied by the ancients only to pet or to eat. All their views of Nature were essentially selfish; none were disinterested, reverential, deductive, or scientific. Nature ministered only to their appetites, in her various kinds of food,—to their service, in her beasts of burden,—or to

their childish or ferocious amusement, with talking birds, as the starling, with pet fish, or with pugnacious



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wild beasts. There was no higher thought. The Greeks, though fond of flowers, and employing them for a multitude of adornments and festive occasions entirely unequalled now, yet did not advance to their botanical study or classification. The Roman, if enamored of the fine arts, could see no Art in Nature. There was no experiment, no discovery, and but little observation. The whole science of Natural History, which has assumed such magnitude and influence in our times, was then almost entirely neglected.

And yet what an opportunity there was for the naturalist, had a single enthusiast arisen? All lands, all climes, and all their natural productions were subservient to the will of the Emperor. The orb of the earth was searched for the roe of eels or the fins of mullets to gratify Caesar. And the whole world might have been explored, and specimens deposited in one gigantic museum in the Eternal City, at the nod of a single individual. But the observer, the lover of Nature, was wanting; and the whole world was ransacked merely to consign its living tenants to the *vivaria*, and thence to the fatal arena of the amphitheatre. Yet even here the naturalist might have pursued his studies on individuals, and even whole species, both living and dead, without quitting Rome. The animal kingdom lay tributary at his feet, but served only to satiate his appetite or his passions, and not to enrich his mind.

So, again, Rome's armies traversed the globe, and her legions were often explorers of hitherto unknown regions. But no men of science, no corps of *savans* was attached to her cohorts, to march in the footsteps of conquest and gather the fruits of victory to enrich the schools. Provinces were devastated, great cities plundered, nations made captive, and all the masterpieces of Art borne off to adorn Rome. But Nature was never rifled of her secrets; nor was discovery carried beyond the most material things. The military spirit stifled natural science.

There were then, to be sure, no tendencies of thought to anything but war, pleasure, literature, or art. There was comparatively no knowledge of the physical sciences, whose culture Mr. Buckle has shown to have exerted so powerful an influence on civilization. The convex lens—as since developed into the microscope, the giver of a new world to man—was known to Archimedes only as an instrument to burn the enemy's fleet.

* * * * *

Modern pisciculture in some measure imitates, although, it does not rival the ancient. Many methods have been devised in France and England of breeding and nurturing the salmon, the trout, and other valuable fish, which are annually becoming more scarce in all civilized countries. But all this is on a far different principle from that pursued at

Rome. We follow pisciculture from necessity or economy, because fish of certain kinds are yearly dying out, and to produce a cheap food; but the Romans followed



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it as a luxury, or a childish amusement, alone. And although our aldermen may sigh over a missing Chelonian, as Crassus for his deceased eel, or the first salmon of the season bring a fabulous price in the market, yet the time has long passed when the gratification of appetite is alone thought of in connection with Nature. We know that living creatures are to be studied, as well as eaten; and that the faithful and reverent observation of their idiosyncrasies, lives, and habits is as healthful and pleasing to the mind as the consumption of their flesh is wholesome and grateful to the body. The whole science of Zoology has arisen, with its simple classifications and its vast details. The *vivaria* of the Jardin des Plantes rival those of the Colosseum in magnitude, and excel them in object. Nature is ransacked, explored, and hunted down in every field, only that she may add to the general knowledge. Museums collect and arrange all the types of creative wisdom, from the simple cell to man. Science searches out their extinct species and fossil remains, and tells their age by Geology. The microscope pursues organic matter down into an infinity of smallness, proportionately as far as the telescope traces it upwards in the infinity of illimitable space. Last of all, though not till long after the earth and the air had been seemingly exhausted, the desire of knowledge began to push its way into the arcana of the sea,—that hidden half of Nature, where are to be found those wonders described by Milton at the Creation,—where, in obedience to the Divine command,

“Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas
And lakes and running streams the waters fill, ...
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish, that with their fins and shining scales
Glide under the green wave in sculls that oft
Bank the mid sea: part single or with mate
Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray, or sporting with quick glance
Show to the sun their waved coats dropt with gold,
Or in their pearly shells at ease attend
Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food
In jointed armor watch.”

But no means were at hand to pursue these unknown creatures to their unknown residences, and to observe their manners when at home. Single, withered, and often mutilated specimens of minute fish, mollusks, or radiata, in the museum, alone illustrated the mysteries of the deep sea. Fish, to be sure, could be kept for longer or shorter periods in globes of glass filled with water; but the more delicate creatures inevitably perished soon after their removal from their mysterious abodes. Such a passionate desire to “search Nature and know her secrets” finally originated the idea of the Aquarium.



The term *vivarium* was used among the ancients to signify many things,—from the dens of the wild animals which opened under the Colosseum, to an oyster-bed; and so now it may mean any collection of living creatures. Hence it could convey no distinct idea of a marine collection such as we propose to describe. The term *aqua* was added to express the watery element; but the compound *aqua-vivarium* was too clumsy for frequent employment, and the abbreviated word *aquarium* has come into general use.



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Thus the real Aquarium is a water-garden and a menagerie combined,—and aims to show life beneath the waters, both animal and vegetable, in all the domestic security of its native home, and in all the beauty, harmony, and nice adaptation of Nature herself. It is no sudden discovery, but the growth of a long and patient research by naturalists.

“What happens, when we put half a dozen gold-fish into a globe? The fishes gulp in water and expel it at the gills. As it passes through the gills, whatever free oxygen the water contains is absorbed, and carbonic acid given off in its place; and in course of time, the free oxygen of the water is exhausted, the water becomes stale, and at last poisonous, from excess of carbonic acid. If the water is not changed, the fishes come to the surface and gulp atmospheric air. But though they naturally breathe air (oxygen) as we do, yet they are formed to extract it from the water; and when compelled to take air from the surface, the gills, or lungs, soon get inflamed, and death at last puts an end to their sufferings.

“Now, if a fish-globe be not overcrowded with fishes, we have only to throw in a goodly handful of some water-weed,—such as the *Callitriche*, for instance,—and a new set of chemical operations commences at once, and it becomes unnecessary to change the water. The reason of this is easily explained. Plants absorb oxygen as animals do; but they also absorb carbonic acid, and from the carbonic add thus absorbed they remove the pure carbon, and convert it into vegetable tissue, giving out the free oxygen either to the water or the air, as the case may be. Hence, in a vessel containing water-plants in a state of healthy growth, the plants exhale more oxygen than they absorb, and thus replace that which the fishes require for maintaining healthy respiration. Any one who will observe the plants in an aquarium, when the sun shines through the tank, will see the leaves studded with bright beads, some of them sending up continuous streams of minute bubbles. These beads and bubbles are pure oxygen, which the plants distil from the water itself, in order to obtain its hydrogen, and from carbonic acid, in order to obtain its carbon.”[A]

[Footnote A: The Book of the Aquarium, by Sidney Hibbert.]

Thus the water, if the due proportion of its animal and vegetable tenants be observed, need never be changed. This is the true Aquarium, which aims to imitate the balance of Nature. By this balance the whole organic world is kept living and healthy. For animals are dependent upon the vegetable kingdom not only for all their food, but also for the purification of the air, which they all breathe, either in the atmosphere or in the water. The divine simplicity of this stupendous scheme may well challenge our admiration. Each living thing, animal or plant, uses what the other rejects, and gives back to the air what the other needs. The balance must be perfect, or all life would expire, and vanish from the earth.



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This is the balance which we imitate in the Aquarium. It is the whole law of life, the whole scheme of Nature, the whole equilibrium of our organic world, inclosed in a bottle.

For the rapid evolution of oxygen by plants the action of sunlight is required. That evolution becomes very feeble, or ceases entirely, in the darkness of the night. Some authorities assert even that carbonic acid is given off during the latter period. So, too, they claim that there are two distinct processes carried on by the leaves of plants,—namely, respiration and digestion: that the first is analogous to the same process in animals; and that by it oxygen is absorbed from, and carbonic acid returned to the atmosphere, though to a limited degree: and that digestion consists in *the decomposition of carbonic acid by the green tissues of the leaves under the stimulus of the light, the fixation of solid carbon, and the evolution of pure oxygen*. The theory of distinct respiration has been somewhat doubted by the highest botanical authority of this country; but the theory of digestion is indisputable. And it is no less certain that all forms of vegetation give to the air much more free oxygen than they take from it, and much less carbonic acid, as their carbonaceous composition shows. If fresh leaves are placed in a bell-glass containing air charged with seven or eight per cent. of carbonic acid, and exposed to the light of the sun, it will be found that a large proportion of the carbonic acid will have disappeared, and will be replaced by pure oxygen. But this change will not be effected in the dark, nor by any degree of artificial light. Under water the oxygen evolved from healthy vegetation can be readily collected as it rises, as has been repeatedly proved.

Why carbonic acid is, to a limited degree, given off by the plant in the night, is merely because the vital process, or the fixation of carbon and evolution of oxygen, ceases when the light is withdrawn. The plant is only in a passive state. Ordinary chemical forces resume their sway, and the oxygen of the air combines with the newly deposited carbon to reproduce a little carbonic acid. But this must be placed to the account of decomposing, not of growing vegetation; for by so much as plants grow, they decompose carbonic acid and give its oxygen to the air, or, in other words, purify the air.

It has been found by experiment, that every six pounds of carbon in existing plants has withdrawn twenty-two pounds of carbonic acid gas from the atmosphere, and replaced it with sixteen pounds of oxygen gas, occupying the same bulk. And when we consider the amount of carbon that is contained in the tissues of living, and of extinct vegetation also, in the form of peat and coal, we may have some idea of the vast body of oxygen which the vegetable kingdom has added to the atmosphere.

And it is also to be considered, that this is the only means we know of whereby free oxygen is given to supply the quantity constantly consumed in respiration, combustion, and other vast and endless oxygen-using processes. It follows, therefore, that animals are dependent upon plants for their pure oxygen, as well as for their food. But the vegetable kingdom might exist independently of the animal; since plants may derive enough carbon from the soil, enriched by the decaying members of their own race.



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There is, however, one exception to the law that plants increase the amount of oxygen in the air. During flowering and fruiting, the stores of carbon laid up in the plant are used to support the process, and, combining with the oxygen of the air, both carbonic acid and heat are given off. This has been frequently proved. In large tropical plants, where an immense number of blossoms are crowded together, the temperature has risen twenty to fifty degrees above that of the surrounding air.

As most of the aquatic plants are cryptogamous, or producing by spores, and not by flowers, it seems probable that the evolution of carbonic acid and heat is much less in degree in them, and therefore less in the water than in the air. We may, therefore, venture to lay it down as a general principle, that plants evolve free oxygen in water, when in the sunlight, and remove the carbonic acid added to the water by the respiration of the animals.

But since this is a digestive or nutritive process, it follows that aquatic plants may derive much or all of their food from the water itself, or the carbon in it, in the same manner as the so-called air-plant, which grows without soil, does from the air. It is true, at any rate, that, in the fresh-water aquarium, the river and brook plants need no soil but pebbles; and that the marine plants have no proper root, but are attached by a sort of sucker or foot-stalk to stones and masses of rock. It is very easy to see, then, how the aquarium may be made entirely self-supporting; and that, excepting for the larger carnivorous fish, who exhaust in a longer or shorter period the minute creatures on which they live, no external food is required.

A very simple experiment will prove the theory and practicability of the aquarium. In a glass jar of moderate size was placed a piece of *Ulva latissima*, or Sea-Lettuce, a broad-leaved, green, aquatic plant, and a small fish. The mouth was closed by a ground glass stopper. The jar was exposed to the light daily; the water was never changed; nor was the glass stopper removed, excepting to feed the fish, once or twice a week, with small fragments of meat. At the end of eight months both remained flourishing: the fish was lively and active; and the plant had more than half filled the bottle with fresh green leaves.

Any vessel that will hold water can, of course, be readily converted into an aquarium. But as we desire a clear view of the contents at all times, glass is the best material. And since glass globes refract the light irregularly and magnify and distort whatever is within them, we shall find an advantage in having the sides of the aquarium parallel and the form rectangular. As the weight of the aquarium, when filled with water, is enormous,—far more than we should at first imagine,—it follows that it must be capable of resisting pressure both from above and from within. The floor and stand, the frame and joints must be strong and compact,



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and the walls of plate or thick crown glass. The bottom should be of slate; and if it is designed to attach arches of rock-work inside to the ends, they, too, must be of slate, as cement will not stick to glass. The frame should be iron, zinc, or well-turned wood; the joints closed with white-lead putty; the front and back of glass. There is one objection to having the side which faces the light of transparent glass, and that is that it transmits too much glare of sunlight for the health of the animals. In Nature's aquarium the light enters only from above; and the fish and delicate creatures have always, even then, the shady fronds of aquatic plants or the shelter of the rocks,—as well as the power of seeking greater depths of water, where the light is less,—to protect themselves from too intense a sunshine. It is, therefore, sometimes advisable to have the window side of the aquarium made of glass stained of a green color. It is desirable that all aquarial tanks should have a movable glass cover to protect them from dust, impure gases, and smoke.

When we speak of an aquarium, we mean a vessel holding from eight to thirty gallons of water. Mr. Gosse describes his larger tank as being two feet long by eighteen inches wide and eighteen inches deep, and holding some twenty gallons. Smaller and very pretty tanks may be made fifteen inches long by twelve inches wide and twelve deep. Great varieties in form and elegance may be adapted to various situations.

There are two kinds of aquaria, the fresh- and the salt-water: the one fitted for the plants and animals of ponds and rivers; the other for the less known tenants of the sea. They are best described as the River and the Marine Aquarium, and they differ somewhat from each other. We shall speak first of the fresh-water aquarium.

The tank being prepared, and well-seasoned, by being kept several weeks alternately full and empty, and exposed to the sun and air, so that all paint, oil, varnish, tannin, *etc.*, may be wholly removed, the next thing is to arrange the bottom and to plant it. Some rough fragments of rock, free from iron or other metals that stain the water, may be built into an arch with cement, or piled up in any shape to suit the fancy. The bottom should be composed entirely of shingle or small pebbles, well washed. Common silver sand, washed until the water can be poured through it quite clear, is also suitable.

Mould, or soil adapted to ordinary vegetation, is not necessary to the aquatic plants, and is, moreover, worse than useless; since it necessitates the frequent changing of the water for some time, in order to get rid of the soluble vegetable matter, and promotes the growth of Confervae, and other low forms of vegetation, which are obnoxious.

Aquatic plants of all kinds have been found to root freely and flourish in pebbles alone, if their roots be covered. The plants should be carefully cleared of all dead parts; the roots attached to a small stone, or laid on the bottom and covered with a layer of pebbles and sand.



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The bottom being planted, the water may be introduced through a watering-pot, or poured against the side of the tank, so as to avoid any violent agitation of the bottom. The water should be pure and bright. River-water is best; spring-water will do, but must be softened by the plants for some days before the fishes are put in.

Sunshine is good for the tank at all seasons of the year. The fresh- requires more than the salt-water aquarium. The amount of oxygen given off by the plants, and hence their growth and the sprightliness of the fishes, are very much increased while the sun is shining on them.

In selecting plants for the aquarium some regard is to be paid to the amount of oxygen they will evolve, and to their hardiness, as well as to their beauty. When it is desired to introduce the fishes without waiting long for the plants to get settled and to have given off a good supply of oxygen, there is no plant more useful than the *Callitriche*, or Brook Star-wort. It is necessary to get a good supply, and pick off the green heads, with four or six inches only of stem; wash them clean, and throw them into the tank, without planting. They spread over the surface, forming a rich green ceiling, grow freely, and last for months. They are continually throwing out new roots and shoots, and create abundance of oxygen. Whenever desired, they can be got rid of by simply lifting them out.

The *Vallisneria*, or Tape-Grass, common in all our ponds, is essential to every fresh-water tank. It must be grown as a bottom-plant, and flourishes only when rooted. The *Nitella* is another pleasing variety. The *Ranunculus aquatilis*, or Water-Crowfoot, is to be found in almost every pond in bloom by the middle of May, and continues so into the autumn. It is of the buttercup family, and may be known as a white buttercup with a yellow centre. The floating leaves are fleshy; the lower ones finely cut. It must be very carefully washed, and planted from a good joint, allowing length enough of stem to reach the surface. Some of the blossom-heads may also be sprinkled over the surface, where they will live and bloom all through the summer. The *Hydrocharis*, or Frog's-Bit, and the *Alisma*, or Water-Plantain, are also easily obtained, hardy and useful, as well as pleasing. Many rarer and more showy varieties may be cultivated; we have given only the most common and essential. All the varieties of *Chara* are interesting to the microscopist, as showing the phenomenon of the circulation of the sap, or Cyclosis.

Of the living tenants of the aquarium, those most interesting, as well as of the highest organization, are the fishes. And among fishes, the family of the *Cyprinidae* are the best adapted to our purpose; for we must select those which are both hardy and tamable. *Cyprinus gibelio*, the Prussian Carp, is one of the best. It will survive, even if the water should accidentally become almost exhausted

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of oxygen. It may be taught, also, to feed from the hand. None of the carp are very carnivorous. *Cyprinus auratus*, or the Gold-fish, is one of the most ornamental objects in an aquarium. But the Minnow, *C. phoxinus*, is the jolliest little fish in the tank. He is the life of the collection, and will survive the severest trials of heat and cold. The Chub, a common tenant of our ponds, is also a good subject for domestication. The Tench and Loach are very interesting, but also very delicate. Among the spiny-finned fishes, the Sticklebacks are the prettiest, but so savage that they often occasion much mischief. For a vessel containing twelve gallons the following selection of live stock is among those recommended: Three Gold Carp, three Prussian Carp, two Perch, four large Loach, a dozen Minnows, six Bleak, and two dozen Planorbis. Some varieties of the Water-Beetles, or Water-Spiders, which the fishes do not eat, may also well be added. The Newt, too, is attractive and harmless.

All may go on well, and the water remain clear; but after the tank has been established several weeks, the inner sides of the glass will show a green tinge, which soon increases and interferes with the view. This is owing to the growth of a minute confervoid vegetation, which must be kept down. For this purpose the Snail is the natural remedy, being the ready scavenger of all such nuisances. Snails cling to the sides, and clean away and consume all this vegetable growth. The *Lymnea* is among the most efficient, but unfortunately is destructive, by eating holes in the young fronds of the larger plants, and thus injuring their appearance. To this objection some other varieties of snail are not open. The *Paludina* and *Planorbis* are the only kinds which are trustworthy. The former is a handsome snail, with a bronze-tinted, globular shell; the latter has a spiral form. These will readily reduce the vegetation. And to preserve the crystal clearness of the water, some Mussels may be allowed to burrow in the sand, where they will perform the office of animated filters. They strain off matters held in suspension in the water, by means of their siphons and ciliated gills. With these precautions, a well-balanced tank will long retain all the pristine purity of Nature.

Specimens for the river aquarium may be readily obtained in almost any brook or pool, by means of the hand-net or dredge. It will be astonishing to see the variety of objects brought up by a successful haul. Small fish, newts, tadpoles, mollusks, water-beetles, worms, spiders, and spawn of all kinds will be visible to the naked eye; while the microscope will bring out thousands more of the most beautiful objects.

A very different style of appearance and of objects distinguishes the Salt-water or Marine Aquarium.

As the greater part of the most curious live stock of the salt-water aquarium live upon or near the bottom, so the marine tank should be more shallow, and allow an uninterrupted view from above. Marine creatures are more delicately constituted than fresh-water

ones; and they demand more care, patience, and oversight to render the marine aquarium successful.



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Sea-sand and pebbles, washed clean, form the best bottom for the salt-water aquarium. It must be recollected that many of the marine tenants are burrowers, and require a bottom adapted to their habits. Some rock-work is considered essential to afford a grateful shelter and concealment to such creatures as are timid by nature, and require a spot in which to hide: this is true of many fishes. Branches of coral, bedded in cement, may be introduced, and form beautiful and natural objects, on which plants will climb and droop gracefully.

Sea-water dipped from the open sea, away from the mouths of rivers, is, of course, the best for the marine aquarium. If pure, it will bear transportation and loss of time before being put into the tank. It may, however, not always be possible to get sea-water, particularly for the aquarium remote from the seaboard, and it is therefore fortunate that artificial sea-water will answer every purpose.

The composition of natural sea-water is, in a thousand parts, approximately, as follows: Water, 964 parts; Common Salt, 27; Chloride of Magnesium, 3.6; Chloride of Potassium, 0.7; Sulphate of Magnesia, (Epsom Salts,) 2; Sulphate of Lime, 1.4; Bromide of Magnesium, Carbonate of Lime, *etc.*, .02 to .03 parts. Now the Bromide of Magnesium, and Sulphate and Carbonate of Lime, occur in such small quantities, that they can be safely omitted in making artificial seawater; and besides, river and spring water always contain a considerable proportion of lime. Therefore, according to Mr. Gosse, we may use the following formula: In every hundred parts of the solid ingredients, Common Salt, 81 parts; Epsom Salts, 7 parts; Chloride of Magnesium, 10 parts; Chloride of Potassium, 2 parts; and of Water about 2900 parts, although this must be accurately determined by the specific gravity. The mixture had better be allowed to stand several days before filling the tank; for thus the impurities of the chemicals will settle, and the clear liquor can be decanted off. The specific gravity should then be tested with the hydrometer, and may safely range from 1026 to 1028,—fresh water being 1000. If a quart or two of real sea-water can be obtained, it is a very useful addition to the mixture. It may now be introduced into the tank through a filter. But no living creatures must be introduced until the artificial water has been softened and prepared by the growth of the marine plants in it for several weeks. Thus, too, it will be oxygenated, and ready for the oxygen-using tenants.

It is a singular fact, that water which has been thus prepared, with only four ingredients, will, after being a month or more in the aquarium, acquire the other constituents which are normally present in minute quantities in the natural sea-water. It must derive them from the action of the plants or animals, or both. Bromine may come from sponges, or sea-wrack, perhaps. Thus artificial water eventually rights itself.

