

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 09, No. 51, January, 1862 eBook

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 09, No. 51, January, 1862

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

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

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

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

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

Contents

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 09, No. 51, January, 1862 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	10
Page 1.....	12
Page 2.....	14
Page 3.....	16
Page 4.....	18
Page 5.....	19
Page 6.....	20
Page 7.....	21
Page 8.....	22
Page 9.....	23
Page 10.....	25
Page 11.....	26
Page 12.....	28
Page 13.....	29
Page 14.....	30
Page 15.....	31
Page 16.....	32
Page 17.....	33
Page 18.....	34
Page 19.....	35
Page 20.....	36
Page 21.....	38
Page 22.....	39

Page 23.....	40
Page 24.....	41
Page 25.....	42
Page 26.....	43
Page 27.....	45
Page 28.....	47
Page 29.....	49
Page 30.....	50
Page 31.....	52
Page 32.....	54
Page 33.....	56
Page 34.....	57
Page 35.....	59
Page 36.....	61
Page 37.....	62
Page 38.....	64
Page 39.....	66
Page 40.....	67
Page 41.....	68
Page 42.....	69
Page 43.....	70
Page 44.....	71
Page 45.....	72
Page 46.....	73
Page 47.....	74
Page 48.....	75

Page 49.....	77
Page 50.....	78
Page 51.....	79
Page 52.....	81
Page 53.....	82
Page 54.....	84
Page 55.....	85
Page 56.....	86
Page 57.....	88
Page 58.....	90
Page 59.....	92
Page 60.....	94
Page 61.....	96
Page 62.....	98
Page 63.....	100
Page 64.....	102
Page 65.....	104
Page 66.....	106
Page 67.....	108
Page 68.....	110
Page 69.....	112
Page 70.....	113
Page 71.....	114
Page 72.....	115
Page 73.....	116
Page 74.....	117

Page 75.....	118
Page 76.....	119
Page 77.....	120
Page 78.....	121
Page 79.....	122
Page 80.....	123
Page 81.....	124
Page 82.....	125
Page 83.....	126
Page 84.....	127
Page 85.....	128
Page 86.....	129
Page 87.....	130
Page 88.....	131
Page 89.....	132
Page 90.....	133
Page 91.....	134
Page 92.....	136
Page 93.....	138
Page 94.....	140
Page 95.....	142
Page 96.....	144
Page 97.....	146
Page 98.....	148
Page 99.....	150
Page 100.....	152

Page 101.....	154
Page 102.....	156
Page 103.....	158
Page 104.....	160
Page 105.....	162
Page 106.....	164
Page 107.....	166
Page 108.....	168
Page 109.....	170
Page 110.....	172
Page 111.....	174
Page 112.....	176
Page 113.....	177
Page 114.....	178
Page 115.....	180
Page 116.....	181
Page 117.....	182
Page 118.....	183
Page 119.....	184
Page 120.....	185
Page 121.....	186
Page 122.....	187
Page 123.....	188
Page 124.....	189
Page 125.....	190
Page 126.....	191

Page 127.....	192
Page 128.....	193
Page 129.....	194
Page 130.....	195
Page 131.....	196
Page 132.....	197
Page 133.....	199
Page 134.....	200
Page 135.....	202
Page 136.....	204
Page 137.....	205
Page 138.....	206
Page 139.....	207
Page 140.....	208
Page 141.....	209
Page 142.....	210
Page 143.....	211
Page 144.....	212
Page 145.....	214
Page 146.....	215
Page 147.....	216
Page 148.....	218
Page 149.....	220
Page 150.....	221
Page 151.....	222
Page 152.....	223

Page 153.....	224
Page 154.....	225
Page 155.....	226
Page 156.....	227
Page 157.....	228
Page 158.....	230
Page 159.....	231
Page 160.....	233
Page 161.....	234
Page 162.....	235
Page 163.....	236
Page 164.....	237
Page 165.....	239
Page 166.....	240
Page 167.....	241
Page 168.....	242
Page 169.....	244
Page 170.....	246
Page 171.....	248
Page 172.....	250
Page 173.....	252
Page 174.....	254
Page 175.....	256
Page 176.....	257
Page 177.....	258

Page 178.....	259
Page 179.....	260
Page 180.....	261
Page 181.....	262
Page 182.....	263
Page 183.....	264
Page 184.....	265
Page 185.....	266
Page 186.....	267
Page 187.....	268
Page 188.....	269
Page 189.....	270

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
Title: The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 09, No. 51, January, 1862	1
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY.	1
CONTENTS. ISSUE.	1
POETRY.	2
REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.	2
FOREIGN LITERATURE, 54, 55.	3
RECENT AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS, 52, 53, 54, 55.	3
METHODS OF STUDY IN NATURAL HISTORY.	3
I.	3
II.	9
III.	15
AGNES OF SORRENTO.	20
CHAPTER XVIII.	20
CHAPTER XIX.	27
THE TRUE HEROINE.	37
A STORY OF TO-DAY.	53
PART IV.	53
JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.	68
PER TENEBRAS, LUMINA.	91
PART I.	91
CHAPTER I.	91
CHAPTER II.	94
CHAPTER III.	96
CHAPTER IV.	99
CHAPTER V.	104
CHAPTER VI.	108
LIGHT LITERATURE.	111
PILGRIMAGE TO OLD BOSTON.	114
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF A STRENGTH-SEEKER.	132
FREMONT'S HUNDRED DAYS IN MISSOURI.	150
I.	150
FROM ST. LOUIS TO WARSAW.	151
BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN, ESQ., TO	164

MR. HOSEA BIGLOW.	
OLD AGE.	174
REVIEWS AND LITERARY	183
NOTICES.	
OBITUARY.	189

Page 1

Title: The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 09, No. 51, January, 1862

Author: Various

Release Date: November 2, 2004 [EBook #13924]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** Start of this project gutenber EBOOK the Atlantic monthly ***

Produced by Joshua Hutchinson, Barbara Tozier and PG Distributed
Proofreaders. Produced from Page Scans Provided by Cornell University.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

A Magazine of literature, art, and politics.

* * * * *

Volume IX.

M DCCC LXII.

* * * * *

[Transcriber's note: Converted page numbers to issue numbers.]

CONTENTS. ISSUE.

A.C., The Experiences of the, 52.
Agnes of Sorrento, 51, 52, 53, 54.
American Civilization, 54.
Author of "Charles Auchester," The, 56.
Autobiographical Sketches of a Strength-Seeker, 51.

Childhood, Concerning the Sorrows of, 53.
Clough, Arthur Hugh, 54.
Cooper, James Fenimore, 52.



Ease in Work, 52.

Forester, The, 54.

Fremont's Hundred Days in Missouri, 51, 52, 53.

Fruits of Free Labor in the Smaller Islands
of the British West Indies, 53.

German Burns, The, 54.

Health of Our Girls, The, 56.

Hindrance, 55.

Horrors of San Domingo, The, 56.

Individuality, 54.

Jefferson and Slavery, 51.

John Lamar, 54.

Letter to a Young Contributor, 54.

Light Literature, 51.

Love and Skates, 51, 52.

Man under Sealed Orders, 55.

Methods of Study in Natural History, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56.

My Garden, 55.

Old Age, 51.

Our Artists in Italy, 52.

Pere Antoine's Date-Palm, 56.

Pilgrimage to Old Boston, 51.

Raft that no Man made, A, 53.

Richelieu, The Statesmanship of, 55.

Rifle, The Use of the, 53.



Page 2

Saltpetre as a Source of Power, 55.
Sam Adams Regiments in the Town of Boston, The, 56.
Slavery, in its Principles, Development,
and Expedients, 55.
Snow, 52.
"Solid Operations in Virginia", 56.
South Breaker, The, 55, 56.
Spain, The Rehabilitation of, 53.
Spirits, 55.
Story of To-Day, A, 51, 52, 53.

Taxation, 53.
Then and Now in the Old Dominion, 54.

Walking, 56.
War and Literature, 56.
Weather in War, 55.
What shall We do with Them?, 54.

POETRY.

Astraea at the Capitol, 56.
At Port Royal, 1861, 52.

Battle-Hymn of the Republic, 52.
Birdofredum Sawin, Esq., to Mr. Hosea Biglow, 51, 53.

Compensation, 54.

Exodus, 54.

Lines written under a Portrait of Theodore
Winthrop, 55.
Lyrics of the Street, 55.

Mason and Slidell: A Yankee Idyl, 52.
Message of Jeff Davis in Secret Session, A, 54.
Midwinter, 52.
Mountain Pictures, 53, 54.

Order for a Picture, An, 56.
Out of the Body to God, 56.

Per Tenebras, Lumina, 51.



Sonnet, 56.
Southern Cross, The, 53.
Speech of Hon'ble Preserved Doe in Secret
Caucus, 55.
Strasburg Clock, The, 54.
Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line, 56.

Titmouse, The, 55.
True Heroine, The, 51.

Under the Snow, 55.

Volunteer, The, 55.
Voyage of the Good Ship Union, 53.

REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

Arnold's Lectures on translating Homer, 51.

Book about Doctors, A, 54.
Botta's Discourse on the Life, Character,
and Policy of Count Cavour, 55.

Page 3

Cloister and the Hearth, The, 52.

De Vere, Aubrey, Poems by, 54.

Dickens's Works, Household Edition, 55.

Harris's Insects Injurious to Vegetation, 55.

John Brent, 54.

Leigh Hunt, Correspondence of, 55.

Lessons in Life, 51.

Mueller's Lectures on the Science of Language, 51.

Newman's Homeric Translation in Theory and
in Practice, 51.

Pauli's Pictures of Old England, 55.

Record of an Obscure Man, 55.

Tragedy of Errors, 55.

Willmott's English Sacred Poetry, 52.

FOREIGN LITERATURE, 54, 55.

OBITUARY, 51.

RECENT AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS, 52, 53, 54, 55.

* * * * *

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

A Magazine of literature, art, and politics.

* * * * *

Vol. IX.—January, 1862.—No. LI.

* * * * *

METHODS OF STUDY IN NATURAL HISTORY.

I.

It is my intention, in this series of papers, to give the history of the progress in Natural History from the beginning,—to show how men first approached Nature,—how the facts of Natural History have been accumulated, and how those facts have been converted into science. In so doing, I shall present the methods employed in Natural History on a wider scale and with broader generalizations than if I limited myself to the study as it exists to-day. The history of humanity, in its efforts to understand the Creation, resembles the development of any individual mind engaged in the same direction. It has its infancy, with the first recognition of surrounding objects; and, indeed, the early observers seem to us like children in their first attempts to understand the world in which they live. But these efforts, that appear childish to us now, were the first steps in that field of knowledge which is so extensive that all our progress seems only to show us how much is left to do.

Aristotle is the representative of the learning of antiquity in Natural Science. The great mind of Greece in his day, and a leader in all the intellectual culture of his time, he was especially a naturalist, and his work on Natural History is a record not only of his own investigations, but of all preceding study in this department. It is evident that even then much had been done, and, in allusion to certain peculiarities of the human frame, which he does not describe in full, he refers his readers to familiar works, saying, that illustrations in point may be found in anatomical text-books.[1]

Page 4

[1] See Aristotle's *Zoology*, Book I., Chapter xiv.

Strange that in Aristotle's day, two thousand years ago, such books should have been in general use, and that in our time we are still in want of elementary text-books of Natural History, having special reference to the animals of our own country, and adapted to the use of schools. One fact in Aristotle's "History of Animals" is very striking, and makes it difficult for us to understand much of its contents. It never occurs to him that a time may come when the Greek language—the language of all culture and science in his time—would not be the language of all cultivated men. He took, therefore, little pains to characterize the animals he alludes to, otherwise than by their current names; and of his descriptions of their habits and peculiarities, much is lost upon us from their local character and expression. There is also a total absence of systematic form, of any classification or framework to express the divisions of the animal kingdom into larger or lesser groups. His only divisions are genera and species: classes, orders, and families, as we understand them now, are quite foreign to the Greek conception of the animal kingdom. Fishes and birds, for instance, they considered as genera, and their different representatives as species. They grouped together quadrupeds also in contradistinction to animals with legs and wings, and they distinguished those that bring forth living young from those that lay eggs. But though a system of Nature was not familiar even to their great philosopher, and Aristotle had not arrived at the idea of a classification on general principles, he yet stimulated a search into the closer affinities among animals by the differences he pointed out. He divided the animal kingdom into two groups, which he called *Enaima* and *Anaima*, or animals with blood and animals without blood. We must remember, however, that by the word *blood* he designated only the red fluid circulating in the higher animals; whereas a fluid akin to blood exists in all animals, variously colored in some, but colorless in a large number of others.

After Aristotle, a long period elapsed without any addition to the information he left us. Rome and the Middle Ages gave us nothing, and even Pliny added hardly a fact to those that Aristotle recorded. And though the great naturalists of the sixteenth century gave a new impulse to this study, their investigations were chiefly directed towards a minute acquaintance with the animals they had an opportunity of observing, mingled with commentaries upon the ancients. Systematic Zoology was but little advanced by their efforts.

Page 5

We must come down to the last century, to Linnaeus, before we find the history taken up where Aristotle had left it, and some of his suggestions carried out with new vigor and vitality. Aristotle had distinguished only between genera and species; Linnaeus took hold of this idea, and gave special names to other groups, of different weight and value. Besides species and genera, he gives us orders and classes,—considering classes the most comprehensive, then orders, then genera, then species. He did not, however, represent these groups as distinguished by their nature, but only by their range; they were still to him, as genera and species had been to Aristotle, only larger or smaller groups, not founded upon and limited by different categories of structure. He divided the animal kingdom into six classes, which I give here, as we shall have occasion to compare them with other classifications:—*Mammalia*, *Birds*, *Reptiles*, *Fishes*, *Insects*, *Worms*.

That this classification should have expressed all that was known in the last century of the most general relations among animals only shows how difficult it is to generalize on such a subject; nor should we expect to find it an easy task, when we remember the vast number of species (about a quarter of a million) already noticed by naturalists. Linnaeus succeeded, however, in finding a common character on which to unite most of his classes; but the *Mammalia*, that group to which we ourselves belong, remained very imperfect. Indeed, in the earlier editions of his classification, he does not apply the name of *Mammalia* to this class, but calls the higher animals *Quadrupedia*, characterizing them as the animals with four legs and covered with fur or hair, that bring forth living young and nurse them with milk. In thus admitting external features as class characters, he excluded many animals which by their mode of reproduction, as well as by their respiration and circulation, belong to this class as much as the *Quadrupeds*,—as, for instance, all the *Cetaceans*, (Whales, Porpoises, and the like,) which, though they have not legs, nor are their bodies covered with hair or fur, yet bring forth living young, nurse them with milk, are warm-blooded and air-breathing. As more was learned of these animals, there arose serious discussion and criticism among contemporary naturalists respecting the classification of Linnaeus, all of which led to a clearer insight into the true relations among animals. Linnaeus himself, in his last edition of the “*Systema Naturae*,” shows us what important progress he had made since he first announced his views; for he there substitutes for the name of *Quadrupedia* that of *Mammalia*, including among them the Whales, which he characterizes as air-breathing, warm-blooded, and bringing forth living young which they nurse with milk. Thus the very deficiencies of his classification stimulated naturalists to new criticism and investigation into

Page 6

the true limits of classes, and led to the recognition of one most important principle,—that such groups are founded, not on external appearance, but on internal structure, and that internal structure, therefore, is the thing to be studied. The group of Quadrupeds was not the only defective one in this classification of Linnaeus; his class of Worms, also, was most heterogeneous, for he included among them Shell-Fishes, Slugs, Star-Fishes, Sea-Urchins, and other animals that bear no relation whatever to the class of Worms.

But whatever its defects, the classification of Linnaeus was the first attempt at grouping animals together according to certain common structural characters. His followers and pupils engaged at once in a scrutiny of the differences and similarities among animals, which soon led to a great increase in the number of classes: instead of six, there were presently nine, twelve, and more. But till Cuvier's time there was no great principle of classification. Facts were accumulated and more or less systematized, but they were not yet arranged according to law; the principle was still wanting by which to generalize them and give meaning and vitality to the whole. It was Cuvier who found the key. He himself tells us how he first began, in his investigations upon the internal organization of animals, to use his dissections with reference to finding the true relations between animals, and how, ever after, his knowledge of anatomy assisted him in his classifications, and his classifications threw new light again on his anatomical investigations,—each science thus helping to fertilize the other. He was not one of those superficial observers who are in haste to announce every new fact that they chance to find, and his first paper[2] specially devoted to classification gave to the world the ripe fruit of years of study. This was followed by his great work, “Le Regne Animal.” He said that animals were united in their most comprehensive groups, not on special characters, but on different *plans of structure*,—moulds, he called them, in which all animals had been cast. He tells us this in such admirable language that I must, to do justice to his thought, give it in his own words:—

“Si l'on considere le regne animal d'apres les principes que nous venons de poser en se debarrassant des prejuges etablis sur les divisions anciennement admises, en n'ayant egard qu'a l'organisation et a la nature des animaux, et non pas a leur grandeur, a leur utilite, au plus ou moins de connaissance que nous en avons, ni a toutes les autres circonstances accessoires, on trouvera qu'il existe quatre formes principales, quatre plans generaux, si l'on peut s'exprimer ainsi, d'apres lesquels tous les animaux semblent avoir ete modeles, et dont les divisions ulterieures, de quelque titre que les naturalistes les aient decorees, ne sont que des modifications assez legeres, fondees sur le developpement ou l'addition de quelques parties, qui ne changent rien a l'essence du plan.”

[2] Sur un nouveau rapprochement a etabli entre les Classes qui composent le Regne Animal. *Ann. Mus.*, Vol. XIX.

Page 7

The value of this principle was soon tested by its application to facts already known, and it was found that animals whose affinities had been questionable before were now at once referred to their true relations with other animals by ascertaining whether they were built on one or another of these plans. Of such plans or structural conceptions Cuvier found in the whole animal kingdom only four, which he called *Vertebrates*, *Mollusks*, *Articulates*, and *Radiates*.

With this new principle as the basis of investigation, it was no longer enough for the naturalist to know a certain amount of features characteristic of a certain number of animals,—he must penetrate deep enough into their organization to find the secret of their internal structure. Till he can do this, he is like the traveller in a strange city, who looks on the exterior of edifices entirely new to him, but knows nothing of the plan of their internal architecture. To be able to read in the finished structure the plan on which the whole is built is now essential to every naturalist.

There have been many criticisms on this division of Cuvier's, and many attempts to change it; but though some improvements have been made in the details of his classification, all departures from its great fundamental principle are errors, and do but lead us away from the recognition of the true affinities among animals.

Each of these plans may be stated in the most general terms. In the *Vertebrates* there is a vertebral column terminating in a prominent head; this column has an arch above and an arch below, forming a double internal cavity. The parts are symmetrically arranged on either side of the longitudinal axis of the body. In the *Mollusks*, also, the parts are arranged according to a bilateral symmetry on either side of the body, but the body has but one cavity, and is a soft, concentrated mass, without a distinct individualization of parts. In the *Articulates* there is but one cavity, and the parts are here again arranged on either side of the longitudinal axis, but in these animals the whole body is divided from end to end into transverse rings or joints movable upon each other. In the *Radiates* we lose sight of the bilateral symmetry so prevalent in the other three, except as a very subordinate element of structure; the plan of this lowest type is an organic sphere, in which all parts bear definite relations to a vertical axis.

It is not upon any special features, then, that these largest divisions of the animal kingdom are based, but simply upon the general structural idea. Striking as this statement was, it was coldly received at first by contemporary naturalists: they could hardly grasp Cuvier's wide generalizations, and perhaps there was also some jealousy of the grandeur of his views. Whatever the cause, his principle of classification was not fully appreciated; but it opened a new road for study, and gave us the keynote to the natural affinities among animals. Lamarck, his contemporary, not recognizing the truth of this principle, distributed the animal kingdom into two great divisions, which he calls *Vertebrates* and *Invertebrates*. Ehrenberg also, at a later period, announced another division under two heads,—those with a continuous solid nervous centre, and those with merely scattered nervous swellings.[3]

Page 8

[3] For more details upon the different systems of Zoology, see Agassiz's Essay on Classification in his *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States*, Vol. I.

But there was no real progress in either of these latter classifications, so far as the primary divisions are concerned; for they correspond to the old division of Aristotle, under the head of animals with or without blood, the *Enaima* and *Anaima*. This coincidence between systems based on different foundations may teach us that every structural combination includes certain inherent necessities which will bring animals together on whatever set of features we try to classify them; so that the division of Aristotle, founded on the circulating fluids, or that of Lamarck, on the absence or presence of a backbone, or that of Ehrenberg, on the differences of the nervous system, cover the same ground. Lamarck attempted also to use the faculties of animals as a groundwork for division among them. But our knowledge of the psychology of animals is still too imperfect to justify any such use of it. His divisions into Apathetic, Sensitive, and Intelligent animals are entirely theoretical. He places, for instance, Fishes and Reptiles among the Intelligent animals, as distinguished from Crustacea and Insects, which he refers to the second division. But one would be puzzled to say how the former manifest more intelligence than the latter, or why the latter should be placed among the Sensitive animals. Again, some of the animals that he calls Apathetic have been proved by later investigators to show an affection and care for their young, seemingly quite inconsistent with the epithet he has applied to them. In fact, we know so little of the faculties of animals that any classification based upon our present information about them must be very imperfect.

Many modifications of Cuvier's great divisions have been attempted. Some naturalists, for instance, have divided off a part of the Radiates and Articulates, insisting upon some special features of structure, and mistaking these for the more important and general characteristics of their respective plans. All subsequent investigations of such would-be improvements show them to be retrograde movements, only proving more clearly that Cuvier detected in his four plans all the great structural ideas on which the vast variety of animals is founded. This result is of greater importance than may at first appear. Upon it depends the question, whether all such classifications represent merely individual impressions and opinions of men, or whether there is really something in Nature that presses upon us certain divisions among animals, certain affinities, certain limitations, founded upon essential principles of organization. Are our systems the inventions of naturalists, or only their reading of the Book of Nature? and can that book have more than one reading? If these classifications are not

Page 9

mere inventions, if they are not an attempt to classify for our own convenience the objects we study, then they are thoughts which, whether we detect them or not, are expressed in Nature,—then Nature is the work of thought, the production of intelligence carried out according to plan, therefore premeditated,—and in our study of natural objects we are approaching the thoughts of the Creator, reading His conceptions, interpreting a system that is His and not ours.

All the divergence from the simplicity and grandeur of this division of the animal kingdom arises from an inability to distinguish between a plan and the execution, of a plan. We allow the details to shut out the plan itself, which exists quite independent of special forms. I hope we shall find a meaning in all these plans that will prove them to be the parts of one great conception and the work of one Mind.

II.

Proceeding upon the view that there is a close analogy between the way in which every individual student penetrates into Nature and the progress of science as a whole in the history of humanity, I continue my sketch of the successive steps that have led to our present state of knowledge. I began with Aristotle, and showed that this great philosopher, though he prepared a digest of all the knowledge belonging to his time, yet did not feel the necessity of any system or of any scientific language differing from the common mode of expression of his day. He presents his information as a man with his eyes open narrates in a familiar style what he sees. As civilization spread and science had its representatives in other countries besides Greece, it became indispensable to have a common scientific language, a technical nomenclature, combining many objects under common names, and enabling every naturalist to express the results of his observations readily and simply in a manner intelligible to all other students of Natural History.

Linnaeus devised such a system, and to him we owe a most simple and comprehensive scientific mode of designating animals and plants. It may at first seem no advantage to give up the common names of the vernacular and adopt the unfamiliar ones, but a word of explanation will make the object clear. Perceiving, for instance, the close relations between certain members of the larger groups, Linnaeus gave to them names that should be common to all, and which are called generic names,—as we speak of Ducks, when we would designate in one word the Mallard, the Widgeon, the Canvas-Back, *etc.*; but to these generic names he added qualifying epithets, called specific names, to indicate the different kinds in each group. For example, the Lion, the Tiger, the Panther, the Domestic Cat constitute such a natural group, which Linnaeus called *Felis*, Cat, indicating the whole genus; but the species he designates as *Felis catus*, the Domestic Cat,—*Felis leo*, the Lion,—*Felis tigris*, the Tiger,—*Felis panthera*, the Panther. So he

called all the Dogs *Canis*; but for the different kinds we have *Canis familiaris*, the Domestic Dog,—*Canis lupus*, the Wolf,—*Canis vulpes*, the Fox, *etc.*

Page 10

In some families of the vegetable kingdom we can appreciate better the application of this nomenclature, because we have something corresponding to it in the vernacular. We have, for instance, one name for all the Oaks, but we call the different kinds Swamp Oak, Red Oak, White Oak, Chestnut Oak, *etc.* So Linnaeus, in his botanical nomenclature, called all the Oaks by the generic name *Quercus*, (characterizing them by their fruit, the acorn, common to all,) and qualified them as *Quercus bicolor*, *Quercus rubra*, *Quercus alba*, *Quercus castanea*, *etc.*, *etc.* His nomenclature, being so easy of application, became at once exceedingly popular and made him the great scientific legislator of his century. He insisted on Latin names, because, if every naturalist should use his own language, it must lead to great confusion, and this Latin nomenclature of double significance was adopted by all. Another advantage of this binominal Latin nomenclature consists in preventing the confusion frequently arising from the use of the same name to designate different animals in different parts of the world,—as, for instance, the name of Robin, used in America to designate a bird of the Thrush family, entirely different from the Robin of the Old World,—or of different names for the same animal, as Perch or Chogset or Burgall for our Cunner. Nothing is more to be deprecated than an over-appreciation of technicalities, valuing the name more highly than the thing; but some knowledge of this nomenclature is necessary to every student of Nature.

The improvements in science thus far were chiefly verbal. Cuvier now came forward and added a principle. He showed that all animals are built upon a certain number of definite plans. This momentous step, the significance of which is not yet appreciated to its full extent; for, had its importance been understood, the efforts of naturalists would have been directed toward a further illustration of the distinctive characteristics of all the plans,—instead of which, the division of the animal kingdom into larger and smaller groups chiefly attracted their attention, and has been carried too far by some of them. Linnaeus began with six classes, Cuvier brought them up to nineteen, and at last the animal kingdom was subdivided by subsequent investigators into twenty-eight classes. This multiplication of divisions, however, soon suggested an important question: How far are these divisions natural or inherent in the objects themselves, and not dependent on individual views?

While Linnaeus pointed out classes, orders, genera, and species, other naturalists had detected other divisions among animals, called families. Lamarck, who had been a distinguished botanist before he began his study of the animal kingdom, brought to his zoological researches his previous methods of investigation. Families in the vegetable kingdom had long been distinguished by French botanists; and one cannot examine the groups

Page 11

they call by this name, without perceiving, that, though they bring them together and describe them according to other characters, they have been unconsciously led to unite them from the general similarity of their port and bearing. Take, for instance, the families of Pines, Oaks, Beeches, Maples, *etc.*, and you feel at once, that, besides the common characters given in the technical descriptions of these trees, there is also a general resemblance among them that would naturally lead us to associate them together, even if we knew nothing of the other features of their structure. By an instinctive recognition of this family likeness between plants, botanists have been led to seek for structural characters on which to unite them, and the groups so founded generally correspond with the combinations suggested by their appearance.

By a like process Lamarck combined animals into families. His method was adopted by French naturalists generally, and found favor especially with Cuvier, who was particularly successful in limiting families among animals, and in naming them happily, generally selecting names expressive of the features on which the groups were founded, or borrowing them from familiar animals. Much, indeed, depends upon the pleasant sound and the significance of a name; for an idea reaches the mind more easily when well expressed, and Cuvier's names were both simple and significant. His descriptions are also remarkable for their graphic precision,—giving all that is essential, omitting all that is merely accessory. He has given us the key-note to his progress in his own expressive language:—

“Je dus donc, et cette obligation me prit un temps considerable, je dus faire marcher de front l'anatomie et la zoologie, les dissections et le classement; chercher dans mes premieres remarques sur l'organisation des distributions meilleures; m'en servir pour arriver a des remarques nouvelles; employer encore ces remarques a perfectionner les distributions; faire sortir enfin de cette fecondation mutuelle des deux sciences, l'une par l'autre, un systeme zoologique propre a servir d'introducteur et de guide dans le champ de l'anatomie, et un corps de doctrine anatomique propre a servir de developpement et d'explication au systeme zoologique.”

It is deeply to be lamented that so many naturalists have entirely overlooked this significant advice of Cuvier's, to combine zoological and anatomical studies in order to arrive at a clearer perception of the true affinities among animals. To sum it up in one word, he tells us that the secret of his method is “comparison,”—ever comparing and comparing throughout the enormous range of his knowledge of the organization of animals, and founding upon the differences as well as the similarities those broad generalizations under which he has included all animal structures. And this method, so prolific in his hands, has also a lesson for us all. In this country there is a growing interest in the study of Nature; but while there exist hundreds of elementary works illustrating the native animals of Europe, there are few such books here to satisfy the demand for information respecting the animals of our land and water. We are thus

forced to turn more and more to our own investigations and less to authority; and the true method of obtaining independent knowledge is this very method of Cuvier's,—comparison.

Page 12

Let us make the most common application of it to natural objects. Suppose we see together a Dog, a Cat, a Bear, a Horse, a Cow, and a Deer. The first feature that strikes us as common to any two of them is the horn in the Cow and Deer. But how shall we associate either of the others with these? We examine the teeth, and find those of the Dog, the Cat, and the Bear sharp and cutting, while those of the Cow, the Deer, and the Horse have flat surfaces, adapted to grinding and chewing, rather than cutting and tearing. We compare these features of their structure with the habits of these animals, and find that the first are carnivorous, that they seize and tear their prey, while the others are herbivorous or grazing animals, living only on vegetable substances, which they chew and grind. We compare farther the Horse and Cow, and find that the Horse has front teeth both in the upper and lower jaw, while the Cow has them only in the lower; and going still farther and comparing the internal with the external features, we find this arrangement of the teeth in direct relation to the different structure of the stomach in the two animals,—the Cow having a stomach with four pouches, adapted to a mode of digestion by which the food is prepared for the second mastication, while the Horse has a simple stomach. Comparing the Cow and the Deer, we find that the digestive apparatus is the same in both; but though they both have horns, in the Cow the horn is hollow, and remains through life firmly attached to the bone, while in the Deer it is solid and is shed every year. With these facts before us, we cannot hesitate to place the Dog, the Cat, and the Bear in one division, as carnivorous animals, and the other three in another division as herbivorous animals,—and looking a little farther, we perceive, that, in common with the Cow and the Deer, the Goat and the Sheep have cloven feet, and that they are all ruminants, while the Horse has a single hoof, does not ruminate, and must therefore be separated from them, even though, like them, he is herbivorous.