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The tank, having been prepared and seasoned with the same precaution used for the river aquarium, and having a clear bottom and a supply of good water, is now ready for planting. Many beautifully colored and delicately fringed Algae and Sea-Wracks will be found on the rocks at low tide, and will sadly tempt the enthusiast to consign their delicate hues to the aquarium. All such temptations must be resisted. Green is the only color well adapted for healthy and oxygenating growth in the new tank. A small selection of the purple or red varieties may perhaps be introduced and successfully cultivated at a later day, but they are very delicate; while the olives and browns are pretty sure to die and corrupt the water. It must be remembered, too, that the Algae are cryptogamous, and bear no visible flowers to delight the eye or fancy. Of all marine plants, the *Ulva latissima*, or Sea-Lettuce, is first and best. It has broad, light-green fronds, and is hardy and a rapid grower, and hence a good giver of oxygen. Next to this in looks and usefulness comes the *Enteromorpha compressa*, a delicate, grass-like Alga. After a while the *Chondrus crispus*, or common Carrageen Moss, may be chosen and added. These ought to be enough for some months, as it is not safe to add too many at once. Then the green weeds *Codium tomentosum* and *Cladophora* may be tried; and, still later, the beautiful *Bryopsis plumosa*. But it is much better to be content with a few Ulvae, and others of that class, to begin with; for a half dozen of these will support quite a variety of animal life.

After a few hardy plants are well set, and thriving for a week or two, and the water is clear and bubbly with oxygen, it will be time to look about for the live stock of the marine aquarium. Fishes, though most attractive, must be put in last; for as they are of the highest vitality, so they require the most oxygen and food, and hence should not be trusted until everything in the tank is well a-going.

The first tenants should be the hardy varieties of the Sea-Anemones, or *Actiniae*,—which are Polyps, of the class Radiata. The *Actinia mesembryanthemum* is the common smooth anemone, abounding on the coast, and often to be found attached to stones on the beach. “When closed,” says Mr. Hibbert, “it has much resemblance to a ripe strawberry, being of a deep chocolate color, dotted with small yellow spots. When expanded, a circle of bright blue beads or tubercles is seen within the central opening; and a number of coral-like fingers or tentacles unfold from the centre, and spread out on all sides.” It remains expanded for many days together, if the water be kept pure; and, having little desire for locomotion, stays, generally, about where it is placed. It is a carnivorous creature, and seeks its food with its ever-searching tentacles, thus drawing in fishes and mollusks, but, most frequently, the minute Infusoria. Like other



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polyps, it may be cut in two, and each part becomes a new creature. It is a very pretty and hardy object in the aquarium. There are many varieties, some of which are very delicate, as the *Actinia anguicomma*, or Snaky-locked Anemone, and the pink and brown *Actinia bellis*, which so resembles a daisy. Others, as the *Actinia parasitica*, are obtainable only by deep-sea dredging; "and, as its name implies, it usually inhabits the shell of some defunct mollusk. And more curious still, in the same shell we usually find a pretty crab, who acts as porter to the anemone. He drags the shell about with him like a palanquin, on which sits enthroned a very bloated, but gayly-dressed potentate, destitute of power to move it for himself." [B]

[Footnote B: Hibbert's *Book of the Aquarium*.]

The *Actinia gemmacea*, or Gemmed Anemone, the *Actinia crassicornis*, and the Plumose Anemone are all beautiful, but tender varieties.

The Anemones require but little care; they do not generally need feeding, though the Daisy and Plumose Anemone greedily take minced mutton, or oyster. But, as a rule, there are enough Infusoria for their subsistence; and it is safer not to feed them, as any fragments not consumed will decay, and contaminate the water.

Next in order of usefulness, hardiness, and adaptability to the new aquarium, come the Mollusks. And of these, Snails and Periwinkles claim our respectful attention, as the most faithful, patient, and necessary scavengers of the confervoid growths, which soon obscure the marine aquarium.

"It is interesting," says Mr. Gosse, "to watch the business-like way in which the Periwinkle feeds. At very regular intervals, the proboscis, a tube with thick fleshy walls, is rapidly turned inside out to a certain extent, until a surface is brought into contact with the glass having a silky lustre; this is the tongue; it is moved with a short sweep, and then the tubular proboscis infolds its walls again, the tongue disappearing, and every filament of Conferva being carried up into the interior, from the little area which had been swept. The next instant, the foot meanwhile having made a small advance, the proboscis unfolds again, the makes another sweep, and again the whole is withdrawn; and this proceeds with great regularity. I can compare the action to nothing so well as to the manner in which the tongue of an ox licks up the grass of the field, or to the action of the mower cutting swath after swath."

Of Crustacea, the Prawns and the smaller kinds of Crabs may be admitted to the aquarium, though but sparingly. They are rude, noisy, quarrelsome, and somewhat destructive,—but, for the same reason, amusing tenants of the tank.



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All are familiar with the mode in which the Soldier or Hermit Crab takes possession of and lives in the shells of Whelks and Snails. Poorly protected behind by Nature, the homeless crab wanders about seeking a lodging. Presently he meets with an empty shell, and, after probing it carefully with his claw to be sure it is not tenanted, he pops into it back foremost in a twinkling, and settles himself in his new house. Often, too, he may be seen balancing the conveniences of the one he is in and of another vacant lodging he has found in his travels; and he even ventures out of his own, and into the other, and back again, before being satisfied as to their respective merits. In all these manoeuvres, as well as in his daily battles with his brethren, he is one of the drollest of creatures.

As we advance in our practice with the aquarium we may venture to introduce more delicate lodgers. Such are the beautiful family of the *Annelidae*: the *Serpula*, in his dirty house; and the *Terebella*, most ancient of masons, who lays the walls of his home in water-proof cement.

The great class of Zooephytes can be introduced, but many varieties of them will be found already within the aquarium, in the company of their more bulky neighbors. These peculiar creatures, or things, form the boundary where the last gleam of animal life is so feeble and flickering as to render it doubtful whether they belong to the animal or vegetable kingdom. Agassiz calls them *Protozoa*,—Primary Existences. Some divide them into two great classes, namely: the *Anthozoa*, or Flower-Life; and the *Polyzoa*, or Many-Life, in which the individuals are associated in numbers. They are mostly inhabitants of the water; all are destitute of joints, nerves, lungs, and proper blood-vessels; but they all possess an *irritable* system, in obedience to which they expand or contract at will. Among the *Anthozoa* are the Anemones; among the *Polyzoa*, are the Madrepores, or Coral-Builders, and many others. Many are microscopic, and belong to the class of animalcules called *Infusoria*.

A very remarkable quality which the *Infusoria* possess—one very useful for the aquarium, and one which would seem to settle their place in the *vegetable* kingdom—is that they *exhale oxygen* like plants. This has been proved by Liebig, who collected several jars of oxygen from tanks containing *Infusoria* only.

A piece of honeycomb coral (*Eschara foliacea*) is easily found, and, when well selected and placed in the aquarium, may continue to grow there by the labors of its living infusorial tenants: they are not unworthy rivals of the Madrepores, or deep-sea coral-builders of warmer latitudes. The walls of its cells are not more than one-thirtieth of an inch in thickness, and each cell has its occupant. So closely are they packed, that in an area of one-eighth of an inch square the orifices of forty-five cells



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can be counted. As these are all double, this would give five thousand seven hundred and sixty cells to the square inch. Now a moderate-sized specimen will afford, with all its convolutions, at least one hundred square inches of wall, which would contain a population of five hundred and seventy-six thousand inhabitants,—a very large city. So says Mr. Gosse. We cannot forbear, with him, from quoting Montgomery's lines on the labors of the coral-worms, which modern science has enabled us to study in our parlors. "Millions on millions thus, from age to age, With simplest skill, and toil unwearable, No moment and no movement unimproved, Laid line on line, on terrace terrace spread, To swell the heightening, brightening, gradual mound, By marvellous structure climbing towards the day. Each wrought alone, yet all together wrought, Unconscious, not unworthy instruments, By which a hand invisible was rearing A new creation in the secret deep.I saw the living pile ascend, The mausoleum of its architects, Still dying upwards as their labors closed; Slime the material, but the slime was turned To adamant by their petrific touch: Frail were their frames, ephemeral their lives, Their masonry imperishable."

The deep-sea soundings taken recently for the Atlantic telegraph have demonstrated the existence of organic life even at the bottom of the ocean. Numerous living Infusoria have been brought to the light of day, from their hidden recesses, by the lead. "Deeper than ever plummet sounded" before these latter days, there exist myriads of minute creatures, and of Algae to furnish their food. It is an unanswered problem, How they can resist the enormous pressure to which they must be there subjected, amounting, not infrequently, to several tons to the square inch. And still another point of interest for us springs from this. It is an inquiry of practical importance to the aquarian naturalist, How far the diminished pressure which they meet with in the tank, on being transferred from their lower homes to the aquarium, may influence their viability. May not some of the numerous deaths in the marine tank be reasonably attributed to this lack of pressure?

What a difference, too, has Nature established, in the natural power to resist pressure, between those creatures which float near the surface and those which haunt the deeper sea! The Jelly-fish can live only near the top of the water, and, floating softly through a gentle medium, is yet crushed by a touch; while the Coral-builder bears the superincumbent weight of worlds on his vaulted cell with perfect impunity.

Another important question is, How far alteration in the amount of light may affect the more delicate creatures. What fishes do without light has been solved by the darkness of the Mammoth Cave, the tenants of whose black pools are eyeless, evidently because there is nothing to see. The more deeply located Infusoria and Mollusks must dwell in an endless twilight; for Humboldt has found, by experiment, that at a depth one hundred and ninety-two feet from the surface the amount of sunlight which can penetrate is equal only to one-half of the light of an ordinary candle one foot distant.



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Thus ever in gloom, yet in a state of constant safety from storms and the agitations of the upper air, the thousand forms of low organic life and cryptogamic vegetation live and thrive in peace and quietness.

“The floor is of sand like the mountain drift,
And the pearl-shells spangle the flinty snow;
From the coral rocks the sea-plants lift
Their boughs, where the tides and billows flow.

* * * * *

“And life in rare and beautiful forms
Is sporting amid those bowers of stone,
And is safe, when the wrathful spirit of storms
Has made the top of the waves his own.”[C]

[Footnote C: Percival.]

Upon the bottom, at various depths, lies that brilliant Radiate—type of his class—the Star-fish. These are quiet and harmless creatures, and favorites in the aquarium, from the pretty contrast they make with marine plants and other objects.

The perfect transparency, elegant form, and graceful navigation of the *Medusae*, or Jelly-fishes, render them much admired in their native haunts, and prized for the aquarium. But they are very delicate. How beautiful and remarkable are these headless *Discophori*, as they float, and propel themselves with involutions of their disks and gently trailing tentacles, and the central peduncle hanging far below, like the clapper of a transparent bell! And yet these wonders are but so much sea-water, inclosed in so slight a tissue that it withers in the sun, and leaves only a minute spot of dried-up gelatinous substance behind.

Finally come the Fishes, many of which are of similar genera to those recommended for the fresh-water tank. The Black Goby is familiar, tamable, but voracious; the Gray Mullet is very hardy, but also rather savage; the Wrasses are some of the most showy fish,—called in some parts of the country Cunnners,—and of these, the Ancient Wrasse, (*Labrus maculatus*,) covered with a network of vermilion meshes on a brown and white ground, is the most elegant.

Some points of general management are so important, and some dangers so imminent, that we cannot pass them by unnoticed. The aquarian enthusiast is very apt to be in too great haste to see everything going on, and commits the common error of trying too many things at once. The aquarium must be built up slowly and tentatively, object by object: plants first, and of the simplest kinds; and not until they are well settled, and the water beaded with oxygen bubbles, should we think of introducing living creatures,—



and even then only the hardier kinds of actinias, mollusks, and crabs. All delicate animals must be intrusted one by one to their new home, and carefully watched for deaths and decay, which, whether arising from dead plants or animals, ruin everything very quickly, unless they be promptly removed. For sulphuretted hydrogen, even in very minute quantities, is sure death to all these little creatures.

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The emanations from paint and putty are often fatal in new tanks. Several weeks' exposure to water, air, and sunlight is necessary to season the new-made aquarium. Of equal consequence is it that the water be absolutely pure; and if brought from the sea, care must be exercised about the vessel containing it. Salt acts upon the glazing of earthen ware of some kinds. Stone or glass jars are safest. New oak casks are fatal from the tannin which soaks out; fir casks are safe and good. So delicate and sensitive are the minute creatures which people the sea, that they have been found dead on opening a cask in which a new oak bung was the only source of poison. And no wonder; for a very slight proportion of tannic acid in the water corrugates and stiffens the thin, smooth skin of the anemone, like the tanning of leather.

A certain natural density of the sea-water must also be preserved, ranging between no wider limits than 1026 and 1028. And in the open tank evaporation is constantly deranging this, and must be met by a supply from without. As the pure water alone evaporates, and the salts and earthy or mineral constituents are left behind, two things result: the water remaining becomes constantly more dense; and this can be remedied only by pure fresh water poured in to restore the equilibrium. Hence the marine aquarium must be replenished with *fresh water*, until the proper specific gravity, as indicated by the hydrometer, is restored.

The aquarium may be found some morning with a deep and permanent green stain discoloring the water. This unsightly appearance is owing to the simultaneous development of the spores of multitudes of minute Algae and Confervae, and can be obviated by passing the water through a charcoal filter. When any of the fishes give signs of sickness or suffocation, by coming to the surface and gulping air, they may be revived by having the water aerated by pouring it out repeatedly from a little elevation, or by a syringe. The fishes are sometimes distressed, also, when the room gets too warm for them. A temperature of 60 deg. is about what they require. And they will stand cold, many of them, even to being frozen with the water into ice, and afterwards revive.

The degree of light should be carefully regulated by a stained glass side, or a shade. Yet it must be borne in mind that sunlight is indispensable to the free evolution of oxygen by the plants. And when the sun is shining on the water, all its occupants appear more lively, and the fishes seem intoxicated—as they doubtless are—with oxygen.

A novice is apt to overstock his aquarium. Not more than two moderate-sized fishes to a gallon of water is a safe rule. Care, too, must be taken to group together those kinds of creatures which are not natural enemies, or natural food for each other, or a sad scene of devastation and murder will ensue.

Cleansing cannot be always intrusted to snails. But the sides may be scrubbed with a soft swab, made of cotton or wick-yarn. Deaths will occasionally take place; and even suicide is said to be resorted to by the wicked family of the Echinoderms.



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To procure specimens for the aquarium requires some knack and knowledge. The sea-shore must be haunted, and even the deep sea explored. At the extreme low-water of new or full moon tides, the rocks and tide-pools are to be zealously hunted over by the aquarian naturalist. Several wide-mouthed vials and stone jars are necessary; and we would repeat, that no plant should be taken, unless its attachment is preserved. It is often a long and difficult job to get some of the Algae; with their tender connections unsevered from the hard rock, which must be chipped away with the chisel, and often with the blows of the hammer deadened by being struck under water. It is by lifting up the overhanging masses of slimy fuel, tangles, and sea-grass, that we find the delicate varieties, as the *Chondrus* with its metallic lustre, and the red *Algae*, or the stony *Corallina*, which delights in the obscurity of shaded pools.

The sea-weeds will be found studded with mollusks,—as Snails and Periwinkles of many queer varieties. Anemones, of the more common kinds, are found clinging to smooth stones. Crabs on the sand. Prawns, Shrimps, Medusae, and fishes of many species, in the little pools which the tide leaves behind, and which it will require a sharp eye and a quick hand to explore with success. But the rarer forms of Actinias, Star-fishes, Sepioles, Madreporae, Annelidae, and Zoophytes, of a thousand shapes, live on the bottom, in deep water, and must be captured there.

For this purpose we must dredge from a boat, under sail. The naturalist's dredge is an improved oyster-dredge, with each of the two long sides of the mouth made into a scraping lip of iron. The body is made of spun-yarn, or fishing-line, netted into a small mesh. Two long triangles are attached by a hinge to the two short sides of the frame, and meeting in front, at some distance from the mouth, are connected by a swivel-joint. To this the dragging rope is bent, which must be three times as long, in dredging, as the depth of the water. This is fastened to the stern of a boat under sail, and thus the bottom is raked of all sorts of objects; among which, on emptying the net, many living creatures for the aquarium are found. These may be placed temporarily in jars; though plants, mollusks, Crustacea and Actiniae may be kept and transmitted long distances packed in layers of moist sea-weed.

For all this detail, labor, and patient care, we may reasonably find two great objects: first, the cultivation and advancement of natural science; second, the purest delight and healthiest amusement.

In the aquarium we have a most convenient field for the study of Natural History: to learn the varieties, nature, names, habits, and peculiarities of those endless forms of animated existence which dwell in the hidden depths of the sea, and at the same time to improve our minds by cultivating our powers of observation.

The pleasure derived from the aquarium comes from the excitement of finding and collecting specimens, as well as from watching the tank itself. There can be no more pleasant accompaniment to the sea-side walk of the casual visitor or summer resident

of a watering-place, than to search for marine plants and animals among the fissures, rocks, and tide-pools of the sea-washed beach or cape.

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Nature is always as varied as beautiful. Thousands of strange forms sport under the shadow of the brown, waving sea-weeds, or among the delicate scarlet fronds of the dulse, which is found growing in the little ponds that the inequalities of the beach have retained. It is down among the great boulders which the Atlantic piles upon our coast, that we may find endless varieties of life to fill the aquarium, though not those more gorgeous hues which distinguish the tenants of the coral reefs on tropical shores. Yet even here Nature is absolutely infinite; and we shall find ourselves, day after day, imitating that botanist who, walking through the same path for a month, found always a new plant which had escaped his notice before. So, too, in exploring the open sea, besides the pleasure of sailing along a variegated coast, with sun and blue water, we have the constant excitement of unexpected discovery: for, as often as we pull up the dredge, some new wonder is revealed.

Words fail to describe the wonders of the sea. And all that we drag from the bottom, all that we admire in the aquarium, are but a few disconnected specimens of that infinite whole which makes up their home.

So, too, in watching the aquarium itself, we shall see endless repetitions of those “sea-changes” which Shakspeare sang. Ancient mythology typified the changing wonders of aquatic Nature, as well as the fickleness of the treacherous sea, in those shifting deities, Glaucus and Proteus, who tenanted the shore.

The one the fancy of Ovid metamorphosed from a restless man to a fickle sea-god; the other assumed so many deceptive shapes to those who visited his cave, that his memory has been preserved in the word Protean. Such fancies well apply to a part of Nature which shifts like the sands, and ranges from the hideous Cuttle-fish and ravenous Shark to the delicate Medusa, whose graceful form and trailing tentacles float among the waving fronds of colored Algae, like

“Sabrina fair,
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of her amber-dropping hair.”

* * * * *

THE YOUNG REPEALER.

About eighteen years ago, when I was confined to two rooms by illness of long standing, I received a remarkable note by post one day. The envelope, bearing the Dublin postmark, was addressed in a good, bold, manly handwriting; but the few lines within showed traces of agitation. What I am going to relate is a true story,—altogether true, so far as I can trust my memory,—except the name of the Young Repealer. I might

give his real name without danger of hurting any person's feelings but one; but, for the sake of that one, who will thus be out of the reach of my narrative, I speak of him under another name. Having to choose a name, I will take a thoroughly Irish one, and call my correspondent Patrick Monahan.

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The few lines which showed agitation in the handwriting were calm in language, but very strange. Patrick Monahan told me that he was extremely unhappy, and that he had reason to believe that I, and I alone, could do him good. This, with the address,—to a certain number in a street in Dublin,—was all.

There was little time before the post went out; I was almost unable to write from illness; but, after a second glance at this note, I felt that I dared not delay my reply. I did not think that it was money that he wished to ask. I did not think that he was insane. I could not conceive why he should apply to me, nor why he did not explain what he wished from me; but I had a strong impression that it was safest to reply at once. I did so, in half a dozen lines, promising to write next day, after a further attempt to discover his meaning, and begging him to consider how completely in the dark I was as to him and his case. It was well that I wrote that day. Long after, when he was letting me into all the facts of his life, he told me that he had made my replying at once or not the turning-point of his fate. If the post had brought him nothing, he would have drowned himself in the Liffey.

My second letter was the only sort of letter that it could be,—an account of my own conjectures about him, and of my regret that I could see no probability of my being of use to him, except in as far as my experience of many troubles might enable me to speak suitably to him. I added some few words on the dangers attending any sort of trouble, when too keenly felt.

In answer to my first note came a few lines, telling me that the purpose of his application was mainly answered, and that my reply was of altogether greater consequence than I could have any idea of. He was less unhappy now, and believed he should never be so desperately wretched again. Wild as this might appear, I was still persuaded that he was not insane.

By the next post came a rather bulky packet. It contained, besides a letter from him, two or three old parchment documents, which showed that Patrick's forefathers had filled some chief municipal offices in the city in which the family had been settled for several generations. I had divined that Patrick was a gentleman; and he now showed me that he came of a good and honorable family, and had been well-educated. He was an orphan, and had not a relation in the world,—if I remember right. It was evident that he was poor; but he did not ask for money, nor seem to write on that account. He aspired to a literary life, and believed he should have done so, even if he had had the means of professional education. But he did not ask me for aid in trying his powers in literature. It was very perplexing; and the fact became presently clear that he expected me to tell him how I could be of use to him,—he being in no way able to afford me that information. I may as well give here the key to the mystery, which



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I had to wait for for some time. When poor Patrick was in a desperate condition,—very ill, in a lodging of which he could not pay the rent,—threatened with being turned into the street as soon as the thing could be done without danger to his life,—galled with a sense of disgrace, and full of impotent wrath against an oppressor,—and even suffering under deeper griefs than these,—at such a time, the worn man fell asleep, and dreamed that I looked kindly upon him. This happened three times; and on this ground, and this alone, he applied to me for comfort.

Before I learned this much, I had taken upon me to advise freely whatever occurred to me as best, finding Patrick entirely docile under my suggestions. Among other things, I advised him not to take offence, or assume any reserve, if a gentleman should call on him, with a desire to be of use to him. A gentleman did call, and was of eminent use to him. I had written to a benevolent friend of mine, a chief citizen of Dublin, begging him to obtain for me, through some trusty clerk or other messenger, some information as to what Patrick was like,—how old he was, what he was doing, and whether anything effectual could be done for him. Mr. H. went himself. He found Patrick sitting over a little fire in a little room, his young face thin and flushed, and his thin hands showing fever. He had had inflammation of the lungs, and, though he talked cheerfully, he was yet very far from well. Mr. H. was charmed with him. He found in him no needless reserves, and not so much sensitive pride as we had feared. Patrick had great hopes of sufficient employment, when once he could get out and go and see about it; and he pointed out two or three directions in which he believed he could obtain engagements. Two things, however, were plain: that there was some difficulty about getting out, and that his mind was set upon going to London at the first possible moment. He had not only the ordinary provincial ambition to achieve an entrance into the London literary world, but he had another object: he could serve his country best in London. Mr. H. easily divined the nature of the obstacle to his going out into the fresh air which he needed so much; and in a few days Patrick had a good suit of clothes. This was Mr. H.'s doing; and he also removed the danger of Patrick's being turned out of his lodging. The landlord had no wish to do such a thing; the young man was a gentleman,—regular and self-denying in his habits, and giving no trouble that he could help: but he had been very ill; and it was so desolate! Nobody came to see him; no letters arrived for him; no money was coming in, it was clear; and he could not go on living there,—starving, in fact.