This is but the simplest illustration, taken from the most familiar objects, of this comparative method; but the same process is equally applicable to the most intricate problems in animal structures, and will give us the clue to all true affinities between animals. The education of a naturalist, now, consists chiefly in learning how to compare. If he have any power of generalization, when he has collected his facts, this habit of mental comparison will lead him up to principles, to the great laws of combination. It must not discourage us, that the process is a slow and laborious one, and the results of one lifetime after all very small. It might seem invidious, were I to show here how small is the sum total of the work accomplished even by the great exceptional men, whose names are known throughout the civilized world. But I may at least be permitted to speak of my own efforts, and to sum up in the fewest words

Page 13

the result of my life's work. I have devoted my whole life to the study of Nature, and yet a single sentence may express all that I have done. I have shown that there is a correspondence between the succession of Fishes in geological times and the different stages of their growth in the egg,—this is all. It chanced to be a result that was found to apply to other groups and has led to other conclusions of a like nature. But, such as it is, it has been reached by this system of comparison, which, though I speak of it now in its application to the study of Natural History, is equally important in every other branch of knowledge. By the same process the most mature results of scientific research in Philology, in Ethnology, and in Physical Science are reached. And let me say that the community should foster the purely intellectual efforts of scientific men as carefully as they do their elementary schools and their practical institutions, generally considered so much more useful and important to the public. For from what other source shall we derive the higher results that are gradually woven into the practical resources of our life, except from the researches of those very men who study science not for its uses, but for its truth? It is this that gives it its noblest interest: it must be for truth's sake, and not even for the sake of its usefulness to humanity, that the scientific man studies Nature. The application of science to the useful arts requires other abilities, other qualities, other tools than his; and therefore I say that the man of science who follows his studies into their practical application is false to his calling. The practical man stands ever ready to take up the work where the scientific man leaves it, and to adapt it to the material wants and uses of daily life.

The publication of Cuvier's proposition, that the animal kingdom is built on four plans, created an extraordinary excitement throughout the scientific world. All naturalists proceeded to test it, and many soon recognized in it a great scientific truth,—while others, who thought more of making themselves prominent than of advancing science, proposed poor amendments, that were sure to be rejected on farther investigation. There were, however, some of these criticisms and additions that were truly improvements, and touched upon points overlooked by Cuvier. Blainville, especially, took up the element of form among animals,—whether divided on two sides, whether radiated, whether irregular, *etc.* He, however, made the mistake of giving very elaborate names to animals already known under simpler ones. Why, for instance, call all animals with parts radiating in every direction *Actinomorpha* or *Actinozoaria*, when they had received the significant name of *Radiates*? It seemed, to be a new system, when in fact it was only a new name. Ehrenberg, likewise, made an important distinction, when he united the animals according to the difference in their nervous systems; but he also incumbered the nomenclature unnecessarily, when he added to the names *Anaima* and *Enaima* of Aristotle those of *Myeloneura* and *Ganglioneura*.

Page 14

But it is not my object to give all the classifications of different authors here, and I will therefore pass over many noted ones, as those of Burmeister, Milne, Edwards, Siebold and Stannius, Owen, Leuckart, Vogt, Van Beneden, and others, and proceed to give some account of one investigator who did as much for the progress of Zoology as Cuvier, though he is comparatively little known among us. Karl Ernst von Baer proposed a classification based, like Cuvier's, upon plan; but he recognized what Cuvier failed to perceive,—namely, the importance of distinguishing between type (by which he means exactly what Cuvier means by plan) and complication of structure,—in other words, between plan and the execution of the plan. He recognized four types, which correspond exactly to Cuvier's four plans, though he calls them by different names. Let us compare them.

Cuvier. Baer. Radiates, Peripheric, Mollusks, Massive, Articulates, Longitudinal, Vertebrates. Doubly Symmetrical.

Though perhaps less felicitous, the names of Baer express the same ideas as those of Cuvier. By the *Peripheric* he signified those in which all the parts converge from the periphery or circumference of the animal to its centre. Cuvier only reverses this definition in his name of *Radiates*, signifying the animals in which all parts radiate from the centre to the circumference. By *Massive*, Baer indicated those animals in which the structure is soft and concentrated, without a very distinct individualization of parts,—exactly the animals included by Cuvier under his name of *Mollusks*, or soft-bodied animals. In his selection of the epithet *Longitudinal*, Baer was less fortunate; for all animals have a longitudinal diameter, and this word was not, therefore, sufficiently special. Yet his *Longitudinal* type answers exactly to Cuvier's *Articulates*,—animals in which all parts are arranged in a succession of articulated joints along a longitudinal axis. Cuvier has expressed this jointed structure in the name *Articulates*; whereas Baer, in his name of *Longitudinal*, referred only to the arrangement of joints in longitudinal succession, in a continuous string, as it were, one after another. For the *Doubly Symmetrical* type his name is the better of the two; for Cuvier's name of *Vertebrates* alludes only to the backbone,—while Baer, who is an embryologist, signifies in his their mode of growth also. He knew what Cuvier did not know, that in its first formation the germ of the Vertebrate divides in two folds: one turning up above the backbone, to inclose all the sensitive Organs,—the spinal marrow, the organs of sense, all those organs by which life is expressed; the other turning down below the backbone, and inclosing all those organs by which life is maintained,—the organs of digestion, of respiration, of circulation, of reproduction,

Page 15

etc. So there is in this type not only an equal division of parts on either side, but also a division above and below, making thus a double symmetry in the plan, expressed by Baer in the name he gave it. Baer was perfectly original in his conception of these four types, for his paper was published in the very same year with that of Cuvier. But even in Germany, his native land, his ideas were not fully appreciated: strange that it should be so,—for, had his countrymen recognized his genius, they might have claimed him as the compeer of the great French naturalist.

Baer also founded the science of Embryology, under the guidance of his teacher, Dollinger. His researches in this direction showed him that animals were not only built on four plans, but that they grew according to four modes of development. The Vertebrate arises from the egg differently from the Articulate,—the Articulate differently from the Mollusk,—the Mollusk differently from the Radiate. Cuvier only showed us the four plans as they exist in the adult; Baer went a step farther, and showed us the four plans in the process of formation. But his greatest scientific achievement is perhaps the discovery that all animals originate in eggs, and that all these eggs are at first identical in substance and structure. The wonderful and untiring research condensed into this simple statement, that all animals arise from eggs and that all those eggs are identical in the beginning, may well excite our admiration. This egg consists of an outer envelope, the vitelline membrane, containing a fluid more or less dense, the yolk; within this is a second envelope, the so-called germinative vesicle, containing a somewhat different and more transparent fluid, and in the fluid of this second envelope float one or more so-called germinative specks. At this stage of their growth all eggs are microscopically small, yet each one has such tenacity of its individual principle of life that no egg was ever known to swerve from the pattern of the parent animal that gave it birth.

III.

From the time that Linnaeus showed us the necessity of a scientific system as a framework for the arrangement of scientific facts in Natural History, the number of divisions adopted by zoologists and botanists increased steadily. Not only were families, orders, and classes added to genera and species, but these were further multiplied by subdivisions of the different groups. But as the number of divisions increased, they lost in precise meaning, and it became more and more doubtful how far they were true to Nature. Moreover, these divisions were not taken in the same sense by all naturalists: what were called families by some were called orders by others, while the orders of some were the classes of others, till it began to be doubted whether these scientific systems had any foundation in Nature, or signified anything more than that it had pleased Linnaeus, for instance, to call certain groups of animals by one name, while Cuvier had chosen to call them by another.

Page 16

These divisions are, first, the most comprehensive groups, the primary divisions, called branches by some, types by others, and divided by some naturalists into so-called sub-types, meaning only a more limited circumscription of the same kind of group; next we have classes, and these also have been divided into sub-classes, then orders and sub-orders, families, sub-families, and tribes; then genera, species, and varieties. With reference to the question, whether these groups really exist in Nature or are merely the expression of individual theories and opinions, it is worth while to study the works of the early naturalists, in order to trace the natural process by which scientific classification has been reached; for in this, as in other departments of learning, practice has always preceded theory. We do the thing before we understand why we do it: speech precedes grammar, reason precedes logic; and so a division of animals into groups, upon an instinctive perception of their differences, has preceded all our scientific creeds and doctrines. Let us, therefore, proceed to examine the meaning of these names as adopted by naturalists.

When Cuvier proposed his four primary divisions of the animal kingdom, he added his argument for their adoption,—*because*, he said, they are constructed on four different plans. All the progress in our science since his time confirms this result; and I shall attempt to show that there are really four, and only four, such structural ideas at the foundation of the animal kingdom, and that all animals are included under one or another of them. But it does not follow, that, because we have arrived at a sound principle, we are therefore unerring in our practice. From ignorance we may misplace animals, and include them under the wrong division. This is a mistake, however, which a better insight into their organization rectifies; and experience constantly proves, that, whenever the structure of an animal is perfectly understood, there is no hesitation as to the head under which it belongs. We may consequently test the merits of these four primary groups on the evidence furnished by investigation. It has already been seen that these plans may be presented in the most abstract manner without any reference to special animals. *Radiation* expresses in one word the idea on which the lowest of these types is based. In *Radiates* we have no prominent bilateral symmetry, as in all other animals, but an all-sided symmetry, in which there is no right and left, no anterior and posterior extremity, no above and below. They are spheroidal bodies; yet, though many of them remind us of a sphere, they are by no means to be compared to a mathematical sphere, but rather to an organic sphere, so loaded with life, as it were, as to produce an infinite variety of radiate symmetry. The whole organization is arranged around a centre toward which all the parts converge, or, in a reverse sense, from which all the parts radiate.

Page 17

In *Mollusks* there is a longitudinal axis and a bilateral symmetry; but the longitudinal axis in these soft concentrated bodies is not very prominent; and though the two ends of this axis are distinct from each other, the difference is not so marked that we can say at once, for all of them, which is the anterior and which the posterior extremity. In this type, right and left have the preponderance over the other diameters of the body. The sides are the prominent parts,—they are charged with the important organs, loaded with those peculiarities of the structure that give it character. The Oyster is a good instance of this, with its double valve, so swollen on one side, so flat on the other. There is an unconscious recognition of this in the arrangement of all collections of Mollusks; for, though the collectors do not put up their specimens with any intention of illustrating this peculiarity, they instinctively give them the position best calculated to display their distinctive characteristics, and to accomplish this they necessarily place them in such a manner as to show the sides. In *Articulates* there is also a longitudinal axis of the body and a bilateral symmetry in the arrangement of parts; the head and tail are marked, and the right and left sides are distinct. But the prominent tendency in this type is the development of the dorsal and ventral region; here above and below prevail over right and left. It is the back and the lower side that have the preponderance over any other part of the structure in *Articulates*. The body is divided from end to end by a succession of transverse constrictions, forming movable rings; but the character of the animal, its striking features, are always above or below, and especially developed on the back. Any collection of Insects or Crustacea is an evidence of this; being always instinctively arranged in such a manner as to show the predominant features, they uniformly exhibit the back of the animal. The profile view of an *Articulate* has no significance; whereas in a Mollusk, on the contrary, the profile view is the most illustrative of the structural character. In the highest division, the *Vertebrates*, so characteristically called by Baer the *Doubly Symmetrical* type, a solid column runs through the body with an arch above and an arch below, thus forming a double internal cavity. In this type, the head is the prominent feature; it is, as it were, the loaded end of the longitudinal axis, so charged with vitality as to form an intelligent brain, and rising in man to such predominance as to command and control the whole organism. The structure is arranged above and below this axis, the upper cavity containing all the sensitive organs, and the lower cavity containing all those by which life is maintained.

Page 18

While Cuvier and his followers traced these four distinct plans, as shown in the adult animal, Baer opened to us a new field of investigation in the embryology of the four types, showing that for each there was a special mode of growth in the egg. Looking at them from this point of view, we shall see that these four types, with their four modes of growth, seem to fill out completely the plan or outline of the animal kingdom, and leave no reason to expect any further development or any other plan of animal life within these limits. The eggs of all animals are spheres, such as I have described them; but in the Radiate the whole periphery is transformed into the germ, so that it becomes, by the liquefying of the yolk, a hollow sphere. In the Mollusks, the germ lies above the yolk, absorbing its whole substance through the under side, thus forming a massive close body instead of a hollow one. In the Articulate, the germ is turned in a position exactly opposite to that of the Mollusk, and absorbs the yolk upon the back. In the Vertebrate, the germ divides in two folds, one turning upward, the other turning downward, above and below the central backbone. These four modes of development seem to exhaust the possibilities of the primitive sphere, which is the foundation of all animal life, and therefore I believe that Cuvier and Baer were right in saying that the whole animal kingdom is included under these four structural ideas.

Leuckart proposed to subdivide the Radiates into two groups: the Coelenterata, including Polyps and Acalephs or Jelly-Fishes,—and Echinoderms, including Star-Fishes, Sea-Urchins, and Holothurians. His reason for this distinction is the fact that in the latter the organs are inclosed within walls of their own, distinct from the body-wall; whereas in the former the organs are formed by internal folds of the outer wall of the body, as in the Polyps, or are hollowed out of the substance of the body, as in Jelly-Fishes. This implies no difference in the plan, but merely a difference in the execution of the plan. Both are equally radiate in their structure; and when Leuckart separated them as distinct primary types, he mistook a difference in the material expression of the plan for a difference in the plan itself. So some naturalists have distinguished Worms from the other Articulates as a separate division. But the structural plan of this type is a body divided by transverse constrictions or joints; and whether those joints are uniformly arranged from one end of the body to the other, as in the Worms, or whether the front joints are soldered together so as to form two regions of the body, as in Crustacea, or divided so as to form three regions of the body, as in winged Insects, does not in the least affect the typical character of the structure, which remains the same in all. Branches or types, then, are natural groups of the animal kingdom, founded on plans of structure or structural ideas.

Page 19

What now are classes? Are they lesser divisions, differing only in extent, or are they founded on special characters? I believe the latter view to be the true one, and that class characters have a significance quite different from that of their mere range or extent. These divisions are founded on certain categories of structure; and were there but one animal of a class in the world, if it had those characters on which a class is founded, it would be as distinct from all other animals as if its kind were counted by thousands. Baer approached the idea of the classes when he discriminated between plan of structure or type and the degree of perfection in the structure. But while he understands the distinction between a plan and its execution, his ideas respecting the different features of structure are not quite so precise. He does not, for instance, distinguish between the complication of a given structure and the mode of execution of a plan, both of which are combined in what he calls degrees of perfection. And yet, without this distinction, the difference between classes and orders cannot be understood; for classes and orders rest upon a just appreciation of these two categories, which are quite distinct from each other, and have by no means the same significance. Again, quite distinct from both of these is the character of form, not to be confounded either with complication of structure, on which orders are based, or with the execution of the plan, on which classes rest. An example will show that form is no guide for the determination of classes or orders. Take, for instance, a Beche-de-Mer, a member of the highest class of Radiates, and compare it with a Worm. They are both long cylindrical bodies; but one has parallel divisions along the length of the body, the other has the body divided by transverse rings. Though in external form they resemble each other, the one is a worm-like Radiate, the other is a worm-like Articulate, each having the structure of its own type; so that they do not even belong to the same great division of the animal kingdom, much less to the same class. We have a similar instance in the Whales and Fishes,—the Whales having been for a long time considered as Fishes, on account of their form, while their structural complication shows them to be a low order of the class of Mammalia, to which we ourselves belong, that class being founded upon a particular mode of execution of the plan characteristic of the Vertebrates, while the order to which the Whales belong depends upon their complication of structure, as compared with other members of the same class. We may therefore say that neither form nor complication of structure distinguishes classes, but simply the mode of execution of a plan. In Vertebrates, for instance, how do we distinguish the class of Mammalia from the other classes of the type? By the peculiar development of the brain, by their breathing through lungs, by their double circulation, by their bringing

Page 20

forth living young and nursing them with milk. In this class the beasts of prey form a distinct order, superior to the Whales or the herbivorous animals, on account of the higher complication of their structure; and for the same reason we place the Monkeys above them all. But among the beasts of prey we distinguish the Bears, as a family, from the family of Dogs, Wolves, and Cats, on account of their different form, which does not imply a difference either in the complication of their structure or in the mode of execution of their plan.

* * * * *

AGNES OF SORRENTO.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PENANCE.

The course of our story requires us to return to the Capuchin convent, and to the struggles and trials of its Superior; for in his hands is the irresistible authority which must direct the future life of Agnes.

From no guilty compliances, no heedless running into temptation, had he come to love her. The temptation had met him in the direct path of duty; the poison had been breathed in with the perfume of sweetest and most life-giving flowers: nor could he shun that temptation, nor cease to inhale that fatal sweetness, without confessing himself vanquished in a point where, in his view, to yield was to be lost. The subtle and deceitful visit of Father Johannes to his cell had the effect of thoroughly rousing him to a complete sense of his position, and making him feel the immediate, absolute necessity of bringing all the energy of his will, all the resources of his nature to bear on its present difficulties. For he felt, by a fine intuition, that already he was watched and suspected;—any faltering step now, any wavering, any change in his mode of treating his female penitents, would be maliciously noted. The military education of his early days had still left in his mind a strong residuum of personal courage and honor, which made him regard it as dastardly to flee when he ought to conquer, and therefore he set his face as a flint for victory.

But reviewing his interior world, and taking a survey of the work before him, he felt that sense of a divided personality which often becomes so vivid in the history of individuals of strong will and passion. It seemed to him that there were two men within him: the one turbulent, passionate, demented; the other vainly endeavoring by authority, reason, and conscience to bring the rebel to subjection. The discipline of conventual life, the extraordinary austerities to which he had condemned himself, the monotonous solitude

of his existence, all tended to exalt the vivacity of the nervous system, which, in the Italian constitution, is at all times disproportionately developed; and when those weird harp-strings of the nerves are once thoroughly unstrung, the fury and tempest of the discord sometimes utterly bewilders the most practised self-government.

Page 21

But he felt that *something* must be done with himself, and done immediately; for in a few days he must again meet Agnes at the confessional. He must meet her, not with weak tremblings and passionate fears, but calm as Fate, inexorable as the Judgment-Day. He must hear her confession, not as man, but as God; he must pronounce his judgments with a divine dispassionateness. He must dive into the recesses of her secret heart, and, following with subtile analysis all the fine courses of those fibres which were feeling their blind way towards an earthly love, must tear them remorselessly away. Well could he warn her of the insidiousness of earthly affections; better than any one else he could show her how a name that was blended with her prayers and borne before the sacred shrine in her most retired and solemn hours might at last come to fill all her heart with a presence too dangerously dear. He must direct her gaze up those mystical heights where an unearthly marriage awaited her, its sealed and spiritual bride; he must hurry her footsteps onward to the irrevocable issue.

All this was before him. But ere it could be done, he must subdue himself,—he must become calm and pulseless, in deadly resolve; and what prayer, what penance might avail for this? If all that he had already tried had so miserably failed, what hope? He resolved to quit for a season all human society, and enter upon one of those desolate periods of retreat from earthly converse well known in the annals of saintship as most prolific in spiritual victories.

Accordingly, on the day after the conversation with Father Johannes, he startled the monks by announcing to them that he was going to leave them for several days.

“My brothers,” he said, “the weight of a fearful penance is laid upon me, which I must work out alone. I leave you today, and charge you not to seek to follow my footsteps; but, as you hope to escape hell, watch and wrestle for me and yourselves during the time I am gone. Before many days I hope to return to you with renewed spiritual strength.”

That evening, while Agnes and her uncle were sitting together in their orange-garden, mingling their parting prayers and hymns, scenes of a very different description surrounded the Father Francesco.

One who looks on the flowery fields and blue seas of this enchanting region thinks that the Isles of the Blest could scarcely find on earth a more fitting image; nor can he realize, till experience proves it to him, that he is in the immediate vicinity of a weird and dreary region which might represent no less the goblin horrors of the damned.

Page 22

Around the foot of Vesuvius lie fair villages and villas garlanded with roses and flushing with grapes whose juice gains warmth from the breathing of its subterraneous fires, while just above them rises a region more awful than can be created by the action of any common causes of sterility. There, immense tracts sloping gradually upward show a desolation so peculiar, so utterly unlike every common solitude of Nature, that one enters upon it with the shudder we give at that which is wholly unnatural. On all sides are gigantic serpent convolutions of black lava, their immense folds rolled into every conceivable contortion, as if, in their fiery agonies, they had struggled and wreathed and knotted together, and then grown cold and black with the imperishable signs of those terrific convulsions upon them. Not a blade of grass, not a flower, not even the hardiest lichen, springs up to relieve the utter deathliness of the scene. The eye wanders from one black, shapeless mass to another, and there is ever the same suggestion of hideous monster life,—of goblin convulsions and strange fiend-like agonies in some age gone by. One's very footsteps have an unnatural, metallic clink, and one's garments brushing over the rough surface are torn and fretted by its sharp, remorseless touch,—as if its very nature were so pitiless and acrid that the slightest contact revealed it.

The sun was just setting over the beautiful Bay of Naples,—with its enchanted islands, its jewelled city, its flowery villages, all bedecked and bedropped with strange shiftings and flushes of prismatic light and shade, as if they belonged to some fairy-land of perpetual festivity and singing,—when Father Francesco stopped in his toilsome ascent up the mountain, and, seating himself on ropy ridges of black lava, looked down on the peaceful landscape.

Above his head, behind him, rose the black cone of the mountain, over whose top the lazy clouds of thin white smoke were floating, tinged with the evening light; around him the desolate convulsed waste,—so arid, so supernaturally dreary; and below, like a soft enchanted dream, the beautiful bay, the gleaming white villas and towers, the picturesque islands, the gliding sails, flecked and streaked and dyed with the violet and pink and purple of the evening sky. The thin new moon and one glittering star trembled through the rosy air.

The monk wiped from his brow the sweat that had been caused by the toil of his hurried journey, and listened to the bells of the Ave Maria pealing from the different churches of Naples, filling the atmosphere with a soft tremble of solemn dropping sound, as if spirits in the air took up and repeated over and over the angelic salutation which a thousand earthly lips were just then uttering. Mechanically he joined in the invocation which at that moment united the hearts of all Christians, and as the words passed his lips, he thought, with a sad, desolate longing, of the hour of death of which they spake.

Page 23

"It must come at last," he said. "Life is but a moment. Why am I so cowardly? why so unwilling to suffer and to struggle? Am I a warrior of the Lord, and do I shrink from the toils of the camp, and long for the ease of the court before I have earned it? Why do we clamor for happiness? Why should we sinners be happy? And yet, O God, why is the world made so lovely as it lies there, why so rejoicing, and so girt with splendor and beauty, if we are never to enjoy it? If penance and toil were all we were sent here for, why not make a world grim and desolate as this around me?—then there would be nothing to seduce us. But our path is a constant fight; Nature is made only to be resisted; we must walk the sharp blade of the sword over the fiery chasm to Paradise. Come, then!—no shrinking!—let me turn my back on everything dear and beautiful, as now on this landscape!"

He rose and commenced the perpendicular ascent of the cone, stumbling and climbing over the huge sliding blocks of broken lava, which grated and crunched beneath his feet with a harsh metallic ring. Sometimes a broken fragment or two would go tinkling down the rough path behind him, and sometimes it seemed as if the whole loose black mass from above were about to slide, like an avalanche, down upon his head;—he almost hoped it would. Sometimes he would stop, overcome by the toil of the ascent, and seat himself for a moment on a black fragment, and then his eye would wander over the wide and peaceful panorama below. He seemed to himself like a fly perched upon some little roughness of a perpendicular wall, and felt a strange airy sense of pleasure in being thus between earth and heaven. A sense of relief, of beauty, and peacefulness would steal over him, as if he were indeed something disfranchised and disembodied, a part of the harmonious and beautiful world that lay stretched out beneath him; in a moment more he would waken himself with a start, and resume his toilsome journey with a sullen and dogged perseverance.

At last he gained the top of the mountain,—that weird, strange region where the loose, hot soil, crumbling beneath his feet, was no honest foodful mother earth, but an acrid mass of ashes and corrosive minerals. Arsenic, sulphur, and many a sharp and bitter salt were in all he touched, every rift in the ground hissed with stifling steam, while rolling clouds of dun sullen smoke, and a deep hollow booming, like the roar of an immense furnace, told his nearness to the great crater. He penetrated the sombre tabernacle, and stood on the very brink of a huge basin, formed by a wall of rocks around a sunken plain, the midst of which rose the black cone of the subterraneous furnace, which crackled and roared and from time to time spit up burning stones and cinders or oozed out slow ropy streams of liquid fire.

Page 24

The sulphurous cliffs were dyed in many a brilliant shade of brown and orange by the admixture of various ores, but their brightness seemed strange and unnatural, and the dizzying whirls of vapor, now enveloping the whole scene in gloom, now lifting in this spot and now in that, seemed to magnify the dismal pit to an indefinite size. Now and then there would come up from the very entrails of the mountain a sort of convulsed sob of hollow sound, and the earth would quiver beneath his feet, and fragments from the surrounding rocks would scale off and fall with crashing reverberations into the depth beneath; at such moments it would seem as if the very mountain were about to crush in and bear him down in its ruins.

Father Francesco, though blinded by the smoke and choked by the vapor, could not be content without descending into the abyss and exploring the very *penetralia* of its mysteries. Steadying his way by means of a cord which he fastened to a firm projecting rock, he began slowly and painfully clambering downward. The wind was sweeping across the chasm from behind, bearing the noxious vapors away from him, or he must inevitably have been stifled. It took him some little time, however, to effect his descent; but at length he found himself fairly landed on the dark floor of the gloomy inclosure.

The ropy, pitch-black undulations of lava yawned here and there in red-hot cracks and seams, making it appear to be only a crust over some fathomless depth of molten fire, whose moanings and boilings could be heard below. These dark congealed billows creaked and bent as the monk stepped upon them, and burned his feet through his coarse sandals; yet he stumbled on. Now and then his foot would crush in, where the lava had hardened in a thinner crust, and he would draw it suddenly back from the lurid red-hot metal beneath. The staff on which he rested was constantly kindling into a light blaze as it slipped into some heated hollow, and he was fain to beat out the fire upon the cooler surface. Still he went on half-stifled by the hot and pungent vapor, but drawn by that painful, unnatural curiosity which possesses one in a nightmare dream. The great cone in the centre was the point to which he wished to attain,—the nearest point which man can gain to this eternal mystery of fire. It was trembling with a perpetual vibration, a hollow, pulsating undertone of sound like the surging of the sea before a storm, and the lava that boiled over its sides rolled slowly down with a strange creaking; it seemed the condensed, intensified essence and expression of eternal fire, rising and still rising from some inexhaustible fountain of burning.

Page 25

Father Francesco drew as near as he could for the stifling heat and vapor, and, resting on his staff, stood gazing intently. The lurid light of the fire fell with an unearthly glare on his pale, sunken features, his wild, haggard eyes, and his torn and disarranged garments. In the awful solitude and silence of the night he felt his heart stand still, as if indeed he had touched with his very hand the gates of eternal woe, and felt its fiery breath upon his cheek. He half-imagined that the seams and clefts which glowed in lurid lines between the dark billows would gape yet wider and show the blasting secrets of some world of fiery despair below. He fancied that he heard behind and around the mocking laugh of fiends, and that confused clamor of mingled shrieks and lamentations which Dante describes as filling the dusky approaches to that forlorn realm where hope never enters.

“Ah, God,” he exclaimed, “for this vain life of man! They eat, they drink, they dance, they sing, they marry and are given in marriage, they have castles and gardens and villas, and the very beauty of Paradise seems over it all,—and yet how close by burns and roars the eternal fire! Fools that we are, to clamor for indulgence and happiness in this life, when the question is, to escape everlasting burnings! If I tremble at this outer court of God’s wrath and justice, what must be the fires of hell? These are but earthly fires; they can but burn the body: those are made to burn the soul; they are undying as the soul is. What would it be to be dragged down, down, down, into an abyss of soul-fire hotter than this for ages on ages? This might bring merciful death in time: that will have no end.”

The monk fell on his knees and breathed out piercing supplications. Every nerve and fibre within him seemed tense with his agony of prayer. It was not the outcry for purity and peace, not a tender longing for forgiveness, not a filial remorse for sin, but the nervous anguish of him who shrieks in the immediate apprehension of an unendurable torture. It was the cry of a man upon the rack, the despairing scream of him who feels himself sinking in a burning dwelling. Such anguish has found an utterance in Stradella’s celebrated “Pieta, Signore,” which still tells to our ears, in its wild moans and piteous shrieks, the religious conceptions of his day; for there is no phase of the Italian mind that has not found expression in its music.

When the oppression of the heat and sulphurous vapor became too dreadful to be borne, the monk retraced his way and climbed with difficulty up the steep sides of the crater, till he gained the summit above, where a comparatively free air revived him. All night he wandered up and down in that dreary vicinity, now listening to the mournful roar and crackle of the fire, and now raising his voice in penitential psalms or the notes of that terrific “Dies Irae” which sums up all the intense fear and horror with which the religion of the Middle Ages clothed the idea of the final catastrophe of humanity. Sometimes prostrating himself with his face towards the stifling soil, he prayed with agonized intensity till Nature would sink in a temporary collapse, and sleep, in spite of himself, would steal over him.

Page 26

So waned the gloomy hours of the night away, till the morning broke in the east, turning all the blue wavering floor of the sea to crimson brightness, and bringing up, with the rising breeze, the barking of dogs, the lowing of kine, the songs of laborers and boatmen, all fresh and breezy from the repose of the past night.

Father Francesco heard the sound of approaching footsteps climbing the lava path, and started with a nervous trepidation. Soon he recognized a poor peasant of the vicinity, whose child he had tended during a dangerous illness. He bore with him a little basket of eggs, with a melon and a fresh green salad.

“Good morning, holy father,” he said, bowing humbly. “I saw you coming this way last night, and I could hardly sleep for thinking of you; and my good woman, Teresina, would have it that I should come out to look after you. I have taken the liberty to bring a little offering;—it was the best we had.”

“Thank you, my son,” said the monk, looking wistfully at the fresh, honest face of the peasant. “You have taken too much trouble for such a sinner. I must not allow myself such indulgences.”

“But your Reverence must live. Look you,” said the peasant, “at least your Reverence will take an egg. See here, how handily I can cook one,” he added, striking his stick into a little cavity of a rock, from which, as from an escape-valve, hissed a jet of hot steam, —“see here, I nestle the egg in this little cleft, and it will be done in a twinkling. Our good God gives us our fire for nothing here.”

There was something wholesomely kindly and cheerful in the action and expression of the man, which broke upon the overstrained and disturbed musings of the monk like daylight on a ghastly dream. The honest, loving heart sees love in everything; even the fire is its fatherly helper, and not its avenging enemy.

Father Francesco took the egg, when it was done, with a silent gesture of thanks.

“If I might make bold to say,” said the peasant, encouraged, “your Reverence should have some care for yourself. If a man will not feed himself, the good God will not feed him; and we poor people have too few friends already to let such as you die. Your hands are trembling, and you look worn out. Surely you should take something more, for the very love of the poor.”

“My son, I am bound to do a heavy penance, and to work out a great conflict. I thank you for your undeserved kindness. Leave me now to myself, and come no more to disturb my prayers. Go, and God bless you!”

“Well,” said the peasant, putting down the basket and melon, “I shall leave these things here, any way, and I beg your Reverence to have a care of yourself. Teresina fretted all



night for fear something might come to you. The bambino that you cured is grown a stout little fellow, and eats enough for two,—and it is all of you; so she cannot forget it. She is a busy little woman, is Teresina; and when she gets a thought in her head, it buzzes, buzzes, like a fly in a bottle, and she will have it your Reverence is killing yourself by inches, and says she, 'What will all the poor do when he is gone?' So your Reverence must pardon us. We mean it all for the best."

Page 27

So saying, the man turned and began sliding and slipping down the steep ashy sides of the mountain cone with a dexterity which carried him to the bottom in a few moments; and on he went, sending back after him a cheerful little air, the refrain of which is still to be heard in our days in that neighborhood. A word or two of the gay song fluttered back on the ear of the monk,—

“Tutta gieja, tutta festa.”