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Once able to go about again, Patrick cheered up; but it was plain that there was one point on which he would not be ruled. He would not stay in Dublin, under any inducement whatever; and he would go to London. I wrote very plainly to him about the risk he was running,—even describing the desolate condition of the unsuccessful literary adventurer in the dreary peopled wilderness, in which the friendless may lie down and die alone, as the starved animal lies down and perishes in the ravine in the desert. I showed him how impossible it was for me or anybody to help him, except with a little money, till he had shown what he could do; and I entreated him to wait two years, —one year,—six months, before rushing on such a fate. Here, and here alone, he was self-willed. At first he explained to me that he had one piece of employment to rely on. He was to be the London correspondent of the Repeal organ in Dublin,—the “Nation” newspaper. The pay was next to nothing. He could not live, ever so frugally, on four times the amount: but it was an engagement; and it would enable him to serve his country. So, as there was nothing else to be done, Mr. H. started him for London, with just money enough to carry him there. Once there, he was sure he should do very well.

I doubted this; and he was met, at the address he gave, (at an Irish greengrocer’s, the only person he knew in London,) by an order for money enough to carry him over two or three weeks,—money given by two or three friends to whom I ventured to open the case. I have seldom read a happier letter than Patrick’s first from London; but it was not even then, nor for some time after, that he told me the main reason of his horror at remaining in Dublin.

He had hoped to support himself as a tutor while studying and practising for the literary profession; and he had been engaged to teach the children of a rich citizen,—not only the boys, but the daughter. He, an engaging youth of three-and-twenty, with blue eyes and golden hair, an innocent and noble expression of countenance, an open heart, a glowing imagination, and an eloquent tongue, was set to teach Latin and literary composition to a pretty, warm-hearted, romantic girl of twenty; and when they were in love and engaged, the father considered himself the victim of the basest treachery that ever man suffered under. In vain the young people pleaded for leave to love and wait till Patrick could provide a home for his wife. They asked no favor but to be let alone. Patrick’s family was as good as hers; and he had the education and manners of a gentleman, without any objectionable habits or tastes, but with every possible desire to win an honorable home for his beloved. I am not sure, but I think there was a moment when they thought of eloping some day, if nothing but the paternal displeasure intervened between them and happiness; but it was not yet time for this. There was much to be done first. What the father did first was to turn Patrick



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out of the house, under such circumstances of ignominy as he could devise. What he did next was the blow which broke the poor fellow down. Patrick had written a letter, in answer to the treatment he had received, in which he expressed his feelings as strongly as one might expect. This letter was made the ground of a complaint at the police-office; and Patrick was arrested, marched before the magistrate, and arraigned as the sender of a threatening letter to a citizen. In vain he protested that no idea of threatening anybody had been in his mind. The letter, as commented on by his employer, was pronounced sufficiently menacing to justify his being bound over to keep the peace towards this citizen and all his family. The intention was, no doubt, to disgrace him, and put him out of the question as a suitor; for no man could pretend to be really afraid of violence from a candid youth like Patrick, who loved the daughter too well to lift a finger against any one connected with her. The scheme succeeded; for he believed it had broken his heart. He supposed himself utterly disgraced in Dublin; and he could live there no longer. Hence his self-will about going to London.

In addition to this personal, there was a patriotic view. Very early in our correspondence, Patrick told me that he was a Repealer. He fancied himself a very moderate one, and likely on that account to do the more good. Those were the days of O'Connell's greatest power; or, if it was on the wane, no one yet recognized any change. Patrick knew one of the younger O'Connells, and had been flatteringly noticed by the great Dan himself, who had approved the idea of his going to London, hoped to see him there some day, and had prophesied that this young friend of his would do great things for the cause by his pen, and be conspicuous among the saviours of Ireland. Patrick's head was not quite turned by this; and he lamented, in his letters to me, the plans proposed and the language held by the common run of O'Connell's followers. Those were the days when the Catholic peasantry believed that "Repale" would make every man the owner of the land he lived on, or of that which he wished to live on; and the great Dan did not disabuse them. Those were the days when poor men believed that "Repale" would release every one from the debts he owed; and Dan did not contradict it. When Dan was dead, the consequence of his not contradicting it was that a literal-minded fellow here and there shot the creditor who asked for payment of the coat, or the pig, or the meal. For all this delusion Patrick was sorry. He was sorry to hear Protestant shopmen wishing for the day when Dublin streets would be knee-deep in Catholic blood, and to hear Catholic shopmen reciprocating the wish in regard to Protestant blood. He was anxious to make me understand that he had no such notions, and that he even thought O'Connell mistaken in appearing to countenance such mistakes. But still he, Patrick, was a Repealer; and he wished



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me to know precisely what he meant by that, and what he proposed to do in consequence. He thought it a sin and shame that Ireland should be trodden under the heel of the Saxon; he thought the domination of the English Parliament intolerable; he considered it just that the Irish should make their own laws, own their own soil, and manage their own affairs. He had no wish to bring in the French, or any other enemy of England; and he was fully disposed to be loyal to the Crown, if the Crown would let Ireland entirely alone. Even the constant persecution inflicted upon Ireland had not destroyed his loyalty to the Crown. Such were the views on which his letters to the "Nation" newspaper were to be grounded. In reply, I contented myself with proposing that he should make sure of his ground as he went along; for which purpose he should ascertain what proportion of the people of Ireland wished for a repeal of the Union; and what sort of people they were who desired Repeal on the one hand, or continued Union on the other. I hoped he would satisfy himself as to what Repeal could and could not effect; and that he would study the history of Irish Parliaments, to learn what the character and bearing of their legislation had been, and to estimate the chances of good government by that kind of legislature, in comparison with the Imperial Parliament.

If any foreign reader should suppose it impossible, that, in modern times, there can have been hopes entertained in Dublin of the streets being inundated with blood, such reader may be referred to the evidence afforded of Repeal sentiment five years later than the time of which I write. When the heroes of that rising of 1848—of whom John Mitchell is the sample best known in America—were tracked in their plans and devices, it appeared what their proposed methods of warfare were. Some of these, detailed in Repeal newspapers, and copied into American journals, were proposed to the patriotic women of Ireland, as their peculiar means of serving their country; and three especially. Red-hot iron hoops, my readers may remember, were to be cast down from balconies, so as to pin the arms of English soldiers marching in the street, and scorch their hearts. Vitriol was to be flung into their eyes. Boiling oil was to be poured upon them from windows. This is enough. Nobody believes that the thing would ever have been done; but the lively and repeated discussion of it shows how the feelings of the ignorant are perverted, and the passions of party-men are stimulated in Ireland, when unscrupulous leaders arise, proposing irrational projects. The consequences have been seen in Popish and Protestant fights in Ulster, and in the midnight drill of Phoenix Clubs in Munster, and in John Mitchell's passion for fat negroes in the Slave States of America. In Ireland such notions are regarded now as a delirious dream, except by a John Mitchell here and there. Smith O'Brien himself declares that there is nothing to be done

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while the people of Ireland are satisfied with the government they live under; and that, if it were otherwise, nothing can be done for a people which either elects jobbers to Parliament, or suspects every man of being a traitor who proceeds, when there, to do the business of his function. I suspected that Patrick would find out some of these things for himself in London; and I left him to make his own discoveries, when I had pointed out one or two paths of inquiry.

The process was a more rapid one than I had anticipated. He reported his first letter to the "Nation" with great satisfaction. He had begun his work in London. He went to the House of Commons, and came away sorely perplexed. After having heard and written so much of the wrongs of Ireland under the domination of the English Parliament, he found that Ireland actually and practically formed a part of that Parliament,—the legislature being, not English, but Imperial. He must have known this before; but he had never felt it. He now saw that Ireland was as well represented as England or Scotland; that political offices were held in fair proportion by Irishmen; and that the Irish members engrossed much more than a fair share of the national time in debate and projects of legislation. He saw at once that here was an end of all excuse for talk of oppression by Parliament, and of all complaints which assumed that Ireland was unrepresented. He was previously aware that Ireland was more lightly taxed than the rest of the empire. The question remained, whether a local legislature would or would not be a better thing than a share in the Imperial Parliament. This was a fair subject of argument; but he must now dismiss all notions grounded on the mistake of Ireland being unrepresented, and oppressed by the representatives of other people.

In the letter which disclosed these new views Patrick reported his visit to O'Connell. He had reminded his friend, the junior O'Connell, of Dan's invitation to him to go to see him in London; and he had looked forward to their levee with delight and expectation. Whether he had candidly expressed his thoughts about the actual representation of Ireland, I don't know; but it was plain that he had not much enjoyed the interview. O'Connell looked very well: the levee was crowded: O'Connell was surrounded by ardent patriots: the junior O'Connell had led Patrick up to his father with particular kindness. Still, there was no enthusiasm in the report; and the next letter showed the reason why. Patrick could not understand O'Connell at all. It was certain that Dan remembered him; and he could not have forgotten the encouragement he gave him to write on behalf of his country; yet now he was cold, even repellent in his manner; and he tried to pretend that he did not know who Patrick was. What could this mean?



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Again I trusted to Patrick's finding out for himself what it meant. To be brief about a phase of human experience which has nothing new in it, Patrick presently saw that the difficulty of governing Ireland by a local legislature, and executive is this:—that no man is tolerated from the moment he can do more than talk. Irish members under O'Connell's eye were for the most part talkers only. Then and since, every Irishman who accepts the office so vehemently demanded is suspected of a good understanding with Englishmen, and soon becomes reviled as a traitor and place-hunter. Between the mere talkers and the proscribed office-holders, Ireland would get none of her business done, if the Imperial Government did not undertake affairs, and see that Ireland was taken care of by somebody or other. Patrick saw that this way of putting Government in abeyance was a mild copy of what happened when a Parliament sat in Dublin, perpetrating the most insolent tyranny and the vilest jobs ever witnessed under any representative system. He told me, very simply, that the people of Ireland should send to Parliament men whom they could trust, and should trust them to act when there: the people should either demand a share of office for their countrymen, or make up their minds to go without; they ought not first to demand office for Irishmen, and then call every Irishman a traitor and self-seeker who took it. In a very short time he told me that he found he had much to unlearn as well as learn: that many things of which he had been most sure now turned out to be mistakes, and many very plain matters to be exceedingly complicated; but that the one thing about which there could be no mistake was, that, in such a state of opinion, he was no proper guide for the readers of the "Nation," and he had accordingly sent in his resignation of his appointment, together with some notices to the editor of the different light in which Irish matters appear outside the atmosphere of Repeal meetings.

In thus cutting loose from his only means of pecuniary support, Patrick forfeited also his patriotic character. He was as thoroughly ruined in the eyes of Repealers as if he had denounced the "Saxon" one hour and the next crept into some warm place in the Custom-House on his knees. Here ended poor Patrick's short political life, after, I think, two letters to the "Nation," and here ended all hope of aid from his countrymen in London. His letter was very moving. He knew himself to be mortified by O'Connell's behavior to him; but he felt that he could not submit to be regarded with suspicion because he had come to see for himself how matters stood. He did not give up Repeal yet: he only wanted to study the case on better knowledge; and in order to have a perfectly clear conscience and judgment, he gave up his only pecuniary resource,—his love and a future home being in the distance, and always in view, all the time. Here, in spite of some lingering of old hopes, two scenes of his young life had closed. His Irish life was over, and his hope of political service.



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I had before written about him to two or three literary friends in London; and now I felt bound to see what could be done in opening a way for him. He had obtained the insertion of a tale in a magazine, for which he had one guinea in payment. This raised his spirits, and gave him a hope of independence; for it was a parting of the clouds, and there was no saying how much sunlight might be let down. He was willing to apply himself to any drudgery; but his care to undertake nothing that he was not sure of doing well was very striking. He might have obtained good work as classical proof-corrector; but he feared, that, though his classical attainments were good, his training had not qualified him for the necessary accuracy. He had some employment of the sort, if I remember right, which defrayed a portion of his small expenses. His expenses were indeed small. He told me all his little gains and his weekly outlay; and I was really afraid that he did not allow himself sufficient food. Yet he knew that there was a little money in my hands, when he wanted it. His letters became now very gay in spirits. He keenly relished the society into which he was invited; and, on the other hand, everybody liked him. It was amusing to me, in my sick room, three hundred miles off, to hear of the impression he made, with his innocence, his fresh delight in his new life, his candor, his modesty, and his bright cleverness,—and then, again, to learn how diligently he had set about learning what I, his correspondent, was really like. In his dreams he had seen me very aged,—he thought upwards of eighty; and he had never doubted of the fact being so. In one letter he told me, that, finding a brother of mine was then in London, he was going that afternoon to a public meeting to see him, in order to have some idea of my aspect. A mutual friend told me afterwards that Patrick had come away quite bewildered and disappointed. He had expected to see in my brother a gray-haired ancient; whereas he found a man under forty. I really believe he was disturbed that his dreams had misled him. Yet I never observed any other sign of superstition in him.

At last the happy day came when he had a literary task worthy of him,—a sort of test of his capacity for reviewing. One of the friends to whom I had introduced him was then sub-editor of the “Athenaeum,”—a weekly periodical of higher reputation at that time than now. Patrick was commissioned to review a book of some weight and consequence,—Sir Robert Kane’s “Industrial Resources of Ireland,”—and he did it so well that the conductors hoped to give him a good deal of employment. What they gave him would have led to more; and thus he really was justified in his exultation at having come to London. I remember, that, in the midst of his joy, he startled me by some light mention of his having spit blood, after catching cold,—a thing which had happened before in Ireland. In answer to my inquiries, my friends told me that he certainly looked very delicate, but made light of it. It happened, unfortunately, that he was obliged just then to change his lodging. He increased his cold by going about in bad weather to look for another. He found one, however, and settled himself, in hope of doing great things there.



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He had not been there a week before he rang his bell one day, and was found bleeding from the lungs. His landlady called in a physician; and it is probable that this gentleman did not know or suspect the circumstances of his patient; for he not only ordered ice and various expensive things, but took fees, while the poor patient was lying forbidden to speak, and gnawed with anxiety as to where more money was to come from, and with eagerness to get to work. His friends soon found him out in his trouble; and I understood from him afterwards, and from others who knew more about it than he did, that they were extremely kind. I believe that one left a bank-note of a considerable amount at the door, in a blank envelope. All charges were defrayed, and he was bidden not to be anxious. Yet something must be done. What must it be?

As soon as he was allowed to raise his head from his pillow, he wrote me a note in pencil; and it afforded an opening for discussing his affairs with him. He had some impression of his life's being in danger; for it was now that he confided to me the whole story of his attachment, and the sufferings attending it: but he was still sanguine about doing great things in literature, and chafing at his unwilling idleness. I was strongly of opinion that the best way of dealing with him was to be perfectly open; and, after proposing that we should have no reserves, I told him what (proceeding on his own report of his health) I should in his place decide upon doing. His pride would cause him some pain in either of the two courses which were open to him,—but, I thought, more in one than the other. If he remained in his lodgings, he would break his heart about being a burden (as he would say) to his friends; and he would fret after work so as to give himself no chance of such recovery as might be hoped for: whereas, if he could once cheerfully agree to enter a hospital, he would have every chance of rallying, and all the sooner for being free from any painful sense of obligation. If the treatment should succeed, this passage in his life would be something to smile at hereafter, or to look back upon with sound satisfaction; and if not, he would have friends about him, just as he would in a lodging.

The effect was what I wished. My letter gave no offence, and did him no harm. He only begged for a few days more, before deciding that he might satisfy himself whether he was getting well or not: if not, he would cheerfully go wherever his friends advised, and believe that the plan was the best for him.

In those few days arrangements were made for his being received at the Sanatorium, —an institution in which sick persons who had either previously subscribed, or who were the nominees of subscribers, were received, and well tended for a guinea a week, under the comfortable circumstances of a private house. Each patient had a separate chamber; and the medical attendance, diet, and arrangements were of a far higher order



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than poor Patrick could have commanded in lodgings. Above all, the resident surgeon—now a distinguished physician, superintendent of a lunatic asylum—was a man to make a friend of,—a man of cultivated mind, tender heart, and cheerful and gentle manners. Patrick won his heart at once; and every note of Patrick's glowed with affection for Doctor H—. After a few weeks of alternating hope and fear, after a natural series of fluctuations of spirits, Patrick wrote me a remarkably quiet letter. He told me that both his doctors had given him a plain answer to his question whether he could recover. They had told him that it was impossible; but he could not learn from them how long they thought he would live. He saw now, however, that he must give up his efforts to work. He believed he could have worked a little: but perhaps he was no judge; and if he really was dying, he could not be wrong in obeying the directions of those who had the care of him. Once afterwards he told me that his physicians did not, he saw, expect him to live many months,—perhaps not even many weeks.

It was now clear to my mind what would please him best. I told him, that, if he liked to furnish me with the address of that house in Dublin in which his thoughts chiefly lived, I would take care that the young lady there should know that he died in honor, having fairly entered upon the literary career which had always been his aspiration, and surrounded by friends whose friendship was a distinction. His words in reply were few, calm, and fervent, intimating that he now had not a care left in the world: and Doctor H—wondered what had happened to make him so gay from the hour he received my letter.

His decline was a rapid one; and I soon learned, by very short notes, that he hardly left his bed. When it was supposed that he would never leave his room again, he surprised the whole household by a great feat. I should have related before what a favorite he was with all the other patients. He was the sunshine of the house while able to get to the drawing-room, and the pet of each invalid by the chamber-fire. On Christmas morning, he slipped out of bed, and managed to get his clothes on, while alone, and was met outside his own door, bent on giving a Christmas greeting to everybody in the house. He was indulged in this; for it was of little consequence now what he did. He appeared at each bedside, and at every sofa,—and not with any moving sentiment, but with genuine gayety. It was full in his thoughts that he had not many days to live, but he hoped the others had; and he entered into their prospect of renewed health and activity. At night they said that Patrick had brightened their Christmas Day.

He died very soon after,—sinking at last with perfect consciousness,—writing messages to me on his slate while his fingers would hold the pencil,—calm and cheerful without intermission. After his death, when the last offices were to be begun, my letters were taken warm from his breast. Every line that I had ever written to him was there; and the packet was sent to me by Doctor H—bound round with the green ribbon which he had himself tied before he quite lost the power. The kind friends who had watched over him

during the months of his London life wrote to me not to trouble myself about his funeral. They buried him honorably, and two of his distinguished friends followed him to the grave.



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Of course, I immediately performed my promise. I had always intended that not only the young lady, but her father, should know what we thought of Patrick, and what he might have been, if he had lived. I wrote to that potential personage, telling him of all the facts of the case, except the poverty, which might be omitted as essentially a slight and temporary circumstance. I reported of his life of industry and simple self-denial,—of his prospects, his friendships, his sweet and gay decline and departure, and his honorable funeral. No answer was needed; and I had supposed there would hardly be one. If there should be one, it was not likely to be very congenial to the mood of Patrick's friends: but I could hardly have conceived of anything so bad as it was. The man wrote that it was not wonderful that any young man should get on under the advantage of my patronage; and that it was to be hoped that this young man would have turned out more worthy of such patronage than he was when he ungratefully returned his obligations to his employer by engaging the affections of his daughter. The young man had caused great trouble and anxiety to one who, now he was dead, was willing to forgive him; but no circumstance could ever change the aspect of his conduct, in regard to his treacherous behavior to his benefactor; and so forth. There was no sign of any consciousness of imprudence on the father's own part; but strong indications of vindictive hatred, softened in the expression by being mixed up with odious flatteries to Patrick's literary friends. The only compensation for the disgust of this letter was the confirmation it afforded of Patrick's narrative, in which, it was clear, he had done no injustice to his oppressor.

I have not bestowed so much thought as this on the man and his letter, from the day I received it, till now; but it was necessary to speak of it at the close of the story. I lose sight of the painful incidents in thinking of Patrick himself. I only wish I had once seen his face, that I might know how near the truth is the image that I have formed of him.

There may have been, there no doubt have been, other such young Irishmen, whose lives have been misdirected for want of the knowledge which Patrick gained in good time by the accident of his coming to England. I fear that many such have lived a life of turbulence, or impotent discontent, under the delusion that their country was politically oppressed. The mistake may now be considered at an end. It is sufficiently understood in Ireland that her woes have been from social and not political causes, from the day of Catholic emancipation. But it is a painful thought what Patrick's short life might have been, if he had remained under the O'Connell influence; and what the lives of hundreds more have been,—rendered wild by delusion, and wretched by strife and lawlessness, for want of a gleam of that clear daylight which made a sound citizen of a passionate Young Repealer.

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BREAD AND THE NEWSPAPER.

This is the new version of the *Panem et Circenses* of the Roman populace. It is our *ultimatum*, as that was theirs. They must have something to eat, and the circus-shows to look at. We must have something to eat, and the papers to read.

Everything else we can give up. If we are rich, we can lay down our carriages, stay away from Newport or Saratoga, and adjourn the trip to Europe *sine die*. If we live in a small way, there are at least new dresses and bonnets and every-day luxuries which we can dispense with. If the young Zouave of the family looks smart in his new uniform, its respectable head is content, though he himself grow seedy as a caraway-umbel late in the season. He will cheerfully calm the perturbed nap of his old beaver by patient brushing in place of buying a new one, if only the Lieutenant's jaunty cap is what it should be. We all take a pride in sharing the epidemic economy of the time. Only *bread and the newspaper* we must have, whatever else we do without.

How this war is simplifying our mode of being! We live on our emotions, as the sick man is said in the common speech to be nourished by his fever. Our common mental food has become distasteful, and what would have been intellectual luxuries at other times are now absolutely repulsive.