So gay and airy it was in its ringing cadence that it seemed a musical laugh springing from sunny skies, and came fluttering into the dismal smoke and gloom of the mountain-top like a very butterfly of sound. It struck on the sad, leaden ear of the monk much as we might fancy the carol of a robin over a grave might seem, could the cold sleeper below wake one moment to its perception. If it woke one regretful sigh and drew one wandering look downward to the elysian paradise that lay smiling at the foot of the mountain, he instantly suppressed the feeling, and set his face in its old deathly stillness.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLOUDS DEEPENING.

After the departure of her uncle to Florence, the life of Agnes was troubled and harassed from a variety of causes.

First, her grandmother was sulky and moody, and though saying nothing directly on the topic nearest her heart, yet intimating by every look and action that she considered Agnes as a most ungrateful and contumacious child. Then there was a constant internal perplexity,—a constant wearying course of self-interrogation and self-distrust, the pain of a sensitive spirit which doubts at every moment whether it may not be falling into sin. The absence of her kind uncle at this time took from her the strongest support on which she had leaned in her perplexities. Cheerful, airy, and elastic in his temperament, always full of fresh-springing and beautiful thoughts, as an Italian dell is of flowers, the charming old man seemed, while he stayed with Agnes, to be the door of a new and fairer world, where she could walk in air and sunshine, and find utterance for a thousand thoughts and feelings which at all other times lay in cold repression in her heart. His counsels were always so wholesome, his sympathies so quick, his devotion so fervent and cheerful, that while with him Agnes felt the burden of her life insensibly lifted and carried for her as by some angel guide.

Now they had all come back upon her, heavier a thousand-fold than ever they had been before. Never did she so much need counsel and guidance,—never had she so much within herself to be solved and made plain to her own comprehension; yet she thought with a strange shiver of her next visit to her confessor. That austere man, so chilling, so

awful, so far above all conception of human weaknesses, how should she dare to lay before him all the secrets of her breast, especially when she must confess to having disobeyed

Page 28

his most stringent commands? She had had another interview with this forbidden son of perdition, but how it was she knew not. How could such things have happened? Instead of shutting her eyes and turning her head and saying prayers, she had listened to a passionate declaration of love, and his last word had called her his wife. Her heart thrilled every time she thought of it; and somehow she could not feel sure that it was exactly a thrill of penitence. It was all like a strange dream to her; and sometimes she looked at her little brown hands and wondered if he really had kissed them,—he, the splendid strange vision of a man, the prince from fairyland! Agnes had never read romances, it is true, but she had been brought up on the legends of the saints, and there never was a marvel possible to human conception that had not been told there. Princes had come from China and Barbary and Abyssinia and every other strange out-of-the-way place, to kneel at the feet of fair, obdurate saints who would not even turn the head to look at them; but she had acted, she was conscious, after a much more mortal fashion, and so made herself work for confession and penance. Yet certainly she had not meant to do so; the interview came on her so suddenly, so unexpectedly; and somehow he *would* speak, and he would not go when she asked him to; and she remembered how he looked when he stood right before her in the doorway and told her she *should* hear him,—how the color flushed up in his cheeks, what a fire there was in his great dark eyes; he looked as if he were going to do something desperate then; it made her hold her breath even now to think of it.

“These princes and nobles,” she thought, “are so used to command, it is no wonder they make us feel as if they must have their will. I have heard grandmother call them wolves and vultures, that are ready to tear us poor folk to pieces; but I am sure he seems gentle. I’m sure it isn’t wicked or cruel for him to want to make me his wife; and he couldn’t know, of course, why it wasn’t right he should; and it really is beautiful of him to love me so. Oh, if I were only a princess, and he loved me that way, how glad I should be to give up everything and go to him alone! And then we would pray together; and I really think that would be much better than praying all alone. He said men had so much more to tempt them. Ah, that is true! How can little moles that grub in the ground know of the dangers of eagles that fly to the very sun? Holy Mother, look mercifully upon him and save his soul!”

Such were the thoughts of Agnes the day when she was preparing for her confession; and all the way to church she found them floating and dissolving and reappearing in new forms in her mind, like the silvery smoke-clouds which were constantly veering and sailing over Vesuvius.

Only one thing was firm and never changing, and that was the purpose to reveal everything to her spiritual director. When she kneeled at the confessional with closed eyes, and began her whispered acknowledgments, she tried to feel as if she were speaking in the ear of God alone,—that God whose spirit she was taught to believe, for

the time being, was present in His minister before whom her inmost heart was to be unveiled.

Page 29

He who sat within had just returned from his lonely retreat with his mind and nerves in a state of unnatural tension,—a sort of ecstatic clearness and calmness, which he mistook for victory and peace. During those lonely days when he had wandered afar from human converse, and was surrounded only by objects of desolation and gloom, he had passed through as many phases of strange, unnatural experience as there were flitting smoke-wreaths eddying about him.

There are depths in man's nature and his possibilities which no plummet has ever sounded,—the wild, lonely joys of fanatical excitement, the perfectly ravenous appetite for self-torture, which seems able, in time, to reverse the whole human system, and make a heaven of hell. How else can we understand the facts related both in Hindoo and in Christian story, of those men and women who have found such strange raptures in slow tortures, prolonged from year to year, till pain became a habit of body and mind? It is said, that, after the tortures of the rack, the reaction of the overstrained nerves produces a sense of the most exquisite relief and repose; and so when mind and body are harrowed, harassed to the very outer verge of endurance, come wild throbbings and transports, and strange celestial clairvoyance, which the mystic hails as the descent of the New Jerusalem into his soul.

It had seemed to Father Francesco, when he came down from the mountain, that he had left his body behind him,—that he had left earth and earthly things; his very feet touching the ground seemed to tread not on rough, resisting soil, but upon elastic cloud. He saw a strange excess of beauty in every flower, in every leaf, in the wavering blue of the sea, in the red grottoed rocks that overhung the shore, with their purple, green, orange, and yellow hangings of flower-and-leaf-tapestry. The songs of the fishermen on the beach, the peasant-girls cutting flowery fodder for the cattle, all seemed to him to have an unnatural charm. As one looking through a prism sees a fine bordering of rainbow on every object, so he beheld a glorified world. His former self seemed to him something forever past and gone. He looked at himself as at another person, who had sinned and suffered, and was now resting in beatified repose; and he fondly thought all this was firm reality, and believed that he was now proof against all earthly impressions, able to hear and to judge with the dispassionate calmness of a disembodied spirit. He did not know that this high-strung calmness, this fine clearness, were only the most intense form of nervous sensibility, and as vividly susceptible to every mortal impression as is the vitalized chemical plate to the least action of the sun's rays.

Page 30

When Agnes began her confession, her voice seemed to him to pass through every nerve; it seemed as if he could feel her presence thrilling through the very wood of the confessional. He was astonished and dismayed at his own emotion. But when she began to speak of the interview with the cavalier, he trembled from head to foot with uncontrollable passion. Nature long repressed came back in a tempestuous reaction. He crossed himself again and again, he tried to pray, and blessed those protecting shadows which concealed his emotion from the unconscious one by his side. But he set his teeth in deadly resolve, and his voice, as he questioned her, came forth cutting and cold as ice crystals.

“Why did you listen to a word?”

“My father, it was so sudden. He wakened me from sleep. I answered him before I thought.”

“You should not have been sleeping. It was a sinful indolence.”

“Yes, my father.”

“See now to what it led. The enemy of your soul, ever watching, seized this moment to tempt you.”

“Yes, my father.”

“Examine your soul well,” said Father Francesco, in a tone of austere severity that made Agnes tremble. “Did you not find a secret pleasure in his words?”

“My father, I fear I did,” said she, with a trembling voice.

“I knew it! I knew it!” the priest muttered to himself, while the great drops started on his forehead, in the intensity of the conflict he repressed. Agnes thought the solemn pause that followed was caused by the horror that had been inspired by her own sinfulness.

“You did not, then, heartily and truly wish him to go from you?” pursued the cold, severe voice.

“Yes, my father, I did. I wished him to go with all my soul.”

“Yet you say you found pleasure in his being near you,” said Father Francesco, conscious how every string of his own being, even in this awful hour, was vibrating with a sort of desperate, miserable joy in being once more near to her.

“Ah,” sighed Agnes, “that is true, my father,—woe is me! Please tell me how I could have helped it. I was pleased before I knew it.”

“And you have been thinking of what he said to you with pleasure since?” pursued the confessor, with an intense severity of manner, deepening as he spoke.

“I *have* thought of it,” faltered Agnes.

“Beware how you trifle with the holy sacrament! Answer frankly. You have thought of it with *pleasure*. Confess it.”

“I do not understand myself exactly,” said Agnes. “I have thought of it partly with pleasure and partly with pain.”

“Would you like to go with him and be his wife, as he said?”

“If it were right, father,—not otherwise.”

“Oh, foolish child! oh, blinded soul! to think of right in connection with an infidel and heretic! Do you not see that all this is an artifice of Satan? He can transform himself into an angel of light. Do you suppose this heretic would be brought back to the Church by a foolish girl? Do you suppose it is your prayers he wants? Why does, he not seek the prayers of the Church,—of holy men who have power with God? He would bait his hook with this pretence that he may catch your soul. Do you believe me?”

Page 31

"I am bound to believe you, my father."

"But you do not. Your heart is going after this wicked man."

"Oh, my father, I do not wish it should. I never wish or expect to see him more. I only pray for him that his soul may not be lost."

"He has gone, then?"

"Yes, my father. And he went with my uncle, a most holy monk, who has undertaken the work of his salvation. He listens to my uncle, who has hopes of restoring him to the Church."

"That is well. And now, my daughter, listen to me. You must root out of your thought every trace and remembrance of these words of sinful earthly love which he hath spoken. Such love would burn your soul to all eternity with fire that never could be quenched. If you can tear away all roots and traces of this from your heart, if by fasting and prayer and penance you can become worthy to be a bride of your divine Lord, then your prayers will gain power, and you may prevail to secure his eternal salvation. But listen to me, daughter,—listen and tremble! If ever you should yield to his love and turn back from this heavenly marriage to follow him, you will accomplish his damnation and your own; to all eternity he will curse you, while the fire rages and consumes him,—he will curse the hour that he first saw you."

These words were spoken with an intense vehemence which seemed almost supernatural. Agnes shivered and trembled; a vague feeling of guilt overwhelmed and disheartened her; she seemed to herself the most lost and abandoned of human beings.

"My father, I shall think no penance too severe that may restore my soul from this sin. I have already made a vow to the blessed Mother that I will walk on foot to the Holy City, praying in every shrine and holy place; and I humbly ask your approval."

This announcement brought to the mind of the monk a sense of relief and deliverance. He felt already, in the terrible storm of agitation which this confession had aroused within him, that nature was not dead, and that he was infinitely farther from the victory of passionless calm than he had supposed. He was still a man,—torn with human passions, with a love which he must never express, and a jealousy which burned and writhed at every word which he had wrung from its unconscious object. Conscience had begun to whisper in his ear that there would be no safety to him in continuing this spiritual dictatorship to one whose every word unmanned him,—that it was laying himself open to a ceaseless temptation, which in some blinded, dreary hour of evil might hurry him into acts of horrible sacrilege; and he was once more feeling that wild, stormy revolt of his inner nature that so distressed him before he left the convent.

This proposition of Agnes' struck him as a compromise. It would take her from him only for a season, she would go under his care and direction, and he would gradually recover his calmness and self-possession in her absence. Her pilgrimage to the holy places would be a most proper and fit preparation for the solemn marriage-rite which should forever sunder her from all human ties and make her inaccessible to all solicitations of human love. Therefore, after an interval of silence, he answered,—

Page 32

"Daughter, your plan is approved. Such pilgrimages have ever been held meritorious works in the Church, and there is a special blessing upon them."

"My father," said Agnes, "it has always been in my heart from my childhood to be the bride of the Lord; but my grandmother, who brought me up, and to whom I owe the obedience of a daughter, utterly forbids me: she will not hear a word of it. No longer ago than last Monday she told me I might as well put a knife into her heart as speak of this."

"And you, daughter, do you put the feelings of any earthly friend before the love of your Lord and Creator who laid down His life for you? Hear what He saith:—'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.'"

"But my poor old grandmother has no one but me in the world, and she has never slept a night without me; she is getting old, and she has worked for me all her good days;—it would be very hard for her to lose me."

"Ah, false, deceitful heart! Has, then, thy Lord not labored for thee? Has He not borne thee through all the years of thy life? And wilt thou put the love of any mortal before His?"

"Yes," replied Agnes, with a sort of hardy sweetness,— "but my Lord does not need me as grandmother does; He is in glory, and will never be old or feeble; I cannot work for Him and tend Him as I shall her. I cannot see my way clear at present; but when she is gone, or if the saints move her to consent, I shall then belong to God alone."

"Daughter, there is some truth in your words; and if your Lord accepts you, He will dispose her heart. Will she go with you on this pilgrimage?"

"I have prayed that she might, father,—that her soul may be quickened; for I fear me, dear old grandmamma has found her love for me a snare,—she has thought too much of my interests and too little of her own soul, poor grandmamma!"

"Well, child, I shall enjoin this pilgrimage on her as a penance."

"I have grievously offended her lately," said Agnes, "in rejecting an offer of marriage with a man on whom she had set her heart, and therefore she does not listen to me as she is wont to do."

"You have done right in refusing, my daughter. I will speak to her of this, and show her how great is the sin of opposing a holy vocation in a soul whom the Lord calls to Himself, and enjoin her to make reparation by uniting with you in this holy work."

Agnes departed from the confessional without even looking upon the face of her director, who sat within listening to the rustle of her dress as she rose,—listening to the



soft fall of her departing footsteps, and praying that grace might be given him not to look after her: and he did not, though he felt as if his life were going with her.

Agnes tripped round the aisle to a little side-chapel where a light was always kept burning by her before a picture of Saint Agnes, and, kneeling there, waited till her grandmother should be through with her confession.

Page 33

“Ah, sweet Saint Agnes,” she said, “pity me! I am a poor ignorant young girl, and have been led into grievous sin; but I did not mean to do wrong,—I have been trying to do right; pray for me, that I may overcome as you did. Pray our dear Lord to send you with us on this pilgrimage, and save us from all wicked and brutal men who would do us harm. As the Lord delivered you in sorest straits, keeping soul and body pure as a lily, ah, pray Him to keep me! I love you dearly,—watch over me and guide me.”

In those days of the Church, such addresses to the glorified saints had become common among all Christians. They were not regarded as worship, any more than a similar outpouring of confidence to a beloved and revered friend yet in the body. Among the hymns of Savonarola is one addressed to Saint Mary Magdalen, whom he regarded with an especial veneration. The great truth, that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, that *all* live to Him, was in those ages with the truly religious a part of spiritual consciousness. The saints of the Church Triumphant, having become one with Christ as he is one with the Father, were regarded as invested with a portion of his divinity, and as the ministering agency through which his mediatorial government on earth was conducted; and it was thought to be in the power of the sympathetic heart to attract them by the outflow of its affections, so that their presence often overshadowed the walks of daily life with a cloud of healing and protecting sweetness.

If the enthusiasm of devotion in regard to these invisible friends became extravagant and took the language due to God alone, it was no more than the fervid Italian nature was always doing with regard to visible objects of affection. Love with an Italian always tends to become worship, and some of the language of the poets addressed to earthly loves rises into intensities of expression due only to the One, Sovereign, Eternal Beauty. One sees even in the writings of Cicero that this passionate adoring kind of love is not confined to modern times. When he loses the daughter in whom his heart is garnered up, he finds no comfort except in building a temple to her memory,—a blind outreaching towards the saint-worship of modern times.

Agnes rose from her devotions, and went with downcast eyes, her lips still repeating prayers, to the font of holy water, which was in a dim shadowy corner, where a painted window cast a gold and violet twilight. Suddenly there was a rustle of garments in the dimness, and a jewelled hand essayed to pass holy water to her on the tip of its finger. This mark of Christian fraternity, common in those times, Agnes almost mechanically accepted, touching her slender finger to the one extended, and making the sign of the cross, while she raised her eyes to see who stood there. Gradually the haze cleared from her mind, and she awoke to the consciousness that it was the cavalier! He moved to come towards her, with a bright smile on his face; but suddenly she became pale as one who has seen a spectre, and, pushing from her with both hands, she said faintly, “Go, go!” and turned and sped up the aisle silently as a sunbeam, joining her grandmother, who was coming from the confessional with a gloomy and sullen brow.

Page 34

Old Elsie had been enjoined to unite with her grandchild in this scheme of a pilgrimage, and received the direction with as much internal contumacy as would a thriving church-member of Wall Street a proposition to attend a protracted meeting in the height of the business season. Not but that pilgrimages were holy and gracious works,—she was too good a Christian not to admit that,—but why must holy and gracious works be thrust on her in particular? There were saints enough who liked such things; and people *could* get to heaven without,—if not with a very abundant entrance, still in a modest way,—and Elsie's ambition for position and treasure in the spiritual world was of a very moderate cast.

"Well, now, I hope you are satisfied," she said to Agnes, as she pulled her along with no very gentle hand; "you've got me sent off on a pilgrimage,—and my old bones must be rattling up and down all the hills between here and Rome,—and who's to see to the oranges?—they'll all be stolen, every one."

"Grandmother," began Agnes in a pleading voice—

"Oh, you hush up! I know what you're going to say: 'The good Lord will take care of them.' I wish He may! He has His hands full, with all the people that go cawing and psalm-singing like so many crows, and leave all their affairs to Him!"

Agnes walked along disconsolate, with her eyes full of tears, which coursed one another down her pale cheeks.

"There's Antonio," pursued Elsie, "would perhaps look after things a little. He is a good fellow, and only yesterday was asking if he couldn't do something for us. It's you he does it for,—but little you care who loves you, or what they do for you!"

At this moment they met old Jocunda, whom we have before introduced to the reader as portress of the Convent. She had on her arm a large square basket, which she was storing for its practical uses.

"Well, well, Saint Agnes be praised, I have found you at last," she said. "I was wanting to speak about some of your blood-oranges for conserving. An order has come down from our dear gracious lady, the Queen, to prepare a lot for her own blessed eating, and you may be sure I would get none of anybody but you.—But what's this, my little heart, my little lamb?—crying?—tears in those sweet eyes? What's the matter now?"

"Matter enough for me!" said Elsie. "It's a weary world we live in. A body can't turn any way and not meet with trouble. If a body brings up a girl one way, why, every fellow is after her, and one has no peace; and if a body brings her up another way, she gets her head in the clouds, and there's no good of her in this world. Now look at that girl,—doesn't everybody say it's time she were married?—but no marrying for her! Nothing will do but we must off to Rome on a pilgrimage,—and what's the good of that, I want to

know? If it's praying that's to be done, the dear saints know she's at it from morning till night,—and lately she's up and down three or four times a night with some prayer or other."

Page 35

“Well, well,” said Jocunda, “who started this idea?”

“Oh, Father Francesco and she got it up between them,—and nothing will do but I must go, too.”

“Well, now, after all, my dear,” said Jocunda, “do you know, I made a pilgrimage once, and it isn’t so bad. One gets a good deal by it, first and last. Everybody drops something into your hand as you go, and one gets treated as if one were somebody a little above the common; and then in Rome one has a princess or a duchess or some noble lady who washes one’s feet, and gives one a good supper, and perhaps a new suit of clothes, and all that,—and ten to one there comes a pretty little sum of money to boot, if one plays one’s cards well. A pilgrimage isn’t bad, after all;—one sees a world of fine things, and something new every day.”

“But who is to look after our garden and dress our trees?”

“Ah, now, there’s Antonio, and old Meta his mother,” said Jocunda, with a knowing wink at Agnes. “I fancy there are friends there that would lend a hand to keep things together against the little one comes borne. If one is going to be married, a pilgrimage brings good luck in the family. All the saints take it kindly that one comes so far to see them, and are more ready to do a good turn for one when one needs it. The blessed saints are like other folks,—they like to be treated with proper attention.”

This view of pilgrimages from the material stand-point had more effect on the mind of Elsie than the most elaborate appeals of Father Francesco. She began to acquiesce, though with a reluctant air.

Jocunda, seeing her words had made some impression, pursued her advantage on the spiritual ground.

“To be sure,” she added, “I don’t know how it is with you; but I know that I have, one way and another, rolled up quite an account of sins in my life. When I was tramping up and down with my old man through the country,—now in this castle and then in that camp, and now and then in at the sacking of a city or village, or something of the kind,—the saints forgive us!—it does seem as if one got into things that were not of the best sort, in such times. It’s true, it’s been wiped out over and over by the priest; but then a pilgrimage is a good thing to make all sure, in case one’s good works should fall short of one’s sins at last. I can tell you, a pilgrimage is a good round weight to throw into the scale; and when it comes to heaven and hell, you know, my dear, why, one cannot be too careful.”

“Well, that may be true enough,” said Elsie,—“though, as to my sins, I have tried to keep them regularly squared up and balanced as I went along. I have always been regular at confession, and never failed a jot or tittle in what the holy father told me. But there may

be something in what you say; one can't be too sure; and so I'll e'en school my old bones into taking this tramp."

Page 36

That evening, as Agnes was sitting in the garden at sunset, her grandmother bustling in and out, talking, groaning, and, hurrying in her preparations for the anticipated undertaking, suddenly there was a rustling in the branches overhead, and a bouquet of rose-buds fell at her feet. Agnes picked it up, and saw a scrip of paper coiled among the flowers. In a moment remembering the apparition of the cavalier in the church in the morning, she doubted not from whom it came. So dreadful had been the effect of the scene at the confessional, that the thought of the near presence of her lover brought only terror. She turned pale; her hands shook. She shut her eyes, and prayed that she might not be left to read the paper; and then, summoning all her resolution, she threw the bouquet with force over the wall. It dropped down, down, down the gloomy, shadowy abyss, and was lost in the damp caverns below.

The cavalier stood without the wall, waiting for some responsive signal in reply to his missive. It had never occurred to him that Agnes would not even read it, and he stood confounded when he saw it thrown back with such apparent rudeness. He remembered her pale, terrified look on seeing him in the morning. It was not indifference or dislike, but mortal fear, that had been shown in that pale face.

“These wretches are practising on her,” he said, in wrath,—“filling her head with frightful images, and torturing her sensitive conscience till she sees sin in the most natural and innocent feelings.”

He had learned from Father Antonio the intention of Agnes to go on a pilgrimage, and he longed to see and talk with her, that he might offer her his protection against dangers which he understood far better than she. It had never even occurred to him that the door for all possible communication would be thus suddenly barred in his face.

“Very well,” he said to himself, with a darkening brow,—“let them have it their own way here. She must pass through my dominions before she can reach Rome, and I will find a place where I *can* be heard, without priest or grandmother to let or hinder. She is mine, and I will care for her.”

But poor Agnes had the woman's share of the misery to bear, in the fear and self-reproach and distress which every movement of this kind cost her. The involuntary thrill at seeing her lover, at hearing from him, the conscious struggle which it cost her to throw back his gift, were all noted by her accusing conscience as so many sins. The next day she sought again her confessor, and began an entrance on those darker and more chilly paths of penance, by which, according to the opinion of her times, the peculiarly elect of the Lord were supposed to be best trained. Hitherto her religion had been the cheerful and natural expression of her tender and devout nature according to the more beautiful and engaging devotional forms of her Church. During the year when her confessor

Page 37

had been, unconsciously to himself, led by her instead of leading, her spiritual food had been its beautiful old hymns and prayers, which she found no weariness in often repeating. But now an unnatural conflict was begun in her mind, directed by a spiritual guide in whom every natural and normal movement of the soul had given way before a succession of morbid and unhealthful experiences. From that day Agnes wore upon her heart one of those sharp instruments of torture which in those times were supposed to be a means of inward grace,—a cross with seven steel points for the seven sorrows of Mary. She fasted with a severity which alarmed her grandmother, who in her inmost heart cursed the day that ever she had placed her in the way of saintship.

“All this will just end in spoiling her beauty,—making her as thin as a shadow,”—said Elsie; “and she was good enough before.”

But it did not spoil her beauty,—it only changed its character. The roundness and bloom melted away,—but there came in their stead that solemn, transparent clearness of countenance, that spiritual light and radiance, which the old Florentine painters gave to their Madonnas.

It is singular how all religious exercises and appliances take the character of the nature that uses them. The pain and penance, which so many in her day bore as a cowardly expedient for averting divine wrath, seemed, as she viewed them, a humble way of becoming associated in the sufferings of her Redeemer. “*Jesu dulcis memoria*,” was the thought that carried a redeeming sweetness with every pain. Could she thus, by suffering with her Lord, gain power like Him to save,—a power which should save that soul so dear and so endangered! “Ah,” she thought, “I would give my life-blood, drop by drop, if only it might avail for his salvation!”

* * * * *

THE TRUE HEROINE.

What was she like? I cannot tell.
I only know God loved her well.
Two noble sons her gray hairs blest,—
And he, their sire, was now at rest.

And why her children loved her so,
And called her blessed, all shall know:
She never had a selfish thought,
Nor valued what her hand had wrought.



She could be just in spite of love;
And cherished hates she dwelt above;
In sick-rooms they that had her care
Said she was wondrous gentle there.

It was a fearful trust, she knew,
To guide her young immortals through;
But Love and Truth explained the way,
And Piety made perfect day.

She taught them to be pure and true,
And brave, and strong, and courteous, too;
She made them reverence silver hairs,
And feel the poor man's biting cares.

She won them ever to her side; *Home* was their treasure and their pride: Its food, drink,
shelter pleased them best, And there they found the sweetest rest.

And often, as the shadows fell,
And twilight had attuned them well,
She sang of many a noble deed,
And marked with joy their eager heed.



Page 38

And most she marked their kindling eyes
When telling of the victories
That made the Stars and Stripes a name,
Their country rich in honest fame.

It was a noble land, she said,—
Its poorest children lacked not bread;
It was so broad, so rich, so free,
They sang its praise beyond the sea;

And thousands sought its kindly shore,
And none were poor and friendless more;
All blessed the name of Washington,
And loved the Union, every one.

She made them feel that they were part
Of a great nation's living heart.—
So they grew up, true patriot boys,
And knew not all their mother's joys.

Sad was the hour when murmurs loud
From a great black advancing cloud
Made millions feel the coming breath
Of maddened whirlwinds, full of death!

She prayed the skies might soon be bright,
And made her sons prepare for fight
Brave youths!—their zeal proved clearly then
In such an hour youths can be men!

By day she went from door to door,—
Men caught her soul, unfelt before;
By night she prayed, and planned, and dreamed,
Till morn's red light war's lightning seemed.

The cry went forth; forth stepped her sons
In martial blaze of gleaming guns:
Still striding on to perils dire,
They turned to catch her glance of fire. No fears, no fond regrets she knew,
But proudly watched them fade from view:
“Lord, keep them so!” she said, and turned
To where her lonely hearth-fire burned.

* * * * *



JEFFERSON AND SLAVERY.

Any one who feels deeply the truths in which our great men of old founded this Democracy, and who sees clearly the great lines of political architecture by which alone it shall stand firm or rise high, finds in the direct plan and work the agency mainly of six men.

These may be set in three groups.

First, three men, who, through a series of earnest thoughts, taking shape sometimes in apt words, sometimes in bold acts, did most to *found* the Republic: and these three are Washington, Adams, and Jefferson.

Secondly, two men, who, as statesmen, by a healthful division between the two great natural policies, and, as politicians, by a healthful antagonism between the two great natural parties, did most to *build* the Republic: and these two are Jefferson and Hamilton.

Thirdly, three men, who, having a clear theory in their heads, and a deep conviction in their hearts, working on the nation by sermons, epistles, programmes, hints, quips, innuendoes, by every form of winged word, have done most to get this people into simple trains of humanitarian thought, and have therefore done most to *brace* the Republic: and these three men are Franklin, Jefferson, and Channing.

Page 39

So, rising above the dust raised in our old quarrels, and taking a broad view over this Democracy, we see Jefferson firmly placed in each of these groups.

If we search in Jefferson's writings and in the contemporary records to ascertain what that power was which won him these positions, we find that it was no personal skill in cajoling friends or scaring enemies. No sound-hearted man ever rose from talk with him with a tithe of the veneration felt by those who sat at the feet of Washington or Hamilton or Channing. Neither was his position due to oratory: he could deal neither in sweet words nor in lofty words. Yet, in spite of these wants, he wrought on the nation with immense power.

The real secret of this power was, first of all, that Jefferson saw infinitely deeper into the principles of the rising Democracy, and infinitely farther into its future working, than any other man of his time. Those who earnestly read him will often halt astounded at proofs of a foresight in him almost miraculous. Even in masses of what men have called his puerility there are often germs of immense worth,—taking years, perhaps, to show life, but sure to be alive at last.

Take, as the latest examples of this, three germ-truths which have recently come to full life, after having been trodden under foot for fifty years.

Early in our national life Jefferson declared against the usurpations of the national judiciary. Straightway his supporters were divided, mainly between those who sorrowed and those who stood silent; while his opponents were divided only between those who laughed and those who cursed. But who laughs now? Jefferson foresaw but too well. The usurpations of the national judiciary have come in shapes most hideous,—in the *obiter dicta* of the Dred Scott decision, and in the use of quibbles to entangle our defenders and set loose our traitors.

Take an example of another kind. In his early career Jefferson gave forth a scheme of harbor-defence by gun-boats and floating batteries. This was partially carried out, and only partially; so it failed. On these gun-boats and batteries his enemies never tired of trying their wit, and certainly seemed to make a brilliant point against his foresight and economy. But, in these latter years, many Americans besides ourself, visiting Cronstadt during the blockade by the Allied fleet, saw not only how the Allies failed of a conquest, the first summer, for want of gun-boats, but how the Russians protected themselves greatly, during the second summer, by means of them. We were shown, too, that not only could good work be done by those driven by steam, but that the greater number driven by oarsmen were of much service, not only in vexing the enemy, but in protecting the whole exposed coast. Here was Jefferson's scheme to the letter. Here was a despised thought of the past become a proud fact of the present. Here had the Autocrat reared a monument to our great Democrat,—gaining praise for Jefferson long after his enemies and their factious laughter had died out forever.

Page 40

But take what the main body of cultured Americans have thought Jefferson's chronic whimsey,—his belief that the heart of England must be ever set against all our liberty and prosperity. As we now breast the terrific storm which English reasonings and taunts had encouraged us to brave, and hear, swelling above the faint English God-speed, misstatements, gibes, reproofs, malignant prophecies, who of us shall say that the English character and policy of 1861 were not better foreknown by Jefferson in 1820 than by ourselves in 1860?

So much for Jefferson's insight and foresight. But there was yet a greater quality which gave him a place in each of these three great groups,—his faith in Democracy.

At a time when the French Revolution had scared even Burke, and when the British Constitution was thought by many to have seduced even Washington, Jefferson held fast to his great faith in the rights and capacities of the people. The only effect on him of the shocks and failures of that period was to make his anxiety sometimes morbid, and his action sometimes spasmodic. Hence much that to many men has seemed unjust suspicion of Adams, and persecution of Hamilton, and disrespect for Washington. Yet all this was but the jarring of that strong mind in the struggle and crash of his times,—mere spasms of bigotry which prove the vigor of his faith in Democracy.