All this change in our manner of existence implies that we have experienced some very profound impression, which will sooner or later betray itself in permanent effects on the minds and bodies of many among us. We cannot forget Corvisart's observation of the frequency with which diseases of the heart were noticed as the consequence of the terrible emotions produced by the scenes of the great French Revolution. Laennec tells the story of a convent, of which he was the medical director, where all the nuns were subjected to the severest penances and schooled in the most painful doctrines. They all became consumptive soon after their entrance, so that, in the course of his ten years' attendance, all the inmates died out two or three times, and were replaced by new ones. He does not hesitate to attribute the disease from which they suffered to those depressing moral influences to which they were subjected.

So far we have noticed little more than disturbances of the nervous system as a consequence of the war excitement in non-combatants. Take the first trifling example which comes to our recollection. A sad disaster to the Federal army was told the other day in the presence of two gentlemen and a lady. Both the gentlemen complained of a sudden feeling at the *epigastrium*, or, less learnedly, the pit of the stomach, changed color, and confessed to a slight tremor about the knees. The lady had a "*grande revolution*," as French patients say,—went home, and kept her bed for the rest of the day. Perhaps the reader may smile at the mention of such trivial indispositions, but in more sensitive natures death itself follows in some cases from no more serious cause. An old gentleman fell senseless in fatal apoplexy, on hearing of Napoleon's return from

Elba. One of our early friends, who recently died of the same complaint, was thought to have had his attack mainly in consequence of the excitements of the time.



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We all know what the *war fever* is in our young men,—what a devouring passion it becomes in those whom it assails. Patriotism is the fire of it, no doubt, but this is fed with fuel of all sorts. The love of adventure, the contagion of example, the fear of losing the chance of participating in the great events of the time, the desire of personal distinction, all help to produce those singular transformations which we often witness, turning the most peaceful of our youth into the most ardent of our soldiers. But something of the same fever in a different form reaches a good many non-combatants, who have no thought of losing a drop of precious blood belonging to themselves or their families. Some of the symptoms we shall mention are almost universal; they are as plain in the people we meet everywhere as the marks of an influenza, when that is prevailing.

The first is a nervous restlessness of a very peculiar character. Men cannot think, or write, or attend to their ordinary business. They stroll up and down the streets, they saunter out upon the public places. We confessed to an illustrious author that we laid down the volume of his work which we were reading when the war broke out. It was as interesting as a romance, but the romance of the past grew pale before the red light of the terrible present. Meeting the same author not long afterwards, he confessed that he had laid down his pen at the same time that we had closed his book. He could not write about the sixteenth century any more than we could read about it, while the nineteenth was in the very agony and bloody sweat of its great sacrifice.

Another most eminent scholar told us in all simplicity that he had fallen into such a state that he would read the same telegraphic despatches over and over again in different papers, as if they were new, until he felt as if he were an idiot. Who did not do just the same thing, and does not often do it still, now that the first flush of the fever is over? Another person always goes through the side streets on his way for the noon *extra*,—he is so afraid somebody will meet him and *tell* the news he wishes to *read*, first on the bulletin-board, and then in the great capitals and leaded type of the newspaper.

When any startling piece of war-news comes, it keeps repeating itself in our minds in spite of all we can do. The same trains of thought go tramping round in circle through the brain like the supernumeraries that make up the grand army of a stage-show. Now, if a thought goes round through the brain a thousand times in a day, it will have worn as deep a track as one which has passed through it once a week for twenty years. This accounts for the ages we seem to have lived since the twelfth of April last, and, to state it more generally, for that *ex post facto* operation of a great calamity, or any very powerful impression, which we once illustrated by the image of a stain spreading backwards from the leaf of life open before us through all those which we have already turned.



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Blessed are those who can sleep quietly in times like these! Yet, not wholly blessed, either; for what is more painful than the awaking from peaceful unconsciousness to a sense that there is something wrong, we cannot at first think what,—and then groping our way about through the twilight of our thoughts until we come full upon the misery, which, like some evil bird, seemed to have flown away, but which sits waiting for us on its perch by our pillow in the gray of the morning?

The converse of this is perhaps still more painful. Many have the feeling in their waking hours that the trouble they are aching with is, after all, only a dream,—if they will rub their eyes briskly enough and shake themselves, they will awake out of it, and find all their supposed grief is unreal. This attempt to cajole ourselves out of an ugly fact always reminds us of those unhappy flies who have been indulging in the dangerous sweets of the paper prepared for their especial use.

Watch one of them. He does not feel quite well,—at least, he suspects himself of indisposition. Nothing serious,—let us just rub our fore-feet together, as the enormous creature who provides for us rubs his hands, and all will be right. He rubs them with that peculiar twisting movement of his, and pauses for the effect. No! all is not quite right yet.—Ah! it is our head that is not set on just as it ought to be. Let us settle *that* where it should be, and *then* we shall certainly be in good trim again. So he pulls his head about as an old lady adjusts her cap, and passes his fore-paw over it like a kitten washing herself.—Poor fellow! It is not a fancy, but a fact, that he has to deal with. If he could read the letters at the head of the sheet, he would see they were *Fly-Paper*.—So with us, when, in our waking misery, we try to think we dream! Perhaps very young persons may not understand this; as we grow older, our waking and dreaming life run more and more into each other.

Another symptom of our excited condition is seen in the breaking up of old habits. The newspaper is as imperious as a Russian Ukase; it will be had, and it will be read. To this all else must give place. If we must go out at unusual hours to get it, we shall go, in spite of after-dinner nap or evening somnolence. If it finds us in company, it will not stand on ceremony, but cuts short the compliment and the story by the divine right of its telegraphic despatches.

War is a very old story, but it is a new one to this generation of Americans. Our own nearest relation in the ascending line remembers the Revolution well. How should she forget it? Did she not lose her doll, which was left behind, when she was carried out of Boston, then growing uncomfortable by reason of cannon-balls dropping in from the neighboring heights at all hours,—in token of which see the tower of Brattle-Street Church at this very day? War in her memory means '76. As for the



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brush of 1812, "we did not think much about that"; and everybody knows that the Mexican business did not concern us much, except in its political relations. No! War is a new thing to all of us who are not in the last quarter of their century. We are learning many strange matters from our fresh experience. And besides, there are new conditions of existence which make war as it is with us very different from war as it has been.

The first and obvious difference consists in the fact that the whole nation is now penetrated by the ramifications of a network of iron nerves which flash sensation and volition backward and forward to and from towns and provinces as if they were organs and limbs of a single living body. The second is the vast system of iron muscles which, as it were, move the limbs of the mighty organism one upon another. What was the railroad-force which put the Sixth Regiment in Baltimore on the 19th of April but a contraction and extension of the arm of Massachusetts with a clenched fist full of bayonets at the end of it?

This perpetual intercommunication, joined to the power of instantaneous action, keeps us always alive with excitement. It is not a breathless courier who comes back with the report from an army we have lost sight of for a month, nor a single bulletin which tells us all we are to know for a week of some great engagement, but almost hourly paragraphs, laden with truth or falsehood as the case may be, making us restless always for the last fact or rumor they are telling. And so of the movements of our armies. To-night the stout lumbermen of Maine are encamped under their own fragrant pines. In a score or two of hours they are among the tobacco-fields and the slave-pens of Virginia. The war passion burned like scattered coals of fire in the households of Revolutionary times; now it rushes all through the land like a flame over the prairie. And this instant diffusion of every fact and feeling produces another singular effect in the equalizing and steadying of public opinion. We may not be able to see a month ahead of us; but as to what has passed, a week afterwards it is as thoroughly talked out and judged as it would have been in a whole season before our national nervous system was organized.

"As the wild tempest wakes the slumbering sea,
Thou only teachest all that man can be!"

We indulged in the above apostrophe to War in a Phi Beta Kappa poem of long ago, which we liked better before we read Mr. Cutler's beautiful prolonged lyric delivered at the recent anniversary of that Society.

Oftentimes, in paroxysms of peace and good-will towards all mankind, we have felt twinges of conscience about the passage,—especially when one of our orators showed us that a ship of war costs as much to build and keep as a college, and that every port-hole we could stop would give us a new professor. Now we begin to think that there



was some meaning in our poor couplet. War *has* taught us, as nothing else could, what we can be and are. It has exalted our manhood and our womanhood, and driven us all back upon our substantial human qualities, for a long time more or less kept out of sight by the spirit of commerce, the love of art, science, or literature, or other qualities not belonging to all of us as men and women.



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It is at this very moment doing more to melt away the petty social distinctions which keep generous souls apart from each other, than the preaching of the Beloved Disciple himself would do. We are finding out that not only "patriotism is eloquence," but that heroism is gentility. All ranks are wonderfully equalized under the fire of a masked battery. The plain artisan or the rough fireman, who faces the lead and iron like a man, is the truest representative we can show of the heroes of Crecy and Agincourt. And if one of our fine gentlemen puts off his straw-colored kids and stands by the other, shoulder to shoulder, or leads him on to the attack, he is as honorable in our eyes and in theirs as if he were ill-dressed and his hands were soiled with labor.

Even our poor "Brahmins,"—whom a critic in ground-glass spectacles (the same who grasps his statistics by the blade and strikes at his supposed antagonist with the handle) oddly confounds with the "bloated aristocracy," whereas they are very commonly pallid, undervalued, shy, sensitive creatures, whose only birthright is an aptitude for learning,—even these poor New England Brahmins of ours, *subvirates* of an organizable base as they often are, count as full men, if their courage is big enough for the uniform which hangs so loosely about their slender figures.

A young man was drowned not very long ago in the river running under our windows. A few days afterwards a field-piece was dragged to the water's edge and fired many times over the river. We asked a bystander, who looked like a fisherman, what that was for. It was to "break the gall," he said, and so bring the drowned person to the surface. A strange physiological fancy and a very odd *non sequitur*; but that is not our present point. A good many extraordinary objects do really come to the surface when the great guns of war shake the waters, as when they roared over Charleston harbor.

Treason came up, hideous, fit only to be huddled into its dishonorable grave. But the wrecks of precious virtues, which had been covered with the waves of prosperity, came up also. And all sorts of unexpected and unheard-of things, which had lain unseen during our national life of fourscore years, came up and are coming up daily, shaken from their bed by the concussions of the artillery bellowing around us.

It is a shame to own it, but there were persons otherwise respectable not unwilling to say that they believed the old valor of Revolutionary times had died out from among us. They talked about our own Northern people as the English in the last centuries used to talk about the French,—Goldsmith's old soldier, it may be remembered, called one Englishman good for five of them. As Napoleon spoke of the English, again, as a nation of shopkeepers, so these persons affected to consider the multitude of their countrymen as unwarlike artisans,—forgetting that Paul Revere taught himself the value of liberty in working upon gold, and Nathaniel Greene fitted himself to shape armies in the labor of forging iron.

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These persons have learned better now. The bravery of our free working-people was overlaid, but not smothered, sunken, but not drowned. The hands which had been busy conquering the elements had only to change their weapons and their adversaries, and they were as ready to conquer the masses of living force opposed to them as they had been to build towns, to dam rivers, to hunt whales, to harvest ice, to hammer brute matter into every shape civilization can ask for.

Another great fact came to the surface, and is coming up every day in new shapes,—that we are one people. It is easy to say that a man is a man in Maine or Minnesota, but not so easy to feel it, all through our bones and marrow. The camp is deprovincializing us very fast. Poor Winthrop, marching with the city *elegants*, seems almost to have been astonished to find how wonderfully human were the hard-handed men of the Eighth Massachusetts. It takes all the nonsense out of everybody, or ought to do it, to see how fairly the real manhood of a country is distributed over its surface. And then, just as we are beginning to think our own soil has a monopoly of heroes as well as of cotton, up turns a regiment of gallant Irishmen, like the Sixty-Ninth, to show us that continental provincialism is as bad as that of Coos County, New Hampshire, or of Broadway, New York.

Here, too, side by side in the same great camp, are half a dozen chaplains, representing half a dozen modes of religious belief. When the masked battery opens, does the “Baptist” Lieutenant believe in his heart that God takes better care of him than of his “Congregationalist” Colonel? Does any man really suppose, that, of a score of noble young fellows who have just laid down their lives for their country, the *Homoousians* are received to the mansions of bliss, and the *Homoiousians* translated from the battle-field to the abodes of everlasting woe? War not only teaches what man can be, but it teaches also what he must not be. He must not be a bigot and a fool in the presence of that day of judgment proclaimed by the trumpet which calls to battle, and where a man should have but two thoughts: to do his duty, and trust his Maker. Let our brave dead come back from the fields where they have fallen for law and liberty, and if you will follow them to their graves, you will find out what the Broad Church means; the narrow church is sparing of its exclusive formulae over the coffins wrapped in the flag which the fallen heroes had defended! Very little comparatively do we hear at such times of the dogmas on which men differ; very much of the faith and trust in which all sincere Christians can agree. It is a noble lesson, and nothing less noisy than the voice of cannon can teach it so that it shall be heard over all the angry voices of theological disputants.



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Now, too, we have a chance to test the sagacity of our friends, and to get at their principles of judgment. Perhaps most of us will agree that our faith in domestic prophets has been diminished by the experience of the last six months. We had the notable predictions attributed to the Secretary of State, which so unpleasantly refused to fulfil themselves. We were infested at one time with a set of ominous-looking seers, who shook their heads and muttered obscurely about some mighty preparations that were making to substitute the rule of the minority for that of the majority. Organizations were darkly hinted at; some thought our armories would be seized; and there are not wanting ancient women in the neighboring University town who consider that the country was saved by the intrepid band of students who stood guard, night after night, over the G.R. cannon and the pile of balls in the Cambridge Arsenal.

As a general rule, it is safe to say that the best prophecies are those which the sages *remember* after the event prophesied of has come to pass, and remind us that they have made long ago. Those who are rash enough to predict publicly beforehand commonly give us what they hope, or what they fear, or some conclusion from an abstraction of their own, or some guess founded on private information not half so good as what everybody gets who reads the papers,—*never* by any possibility a word that we can depend on, simply because there are cob-webs of contingency between every to-day and to-morrow that no field-glass can penetrate when fifty of them lie woven one over another. Prophecy as much as you like, but always *hedge*. Say that you think the rebels are weaker than is commonly supposed, but, on the other hand, that they may prove to be even stronger than is anticipated. Say what you like,—only don't be too peremptory and dogmatic; we *know* that wiser men than you have been notoriously deceived in their predictions in this very matter.

Ibis et redibis nunquam in bello peribis.

Let that be your model; and remember, on peril of your reputation as a prophet, not to put a stop before or after the *nunquam*.

There are two or three facts connected with *time*, besides that already referred to, which strike us very forcibly in their relation to the great events passing around us. We spoke of the long period seeming to have elapsed since this war began. The buds were then swelling which held the leaves that are still green. It seems as old as Time himself. We cannot fail to observe how the mind brings together the scenes of to-day and those of the old Revolution. We shut up eighty years into each other like the joints of a pocket-telescope. When the young men from Middlesex dropped in Baltimore the other day, it seemed to bring Lexington and the other Nineteenth of April close to us. War has always been the mint in which the world's history has been coined, and now every day or week or month



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has a new medal for us. It was Warren that the first impression bore in the last great coinage; if it is Ellsworth now, the new face hardly seems fresher than the old. All battle-fields are alike in their main features. The young fellows who fell in our earlier struggle seemed like old men to us until within these few months; now we remember they were like these fiery youth we are cheering as they go to the fight; it seems as if the grass of our bloody hill-side was crimsoned but yesterday, and the cannon-ball imbedded in the church-tower would feel warm, if we laid our hand upon it.

Nay, in this our quickened life we feel that all the battles from earliest time to our own day, where Right and Wrong have grappled, are but one great battle, varied with brief pauses or hasty bivouacs upon the field of conflict. The issues seem to vary, but it is always a right against a claim, and, however the struggle of the hour may go, a movement onward of the campaign, which uses defeat as well as victory to serve its mighty ends. The very weapons of our warfare change less than we think. Our bullets and cannon-balls have lengthened into bolts like those which whistled out of old arbalests. Our soldiers fight with Bowie-knives, such as are pictured on the walls of Theban tombs, wearing a newly-invented head-gear as old as the days of the Pyramids.

Whatever miseries this war brings upon us, it is making us wiser, and, we trust, better. Wiser, for we are learning our weakness, our narrowness, our selfishness, our ignorance, in lessons of sorrow and shame. Better, because all that is noble in men and women is demanded by the time, and our people are rising to the standard the time calls for. For this is the question the hour is putting to each of us: Are you ready, if need be, to sacrifice all that you have and hope for in this world, that the generations to follow you may inherit a whole country whose natural condition shall be peace, and not a broken province which must live under the perpetual threat, if not in the constant presence, of war and all that war brings with it? If we are all ready for this sacrifice, battles may be lost, but the campaign and its grand object must be won.

Heaven is very kind in its way of putting questions to mortals. We are not abruptly asked to give up all that we most care for, in view of the momentous issues before us. Perhaps we shall never be asked to give up all, but we have already been called upon to part with much that is dear to us, and should be ready to yield the rest as it is called for. The time may come when even the cheap public print shall be a burden our means cannot support, and we can only listen in the square that was once the market-place to the voices of those who proclaim defeat or victory. Then there will be only our daily food left. When we have nothing to read and nothing to eat, it will be a favorable moment to offer a compromise. At present we have all that Nature absolutely demands,—we can live on bread and the newspaper.



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“UNDER THE CLOUD AND THROUGH THE SEA.”

So moved they, when false Pharaoh's legion pressed,
Chariots and horsemen following furiously,—
Sons of old Israel, at their God's behest,
Under the cloud and through the swelling sea.

So passed they, fearless, where the parted wave,
With cloven crest uprearing from the sand,—
A solemn aisle before,—behind, a grave,—
Rolled to the beckoning of Jehovah's hand.

So led He them, in desert marches grand,
By toils sublime, with test of long delay,
On, to the borders of that Promised Land
Wherein their heritage of glory lay.

And Jordan raged along his rocky bed,
And Amorite spears flashed keen and fearfully:
Still the same pathway must their footsteps tread,—
Under the cloud and through the threatening sea.

God works no otherwise. No mighty birth
But comes by throes of mortal agony;
No man-child among nations of the earth
But findeth baptism in a stormy sea.

Sons of the Saints who faced their Jordan-flood
In fierce Atlantic's unretreating wave,—
Who by the Red Sea of their glorious blood
Reached to the Freedom that your blood shall save!

O Countrymen! God's day is not yet done!
He leaveth not His people utterly!
Count it a covenant, that He leads us on
Beneath the Cloud and through the crimson Sea!

JOURNAL OF A PRIVATEERSMAN.

The following journal was written by the Captain's Quartermaster on board the Sloop Revenge, of Newport, Rhode Island, on a cruise against the Spaniards in the year 1741. Rhode Island was famous at that time for the number and the success of her



privateers. There was but little objection felt to the profession of privateering. Franklin had not yet roused by his effective protest the moral sentiment of the civilized world against it. The privateers that were fitted out in those days were intended for service against foreign enemies; they were not manned by rebels, with design to ruin their loyal fellow-citizens. England and Spain were at war, and the West Indian seas were white with the sails of national fleets and private armed vessels. Privateering afforded a vent for the active and restless spirits of the colonies; it was not without some creditable associations; and the life of a privateersman was full of the charms of novelty, adventure, and risk. This journal shows something of its character.

A journal of all the transactions on board the sloop REVENGE, Benj'n Norton Com'r by God's grace and under his protection, bound on a cruising voyage against the Spaniards. Begun June the 5th, 1741.

Friday, 5th. This day, at 4 A.M., the Cap't went from Taylor's wharf on board his sloop, which lay off of Connanicut, & at 6 o'clock Cap't John Freebody [the chief owner] came off in the pinnace with several hands. We directly weighed anchor with 40 hands, officers included, bound to New York to get more hands, a Doctor, and some more provisions and other stores we stood in need of. The wind coming contrary, was obliged to put back. Came to an anchor again under Connanicut at 8 P.M.



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Saturday, 6th. Weighed from under Connanicut at 4 A.M. with a small breeze of wind. Met several vessells bound to Newport and Boston. At 7 P.M. anchored under Block Island, over against the L10,000 Pear [pier?]. Bought 10s. worth of Codfish for the people.

Sunday, 7th. About 4 A.M. weighed from Block Island, and Monday, the 8th instant, at 9 A.M., anchored in Huntington Bay.

Tuesday, 9th. Weighed from Huntington Bay at 3 P.M. At 11 came to the white stone. Fired a gun & beat the drum to let them know what we were. The Ferryboat came off & told us we could not get hands at York, for the sloops fitted by the country had got them all. At 12 came to anchor at the 2 Brothers. At 4 took an acc't of all the provisions on board, with the cost; together with a list of all the people on board. Price, a hand that came with us from Rhode Island, askt leave to go to York to see his wife. Set a shilling crazy fellow ashore, not thinking him fit to proceed the Voyage, his name unknown to me.

Wednesday, 10th. This morning, about 5 A.M., Cap't Freebody went up to York in the pinnace to get provisions and leave to beat about for more hands. At 1 P.M. the Pinnace returned and brought word to Cap't Norton from Mr. Freebody that he had waited on his Honour the Gov'r, and that he would not give him leave to beat up for Volunteers. The chief reason he gave was that the City was thinned of hands by the 2 country sloops that were fitted out by the Council to cruise after the Spanish privateers on the coast, and that his Grace the Duke of Newcastle had wrote him word, that, if Admiral Vernon or Gen. Wentworth[A] should write for more recruits, to use his endeavors to get them, so that he could not give encouragement to any privateers to take their men away. Three of the hands that went up to York left us. At 4 P.M. Edward Sampford, our pilot, went ashore in a canoe with four more hands, without leave from the Cap'n. When he came on board again the Cap'n talked to him, & found that he was a mutinous, quarrelsome fellow, and so ordered him to bundle up his clothes & go ashore for good. He carried with him 5 more hands. After they were gone, I read the articles to those on board, who readily signed; so hope we shall lead a peaceable life. Remain, out of the 41 hands that came with us from Rhode Island, 29 hands.

[Footnote A: Admiral Vernon (whose name is familiar to every American,—Mount Vernon was named in his honor) was in command of the British fleet in the Spanish Main. General Wentworth, an officer “without experience, authority, or resolution,” had command of the land forces in the West Indies. All the North American, colonies, except Georgia, which was too recently settled, and whose own borders were too much exposed, had been called upon to give aid to the expedition against the Spaniards, and a regiment thirty-six hundreds strong was actually supplied by them. The war was one in which the colonists took an active interest.]



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Friday, 12th. Went to York with a letter from the Cap'n to Mr. Freebody, who ordered the vessel up to York. Three of our hands left me to see some negroes burnt,[B] took a pilot in to bring the vessel up, and so returned on board at 3 P.M.

[Footnote B: This little, indifferent phrase refers to one of the most shocking and cruel incidents of the colonial history of New York, the result of a delusion "less notorious," says Mr. Hildreth, (*Hist, of the United States, ii. 391,*) "but not less lamentable, than the Salem witchcraft. The city of New York now contained some seven or eight thousand inhabitants, of whom twelve or fifteen hundred were slaves. Nine fires in rapid succession, most of them, however, merely the burning of chimneys, produced a perfect insanity of terror. An indented servant-woman purchased her liberty and secured a reward of one hundred pounds by pretending to give information of a plot formed by a low tavern-keeper, her master, and three negroes, to burn the city and murder the whites. This story was confirmed and amplified by an Irish prostitute convicted of a robbery, who, to recommend herself to mercy, reluctantly turned informer. Numerous arrests had been already made among the slaves and free blacks. Many others followed. The eight lawyers who then composed the bar of New York all assisted by turns in behalf of the prosecution. The prisoners, who had no counsel, were tried and convicted upon most insufficient evidence. Many confessed to save their lives, and then accused others. Thirteen unhappy convicts were burned at the stake, eighteen were hanged, and seventy-one transported." Such are the panics of a slaveholding community!]

Saturday, 13th. At 5 A.M. weighed from the 2 Brothers and went to York. At 7 anchored off the town. Saluted it with 7 guns. Ship't 7 hands to proceed the voyage.

Sunday, 14th. Between 6 & 7 A.M. came in a brig from Aberdeen with 40 servants,[C] but brings no news.

[Footnote C: At this time much of the agricultural and domestic labor in the colonies, especially south of New England, was performed by indented servants brought from Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany. They were generally an ill-used class. Their services were purchased of the captains who brought them over; the purchaser had a legal property in them during the time they were bound for, could sell or bequeath them, and, like other chattels, they were liable to be seized for debts.]

Thursday, 18th. At 11 A.M. our pilot came on board with 4 of our men that had left us when the Cap'n turned Edward Sampford ashore. At 2 P.M. the Cap'n ordered our gunner to deliver arms to them that had none. 25 hands fitted themselves. Great firing at our buoy, supposing him a Spaniard. I hope to God their courage may be as good, if ever they meet with any.

Saturday, 20th. At 10 A.M. there came in the Squirrel man of war, Cap'n Warren[D] Com'r, from Jamaica, who informed us that Admiral Vernon had taken all the forts at



Carthagená except one, and the town.[E] We saluted him with 3 guns, having no more loaded. He returned us one, and we gave three cheers, which were returned by the ship. He further told the Captain, that, if he would come up to York, he would put him on a route which would be of service to his voyage.



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[Footnote D: Captain, afterward Sir Peter Warren, was a distinguished naval officer in his day. In 1745 he was made Rear-Admiral for his services at the siege of Louisbourg. He married in New York.]

[Footnote E: The report of the taking of Cartagena was false, and the colonists were greatly disappointed at the failure of Vernon's great enterprise.]

Tuesday, 23d. Wrote a letter, by the Captain's order, to get Davison to go as mate with us. Our Captain went to York to carry it to Capt. Potter. At 3 P.M. came in a sloop from Jamaica, in a 20 days passage, from which we learn that Admiral Vernon's fleet was fitting out for Cuba.[F] I wish them more success than what they got against Carthagena; for by all report they got more blows than honour. At 4 P.M. the Captain returned and brought a hand with him, John Watson, Clerk of a Dutch church.

[Footnote F: Five hundred additional men were sent from Massachusetts to take part in this new expedition. It was a total failure, like the preceding one, and Few of the colonial troops lived to return home.]

Wednesday, 24th. About 10 A.M. the pilot came on board with a message from Capt Freebody, who was returned from Long Island, to agree with a Doctor who had offered to go with us. At 1 P.M. came in a sloop from Jamaica, a prize of Capt Warren, which had formerly been taken by the Spaniards. She belonged to Providence, and had been retaken by the Squirrel. At 6 P.M. Mr. Stone & the Doctor came on board to see the Captain, but, he being at York, they went there to see him.

Thursday, 25th. Nothing remarkable the fore part of the day, but quarreling not worth mentioning. At 1 P.M. a sloop came in from Jamaica, and brought for news that they had spoken an English man of war at Port Marant, by which they had been informed that a fresh war was daily expected; also that the Bay was entirely cut off by the Spaniards. No Doctor as yet, for he that the Captain went to agree with was a drunkard and an extortioner, so we are better without him than with him.

Friday, 26th. The most remarkablest day this great while. All has been peace & quietness. Three ships came down the Narrows, one bound to London, another bound to Newfoundland, & the third to Ireland.

Saturday, 27th. This morning, about 10, the Cap't went to York to take his leave of Cap't Freebody, who was going to Rhode Island. At 2 P.M. he came on board & brought with him 2 bb's of pork. At 3 came in a privateer from Bermudas, Capt Love Com'r, who came here for provisions for himself & his consort, who waited for him there. This day we heard that the two country sloops were expected in by Wednesday next. Lord send it, for we only wait for them in hopes of getting a Doctor & some more hands to make up our complement.



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Friday, July 3d. At 5 A.M. we saw three hands who had left us the day before on board the Humming Bird privateer, who had been enticed by some of the owners to leave us by making of them drunk. About 10 we saw their canoe going ashore with our hands in her, also Joseph Ferrow, whom we had brought from Rhode Island, and since given him clothes, but who had entered on board that sloop as boatswain. As soon as they had done watering, and were returning to the ship, we manned our pinnace, and, having boarded their canoe, took our three hands out of her, and brought them and Joseph Ferrow aboard. Some time after, the Humming Bird's canoe coming alongside, Ferrow jumpt into it, and they put off. Our pinnace being hauled up in the tackles, we immediately let her down, but unfortunately the plug was out, and the hands which had jumped into her being raw, she almost filled with water, which caused such confusion that the canoe got on board before we got off. Our hands then went to demand Ferrow, but the privateersmen got out their arms and would not suffer us to board them. At 4 P.M. the Cap' of the little Privateer came on board of us to know the reason of the disturbance between his people and ours. Our Captain told him the reason, and forbid him to carry that fellow away, for, if he did, he might chance to hear of him in the West Indies, &, if he did, he would go 100 leagues to meet him, and take ten for one, and break up his voyage, & send him home to his owners, and give his people a good dressing. (I don't doubt but he'll be as good as his word.) Opened a bbl of bread. Thunder and lightning with a great deal of rain.

Saturday, 4th. This morning, about 5 A.M., came in a ship from Marblehead bound to S'o Carolina. She had lost her main mast, mizzen mast, & fore topmast. In Latitude 35 she met with a hard gale of wind which caused the disaster, and obliged her to put in to New York to refit. About 11 o'clock the Humming Bird weighed anchor for Philadelphia to get hands. At 4 P.M. the Lieu't and 2 sergeants belonging to Capt Rigg's Company came on board to look for some soldiers who were supposed to be on board the Humming Bird, which was lying off Coney Island, but, the wind and tide proving contrary, they were obliged to return. At 6 came in a ship from Lisbon, having made the passage in 6 weeks; also a sloop from Turks Island: both loaded with salt. The ship appearing to be a lofty vessel, our people were panic struck with fear, taking her for a 70 gun ship, and, as we had several deserters from the men at war, they desired the Cap't to hoist the Jack and lower our pennant as a signal for our pinnace, which was then ashore, so that, if she proved to be a man of war, they might get ashore, and clear of the press. But it proved quite the contrary; for the ship & sloop's crew, taking us, by the signal we had made for our pinnace, for a tender of a man of war, laying there to press hands, quitted their vessels and ran ashore, as soon as they saw our pinnace manned, and made for the bushes. At night the Cap' gave the people a pail of punch to recover them of their fright. Thunder & lightning all this day.



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Sunday, 5th. At 5 A.M. shipped a hand. Our mate went ashore to get water. About 8 he returned, and informed us that the two country sloops lay at the Hook, and only waited for a pilot to bring them up, which I hope will prove true. We are all tired of staying here. At 2 P.M. weighed anchor and got nearer in shore, out of the current. Rainy, squally, windy weather. Here lie a brig bound to Newfoundland, a ship to Jamaica, and a sloop which at 6 P.M. weighed anchor, bound to Barbadoes, loaded with lumber and horses. This day being a month since we left our commission port, I have set down what quantity of provisions has been expended, viz., 9-1/2 bb's of beef, 1 bb of pork, 14 bb of Bread. Remaining, 49-1/2 bb's of beef, 29 bb's of pork, 40 cwt of bread.

Monday, 6th. About 6 A.M. came in the two Country sloops so long waited for. They were fitted out to take a Spanish privateer that has been cruising on the coast, and has taken several of our English vessels. A ship from Newfoundland also came up, and also the Humming bird privateer, which had been to meet them to get hands. Cap't Langden, Com'r of one of the above sloops, as he came alongside, gave us three cheers, which we returned. The Cap't went up to York to get a Doctor and some hands. One promised to give him an answer the next day. At 10 a hand came on board to list, but went away without signing.

Tuesday, 6th. This morning the Captain went up to York, and at last agreed with a Doctor who had been in the employ of Capt Cunningham, Com'r of one of the Privateer Sloops that came in the day before. His name is William Blake. He is a young gentleman, and well recommended by the Gen'l of York. At 6 P.M. the Captain returned on board, and brought with him a chest of medicines, a Doctor's box which cost 90L York currency; also 10 pistols and cutlasses.

Tuesday, 14th. Weighed about 2 P.M., from the Hook with the wind at W.S.W, with a fresh gale, & by God's leave and under his protection, bound on our cruise against the proud Dons, the Spaniards. The Captain ordered the people a pail of punch to drink to a good voyage. Opened a bb of beef & a tierce of bread. The people were put on allowance for the time, one pound of beef per man & 7 pounds of bread, per week.

Wednesday, 15th. At 3 P.M. set our shrouds up. There was a great, swelling sea. About 5 A.M. saw a sail under our bow, about a league distant. All hands were called upon deck, and got ready to receive her, should she prove an enemy. We fired one of our bow chasers & brought her to, and found that she was a sloop from Nantucket, Russell Master. He said he had met nothing since he had been out, which was 4 days. Our people returned to their *statu quo*, being all peaceable since they have got a Quartermaster to control them.



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Tuesday, 28th. About 5 A.M. spied a sail under our lee bow, bore down on her, and when in gunshot fired one of our bow chasers. She immediately lowered all her sails, & went astern of us. We then ordered the master to send his boat aboard, which he did, and came himself with one hand. Upon examination, we found that she was a sloop belonging to some of the subjects of his Brittanick majesty, & was taken by a Spanish privateer. The sloop had been taken off of Obricock,[G] near N. Carolina, and when taken by us was in Latitude 31 deg. 59' N., Longitude 73 deg. 6' W. The master, when he came aboard, brought three Spanish papers, which he declared to be, the first, a copy of his commission; the second, Instructions what signal to make when arrived at S't Augustine, where she was to be condemned; and the third paper was to let him know what route he was to steer. We sent our Lieu't aboard, who reported that she was loaded with Pork, Beans, Live Hogs, &c., and a horse, & had on board 2 Englishmen; the Master, who is a Frenchman born, but turned Spaniard; 3 Spaniard slaves, & one negro. Upon examination, John Evergin, one of the owners, declared that he had been taken some time in April last by Don Pedro Estrado, Cap't of the privateer that had taken this sloop, & that he forced him to list with them, and to pilot their vessel on the coast of N. Carolina, and that then they took this sloop at Obricock, on July 5'th; also 2 more sloops and a ship loaded with lumber & bound to S'o Carolina; that the Cap't of the privateer put him on board with the French master, and another Englishman, Saml Elderidge, to navigate the vessel to Augustine, and that they were making the best of their way to that place. We sent our Master on board to fetch all the papers & bring the prisoners as above mentioned. At 11 A.M. sent Jeremiah Harman & John Webb with four hands to take care of the prize, the first to be master & the other mate. The Captain gave the master & mate the following orders, viz.,—

[Footnote G: Perhaps a misspelling of Occacoke, an island on the coast of North Carolina.]

On Board the Revenge,

July 28th, 1741.

You, Jeremiah Harman, being appointed Master, & you, John Webb, mate, of a sloop taken by a Spanish privateer some time ago, belonging to some of the subjects of his Brittanick Majesty, and retaken by me by virtue of a commission granted to me by the Hon'ble Ritchard Ward, Esq., Gov'r in chief over Rhode Island & Providence plantations, &c., in New England, I order, that you keep company with my sloop, the Revenge, as long as weather will permit, & if by the Providence of God, by stormy weather, or some unforeseen accident, we should part, I then order you to proceed directly to the island of Providence, one of the Bahamia islands, and there to wait my arrival, and not to embezzle, diminish, waste, sell, or unload any part of her cargo till I am there present, under the penalty of the articles already signed by you. Upon your arrival at Providence, make a just report to his Hon'r the Gov'r of that place of the sloop & cargo, & what is on board, & how we came by her. I am y'rs,



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B. NORTON. To Jeremiah Harman, Mas'r & John Webb, mate.

For signal, hoist your Dutch jack at mast head; if we hoist first, you answer us, & do not keep it up long.

Wednesday, 29th. About 4 P.M. saw a sloop. Gave chase, but, the weather being calm, was forced to get out our oars. Fired our bow chase to bring her to; but as the people were in confusion, the ship tacking about, and the night coming on very foggy, we were unable to speak to her. By her course she was bound to the North'd. Lost sight of our prize. The two Englishmen, who were taken prisoners by the Spanish privateer, signed our articles to-day.

Saturday, Aug 1st. The prize still alongside of us. Ordered the Master to send us the negro prisoner, having been informed that he was Cap't of a Comp'y of Indians, mulattoes, and negroes, that was at the retaking of the Fort at St Augustine, which had formerly been taken while under the command of that worthiest G—O—pe,[H] who by his treachery suffered so many brave fellows to be mangled by those barbarians. The negro went under the name of Signior Capitano Francisco. Sent one of the mulattoes in his room on board the prize. Gave the people a pail of punch.

[Footnote H: General Oglethorpe, who was at this time the victim of unfavorable reports and calumnious stories, that had been spread by disaffected members of the infant settlements in Georgia, and by some of the officers who had served under him in his unsuccessful attempt to reduce the town of Saint Augustine in Florida, "The fort at Saint Augustine," to which the writer of this Journal refers, as having been taken while under the command of Oglethorpe, was Fort Moosa, three miles from Saint Augustine, where a detachment of one hundred and thirty-seven men, under Colonel Palmer of Carolina, had been attacked by a vastly superior force of Spaniards, negroes, and Indians, and had been cut off almost to a man. This misfortune seems to have been due to Colonel Palmer's disregard of Oglethorpe's orders, and Oglethorpe himself was in no way responsible for it, although the popular blame fell on his shoulders.]

Sunday, 2nd. At 1 P.M. we examined the negro, who frankly owned that he was Cap't of a Comp'y as aforesaid, & that his commission was on board the privateer; that he was in the privateer in hopes of getting to the Havanah, & that there he might get a passage to Old Spain to get the reward of his brave actions. We then askt him if it was his comp'y that had used the English so barbarously, when taken at the fort. He denied that it was his compy, but laid that cruel action to the Florida Indians, and nothing more could we get out of him. We then tied him to a gun & made the Doctor come with instruments, seemingly to treat him as they had served the English [prisoners], thinking by that means to get some confession out of him; but he still denied it. We then tried a mulatto, one that was taken with him, to find out



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if he knew anything about the matter. We gave him a dozen of stripes, but he declared that he knew nothing more than that he [the negro] had been Cap't of a Comp'y all that time. The other fellow on board the sloop, he said, knew all about it. We sent to him, & he declared the whole truth, that it was the Florida Indians who had committed the acts under his [the negro's] command, but did not know if he was consenting to it. However, to make sure, & to make him remember that he bore such a commission, we gave him 200 lashes, & having pickled him, left him to the care of the Doctor. Opened a tierce of bread and killed the 2 hogs.

Monday, 3d. Small breeze of wind. About 10 saw a schooner standing to N'ward. Gave her chase.

Tuesday, 4th. A fine breeze of wind. Still in chase of the schooner. At 5 P.M. gave her a gun, in hopes to bring her to and find out what she was; but she did not mind it, neither hoisted any colors. Then she bore down on us, tacked and bore away. We fired 10 shot, but all did not signify, for she hugged her wind, & it growing dark, and having a good pair of heels, she was soon lost sight of. We imagined she was an eastward schooner both by her build & course; but let her be what she will, she had a brave fellow for a Comr.

Wednesday, 5th. Fine breeze of wind. The man at the mast head about 2 P.M. spied 5 sail of vessels steering to the westward. Gave them chase till 1 A.M. About 2 we could see them at a great distance to leeward of us. Lay to till 4, and then began the chase again, they having got almost out of sight.

Thursday, 6th. Still in chase of the 5 vessels. Set our spritsail, topsail & squaresail, with a fair breeze of wind. One of the ships brought to and fired a gun to wait for a sloop that was in Comp' with her, & to wait for us. We took in all our small sails, bore down on her, & hoisted our pennant. When alongside of her she fired 6 shot at us, but did us no damage. We still hedged upon her, and, having given her our broadside, stood off. The sloop tacked immediately and bore down on us, in hopes to get us between them to pepper us, as we supposed. At sight of this, we gave them three cheers. Our people were all agreed to fight them, & told the Captain, if he would venture his sloop, they would venture their lives; but he seemed unwilling, and gave for reason, that the prize would be of little profit, if taken, and perhaps would not make good a limb, if it was lost. He also said we had not hands sufficient to man them, and to bring them into Providence, & to carry them to the N'ward would be the breaking up of the voyage without profit. Nevertheless we let the sloop come alongside us, & received her shot. In return we gave her a broadside & a volley of small arms with three huzzas, and then bore down on the ship, which all this time had been pelting us with her shot, but to no purpose. As we passed, we gave her a broadside which did some damage, for



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she bore down to the sloop, and never fired another shot, but careened her over and let some men down the side to stop her holes, & sent some to repair the rigging and sails, which were full of shot holes. All the damage we got was one shot through our main-sail. The ship mounted 6 guns of a side, and the sloop eight. She was a Spanish privateer, bound on a cruize to the N'ward, & had taken 5 ships & the sloop which we had retaken some time before. It grieved us to think that the fellow should go off with those prizes, which he would not have done, had the Captain been as willing to fight as we. This battle took place in the Latitude 29 deg. 26', Long. 74 deg. 30' W. But no blood was shed on our side.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DEFEAT.

When the news flashed over the country, on Monday, the 22d of July, that our army, whose advance into Virginia had been so long expected, and had been watched with such intense interest and satisfaction,—that our army had been defeated, and was flying back in disorder to the intrenchments around Washington, it was but natural that the strong revulsion of feeling and the bitter disappointment should have been accompanied by a sense of dismay, and by alarm as to what was to follow. The panic which had disgraced some of our troops at the close of the fight found its parallel in the panic in our own hearts. But as the smoke of the battle and the dust of the retreat, which overshadowed the land in a cloud of lies and exaggerations, by degrees cleared away, men regained the even balance of their minds, and felt a not unworthy shame at their transient fears.

It is now plain that our defeat at Bull Run was in no true sense a disaster; that we not only deserved it, but needed it; that its ultimate consequences are better than those of a victory would have been. Far from being disheartened by it, it should give us new confidence in our cause, in our strength, in our final success. There are lessons which every great nation must learn which are cheap at any cost, and for some of those lessons the defeat of the 21st of July was a very small price to pay. The essential question now is, Whether this schooling has been sufficient and effectual, or whether we require still further hard discipline to enforce its instructions upon us.

In this moment of pause and compelled reflection, it is for us to examine closely the spirit and motives with which we have engaged in war, and to determine the true end for which the war must be carried on. It is no time for indulging in fallacies of the fancy or in febleness of counsel. The temper of the Northern people, since the war was forced upon them, has been in large measure noble and magnanimous. The sudden interruption of peace, the prospect of a decline of long continued prosperity, were at once and manfully faced. An eager and emulous zeal in the defence of the imperilled liberties and institutions



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of the nation showed itself all over the land, and in every condition of life. None who lived through the months of April and May can ever forget the heroic and ideal sublimity of the time. But as the weeks went on, as the immediate alarm that had roused the invincible might of the people passed away, something of the spirit of over-confidence, of excited hope, of satisfied vanity mingled with and corrupted the earlier and purer emotion. The war was to be a short one. Our enemies would speedily yield before the overwhelming force arrayed against them; they would run from Northern troops; we were sure of easy victory. There was little sober foreboding, as our army set out from Washington on its great advance. The troops moved forward with exultation, as if going on a holiday and festive campaign; and the nation that watched them shared in their careless confidence, and prophesied a speedy triumph. But the event showed how far such a spirit was from that befitting a civil war like this. Never were men engaged in a cause which demanded more seriousness of purpose, more modesty and humility of pretension.

The duty before us is honorable in proportion to its difficulty. God has given us work to do not only for ourselves, but for coming generations of men. He has imposed on us a task which, if well performed, will require our most strenuous endeavors and our most patient and unremitting exertions. We are fairly engaged in a war which cannot be a short one, even though our enemies should before long lay down their arms; for it is a war not merely to support and defend the Constitution and to retake the property of the United States, not merely to settle the question of the right of a majority to control an insolent and rebellious minority in the republic, nor to establish the fact of the national existence and historic unity of the United States; but it is also and more essentially a war for the establishment of civilization in that immense portion of our country in which for many years barbarism has been gaining power. It is for the establishment of liberty and justice, of freedom of conscience and liberty of thought, of equal law and of personal rights, throughout the South. If these are not to be secured without the abolition of slavery, it is a war for the abolition of slavery. We are not making war to reestablish an old order of things, but to set up a new one. We are not giving ourselves and our fortunes for the purpose of fighting a few battles, and then making peace, restoring the Southern States to their old place in the Union,—but for the sake of destroying the root from which this war has sprung, and of making another such war impossible. It is not worth while to do only half or a quarter of our work. But if we do it thoroughly, as we ought, the war must be a long one, and will require from us long sacrifices. It is well to face up to the fact at once, that this generation is to be compelled to frugality, and that luxurious expenses

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upon trifles and superfluities must be changed for the large and liberal costliness of a noble cause. We are not to expect or hope for a speedy return of what is called prosperity; but we are greatly and abundantly prosperous, if we succeed in extending and establishing the principles which alone can give dignity and value to national or individual life, and without which, material abundance, success in trade, and increase of wealth are evidences rather of the decline than of the progress of a state. We, who have so long been eager in the pursuit and accumulation of riches, are now to show more generous energies in the free spending of our means to gain the invaluable objects for which we have gone to war. There is nothing disheartening in this prospect. Our people, accustomed as they have been during late years to the most lavish use of money, and to general extravagance in expense, have not yet lost the tradition of the economies and thrift of earlier times, and will not find it difficult to put them once more into practice. The burden will not fall upon any class; and when each man, whatever be his station in life, is called upon to lower his scale of living, no one person will find it too hard to do what all others are doing.