Jefferson, then, known of all men not fettered by provincial traditions as invested with this foresight and this faith, is become to a vast party an idol, and from his writings issue oracles. But the priests at his shrines, having waxed fat in honors, have at last so befogged his sentiments and wrested his arguments, that thousands of true men regard him sorrowfully as the promoter of that Slavery-Despotism which to-day blooms in treason. It is worth our while, therefore, to seek to know whether Jefferson the god of the Oligarchs is Jefferson the Democrat. Let us, by the simplest and fairest process possible, try to come at his real opinions on Slavery,—just as they grew when he did so much to found the Republic,—just as they flourished when he did so much to build the Republic,—just as they were re-wrought and polished when he did so much to brace the Republic.

The whole culture of Jefferson's youth was, of all things in the world, least likely to make him support slavery or apologize for it. The man who did most to work into his mind ideas of moral and political science was Dr. William Small, a liberal Scotchman; the man who did most to direct his studies in law, and his grappling with social problems, was George Wythe. To both of these Jefferson confessed the deepest debt for their efforts to strengthen his mind and make his footing firm. Now, of all men in this country at that time, these two were least likely to support pro-slavery theories or tolerate pro-slavery cant. For while to Small's soundness there is abundance of general testimony, there is to Wythe's

Page 41

soundness testimony the most pointed. We have but to take the first volume of Jefferson's Works, published by order of Congress, and we find Jefferson's anti-slavery letter to Dr. Price, written in 1785, urging the Doctor to work against pro-slavery ideas in the young men, and to exhort the young men of Virginia to the "redress of the enormity." Incidentally he speaks of Mr. Wythe as already doing great good in this direction among these same young men, and declares him "one of the most virtuous of characters, and whose sentiments on the subject of slavery are unequivocal."

So much for the *direct* influences on Jefferson's early culture.

Studying, next, the *indirect* influences on his early culture, we see that the reform literature of that time was coming almost entirely from France. Active, earnest men everywhere were grasping the theories and phrases of Voltaire and Rousseau and Montesquieu, to wield them against every tyranny. Terrible weapons these,—often searing and scarring frightfully those who brandished them,—yet there was not one chance in a thousand that any man who had once made any considerable number of these ideas his own could ever support slavery. Whoever, at that time, studied the "Contrat Social," or the defence of Jean Calas, whatever other sins he might commit, was no more likely to advocate systematic oppression than are they who now read with reverence Dr. Arnold and Charles Kingsley; and whoever, at that time, read earnestly "The Spirit of the Laws" was as sure to fight slavery as any man who to-day reveres Channing or Theodore Parker. Those French thinkers threw such heat and light into Jefferson's young mind, that every filthy weed of tyrannic quibble or pro-slavery paradox must have been shrivelled.

And the young statesman grew under this influence as we should expect. In his twenty-seventh year he sat in the Virginia House of Burgesses, and his first effort in legislation was, in his own words, "an effort for the permission of the emancipation of slaves, which was rejected, and, indeed, during the regal government nothing liberal could expect success." His whole career in those years, whether as public man or private man, shows that his hatred of slavery was bitter. But there was such a press of other work during this founding period, that this hatred took shape not so much in a steady siege as in a series of pitched battles. The work to be done was immense, and Jefferson bore the bulk of it. He took upon himself one-third of the revising and codifying of the Virginia laws, and did even more than this. He undertook, in his own words, "a distinct series of labors which formed a *system by which every fibre would be eradicated of ancient or future aristocracy*." He effected the repeal of the laws of entail, and this prevented an aristocratic absorption of the soil; he effected the abolition of primogeniture, and this destroyed all chance of rebuilding feudal families;

Page 42

he effected a restoration of the rights of conscience, and this overthrew all hope of an Established Church; he forced on the bill for general education,—for thus, he said, would the people be “qualified to understand their rights, to maintain them, and to exercise with intelligence their parts in self-government.” In all this work his keen common sense always cut his way through questions at which other men stopped or stumbled. Thus, in the discussion on primogeniture, when Isaac Pendleton proposed, as a compromise, that they should adopt the Hebrew principle and give a double portion to the eldest son, Jefferson cut at once into the heart of the question. As he himself relates,—“I observed, that, if the eldest son could eat twice as much, or do double work, it might be a natural evidence of his right to a double portion; but being on a par in his powers and wants with his brothers and sisters, he should be on a par also in the partition of the patrimony. And such was the decision of the other members.”

But such fierceness against the bulwarks of aristocracy, and such keenness in cutting through its heavy arguments, carried him farther. Logic forced him to pass from the attack on aristocracy to the attack on slavery, just as logic forces the Confederate oligarchs of to-day to pass from the defence of slavery to the defence of aristocracy. He was sure to fight this vilest of tyrannies, and he gave quick thrusts and heavy blows. In 1778 he brought in a bill to prevent the further importation of slaves into Virginia. “This,” he says, “passed without opposition, and stopped the increase of the evil by importation, leaving to future efforts its final eradication.” Years afterward he wrote as follows:—“I have sometimes asked myself whether my country is better for my having lived at all: I do not know that it is. I have been the instrument of doing the following things.” Of these things there were just ten. Just ten great worthy deeds in a life like Jefferson’s!—and one of these he declares “the act prohibiting the importation of slaves.”

Close upon this followed a fiercer grapple,—his third great legislative attack on slavery. In his revision of the Virginia laws he reported “a bill to emancipate all slaves born after the passing of the act.” Attached to this was a plan for the instruction of the young negroes thus set free.

To follow Jefferson and understand him, we must bear in mind that the Virginia which educated him was not behind a dozen smaller States in fertility, enterprise, and republican feeling. Its best men were haters of slavery. The efforts of its leaders were directed to other things than plans for taxing oysters or filching the gains of free negroes. Forth from the Virginia of that time were hurled against negro slavery the thrilling invectives of Patrick Henry, the startling prophecies of Madison, and the declaration of Washington, “For the abolition of slavery by law my vote shall not be wanting.”

Page 43

For a mirror of that Virginia statesmanship, in its dealings with human rights, take the “Dissertation on Slavery with a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition of it in the State of Virginia, written by St. George Tucker, Professor of Law in the University of William and Mary, and one of the Judges of the General Court in Virginia,” published in 1791. It proves, that, between the passage of the act of 1782 allowing manumission and the year 1791, more than ten thousand slaves had been set free. One is tempted to believe that the new Massachusetts school caught its fire from this old Virginia school; for this friend of Jefferson speaks of “the inconsistency of invoking God for liberty in our Revolution and imposing on our fellow-men who differ from us in complexion a slavery ten thousand times more cruel than the grievances and oppressions of which we complained.” Such was the utterance of the Virginia school of statesmanship in which Jefferson was trained.

And his views progressed, as we should expect. On the occasion of a call for instructions to the first Virginia delegates to Congress respecting an address to the King, Jefferson drew up a paper, which, though greatly admired, was thought too bold. In one passage he goes beyond his masters, and says,—“For the most trifling reasons, and sometimes for no conceivable reasons at all, his Majesty has rejected laws of the most salutary tendency. *The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in these Colonies, where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state.* But, previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa. Yet our repeated efforts to effect this, by prohibiting and by imposing duties which might amount to prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by his Majesty’s negative,—thus preferring the advantages of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice.”

These words are hot and bright, but they are mere sparkles compared to the full-flaming orb of freedom which our statesman gave afterward. For, take the Declaration of Independence, as it issued from Carpenter’s Hall, after slavery-loving planters of the South and money-loving ship-owners of the North had, as they thought, made it neutral, and we all, North and South, recognize in it the boldest anti-slavery document extant. Why else do Northern demagogues ridicule it, and Southern demagogues revile it? Yet Jefferson made it far stronger and sharper against negro slavery than it is now. Look closely at the well-known fac-simile:—

[Transcriber’s note: in this quotation, *text* is underlined;
#text# is struck through]

Page 44

he has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating it's most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither, this piratical warfare, the opprobrium of *infidel* powers, is the warfare of the *Christian* king of Great Britain determined to keep open a market
#and#

where MEN should be bought & sold he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this
#determining to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold:# execrable commerce: and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which *he* has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom *he* also obtruded them: thus paying off former crimes committed against the *liberties* of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the *lives* of another.]

There stands to this day that precious original,—hot first-thoughts and cold second-thoughts, all in Jefferson's own hand. Look for a moment at the rich current of internal evidence running through that rough draught, and through all its erasures, changes, and emphatic markings,—evidence of the deepest hatred not only of all tyranny, but of all slavery. Thus, after he had written the passage, “determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold,” the idea continues hot in his mind; for, after smouldering a few moments, it flames forth again, is written again in the same phrasing, with the same show of emphasis, before he bethinks himself to erase it. Then, too, the words *Christian* and *MEN* are the only words emphasized by careful pen-printing in large letters;—and this labored movement of his pen marks the injury which he deemed the greater; for the largest letters and deepest emphasis are reserved for *MEN*. Evidently, that word points out the wrong which, as Jefferson thought, “a candid world” would forever regard as the supreme wrong.

We have now noted Jefferson's battle against slavery in the founding of the Republic: let us go on to his work in the building of the Republic.

In 1782 he gave forth the “Notes on Virginia.” His opposition to slavery is as fierce here as of old, but it takes various phases,—sometimes sweeping against the hated system with a torrent of facts,—sometimes battering it with a hard, cold logic,—sometimes piercing it with deadly queries and suggestions,—and sometimes, with his blazing hate of all oppression, biting and burning through every pro-slavery theory.

Page 45

But in taking up the “Notes,” we must understand the relation of Jefferson’s way of thinking to his way of working. In his thinking, the slave system was evidently a violation of the whole body of good principles, for he calls it an “evil”;—a violation of morality, for he calls it an “*enormity*”;—a violation of justice, for he calls it a “*wrong*”;—a violation of republican pretensions, for he calls it a “*hideous blot*”;—a violation of the healthy action of our institutions, for he calls it a “*disease*”;—a violation of our whole public happiness, for he calls it a “*curse*.” But his way of working was more calm and cool,—often displeasing those whose plans of action are formed far from any direct entanglement in the slave system.

This union of fervent thought and cool action has, of course, brought upon Jefferson the invectives of two great classes. One class have looked merely at his thinking, and have distrusted him as a dreamer. To these he is a dealer in oracles, at second-hand, from Voltaire and Diderot. The other class have studied his plans of practical philanthropy, with all his shrewd researches and homely discussions in agriculture, finance, mechanics, and architecture, and have ridiculed him as a tinker. To such Jefferson seems a grandmotherly sort of person,—riding about in a gig arranged to register the length of his rides,—walking about in boots arranged to register the length of his walks,—weatherwise, and profound in dealing with smoky chimneys and sheep-breeding.

But whether men have cavilled at him for a dreamer or laughed at him for a tinker, they have been mainly foolish, for they have cavilled and laughed at the very combination which made him powerful. In no other American have been so happily blended highest skill in theory and highest strength in practice.

The remarks, in the “Notes on Virginia,” on the colored race are clear and fair. He studied carefully and stated fully all that could be learned in his time. On the whole, his examination greatly encourages those who hope good things for that race. But one distinction must be made. As to those profound views of the character and destiny of the race which come only by observation of a long historic development, in a wide range of climate, in great variety of social position, Jefferson could, as he confesses, know almost nothing,—for the same reason that the keenest observer of William the Conqueror’s Norman robbers and Saxon swineherds would have failed to foretell the great dominant race which has come from them by free growth and good culture. But, on the other hand, of all that comes by observation of the daily life of the black race, as it then was, he knew almost everything.

He declares that the black race is inferior to the white in mind, but not in heart. The poems of black Phillis Wheatley seem to him to prove not much; but the letters of black Ignatius Sancho he praises for depth of feeling, happy turn of thought, and ease of style, though he finds no depth of reasoning. He does not praise the mental capacity of the race, but, at last, as if conscious, that, if developed under a free system, it might be far better, he quotes the Homeric lines,—

Page 46

“Jove fixed it certain that whatever day
Makes man a slave takes half his worth away.”

And shortly after, he declares it “a *suspicion* only that the blacks are inferior in the endowments of body or mind,”—that “in memory they are equal to the whites,”—that “in music they are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for time and tune.”

But there is one statement which we especially commend to those in search of an effective military policy in the present crisis. Jefferson declares of the negroes, that they are “at least as brave as the whites, and more adventuresome.” May not this truth account for the fact that one of the most daring deeds in the present war was done by a black man?

Still later, Jefferson says,—“Whether further observation will or will not verify the conjecture that Nature has been less bountiful to them in the endowments of the head, I believe that in those of the heart she will be found to have done them justice. That disposition to theft with which they have been branded must be ascribed to their situation, and not to any depravity of the moral sense. The man in whose favor no laws of property exist probably feels himself less bound to respect those made in favor of others. When arguing for ourselves, we lay it down as fundamental, that laws, to be just, must give reciprocation of right,—that, without this, they are mere arbitrary rules of conduct, founded in force, and not in conscience; and it is a problem which I give to the master to solve, whether the religious precepts against the violation of property were not framed for him as well as his slave,—and whether the slave may not as justifiably take a little from one who has taken all from him as he may slay one who would slay him. That a change in the relations in which a man is placed should change his ideas of moral right and wrong is neither new, nor peculiar to the color of the blacks.”

Here Jefferson puts forth that very idea for which Gerrit Smith, a few years ago, was threatened with the penalties of treason.

But to quote further from the same source:—

“Notwithstanding these considerations, which must weaken their respect for the laws of property, we find among them numerous instances of the most rigid integrity, and as many as among their instructed masters, of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity. The opinion that they are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination must be hazarded with great diffidence.”

The old hot thought blazes forth again in the chapter on “Particular Manners and Customs.” Can men speak against the proclamations of Abolition Conventions after such fiery words from Jefferson?

Page 47

“The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism, on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. If a parent could find no motive either in his philanthropy or his self-love for restraining the intemperance of passion toward his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose rein to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by its odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances.” (Here fire begins to flicker up around the words.) “And with what execration should a statesman be loaded, who, permitting one half the *citizens*” (note the word) “to trample on the *rights*” (note the word) “of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one and the *amor patriae* of the other! And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis,—a conviction in the minds of the people that their liberties are the gifts of God, that they are not to be violated but with His wrath?” (Now bursts forth prophecy. The whole page flames in a moment.) “Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever; that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of Fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest.”

Well may Jefferson say, immediately after this, that “it is impossible to be temperate and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history natural and civil.” For no Abolitionist ever branded the slave-system with words more fiery.

In 1784 Jefferson drew up the ordinance for the government of the Western Territory. One famous clause runs thus:—

“After the year 1800 of the Christian era there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said States, otherwise than in punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been convicted to be personally guilty.”

In Randall’s “Life of Jefferson,” a work in many respects admirable, this clause is glossed with the declaration that Jefferson intended merely to prevent an immense new importation of slaves from Africa to fill the Territory; but Mr. Randall would have shown far greater insight, had he added to this half-truth, that the idea of legally grasping and strangling this curse flows from the ideas of the “Notes” as hot metal flows from fiery furnace,—that the Ordinance of 1784 was but a minting of that true metal drawn from those old glowing thoughts and words.

Page 48

But Jefferson's hatred of slavery is not less fierce in his letters.

Dr. Price writes a pamphlet in England against slavery, and straightway Jefferson seizes his pen to urge him to write more, and more clearly for America, and more directly at American young men, saying, in encouragement,—“Northward of the Chesapeake you may find, here and there, an opponent to your doctrine, as you may find, here and there, a murderer.” He speaks hopefully of the disposition in Virginia to “redress this enormity,”—calls the fight against slavery “the interesting spectacle of justice in conflict with avarice and oppression,”—speaks of the side hostile to slavery as “the sacred side.” The date is 1785.

This welcome to Dr. Price's onslaught will serve as antidote to Mr. Randall's poisonous declaration, that Jefferson was opposed to interference with slave institutions by those living outside of Slave States.