But if such be the objects and the prospects of the war, it is plain that they require more sober thought and more careful forecasting and more thorough preparation than have thus far been given to them. If we be the generation chosen to accomplish the work that lies ready to our hands, if we be commissioned to so glorious and so weighty an enterprise, there is but one spirit befitting our task. The war, if it is to be successful, must be a religious war: not in the old sense of that phrase, not a war of violent excitement and passionate enthusiasm, not a war in which the crimes of cruel bigots are laid to the charge of divine impulse, but a war by itself, waged with dignified and solemn strength, with clean hands and pure hearts,—a war calm and inevitable in its processes as the judgments of God. When Cromwell's men went out to win the victory at Winceby Fight, their watchword was "*Religion*." Can we in our great struggle for liberty and right adopt any other watchword than this? Do we require another defeat and more suffering to bring us to a sense of our responsibility to God for the conduct and the issue of this war?

It is only by taking the highest ground, by raising ourselves to the full conception of what is involved in this contest, that we shall secure success, and prevent ourselves from sinking to the level of those who are fighting against us. The demoralization necessarily attendant upon all wars is to be met and overcome only by simple and manly religious conviction and effort. It will be one of the advantages of defeat to have made it evident that a regiment of bullies and prize-fighters is not the best stuff to compose an army. "Your men are not vindictive enough," Mr. Russell is reported to have said,



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as he watched the battle. It was the saying of a shrewd observer, but it expresses only an imperfect apprehension of the truth. Vindictiveness is not the spirit our men should have, but a resoluteness of determination, as much more to be relied upon than a vindictive passion as it is founded upon more stable and more enduring qualities of character. The worst characters of our great cities may be the fit equals of Mississippi or Arkansas ruffians, but the mass of our army is not to be brought down to the standard of rowdies or the level of barbarians. The men of New England and of the West do not march under banners with the device of "Booty and Beauty," though General Beauregard has the effrontery to declare it, and Bishop, now General, Polk the ignorance to utter similar slanders. The atrocities committed on our wounded and prisoners by the "chivalry" of the South may excite not only horror, but a wild fury of revenge. But our cause should not be stained with cruelty and crime, even in the name of vengeance. If the war is simply one in which brute force is to prevail, if we are fighting only for lust and pride and domination, then let us have our "Ellsworth Avengers," and let us slay the wounded of our enemy without mercy; let us burn their hospitals, let us justify their, as yet, false charges against us; let us admit the truth of the words of the Bishop of Louisiana, that the North is prosecuting this war "with circumstances of barbarity which it was fondly believed would never more disgrace the annals of a civilized people." But if we, if our brothers in the army, are to lose the proud distinctions of the North, and to be brought down to the level of the tender mercies and the humane counsels of slaveholders and slave-drivers, there would be little use in fighting. If our institutions at the North do not produce better, more humane, and more courageous men than those of the South, when taken in the mass, there is no reason for the sacrifice of blood and treasure in their support. War must be always cruel; it is not to be waged on principles of tenderness; but a just, a religious war can be waged only mercifully, with no excess, with no circumstance of avoidable suffering. Our enemies are our outward consciences, and their reproaches may warn us of our dangers.

The soldiers of the Northern army generally are men capable of understanding the force of moral considerations. They are intelligent, independent, vigorous,—as good material as an army ever was formed from. A large proportion of them have gone to the war from the best motives, and with clear appreciation of the nature and grounds of the contest. But they require to be confirmed in their principles, and to be strengthened against the temptations of life in the camp and in the field, by the voice and support of the communities from which they have come. If the country is careless or indifferent as to their moral standard, they will inevitably become so themselves, and lose the perception of the objects for which they are fighting, forgetting their responsibilities, not only as soldiers, but as good men. It is one of the advantages of defeat to force the thoughts which camp-life may have rendered unfamiliar back into the soldier's mind. The boastfulness of the advance is gone,—and there is chance for sober reflection.



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It is especially necessary for our men, unaccustomed to the profession of arms, and entering at once untried upon this great war, to take a just and high view of their new calling: to look at it with the eyes, not of mercenaries, but of men called into their country's service; to regard it as a life which is not less, but more difficult than any other to be discharged with honor. "Our profession," said Washington, "is the chastest of all; even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our finest achievements." Our soldiers in Virginia, and in the other Slave States, have not only their own reputation to support, but also that of the communities from which they come. There must be a rivalry in generous efforts among the troops of different States. Shall we not now have our regiments which by their brave and honorable conduct shall win appellations not less noble than that of the *Auvergne sans tache*, "Auvergne without a stain"? If the praise that Mr. Lincoln bestowed upon our men in his late Message to Congress be not undeserved, they are bound to show qualities such as no other common soldiers have ever been called to exhibit. There are among them more men of character, intelligence, and principle than were ever seen before in the ranks. There should be a higher tone in our service than in that of any other people; and it would be a reproach to our institutions, if our soldiers did not show themselves not only steady and brave in action, undaunted in spirit, unwearied in energy, but patient of discipline, self-controlled, and forbearing. The disgrace to our arms of the defeat at Bull Run was not so great as that of the riotous drunkenness and disorderly conduct of our men during the two or three days that succeeded at Washington. If our men are to be the worthy soldiers of so magnificent a cause as that in which they are engaged, they must raise themselves to its height. Battles may be won by mere human machines, by men serving for eleven dollars a month; but a victory such as we have to gain can be won only by men who know for what and why they are fighting, and who are conscious of the dignity given to them and the responsibility imposed upon them by the sacredness of their cause. The old flag, the stars and stripes, must not only be the symbol in their eyes of past glories and of the country's honor, but its stars must shine before them with the light of liberty, and its stripes must be the emblem of the even and enduring lines of equal justice.

The retreat from Bull Run and the panic that accompanied it were not due to cowardice among our men. During long hours our troops had fought well, and showed their gallantry under the most trying circumstances. They were not afraid to die. It was not strange that raw volunteers, as many of them were, inefficiently supported, and poorly led, should at length give way before superior force, and yield to the weakness induced by exhaustion and hunger. But the lesson of defeat



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would be imperfectly learned, did not the army and the nation alike gain from it a juster sense than they before possessed of the value of individual life. Never has life been so much prized and so precious as it has become in America. Never before has each individual been of so much worth. It costs more to bring up a man here, and he is worth more when brought up, than elsewhere. The long peace and the extraordinary amount of comfort which the nation has enjoyed have made us (speaking broadly) fond of life and tender of it. We of the North have looked with astonishment at the recklessness of the South concerning it. We have thought it braver to save than to spend it; and a questionable humanity has undoubtedly led us sometimes into feeble sentimentalities, and false estimates of its value. We have been in danger of thinking too much of it, and of being mean-spirited in its use. But the first sacrifice for which war calls is life; and we must revise our estimates of its value, if we would conduct our war to a happy end. To gain that end, no sacrifice can be too precious or too costly. The shudder with which we heard the first report that three thousand of our men were slain was but the sign of the blow that our hearts received. But there must be no shrinking from the prospect of the death of our soldiers. Better than that we should fail that a million men should die on the battle-field. It is not often that men can have the privilege to offer their lives for a principle; and when the opportunity comes, it is only the coward that does not welcome it with gladness. Life is of no value in comparison with the spiritual principles from which it gains its worth. No matter how many lives it costs to defend or secure truth or justice or liberty, truth and justice and liberty must be defended and secured. Self-preservation must yield to Truth's preservation. The little human life is for to-day,—the principle is eternal. To die for truth, to die open-eyed and resolutely for the "good old cause," is not only honor, but reward. "Suffering is a gift not given to every one," said one of the Scotch martyrs in 1684, "and I desire to bless the Lord with my whole heart and soul that He has counted such a poor thing as I am worthy of the gift of suffering."

The little value of the individual in comparison with the principles upon which the progress and happiness of the race depend is a lesson enforced by the analogies of Nature, as well as by the evidence of history and the assurance of faith. Nature is careless of the single life. Her processes seem wasteful, but out of seeming waste she produces her great and durable results. Everywhere in her works are the signs of life cut short for the sake of some effect more permanent than itself. And for the establishing of those immortal foundations upon which the human race is to stand firm in virtue and in hope, for the building of the walls of truth, there will be no scanty expenditure of individual life. Men are nothing in the count,—man is everything.



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The spirit of the nation will be shown in its readiness to meet without shrinking such sacrifice of life as may be demanded in gaining our end. We must all suffer and rejoice together,—but let there be no unmanly or unwomanly fear of bloodshed. The deaths of our men from sickness, from camp epidemics, are what we should fear and prevent; death on the battle-field we have no right to dread. The men who die in this cause die well; they could wish for no more honorable end of life.

The honor lost in our recent defeat cannot be regained,—but it is indeed one of the advantages of defeat to teach men the preciousness of honor, the necessity of winning and keeping it at any cost. Honor and duty are but two names for the same thing in war. But the novelty of war is so great to us, we are so unpractised in it, and we have thought so little of it heretofore as concerning ourselves, that there is danger lest we fail at first to appreciate its finer elements, and neglect the opportunities it affords for the practice of virtues rarely called out in civil life. The common boast of the South, that there alone was to be found the chivalry of America, and that among the Southern people was a higher strain of courage and a keener sense of honor than among the people of the North, is now to be brought to the test. There is not need to repeat the commonplaces about bravery and honor. But we and our soldiers should remember that it is not the mere performance of set work that is required of them, but the valiant and generous alacrity of noble minds in deeds of daring and of courtesy. Though the science of war has in modern times changed the relations and the duties of men on the battle-field from what they were in the old days of knighthood, yet there is still room for the display of stainless valor and of manful virtue. Honor and courage are part of our religion; and the coward or the man careless of honor in our army of liberty should fall under heavier shame than ever rested on the disgraced soldier in former times. The sense of honor is finer than the common sense of the world. It counts no cost and reckons no sacrifice great. “Then the king wept, and dried his eyes, and said, ‘Your courage had neere hand destroyed you, for I call it folly knights to abide when they be overmatched.’ ‘Nay,’ said Sir Lancelot and the other, ‘for once shamed may never be recovered.’” The examples of Bayard,—*sans peur et sans reproche*,—of Sidney, of the heroes of old or recent days, are for our imitation. We are bound to be no less worthy of praise and remembrance than they. They did nothing too high for us to imitate. And in their glorious company we may hope that some of our names may yet be enrolled, to stand as the inspiring exemplars and the models for coming times. If defeat has brought us shame, it has brought us also firmer resolve. No man can be said to know himself, or to have assurance of his force of principle and character, till he has



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been tested by the fires of trial in the crucible of defeat. The same is true of a nation. The test of defeat is the test of its national worth. Defeat shows whether it deserves success. We may well be grateful and glad for our defeat of the 21st of July, if we wrest from it the secrets of our weakness, and are thrown back by it to the true sources of strength. If it has done its work thoroughly, if we profit sufficiently by the advantages it has afforded us, we may be well content that so slight a harm has brought us so great a good. But if not, then let us be ready for another and another defeat, till our souls shall be tempered and our forces disciplined for the worthy attainment of victory. For victory we shall in good time have. There is no need to fear or be doubtful of the issue. As soon as we deserve it, victory will be ours; and were we to win it before, it would be but an empty and barren triumph. All history is but the prophecy of our final success,—and Milton has put the prophecy into words: “Go on, O Nation, never to be disunited! Be the praise and the heroic song of all posterity! Merit this, but seek only virtue, not to extend your limits, (for what needs to win a fading triumphant laurel out of the tears of wretched men?) but to settle the pure worship of God in his church, and justice in the state. Then shall the hardest difficulties smooth out themselves before thee; envy shall sink to hell, craft and malice be confounded, whether it be home-bred mischief or outlandish cunning; yea, other nations will then covet to serve thee, for lordship and victory are but the pages of justice and virtue. Use thine invincible might to do worthy and godlike deeds, and then he that seeks to break your union a cleaving curse be his inheritance to all generations!”

* * * * *

ODE TO HAPPINESS.

I.

Spirit, that rarely comest now,
And only to contrast my gloom,
Like rainbow-feathered birds that bloom
A moment on some autumn bough
Which, with the spurn of their farewell,
Sheds its last leaves,—thou once didst dwell
With me year-long, and make intense
To boyhood’s wisely-vacant days
That fleet, but all-sufficing grace
Of trustful inexperience,
While yet the soul transfigured sense,
And thrilled, as with love’s first caress,
At life’s mere unexpectedness.



II.

Those were thy days, blithe spirit, those
When a June sunshine could fill up
The chalice of a buttercup
With such Falernian juice as flows
No longer,—for the vine is dead
Whence that inspiring drop was shed:
Days when my blood would leap and run,
As full of morning as a breeze,
Or spray tossed up by summer seas
That doubts if it be sea or sun;
Days that flew swiftly, like the band
That in the Grecian games had strife
And passed from eager hand to hand
The onward-dancing torch of life.



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III.

Wing-footed! thou abid'st with him
Who asks it not; but he who hath
Watched o'er the waves thy fading path
Shall nevermore on ocean's rim,
At morn or eve, behold returning
Thy high-heaped canvas shoreward yearning!
Thou first reveal'st to us thy face
Turned o'er the shoulder's parting grace,
A moment glimpsed, then seen no more,—
Thou whose swift footsteps we can trace
Away from every mortal door!

IV.

Nymph of the unreturning feet,
How may I woo thee back? But no,
I do thee wrong to call thee so;
'Tis we are changed, not thou art fleet:
The man thy presence feels again
Not in the blood, but in the brain,
Spirit, that lov'st the upper air,
Serene and vaporless and rare,
Such as on mountain-heights we find
And wide-viewed uplands of the mind,
Or such as scorns to coil and sing
Round any but the eagle's wing
Of souls that with long upward beat
Have won an undisturbed retreat,
Where, poised like winged victories,
They mirror in unflinching eyes
The life broad-basking 'neath their feet,—
Man always with his Now at strife,
Pained with first gasps of earthly air,
Then begging Death the last to spare,
Still fearful of the ampler life.

V.

Not unto them dost thou consent
Who, passionless, can lead at ease
A life of unalloyed content,
A life like that of landlocked seas,



That feel no elemental gush
Of tidal forces, no fierce rush
Of storm deep-grasping, scarcely spent
'Twi'xt continent and continent:
Such quiet souls have never known
Thy truer inspiration, thou
Who lov'st to feel upon thy brow
Spray from the plunging vessel thrown,
Grazing the tusked lee shore, the cliff
That o'er the abrupt gorge holds its breath,
Where the frail hair's-breadth of an If
Is all that sunders life and death:
These, too, are cared for, and round these
Bends her mild crook thy sister Peace;
These in unvexed dependence lie
Each 'neath his space of household sky;
O'er them clouds wander, or the blue
Hangs motionless the whole day through;
Stars rise for them, and moons grow large
And lessen in such tranquil wise
As joys and sorrows do that rise
Within their nature's sheltered marge;
Their hours into each other flit,
Like the leaf-shadows of the vine
And fig-tree under which they sit;
And their still lives to heaven incline
With an unconscious habitude,
Unhistoried as smokes that rise
From happy hearths and sight elude
In kindred blue of morning skies.

VI.



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Wayward! when once we feel thy lack,
'Tis worse than vain to tempt thee back!
Yet there is one who seems to be
Thine elder sister, in whose eyes
A faint, far northern light will rise
Sometimes and bring a dream of thee:
She is not that for which youth hoped;
But she hath blessings all her own,
Thoughts pure as lilies newly oped,
And faith to sorrow given alone:
Almost I deem that it is thou
Come back with graver matron brow,
With deepened eyes and bated breath,
Like one who somewhere had met Death.
“But no,” she answers, “I am she
Whom the gods love, Tranquillity;
That other whom you seek forlorn.
Half-earthly was; but I am born
Of the immortals, and our race
Have still some sadness in our face:
He wins me late, but keeps me long,
Who, dowered with every gift of passion,
In that fierce flame can forge and fashion
Of sin and self the anchor strong;
Can thence compel the driving force
Of daily life’s mechanic course,
Nor less the nobler energies
Of needful toil and culture wise:
Whose soul is worth the tempter’s lure,
Who can renounce and yet endure,
To him I come, not lightly wooed,
And won by silent fortitude.”

* * * * *

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

Florence, July 5th, 1861.

“When some beloved voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness faileth suddenly,
And silence, against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new,—
What hope? what help? what music will undo



That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,—
Not reason's subtle count,—not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew,—
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales,
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress-trees
To the clear moon,—nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted,—nor the angels' sweet All-hails,
Met in the smile of God. Nay, none of these!
Speak THOU, availing Christ, and fill this pause!"

Thus sang the Muse of a great woman years ago; and now, alas! she, who, with constant suffering of her own, was called upon to grieve often for the loss of near and dear ones, has suddenly gone from among us, "and silence, against which we dare not cry, aches round us like a strong disease and new." Her own beautiful words are our words, the world's words,—and though the tears fall faster and thicker, as we search for all that is left of her in the noble poems which she bequeaths to humanity, there follows the sad consolation in feeling assured that she above all others *felt* the full value of life, the full value of death, and was prepared to meet her God humbly, yet joyfully, whenever He should claim her for His own. Her life was one long, large-souled, large-hearted prayer for the triumph of Right, Justice, Liberty; and she who lived for others was



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“poet true,
Who died for Beauty, as martyrs do
For Truth,—the ends being scarcely two.”

Beauty was truth with her, the wife, mother, and poet, three in one, and such an earthly trinity as God had never before blessed the world with.

This day week, at half-past four o'clock in the morning, Mrs. Browning died. A great invalid from girlhood, owing to an unfortunate accident, Mrs. Browning's life was a prolonged combat with disease thereby engendered; and had not God given her extraordinary vitality of spirit, the frail body could never have borne up against the suffering to which it was doomed. Probably there never was a greater instance of the power of genius over the weakness of the flesh. Confined to her room in the country or city home of her father in England, Elizabeth Barrett developed into the great artist and scholar.

From her couch went forth those poems which have crowned her as “the world's greatest poetess”; and on that couch, where she lay almost speechless at times, and seeing none but those friends dearest and nearest, the soul-woman struck deep into the roots of Latin and Greek, and drank of their vital juices. We hold in kindly affection her learned and blind teacher, Hugh Stuart Boyd, who, she tells us, was “enthusiastic for the good and the beautiful, and one of the most simple and upright of human beings.” The love of his grateful scholar, when called upon to mourn the good man's death, embalms his memory among her Sonnets, where she addresses him as her

“Beloved friend, who, living many years
With sightless eyes raised vainly to the sun,
Didst learn to keep thy patient soul in tune
To visible Nature's elemental cheers!”

Nor did this “steadfast friend” forget his poet-pupil ere he went to “join the dead”:—

“Three gifts the Dying left me,—Aeschylus,
And Gregory Nazianzen, and a clock
Chiming the gradual hours out like a flock
Of stars, whose motion is melodious.”

We catch a glimpse of those communings over “our Sophocles the royal,” “our Aeschylus the thunderous,” “our Euripides the human,” and “my Plato the divine one,” in her pretty poem of “Wine of Cyprus,” addressed to Mr. Boyd. The woman translates the remembrance of those early lessons into her heart's verse:—

“And I think of those long mornings
Which my thought goes far to seek,



When, betwixt the folio's turnings,
Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek.
Past the pane, the mountain spreading,
Swept the sheep-bell's tinkling noise,
While a girlish voice was reading,—
Somewhat low for [Greek: ais] and [Greek: ois].”

These “golden hours” were not without that earnest argument so welcome to candid minds:—

“For we sometimes gently wrangled,
Very gently, be it said,—
Since our thoughts were disentangled
By no breaking of the thread!
And I charged you with extortions
On the nobler fames of old,—
Ay, and sometimes thought your Persons
Stained the purple they would fold.”



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What high honor the scholar did her friend and teacher, and how nobly she could interpret the “rhythmic Greek,” let those decide who have read Mrs. Browning’s translations of “Prometheus Bound” and Bion’s “Lament for Adonis.”

Imprisoned within the four walls of her room, with books for her world and large humanity for her thought, the lamp of life burning so low at times that a feather would be placed on her lips to prove that there was still breath, Elizabeth Barrett read and wrote, and “heard the nations praising” her “far off.” She loved

“Art for art,
And good for God himself, the essential Good,”

until destiny (a destiny with God in it) brought two poets face to face and heart to heart. Mind had met mind and recognized its peer previously to that personal interview which made them one in soul; but it was not until after an acquaintance of two years that Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning were united in marriage for time and for eternity, a marriage the like of which can seldom be recorded. What wealth of love she could give is evidenced in those exquisite sonnets purporting to be from the Portuguese, the author being too modest to christen them by their right name, *Sonnets from the Heart*. None have failed to read the truth through this slight veil, and to see the woman more than the poet in such lines as these:—

“I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange
My near sweet view of heaven for earth with thee!”

We have only to turn to the concluding poem in “Men and Women,” inscribed to E.B.B., to see how reciprocal was this great love.

From their wedding-day Mrs. Browning seemed to be endowed with new life. Her health visibly improved, and she was enabled to make excursions in England prior to her departure for the land of her adoption, Italy, where she found a second and a dearer home. For nearly fifteen years Florence and the Brownings have been one in the thoughts of many English and Americans; and Casa Guidi, which has been immortalized by Mrs. Browning’s genius, will be as dear to the Anglo-Saxon traveller as Milton’s Florentine residence has been heretofore. Those who now pass by Casa Guidi fancy an additional gloom has settled upon the dark face of the old palace, and grieve to think that those windows from which a spirit-face witnessed two Italian revolutions, and those large mysterious rooms where a spirit-hand translated the great Italian Cause into burning verse, and pleaded the rights of humanity in “Aurora Leigh,” are hereafter to be the passing homes of the thoughtless or the unsympathizing.



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Those who have known Casa Guidi as it was could hardly enter the loved rooms now and speak above a whisper. They who have been so favored can never forget the square anteroom, with its great picture and piano-forte, at which the boy Browning passed many an hour,—the little dining-room covered with tapestry, and where hung medallions of Tennyson, Carlyle, and Robert Browning,—the long room filled with plaster casts and studies, which was Mr. Browning's retreat,—and, dearest of all, the large drawing-room, where she always sat. It opens upon a balcony filled with plants, and looks out upon the old iron-gray church of Santa Felice. There was something about this room that seemed to make it a proper and especial haunt for poets. The dark shadows and subdued light gave it a dreamy look, which was enhanced by the tapestry-covered walls and the old pictures of saints that looked out sadly from their carved frames of black wood. Large book-cases, constructed of specimens of Florentine carving selected by Mr. Browning, were brimming over with wise-looking books. Tables were covered with more gayly bound volumes, the gifts of brother authors. Dante's grave profile, a cast of Keats's face and brow taken after death, a pen-and-ink sketch of Tennyson, the genial face of John Kenyon, Mrs. Browning's good friend and relative, little paintings of the boy Browning, all attracted the eye in turn, and gave rise to a thousand musings. A quaint mirror, easy-chairs and sofas, and a hundred nothings that always add an indescribable charm, were all massed in this room. But the glory of all, and that which sanctified all, was seated in a low arm-chair near the door. A small table, strewn with writing-materials, books, and newspapers, was always by her side.

To those who loved Mrs. Browning (and to know her was to love her) she was singularly attractive. Hers was not the beauty of feature; it was the loftier beauty of expression. Her slight figure seemed hardly large enough to contain the great heart that beat so fervently within, and the soul that expanded more and more as one year gave place to another. It was difficult to believe that such a fairy hand could pen thoughts of such ponderous weight, or that such a "still small voice" could utter them with equal force. But it was Mrs. Browning's face upon which one loved to gaze,—that face and head which almost lost themselves in the thick curls of her dark brown hair. That jealous hair could not hide the broad, fair forehead, "royal with the truth," as smooth as any girl's, and

"Too large for wreath of modern wont."

Her large brown eyes were beautiful, and were in truth the windows of her soul. They combined the confidingness of a child with the poet-passion of heart and of intellect; and in gazing into them it was easy to read *why* Mrs. Browning wrote. God's inspiration was her motive power, and in her eyes was the reflection of this higher light.



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“And her smile it seemed half holy,
As if drawn from thoughts more far
Than our common jestings are.”

Mrs. Browning's character was wellnigh perfect. Patient in long suffering, she never spoke of herself, except when the subject was forced upon her by others, and then with no complaint. She *judged not*, saving when great principles were imperilled, and then was ready to sacrifice herself upon the altar of Right. Forgiving as she wished to be forgiven, none approached her with misgivings, knowing her magnanimity. She was ever ready to accord sympathy to all, taking an earnest interest in the most insignificant, and so humble in her greatness that her friends looked upon her as a divinity among women. Thoughtful in the smallest things for others, she seemed to give little thought to herself; and believing in universal goodness, her nature was free from worldly suspicions. The first to see merit, she was the last to censure faults, and gave the praise that she *felt* with a generous hand. No one so heartily rejoiced at the success of others, no one was so modest in her own triumphs, which she looked upon more as a favor of which she was unworthy than as a right due to her. She loved all who offered her affection, and would solace and advise with any. She watched the progress of the world with tireless eye and beating heart, and, anxious for the good of the *whole* world, scorned to take an insular view of any political question. With her a political question was a moral question as well. Mrs. Browning belonged to no particular country; the world was inscribed upon the banner under which she fought. Wrong was her enemy; against this she wrestled, in whatever part of the globe it was to be found.

A noble devotion to and faith in the regeneration of Italy was a prominent feature in Mrs. Browning's life. To her, Italy was from the first a living fire, not the bed of dead ashes at which the world was wont to sneer. Her trust in God and the People was supreme; and when the Revolution of 1848 kindled the passion of liberty from the Alps to Sicily, she, in common with many another earnest spirit, believed that the hour for the fulfilment of her hopes had arrived. Her joyful enthusiasm at the Tuscan uprising found vent in the “Eureka” which she sang with so much fervor in Part First of “Casa Guidi Windows.”

“But never say ‘No more’
To Italy's life! Her memories undismayed
Still argue ‘Evermore’; her graves implore
Her future to be strong and not afraid;
Her very statues send their looks before.”

And even she was ready to believe that a Pope *might* be a reformer.

“Feet, knees, and sinews, energies divine,
Were never yet too much for men who ran
In such hard ways as must be this of thine,
Deliverer whom we seek, whoe'er thou art,



Pope, prince, or peasant! If, indeed, the first,
The noblest therefore! since the heroic heart
Within thee must be great enough to burst
Those trammels buckling to the baser part
Thy saintly peers in Rome, who crossed and cursed
With the same finger.”



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The Second Part of “Casa Guidi Windows” is a sad sequel to the First, but Mrs. Browning does not deride. She bows before the inevitable, but is firm in her belief of a future living Italy.

“In the name of Italy
Meantime her patriot dead have benison;
They only have done well;—and what they did
Being perfect, it shall triumph. Let them slumber!”

Her short-lived credence in the good faith of Popes was buried with much bitterness of heart:—

“And peradventure other eyes may see,
From Casa Guidi windows, what is done
Or undone. Whatsoever deeds they be,
Pope Pius will be glorified in none.”

It is a matter of great thankfulness that God permitted Mrs. Browning to witness the second Italian revolution before claiming her for heaven. No patriot Italian, of whatever high degree, gave greater sympathy to the aspirations of 1859 than Mrs. Browning, an echo of which the world has read in her “Poems before Congress” and still later contributions to the New York “Independent.” Great was the moral courage of this frail woman to publish the “Poems before Congress” at a time when England was most suspicious of Napoleon. Greater were her convictions, when she abased England and exalted France for the cold neutrality of the one and the generous aid of the other in this war of Italian independence. Bravely did she bear up against the angry criticism excited by such anti-English sentiment. Strong in her right, Mrs. Browning was willing to brave the storm, confident that truth would prevail in the end. Apart from certain *tours de force* in rhythm, there is much that is grand and as much that is beautiful in these Poems, while there is the stamp of *power* upon every page. It is felt that a great soul is in earnest about vital principles, and earnestness of itself is a giant as rare as forcible. Though there are few now who look upon Napoleon as

“Larger so much by the heart”

than others “who have governed and led,” there are many who acknowledge him to be

“Larger so much by the head,”

and regard him as she did,—Italy’s best friend in the hour of need. Her disciples are increasing, and soon “Napoleon III. in Italy” will be read with the admiration which it deserves.



Beautiful in its pathos is the poem of “A Court Lady,” and there are few satires more biting than “An August Voice,” which, as an interpretation of the Napoleonic words, is perfect. Nor did she fail to vindicate the Peace of Villafranca:—

“But He stood sad before the sun
(The peoples felt their fate):
'The world is many,—I am one;
My great Deed was too great.
God's fruit of justice ripens slow:
Men's souls are narrow; let them grow.
My brothers, we must wait.”

And truly, what Napoleon then failed, from opposition, to accomplish by the sword, has since been, to a great extent, accomplished by diplomacy.



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But though Mrs. Browning wrote her "Tale of Villafranca" in full faith, after many a milestone in time lay between her and the *fact*, her friends remember how the woman bent and was wellnigh crushed, as by a thunderbolt, when the intelligence of this Imperial Treaty was first received. Coming so quickly upon the heels of the victories of Solferino and San Martino, it is no marvel that what stunned Italy should have almost killed Mrs. Browning. That it hastened her into the grave is beyond a doubt, as she never fully shook off the severe attack of illness occasioned by this check upon her life-hopes. The summer of 1859 was a weary, suffering season for her in consequence; and although the following winter, passed in Rome, helped to repair the evil that had been wrought, a heavy cold, caught at the end of the season, (and for the sake of seeing Rome's gift of swords to Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel,) told upon her lungs. The autumn of 1860 brought with it another sorrow in the death of a beloved sister, and this loss seemed more than Mrs. Browning could bear; but by breathing the soft air of Rome again she seemed to revive, and indeed wrote that she was "better in body and soul."

Those who have known Mrs. Browning in later years thought she never looked better than upon her return to Florence in the first days of last June, although the overland journey had been unusually fatiguing to her. But the meeting was a sad one; for Cavour had died, and the national loss was as severe to her as a personal bereavement. Her deep nature regarded Italy's benefactor in the light of a friend; for had he not labored unceasingly for that which was the burden of her song? and could she allow so great a man to pass away without many a heart-ache? It is as sublime as it is rare to see such intense appreciation of great deeds as Mrs. Browning could give. Her fears, too, for Italy, when the patriot pilot was hurried from the helm, gave rise to much anxiety, until quieted by the assuring words of the new minister, Ricasoli.

Nor was Mrs. Browning so much engrossed in the Italian regeneration that she had no thought for other nations and for other wrongs. Her interest in America was very great,

"For poets, (bear the word!)
Half-poets even, are still whole democrats:
Oh, not that we're disloyal to the high,
But loyal to the low, and cognizant
Of the less scrutable majesties."

In Mrs. Browning's poem of "A Curse for a Nation," where she foretold the agony in store for America, and which has fallen upon us with the swiftness of lightning, she was loath to raise her poet's voice against us, pleading,—

"For I am hound by gratitude,
By love and blood,
To brothers of mine across the sea,
Who stretch out kindly hands to me."



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And in one of her last letters, addressed to an American friend who had reminded her of her prophecy and of its present fulfilment, she replied,—“Never say that I have ‘cursed’ your country. I only *declared the consequence of the evil* in her, and which has since developed itself in thunder and flame. I feel with more pain than many Americans do the sorrow of this transition-time; but I do know that it *is* transition, that it *is* crisis, and that you will come out of the fire purified, stainless, having had the angel of a great cause walking with you in the furnace.” Are not such burning, hopeful words from such a source—worthy of the grateful memory of the Americans? Our cause has lost an ardent supporter in Mrs. Browning; and did we dare rebel against God’s will, we should grieve deeply that she was not permitted to glorify the Right in America as she has glorified it in Italy. Among the last things that she read were Motley’s letters on the “American Crisis,” and the writer will ever hold in dear memory the all but final conversation had with Mrs. Browning, in which these letters were discussed and warmly approved. In referring to the attitude taken by foreign nations with regard to America, she said,—“Why do you heed what others say? You are strong, and can do without sympathy; and when you have triumphed, your glory will be the greater.” Mrs. Browning’s most enthusiastic admirers are Americans; and I am sure, that, now she is no longer of earth, they will love her the more for her sympathy in the cause which is nearest to all hearts.

Mrs. Browning’s conversation was most interesting. It was not characterized by sallies of wit or brilliant repartee, nor was it of that nature which is most welcome in society. It was frequently intermingled with trenchant, quaint remarks, leavened with a quiet, graceful humor of her own; but it was eminently calculated for a *tete-a-tete*. Mrs. Browning never made an insignificant remark. All that she said was *always* worth hearing;—a greater compliment could not be paid her. She was a most conscientious listener, giving you her mind and heart, as well as her magnetic eyes. Though the latter spoke an eager language of their own, she conversed slowly, with a conciseness and point that, added to a matchless earnestness, which was the predominant trait of her conversation as it was of her character, made her a most delightful companion. *Persons* were never her theme, unless public characters were under discussion, or friends were to be praised,—which kind office she frequently took upon herself. One never dreamed of frivolities in Mrs. Browning’s presence, and gossip felt itself out of place. *Yourself* (not *herself*) was always a pleasant subject to her, calling out all her best sympathies in joy, and yet more in sorrow. Books and humanity, great deeds, and, above all, politics, which include all the grand questions of the day, were foremost in her thoughts, and therefore oftenest on her lips. I speak not of religion, for with her everything was religion. Her Christianity was not confined to church and rubric: it meant *civilization*.



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Association with the Brownings, even though of the slightest nature, made one better in mind and soul. It was impossible to escape the influence of the magnetic fluid of love and poetry that was constantly passing between husband and wife. The unaffected devotion of one to the other wove an additional charm around the two, and the very contrasts in their natures made the union a more beautiful one. All remember Mrs. Browning's pretty poem on her "Pet Name":—

"I have a name, a little name,
Uncadenced for the ear,
Unhonored by ancestral claim,
Unsanctified by prayer and psalm
The solemn font anear.

* * * * *

"My brother gave that name to me,
When we were children twain,—
When names acquired baptismally
Were hard to utter, as to see
That life had any pain."

It was this pet name of two small letters lovingly combined that dotted Mr. Browning's spoken thoughts, as moonbeams fleck the ocean, and seemed the pearl-bead that linked conversation together in one harmonious whole. But what was written has now come to pass. The pet name is engraved only in the hearts of a few.

"Though I write books, it will be read
Upon the leaves of none;
And afterward, when I am dead,
Will ne'er be graved, for sight or tread,
Across my funeral stone."

Mrs. Browning's letters are masterpieces of their kind. Easy and conversational, they touch upon no subject without leaving an indelible impression of the writer's originality; and the myriad matters of universal interest with which many of them are teeming will render them a precious legacy to the world, when the time shall have arrived for their publication. Of late, Italy has claimed the lion's share in these unrhymed sketches of Mrs. Browning in the *negligee* of home. Prose has recorded all that poetry threw aside; and thus much political thought, many an anecdote, many a reflection, and much womanly enthusiasm have been stored up for the benefit of more than the persons to whom these letters were addressed. And while we wait patiently for this great pleasure, which must sooner or later be enjoyed and appreciated, we may gather a foretaste of Mrs. Browning's power in prose-writing from her early essays, and from the admirable



preface to the "Poems before Congress." The latter is simple in its style, and grand in teachings that find few followers among *nations* in these *enlightened* days.

Some are prone to moralize over precious stones, and see in them the petrified souls of men and women. There is no stone so sympathetic as the opal, which one might fancy to be a concentration of Mrs. Browning's genius. It is essentially the *woman-stone*, giving out a sympathetic warmth, varying its colors from day to day, as though an index of the heart's barometer. There is the topmost purity of white, blended with the delicate, perpetual verdure of hope, and down in the opal's centre lies the deep crimson of love. The red, the white, and the green, forming as they do the colors of Italy, render the opal doubly like Mrs. Browning. It is right that the woman-stone should inclose the symbols of the "Woman Country."



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Feeling all these things of Mrs. Browning, it becomes the more painful to place on record an account of those last days that have brought with them so universal a sorrow. Mrs. Browning's illness was only of a week's duration. Having caught a severe cold of a more threatening nature than usual, medical skill was summoned; but, although anxiety in her behalf was necessarily felt, there was no whisper of great danger until the third or fourth night, when those who most loved her said they had never seen her so ill; on the following morning, however, she was better, and from that moment was thought to be improving in health. She herself believed this; and all had such confidence in her wondrous vitality, and the hope was so strong that God would spare her for still greater good, that a dark veil was drawn over what might be. It is often the case, where we are accustomed to associate constant suffering with dear friends, that we calmly look danger in the face without misgivings. So little did Mrs. Browning realize her critical condition, that, until the last day, she did not consider herself sufficiently indisposed to remain in bed, and then the precaution was accidental. So much encouraged did she feel with regard to herself, that, on this final evening, an intimate female friend was admitted to her bedside and found her in good spirits, ready at pleasantry and willing to converse on all the old loved subjects. Her ruling passion had prompted her to glance at the "Athenaeum" and "Nazione"; and when this friend repeated the opinions she had heard expressed by an acquaintance of the new Italian Premier, Ricasoli, to the effect that his policy and Cavour's were identical, Mrs. Browning "smiled like Italy," and thankfully replied,—*"I am glad of it; I thought so."* Even then her thoughts were not of self. This near friend went away with no suspicion of what was soon to be a terrible reality. Mrs. Browning's own bright boy bade his mother goodnight, cheered by her oft-repeated, *"I am better, dear, much better."* Inquiring friends were made happy by these assurances.

One only watched her breathing through the night,—he who for fifteen years had ministered to her with all the tenderness of a woman. It was a night devoid of suffering *to her*. As morning approached, and for two hours previous to the dread moment, she seemed to be in a partial ecstasy; and though not apparently conscious of the coming on of death, she gave her husband all those holy words of love, all the consolation of an oft-repeated blessing, whose value death has made priceless. Such moments are too sacred for the common pen, which pauses as the woman-poet raises herself up to die in the arms of her poet-husband. He knew not that death had robbed him of his treasure, until the drooping form grew chill and froze his heart's blood.

At half-past four, on the morning of the 29th of June, Elizabeth Barrett Browning died of congestion of the lungs. Her last words were, *"It is beautiful!"* God was merciful to the end, sparing her and hers the agony of a frenzied parting, giving proof to those who were left of the glory and happiness in store for her, by those few words, *"It is beautiful!"* The spirit could see its future mission even before shaking off the dust of the earth.



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Gazing on her peaceful face with its eyes closed on us forever, our cry was *her* "Cry of the Human."

"We tremble by the harmless bed
Of one loved and departed;
Our tears drop on the lips that said
Last night, 'Be stronger-hearted!'
O God! to clasp those fingers close,
And yet to feel so lonely!
To see a light upon such brows,
Which is the daylight only!
Be pitiful, O God!"

On the evening of July 1st, the lovely English burying-ground without the walls of Florence opened its gates to receive one more occupant. A band of English, Americans, and Italians, sorrowing men and women, whose faces as well as dress were in mourning, gathered around the bier containing all that was mortal of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Who of those present will forget the solemn scene, made doubly impressive by the grief of the husband and son? "The sting of death is sin," said the clergyman. Sinless in life, *her* death, then, was without sting; and turning our thoughts inwardly, we murmured *her* prayers for the dead, and wished that they might have been her burial-service. We heard her poet-voice saying,—

"And friends, dear friends, when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let one most loving of you all
Say, 'Not a tear must o'er her fall,—
He giveth His beloved sleep.'"

But the tears would fall, as they bore her up the hill, and lowered "His beloved" into her resting-place, the grave. The sun itself was sinking to rest behind the western hills, and sent a farewell smile of love into the east, that it might glance on the lowering bier. The distant mountains hid their faces in a misty veil, and the tall cypress-trees of the cemetery swayed and sighed as Nature's special mourners for her favored child; and there they are to stand keeping watch over her.

"Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west, *Toll slowly!* And I said in under-breath, All our life is mixed with death, And who knoweth which is best?

* * * * *



“Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west, *Toll slowly!* And I ‘paused’ to think God’s greatness flowed around our incompleteness,— Round our restlessness, His rest.”

Dust to dust,—and the earth fell with a dull echo on the coffin. We gathered round to take one look, and saw a double grave, too large for her;—may it wait long and patiently for *him!*

And now a mound of earth marks the spot where sleeps Elizabeth Barrett Browning. A white wreath to mark her woman’s purity lies on her head; the laurel wreath of the poet lies at her feet; and friendly hands scatter white flowers over the grave of a week as symbols of the dead.

We feel as she wrote,—

“God keeps a niche
In heaven to hold our idols; and albeit
He brake them to our faces, and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust swept from their beauty, glorified,
New Memnons singing in the great God-light.”



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It is strange that Cavour and Mrs. Browning should have died in the same month, within twenty-three days of each other,—the one the head, the other the heart of Italy. As head and heart made up the perfect life, so death was not complete until Heaven welcomed both. It seemed also strange, that on the night after Mrs. Browning's decease an unexpected comet should glare ominously out of the sky. For the moment we were superstitious, and believed in it as a minister of woe.

Great as is this loss, Mrs. Browning's death is not without a sad consolation. From the shattered condition of her lungs, the physician feels assured that existence could not at the farthest have been prolonged for more than six months. Instead of a sudden call to God, life would have slowly ebbed away; and, too feeble for the slightest exertion, she must have been denied the solace of books, of friends, of writing, perhaps of thought even. God saved her from a living grave, and her husband from protracted misery. Seeking for the shadow of Mrs. Browning's self in her poetry, (for she was a rare instance of an author's superiority to his work,) many an expression is found that welcomes the thought of a change which would free her from the suffering inseparable from her mortality. There is a yearning for a more fully developed life, to be found most frequently in her sonnets. She writes at times as though, through weakness of the body, her wings were tied:—

“When I attain to utter forth in verse
Some inward thought, my soul throbs audibly
Along my pulses, yearning to be free,
And something farther, fuller, higher rehearse,
To the individual true, and the universe,
In consummation of right harmony!
But, like a wind-exposed, distorted tree,
We are blown against forever by the curse
Which breathes through Nature. Oh, the world is weak;
The effluence of each is false to all;
Add what we best conceive, we fail to speak!
Wait, soul, until thine ashen garments fall,
And then resume thy broken strains, and seek
Fit peroration without let or thrall!”

The “ashen garments” have fallen,—

“And though we must have and have had
Right reason to be earthly sad,
Thou Poet-God art great and glad!”

It was meet that Mrs. Browning should come home to die in her Florence, in her Casa Guidi, where she had passed her happy married life, where her boy was born, and where she had watched and rejoiced over the second birth of a great nation. Her heart-



strings did not entwine themselves around Rome as around Florence, and it seems as though life had been so eked out that she might find a lasting sleep in Florence. Rome holds fast its Shelley and Keats, to whose lowly graves there is many a reverential pilgrimage; and now Florence, no less honored, has its shrine sacred to the memory of Theodore Parker and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.



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The present Florence is not the Florence of other days. It can never be the same to those who loved it as much for Mrs. Browning's sake as for its own. Her reflection remains and must ever remain; for,

“while she rests, her songs in troops
Walk up and down our earthly slopes,
Companions by diviner hopes.”

The Italians have shown much feeling at the loss which they, too, have sustained,—more than might have been expected, when it is considered that few of them are conversant with the English language, and that to those few English poetry (Byron excepted) is unknown.

A battalion of the National Guard was to have followed Mrs. Browning's remains to the grave, had not a misunderstanding as to time frustrated this testimonial of respect. The Florentines have expressed great interest in the young boy, Tuscan-born, and have even requested that he should be educated as an Italian, when any career in the new Italy should be open to him. Though this offer will not be accepted, it was most kindly meant, and shows with what reverence Florence regards the name of Browning. Mrs. Browning's friends are anxious that a tablet to her memory should be placed in the Florentine Pantheon, the Church of Santa Croce. It is true she was not a Romanist, neither was she an Italian,—yet she was Catholic, and more than an Italian. Her genius and what she has done for Italy entitle her to companionship with Galileo, Michel Angelo, Dante, and Alfieri. The friars who have given their permission for the erection of a monument to Cavour in Santa Croce ought willingly to make room for a tablet on which should be inscribed,

SHE SANG THE SONG OF ITALY.
SHE WROTE “AURORA LEIGH.”

REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

Edwin of Deira. By ALEXANDER SMITH. London: Macmillan & Co. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 16mo.

A third volume of verse by Alexander Smith certainly claims a share of public attention. We should not be at all surprised, if this, his latest venture, turn out his most approved one. The volcanic lines in his earlier pieces drew upon him the wrath of Captain Stab and many younger officers of justice, till then innocent of ink-shed. The old weapons will, no doubt, be drawn upon him profusely enough now. Suffice it for us, this month, if we send to the printer a taste of Alexander's last feast and ask him to “hand it round.”

* * * * *



BERTHA.

“So, in the very depth of pleasant May,
When every hedge was milky white, the lark
A speck against a cape of sunny cloud,
Yet heard o’er all the fields, and when his heart
Made all the world as happy as itself,—
Prince Edwin, with a score of lusty knights,
Rode forth a bridegroom to bring home his bride.
Brave sight it was to see them on their way,
Their long white mantles ruffling in the



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wind,

Their jewelled bridles, horses keen as flame
Crushing the flowers to fragrance as they moved!
Now flashed they past the solitary crag,
Now glimmered through the forest's dewy gloom,
Now issued to the sun. The summer night
Hung o'er their tents, within the valley pitched,
Her transient pomp of stars. When that had paled,
And when the peaks of all the region stood
Like crimson islands in a sea of dawn,
They, yet in shadow, struck their canvas town;
For Love shook slumber from him as a foe,
And would not be delayed. At height of noon,
When, shining from the woods afar in front,
The Prince beheld the palace-gates, his heart
Was lost in its own beatings, like a sound
In echoes. When the cavalcade drew near,
To meet it, forth the princely brothers pranced,
In plume and golden scale; and when they met,
Sudden, from out the palace, trumpets rang
Gay wedding music. Bertha, among her maids,
Upstart, as she caught the happy sound,
Bright as a star that brightens 'gainst the night.
When forth she came, the summer day was dimmed;
For all its sunshine sank into her hair,
Its azure in her eyes. The princely man
Lord of a happiness unknown, unknown,
Which cannot all be known for years and years,—
Uncomprehended as the shapes of hills
When one stands in the midst! A week went by,
Deepening from feast to feast; and at the close,
The gray priest lifted up his solemn hands,
And two fair lives were sweetly blent in one,
As stream in stream. Then once again the knights
Were gathered fair as flowers upon the sward,
While in the distant chambers women wept,
And, crowding, blessed the little golden head,
So soon to lie upon a stranger's breast,
And light that place no more. The gate stood wide:
Forth Edwin came enclined with happiness;
She trembled at the murmur and the stir
That heaved around,—then, on a sudden, shrank,



When through the folds of downcast lids she felt
Burn on her face the wide and staring day,
And all the curious eyes. Her brothers cried,
When she was lifted on the milky steed,
'Ah! little one, 't will soon be dark to-night!
A hundred times we'll miss thee in a day,
A hundred times we'll rise up to thy call,
And want and emptiness will come on us!
Now, at the last, our love would hold thee back!
Let this kiss snap the cord! Cheer up, my girl!
We'll come and see thee when thou hast a boy
To toss up proudly to his father's face,
To let him hear it crow!' Away they rode;
And still the brethren watched them from the door,
Till purple distance took them. How she wept,
When, looking back, she saw the things she knew—
The palace, streak of waterfall, the mead,
The gloomy belt of forest—fade



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away

Into the gray of mountains! With a chill
The wide strange world swept round her, and she clung
Close to her husband's side. A silken tent
They spread for her, and for her tiring-girls,
Upon the hills at sunset. All was hushed
Save Edwin; for the thought that Bertha slept
In that wild place,—roofed by the moaning wind,
The black blue midnight with its fiery pulse,—
So good, so precious, woke a tenderness
In which there lived uneasily a fear
That kept him still awake. And now, high up,
There burned upon the mountain's craggy top
Their journey's rosy signal. On they went;
And as the day advanced, upon a ridge,
They saw their home o'ershadowed by a cloud;
And, hanging but a moment on the steep,
A sunbeam touched it into dusty rain;
And, lo, the town lay gleaming 'mong the woods,
And the wet shores were bright. As nigh they drew,
The town was emptied to its very babes,
And spread as thick as daisies o'er the fields.
The wind that swayed a thousand chestnut cones,
And sported in the surges of the rye,
Forgot its idle play, and, smit with love,
Dwelt in her fluttering robe. On every side
The people leaped like billows for a sight,
And closed behind, like waves behind a ship.
Yet, in the very hubbub of the joy,
A deepening hush went with her on her way;
She was a thing so exquisite, the hind
Felt his own rudeness; silent women blessed
The lady, as her beauty swam in eyes
Sweet with unwonted tears. Through crowds she passed,
Distributing a largess of her smiles;
And as she entered through the palace-gate,
The wondrous sunshine died from out the air,
And everything resumed its common look.
The sun dropped down into the golden west,
Evening drew on apace; and round the fire
The people sat and talked of her who came
That day to dwell amongst them, and they praised



Her sweet face, saying she was good as fair.

“So, while the town hummed on as was its wont,
With mill, and wheel, and scythe, and lowing steer
In the green field,—while, round a hundred hearths,
Brown Labor boasted of the mighty deeds
Done in the meadow swaths, and Envy hissed
Its poison, that corroded all it touched,—
Rusting a neighbor’s gold, mildewing wheat,
And blistering the pure skin of chastest maid,—
Edwin and Bertha sat in marriage joy,
From all removed, as heavenly creatures winged,
Alit upon a hill-top near the sun,
When all the world is reft of man and town
By distance, and their hearts the silence fills—
Not long: for unto them, as unto all,
Down from love’s height unto the world of men
Occasion called with many a sordid voice.
So forth they fared with sweetness in their hearts,
That took the sense of sharpness from



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the thorn.

Sweet is love's sun within the heavens alone,
But not less sweet when tempered by a cloud
Of daily duties! Love's elixir, drained
From out the pure and passionate cup of youth,
Is sweet; but better, providently used,
A few drops sprinkled in each common dish
Wherewith the human table is set forth,
Leavening all with heaven. Seated high
Among his people, on the lofty dais,
Dispensing judgment,—making woodlands ring
Behind a flying hart with hound and horn,—
Talking with workmen on the tawny sands,
'Mid skeletons of ships, how best the prow
May slice the big wave and shake off the foam,—
Edwin preserved a spirit calm, composed,
Still as a river at the full of tide;
And in his eye there gathered deeper blue,
And beamed a warmer summer. And when sprang
The angry blood, at sloth, or fraud, or wrong,
Something of Bertha touched him into peace
And swayed his voice. Among the people went
Queen Bertha, breathing gracious charities,
And saw but smiling faces; for the light
Aye looks on brightened colors. Like the dawn
(Beloved of all the happy, often sought
In the slow east by hollow eyes that watch)
She seemed to husked find clownish gratitude,
That could but kneel and thank. Of industry
She was the fair exemplar, us she span
Among her maids; and every day she broke
Bread to the needy stranger at her gate.
All sloth and rudeness fled at her approach;
The women blushed and courtesied as she passed,
Preserving word and smile like precious gold;
And where on pillows clustered children's heads,
A shape of light she floated through their dreams."

History, Theory, and Practice of the Electric Telegraph. By GEORGE B. PRESCOTT, Superintendent of Electric Telegraph Lines. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1861. 12mo.



It may be safely said that no one of the wonder-working agencies of the nineteenth century, of an importance in any degree equal to that of the Electric Telegraph, is so little understood in its practical details by the world at large. Its results come before us daily, to satisfy our morning and evening appetite for news; but how few have a clear knowledge of even the simplest rules which govern its operation, to say nothing of the vast and complicated system by which these results are made so universal! The general intelligence, at present, doubtless outruns the dull apprehension of the typical Hibernian, who, in earlier telegraphic times, wasted the better part of a day in watching for the passage of a veritable letter over the wires; but even now,—after twenty years of Electric Telegraphy, during which the progress of the magic wire has been so rapid that it has already reached an extent of nearly sixty thousand miles in the United States alone,—even now the ideas of men in general as to the *modus operandi* of this great agency are, to say the least, extremely vague. Even the chronic and pamphlet-producing quarrel between the managers of our telegraphic system and their Briarean antagonist, the daily-newspaper-press, fails to convey to our general sense anything beyond the impression that the most gigantic benefits may be so abused as to tempt us into an occasional wish that they had never existed.



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One reason of this general ignorance has been the absence of any text-book or manual on the subject, giving a clear and thorough exposition of its mysteries. The present is the first American work which takes the subject in hand from the beginning and carries it through the entire process which leads to the results we have spoken of. Its author brings to his work the best possible qualification,—a long familiarity with the subject in the every-day details of its development. His Introduction informs the reader that he has been engaged for thirteen years in the business of practical telegraphing. He is thus sure of his ground, from the best of sources, personal experience.

We shall not criticize the work in detail, but shall rest satisfied with saying that the author has succeeded in his design of making the whole subject clear to any reader who will follow his lucid and systematic exposition. The plan of the work is simple, and the arrangement orderly and proper. A concise statement is given of the fundamental principles of electricity, and of the means of its artificial propagation. This includes, of course, a description of the various batteries used in telegraphing. Then follows a chapter upon electro-magnetism and its application to the telegraph. This prepares the way for a statement of the physical conditions under which the electrical current may be conveyed. The author then describes the instruments necessary for the transmission and recording of intelligible signs, under which general head of "Electric Telegraph Apparatus" the various telegraphic systems are made the subject of careful description. A chapter is given to the history of each system,—the Morse, the Needle, the House, the Bain, the Hughes, the Combination, and others of less note. These chapters are very complete and very interesting, embodying, as they do, the history of each instrument, the details of its use, and a statement of its capabilities. The system most used in America is the Combination system, the printing instrument of which is the result of an ingenious combination of the most desirable qualities of the House and Hughes systems. Of this fine instrument a full-page engraving is given, which, with Mr. Prescott's careful explanation, renders the recording process very clear.

The next division of the work relates to subterranean and submarine telegraphic lines. Of this the greater portion is devoted to the Atlantic cable, the great success and the great failure of our time. The chapter devoted to this unfortunate enterprise gives the completest account of its rise, progress, and decline that we have ever seen. It seems to set at rest, so far as evidence can do it, the mooted question whether any message ever did really pass through the submerged cable,—a point upon which there are many unbelievers, even at the present day. We think these unbelievers would do well to read the account before us. Mr. Prescott informs us, that, from the first laying of the cable to the

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day when it ceased to work, no less than four hundred messages were actually transmitted: one hundred and twenty-nine from Valentia to Trinity Bay, and two hundred and seventy-one from Trinity Bay to Valentia. The curious reader may find copies of all these messages chronologically set down in this volume. Mr. Prescott expresses entire confidence in the restoration of telegraphic communication between the two hemispheres. It may be reasonably doubted, however, if *direct submarine* communication will ever be resumed. Two other routes are suggested as more likely to become the course of the international wires. One is that lately examined by Sir Leopold M'Clintock and Captain Young, under the auspices of the British Government. This route, taking the extreme northern coast of Scotland as its point of departure, and touching the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland, strikes our continent upon the coast of Labrador, making the longest submarine section eight hundred miles, about one-third the length of the Atlantic cable. There is not a little doubt, however, as to the practicability of this route; and as the British Government has already expended several hundred thousand pounds in experimenting upon submarine cables, it is not likely that it will venture much more upon any project not holding out a very absolute promise of success. What seems more likely is, that our telegraphic communication with Europe will be made eventually through Asia. Even now the Russian Government is vigorously pushing its telegraphic lines eastward from Moscow; and its own interest affords a strong guaranty that telegraphic communication will soon be established between its commercial metropolis and its military and trading posts on the Pacific border. A project has also recently taken form to establish a line between Quebec and the Hudson Bay Company's posts north of the Columbia River. With the two extremes so near meeting, a submarine wire would soon be laid over Behring's Straits, or crossing at a more southern point and touching the Aleutian Islands in its passage.

Two of the chapters of this work will be recognized by readers of the "Atlantic" as having first appeared in its pages,—a chapter upon the Progress and Present Condition of the Electric Telegraph in the various countries of the world, and a description of the Electrical Influence of the Aurora Borealis upon the Working of the Telegraph. These, with a curiously interesting chapter upon the Various Applications of the Telegraph, and an amusing miscellaneous chapter showing that the Telegraph has a literature of its own, complete the chief popular elements of the volume. The remainder is devoted mainly to a technical treatise on the proper method of constructing telegraphic lines, perfecting insulation, *etc.* In an Appendix we have a more careful consideration of Galvanism, and a more detailed examination of the qualities and capacities of the various batteries.



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As is becoming in any, and especially in an American, treatise upon this great subject, Mr. Prescott devotes some space to a detailed account of the labors of Professor Morse, which have led to his being regarded as the father of our American system of telegraphing. In a chapter entitled "Early Discoveries in Electro-Dynamics," he publishes for the first time some interesting facts elicited during the trial, in the Supreme Court of the United States, of the suit of the Morse patentees against the House Company for alleged infringement of patent. In this chapter we have a *resume* of the evidence before the Court, and an abstract of the decision of Judge Woodbury. This leads clearly to the conclusion, that, although Professor Morse had no claims to any merit of actual invention, yet he had the purely mechanical merit of having gone beyond all his compeers in the application of discoveries and inventions already made, and that he was the first to contrive and set in operation a thoroughly effective instrument.

Mr. Prescott has produced a very readable and useful book. It has been thoroughly and appropriately illustrated, and is a very elegant specimen of the typographer's art.

Great Expectations. By CHARLES DICKENS. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers. 8vo.

The very title of this book indicates the confidence of conscious genius. In a new aspirant for public favor, such a title might have been a good device to attract attention; but the most famous novelist of the day, watched by jealous rivals and critics, could hardly have selected it, had he not inwardly felt the capacity to meet all the expectations he raised. We have read it, as we have read all Mr. Dickens's previous works, as it appeared in instalments, and can testify to the felicity with which expectation was excited and prolonged, and to the series of surprises which accompanied the unfolding of the plot of the story. In no other of his romances has the author succeeded so perfectly in at once stimulating and baffling the curiosity of his readers. He stirred the dullest minds to guess the secret of his mystery; but, so far as we have learned, the guesses of his most intelligent readers have been almost as wide of the mark as those of the least apprehensive. It has been all the more provoking to the former class, that each surprise was the result of art, and not of trick; for a rapid review of previous chapters has shown that the materials of a strictly logical development of the story were freely given. Even after the first, second, third, and even fourth of these surprises gave their pleasing electric shocks to intelligent curiosity, the *denouement* was still hidden, though confidentially foretold. The plot of the romance is therefore universally admitted to be the best that Dickens has ever invented. Its leading events are, as we read the story consecutively, artistically necessary, yet, at the same time, the processes are artistically concealed. We follow the movement of a logic of passion and character, the real premises of which we detect only when we are startled by the conclusions.



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The plot of "Great Expectations" is also noticeable as indicating, better than any of his previous stories, the individuality of Dickens's genius. Everybody must have discerned in the action of his mind two diverging tendencies, which, in this novel, are harmonized. He possesses a singularly wide, clear, and minute power of accurate observation, both of things and of persons; but his observation, keen and true to actualities as it independently is, is not a dominant faculty, and is opposed or controlled by the strong tendency of his disposition to pathetic or humorous idealization. Perhaps in "The Old Curiosity Shop" these qualities are best seen in their struggle and divergence, and the result is a magnificent juxtaposition of romantic tenderness, melodramatic improbabilities, and broad farce. The humorous characterization is joyously exaggerated into caricature,—the serious characterization into romantic unreality, Richard Swiveller and Little Nell refuse to combine. There is abundant evidence of genius both in the humorous and the pathetic parts, but the artistic impression is one of anarchy rather than unity.

In "Great Expectations," on the contrary, Dickens seems to have attained the mastery of powers which formerly more or less mastered him. He has fairly discovered that he cannot, like Thackeray, narrate a story as if he were a mere looker-on, a mere "knowing" observer of what he describes and represents; and he has therefore taken observation simply as the basis of his plot and his characterization. As we read "Vanity Fair" and "The Newcomes," we are impressed with the actuality of the persons and incidents. There is an absence both of directing ideas and disturbing idealizations. Everything drifts to its end, as in real life. In "Great Expectations" there is shown a power of external observation finer and deeper even than Thackeray's; and yet, owing to the presence of other qualities, the general impression is not one of objective reality. The author palpably uses his observations as materials for his creative faculties to work upon; he does not record, but invents; and he produces something which is natural only under conditions prescribed by his own mind. He shapes, disposes, penetrates, colors, and contrives everything, and the whole action, is a series of events which could have occurred only in his own brain, and which it is difficult to conceive of as actually "happening." And yet in none of his other works does he evince a shrewder insight into real life, and a clearer perception and knowledge of what is called "the world." The book is, indeed, an artistic creation, and not a mere succession of humorous and pathetic scenes, and demonstrates that Dickens is now in the prime, and not in the decline of his great powers.



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The characters of the novel also show how deeply it has been meditated; for, though none of them may excite the personal interest which clings to Sam Weller or little Dombey, they are better fitted to each other and to the story in which they appear than is usual with Dickens. They all combine to produce that unity of impression which the work leaves on the mind. Individually they will rank among the most original of the author's creations. Magwitch and Joe Gargery, Jaggers and Wemmick, Pip and Herbert, Wopsle, Pumblechook, and "the Aged," Miss Havisham, Estella, and Bidley, are personages which the most assiduous readers of Dickens must pronounce positive additions to the characters his rich and various genius had already created.

Pip, the hero, from whose mind the whole representation takes its form and color, is admirably delineated throughout. Weak, dreamy, amiable, apprehensive, aspiring, inefficient, the subject and the victim of "Great Expectations," his individuality is, as it were, diffused through the whole narrative. Joe is a noble character, with a heart too great for his powers of expression to utter in words, but whose patience, fortitude, tenderness, and beneficence shine lucidly through his confused and mangled English. Magwitch, the "warmint" who "grew up took up," whose memory extended only to that period of his childhood when he was "a-thieving turnips for his living" down in Essex, but in whom a life of crime had only intensified the feeling of gratitude for the one kind action of which he was the object, is hardly equalled in grotesque grandeur by anything which Dickens has previously done. The character is not only powerful in itself, but it furnishes pregnant and original hints to all philosophical investigators into the phenomena of crime. In this wonderful creation Dickens follows the maxim of the great master of characterization, and seeks "the soul of goodness in things evil."

The style of the romance is rigorously close to things. The author is so engrossed with the objects before his mind, is so thoroughly in earnest, that he has fewer of those humorous caprices of expression in which formerly he was wont to wanton. Some of the old hilarity and play of fancy is gone, but we hardly miss it in our admiration of the effects produced by his almost stern devotion to the main idea of his work. There are passages of description and narrative in which we are hardly conscious of the words, in our clear apprehension of the objects and incidents they convey. The quotable epithets and phrases are less numerous than in "Dombey & Son" and "David Copperfield"; but the scenes and events impressed on the imagination are perhaps greater in number and more vivid in representation. The poetical element of the writer's genius, his modification of the forms, hues, and sounds of Nature by viewing them through the medium of an imagined mind, is especially prominent throughout the descriptions with which the work abounds. Nature is not only described, but individualized and humanized.



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Altogether we take great joy in recording our conviction that "Great Expectations" is a masterpiece. We have never sympathized in the mean delight which some critics seem to experience in detecting the signs which subtly indicate the decay of power in creative intellects. We sympathize still less in the stupid and ungenerous judgments of those who find a still meaner delight in wilfully asserting that the last book of a popular writer is unworthy of the genius which produced his first. In our opinion, "Great Expectations" is a work which proves that we may expect from Dickens a series of romances far exceeding in power and artistic skill the productions which have already given him such a preeminence among the novelists of the age.

Tom Brown at Oxford: A Sequel to School-Days at Rugby. By the Author of "School-Days at Rugby," "Scouring of the White Horse," etc. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 2 vols. 16mo.

Thomas Hughes, the author of these volumes, does not, on a superficial examination, seem to deserve the wide reputation he has obtained. We hunt his books in vain for any of those obvious peculiarities of style, thought, and character which commonly distinguish a man from his fellows. He does not possess striking wit, or humor, or imagination, or power of expression. In every quality, good or bad, calculated to create "a sensation," he is remarkably deficient. Yet everybody reads him with interest, and experiences for him a feeling of personal affection and esteem. An unobtrusive, yet evident nobility of character, a sound, large, "round-about" common-sense, a warm sympathy with English and human kind, a practical grasp of human life as it is lived by ordinary people, and an unmistakable sincerity and earnestness of purpose animate everything he writes. His "School-Days at Rugby" delighted men as well as boys by the freshness, geniality, and truthfulness with which it represented boyish experiences; and the Tom Brown who, in that book, gained so many friends wherever the English tongue is spoken, parts with none of his power to interest and charm in this record of his collegiate life. Mr. Hughes has the true, wholesome English love of home, the English delight in rude physical sports, the English hatred of hypocrisy and cant, the English fidelity to facts, the English disbelief in all piety and morality which are not grounded in manliness. The present work is full of illustrations of these healthy qualities of his nature, and they are all intimately connected with an elevated, yet eminently sagacious spirit of Christian philanthropy. Tom Brown at Oxford, as well as Tom Brown at Rugby, will, so far as he exerts any influence, exert one for good. He has a plentiful lack of those impossible virtues which disgust boys and young men with the models set up as examples for them to emulate in books deliberately moral and religious; but he none the less shows how a manly and Christian character can be attained by methods which are all the more influential



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by departing from the common mechanical contrivances for fashioning lusty youths into consumptive saints, incompetent to do the work of the Lord in this world, however they may fare in the next. Mr. Hughes can hardly be called a disciple of "Muscular Christianity," except so far as muscle is necessary to give full efficiency to mind; but he feels all the contempt possible to such a tolerant nature for that spurious piety which kills the body in order to give a sickly appearance of life to the soul.

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