In 1786 Jefferson wrote to correct M. de Meusnier's statement of the efforts already made for emancipation; and, referring to the holding of slaves by a people who had clamored loudly and fought bravely for freedom, he says,—

“What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man,—who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and, in the next moment, be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow-men a *bondage one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose!*”

Here, in Jefferson himself, then, is the source of that venom with which earnest men, throughout the land, are stinging to death the organization which stole his name to destroy his ideas.

In 1788, Jefferson, being Minister at Paris, receives a note from M. de Warville tendering him membership in the Society for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade. Jefferson is forced by his peculiar position to decline, but he takes pains to say,—“You know that nobody wishes more ardently to see an abolition not only of the trade, but of the *condition* of slavery.”

Here is no non-committalism, no wistful casting about for loop-holes, no sly putting out of hooks to catch backers, not the feeblest germ of quibble or lie. The man answers more than he is asked. Is there not, in the present dearth, something refreshing in this old candor?

But some have thought Jefferson's later expressions against slavery wanting in heartiness. Let us examine.

The whole world knows, that, when a wrong stings a man, making him fierce and loud, his *direct* expressions have often small value; but that his *parenthetical* expressions often have great value. This is one of the simplest principles in homely every-day criticism, serving truth-seekers, wherever wordy war rages, whether among statesmen or hackmen.

Now, in Jefferson's letter to Dr. Gordon,—written in 1788,—he is greatly stirred by his own recital of the shameful ravages on his property by the British army. Just at the moment when his indignation was at the hottest, there shot out of his heart, and off his pen, one of these side-thoughts, one of these fragments of the man's ground-idea, which, at such moments, truth-seekers always watch for. Jefferson says of Cornwallis,

Page 49

“He destroyed all my growing crops of corn and tobacco; he burned all my barns containing the same articles of the last year, having first taken what corn he wanted; he used, as was to be expected, all my stock of cattle, sheep, and hogs, for the sustenance of his army, and carried off all the horses capable of service,—of those too young for service he cut the throats; and he burned all the fences in the plantation, so as to make it an absolute waste. *He carried off also about thirty slaves. Had this been to give them their freedom, he would have done right.*”

But we turn to a seeming discrepancy between these thousand earnest declarations of Jefferson the private citizen, and the cold, formal tone of Jefferson the Secretary of State. In this high office he reclaims slaves from the Spanish power in Florida, and demands compensation for slaves carried off by the British at the evacuation of New York. For a moment that transition from personal warmth to diplomatic coolness is as the Russian plunge from steam-bath to snow-heap.

Yet, if truth-seekers do not stop to moan, they may easily find a complete explanation. As private citizen, in a State, dealing with his home Government, Jefferson had the right to move heaven and earth against slavery, and bravely he did it; but, as public servant of the nation, dealing with foreign Governments, his rights and duties were different, and his tone must be different. As a private person, writing for man as man, Jefferson forgot readily enough all differences of nation. He wrote as readily and fully of the hideousness of slavery to Meusnier and Warville in France, or to Price and Priestley in England, as to any of his neighbors; but, as public servant of the nation, writing to Hammond or Viar, representatives of foreign powers, he made no apology for our miseries. England might be ready enough to act the part of Dives, but Jefferson was not the statesman to put America in the attitude of Lazarus,—begging, and showing sores.

But we have to note yet another change in Jefferson’s modes of work and warfare.

As he wrought and fought in this second period, which, for easy reference, we call the building period, he was forced into new methods. In the former period we saw him thinking and speaking and working against every effort to found pro-slavery theories or practices. Eagerness was then the best quality for work, and quickness the best quality for fight. But now the case was different. An institution which Jefferson hated had, in spite of his struggles, been firmly founded. The land was full of the towers of the slave aristocracy. He saw that his mode of warfare must be changed. His old way did well in the earlier days, for tower-builders may be driven from their work by a sweeping charge or sudden volley; but towers, when built, must be treated with steady battering and skilful mining.

Page 50

In 1797, Jefferson, writing to St. George Tucker, speaks of the only possible emancipation as “a compromise between the passions, prejudices, and real difficulties, which will each have their weight in the operation.” Afterwards, in his letters to Monroe and Rufus King, he advocates a scheme of colonization to some point not too distant. But let no man, on this account, claim Jefferson as a supporter of the do-nothing school of Northern demagogues, or of the mad school of Southern fanatics who proclaim this ulcerous mass a beauty, and who howl at all who refuse its infection. For, note, in that same letter to St. George Tucker, the fervor of the Jeffersonian theory: bitter as Tucker’s pamphlet against slavery was, he says,—“You know my subscription to its doctrines.” Note also the vigor of the Jeffersonian practice: speaking of emancipation, he says,—“The sooner we put some plan under way, the greater hope there is that it may be permitted to proceed peaceably to its ultimate effect.” And now bursts forth prophecy again. “*But if something is not done, and soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children.*” “If we had begun sooner, we might probably have been allowed a lengthier operation to clear ourselves; but every day’s delay lessens the time we may take for emancipation.”

Here is no trace of the theory inflicting a present certain evil on a great white population in order to do a future doubtful good to a smaller black population. And this has been nowhere better understood than among the slave oligarchs of his own time. Note one marked example.

In 1801, Jefferson was elected to the Presidency on the thirty-sixth ballot. Thirty-five times Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina voted against him. The following year Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina, feeling an itching to specify to Congress his interests in Buncombe and his relations to the universe, palavered in the usual style, but let out one truth, for which, as truth-searchers, we thank him. He said,—

“Permit me to state, that, beside the objections common to my friend from Delaware and myself, there was a strong one which I felt with peculiar force. It resulted from a firm belief that the gentleman in question [Jefferson] *held opinions respecting a certain description of property in my State which, should they obtain generally, would endanger it.*”[4]

[4] Benton’s *Abridgment*, Vol. II. p. 636.

We come now to Jefferson’s Presidency. In this there was no great chance to deal an effective blow at slavery; but some have grown bitter over a story that he favored the schemes to break the slavery-limitation in Ohio. Such writers have not stopped to consider that it is more probable that a few Southern members, eager to drum in recruits, falsely claimed the favor of the President, than that Jefferson broke the slavery-limitation which he himself planned. Then, too, came the

Page 51

petitions of the abolition societies against slavery in Louisiana; and Hildreth blames Jefferson for his slowness to assist; but ought we not here to take some account of the difficulties of the situation? Ought not some weight to be given to Jefferson's declaration to Kerchival, that in his administration his "efforts in relation to peace, slavery, and religious freedom were all in accordance with Quakerism"?

We pass now to the third great period, in which, as thinker and writer, he did so much to brace the Republic.

First of all, in this period we see him revising the translation and arranging the publication of De Tracy's "Commentaire sur l'Esprit des Lois." He takes endless pains to make its hold firm on America; engages his old companion in abolitionism, St. George Tucker, to circulate it; makes it a text-book in the University of Virginia; tells his friend Cabell to read it, for it is "the best book on government in the world." Now this "best book on government" is killing to every form of tyranny or slavery; its arguments pierce all their fallacies and crush all their sophistries. That famous plea which makes Alison love Austria and Palmer love Louisiana—the plea that a people can be best educated for freedom and religion by dwarfing their minds and tying their hands—is, in this book, shivered by argument and burnt by invective.

As we approach the last years of Jefferson's life we find several letters of his on slavery. Some have thought them mere heaps of ashes,—poor remains of the flaming thoughts and words of earlier years. This mistake is great. Touch the seeming heap of ashes, and those thoughts and words dart forth, fiery as of old.

In 1814, Edward Coles attacks slavery vigorously, and calls on the great Democrat to destroy it. Jefferson's approving reply is the complete summary of his matured views on slavery. Take a few declarations as specimens.[5]

[5] Randall, Vol. III., Appendix.

"The sentiments breathed through the whole do honor both to the head and heart of the writer. Mine, on the subject of the slavery of negroes, have long since been in possession of the public, and time has only served to give them stronger proof. The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people, and it is a mortal reproach to us that they should have pleaded so long in vain." "The hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. It will come; and whether brought on by the generous energy of our own minds or by the bloody process of St. Domingo ... is a leaf of our history not yet turned over." "As to the method by which this difficult work is to be effected, if permitted to be done by ourselves, I have seen no proposition so expedient, on the whole, as that of emancipation of those born after a given day."

“This enterprise is for the young,—for those who can follow it up and bear it through to its consummation. It shall have all my prayers.”

Page 52

No wonder that this letter of Jefferson to Coles seems to have been carefully suppressed by Southern editors of the Jeffersonian writings.

Take also the letters to Mr. Barrows and to Dr. Humphreys of 1815-17. Disappointment is expressed at the want of a more general anti-slavery feeling among the young men; hope is expressed that “time will soften down the master and educate the slave”; faith is expressed that slavery will yield, “because we are not in a world ungoverned by the laws and power of a Supreme Agent.”

Entering now the stormy period of the Missouri Debate, we have one declaration from Jefferson which, at first, surprises and pains us,—the opinion given in a letter to Lafayette, that spreading slavery will “dilute the evil everywhere, and facilitate the means of getting rid of it.” The mistake is gross indeed. To all of us, with the political knowledge forced upon us by events since Jefferson’s death, it seems atrocious. But unpardonable as such a theory is *now*, was it so *then*?

Jefferson had not before him the experience of these last forty years of weakness and poverty and barbarism in our new Slave States,—and of that tenacity of life which slavery shares with so many other noxious growths. Hastily, then, he broached this opinion. Let it stand; and let the remark on “geographical lines,” and the two or three severe criticisms of Northern men, wrested from him in the excitement of the Missouri struggle, be tied to it and given to the Oligarchs. These expressions were drawn from him in his old age,—in his vexation at unfair attacks,—in his depression at the approach of poverty,—in his suffering under the encroachments of disease. Any one of those bold declarations in the vigor of his manhood will forever efface all memory of them.

The opinion expressed by Jefferson, at the same period, that “the General Government cannot interfere with slavery in the States,” all our parties now accept—as a *peace* policy; but if we are forced into an opposite *war* policy, let our generals remember Jefferson’s declaration as to the taking of his slaves by Cornwallis: “*Had this been to give them their freedom, he would have done right.*”

But there is one letter which all Northern statesmen should ponder. It warns them solemnly, for it was written a very short time before Jefferson’s death;—it warns them sharply, for it struck one whom the North has especially honored. This son of the North had made a well-known unfortunate speech in Congress, and had sent it to Jefferson. In his answer the old statesman declares,—

Page 53

“On the question of the lawfulness of slavery, that is, *of the right of one man to appropriate to himself the faculties of another without his consent, I certainly retain my early opinions*. On that, however, of third persons to interfere between the parties, and the effect of Constitutional modifications of that pretension, we are probably nearer together.”

There was a blow well dealt,—though at one now greatly honored. We may refuse the subordinate idea in the letter, but we will glory in that main confession of political faith, in the last year of Jefferson’s life; and we will not forget that the last of his letters on slavery chastised the worst sin of Northern statesmanship.

Jefferson, then, in dealing with slavery, was a real political seer and giver of oracles,—always sure to say *something*; whereas the “leading men” who in these latter days have usurped his name are neither political seers nor givers of oracles, but mere political fakirs,—striving, their lives long, to enter political blessedness by solemnly doing and seeing and saying—*nothing*.

Jefferson was a true political warrior, and his battle for human rights compares with the Oligarchist battle against them as the warfare of Cortes compares with Aztec warfare. He is the man full of strong thought backed by civilization: they, the men trying to keep up their faith in idols, trying to scare with war-paint, trying to startle with war-whoop, trying to vex with showers of poor Aztec arrows.

Jefferson was an orator,—not in that he fed petty assemblages with narcotic words to stupefy conscience, or corrosive words to kill conscience, but in that he gave to the world those decisive, true words which shall yet pierce all tyranny and slavery.

Jefferson was the founder of a democratic system, strong and full-orbed: “leading men” have fastened his name to an aristocratic system with mobocratic cries.

This great tree of Liberty which we are all trying to plant will, of course, not grow as we will, but as God and Nature will. Some branches will be exuberant through too great wealth of sunshine,—others gnarled and awry through too great fury of storms. We need find no fault with any growth, but we may admire some branches and prize some fruits more than others. Some grafts set by noblest hands have often blossomed in bad temper and borne fruit bitter and sour. Some fruitage has been of that poor Dead-Sea sort,—splendid in coating, but inwardly ashes,—wretched “protective” schemes and the like. The world may yet see that the limbs of toughest fibre and fruit of richest flavor have come from grafts set by just such strong men in theory and in practice as Thomas Jefferson.

* * * * *

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

PART IV.

Page 54

An hour after, the evening came on sultry, the air murky, opaque, with yellow trails of color dragging in the west: a sullen stillness in the woods and farms; only, in fact, that dark, inexplicable hush that precedes a storm. But Lois, coming down the hill-road, singing to herself, and keeping time with her whip-end on the wooden measure, stopped when she grew conscious of it. It seemed to her blurred fancy more than a deadening sky: a something solemn and unknown, hinting of evil to come. The dwarf-pines on the road-side scowled weakly at her through the gray; the very silver minnows in the pools she passed flashed frightened away, and darkened into the muddy niches. There was a vague dread in the sudden silence. She called to the old donkey, and went faster down the hill, as if escaping from some overhanging peril, unseen. She saw Margaret coming up the road. There was a phaeton behind her, and some horsemen: she jolted the cart off into the stones to let them pass, seeing Mr. Holmes's face in the carriage as she did so. He did not look at her; had his head turned towards the gray distance. Lois's vivid eye caught the full meaning of the woman beside him. The face hurt her: not fair, as Polston called it: vapid and cruel. She was dressed in yellow: the color seemed jeering and mocking to the girl's sensitive instinct, keenly alive to every trifle. She did not know that it is the color of shams, and that women like this are the most deadly of shams. As the phaeton went slowly down, Margaret came nearer, meeting it on the road-side, the dust from the wheels stifling the air. Lois saw her look up, and then suddenly stand still, holding to the fence, as they met her. Holmes's cold, wandering eye turned on the little dusty figure standing there, poor and despised. Polston called his eyes hungry: it was a savage hunger that sprang into them now; a gray shadow creeping over his set face, as he looked at her, in that flashing moment. The phaeton was gone in an instant, leaving her alone in the muddy road. One of the men looked back, and then whispered something to the lady with a laugh. She turned to Holmes, when he had finished, fixing her light, confusing eyes on his face, and softening her voice.

"Fred swears that woman we passed was your first love. Were you, then, so chivalric? Was it to have been a second romaunt of 'King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid'?"

He met her look, and saw the fierce demand through the softness and persiflage. He gave it no answer, but, turning to her, kindled into the man whom she was so proud to show as her capture,—a man far off from Stephen Holmes. Brilliant she called him,—frank, winning, generous. She thought she knew him well; held him a slave to her fluttering hand. Being proud of her slave, she let the hand flutter down now somehow with some flowers it held until it touched his hard fingers, her cheek flushing into rose. The nerveless, spongy hand,—what

Page 55

a death-grip it had on his life! He did not look back once at the motionless, dusty figure on the road. What was that Polston had said about starving to death for a kind word? *Love*? He was sick of the sickly talk,—crushed it out of his heart with a savage scorn. He remembered his father, the night he died, had said in his weak ravings that God was love. Was He? No wonder, then, He was the God of women, and children, and unsuccessful men. For him, he was done with it. He was here with stronger purpose than to yield to weaknesses of the flesh. He had made his choice,—a straight, hard path upwards; he was deaf now and forever to any word of kindness or pity. As for this woman beside him, he would be just to her, in justice to himself: she never should know the loathing in his heart: just to her as to all living creatures. Some little, mean doubt kept up a sullen whisper of bought and sold,—sold,—but he laughed it down. He sat there with his head steadily turned towards her: a kingly face, she called it, and she was right,—it was a kingly face: with the same shallow, fixed smile on his mouth,—no weary cry went up to God that day so terrible in its pathos, I think: with the same dull consciousness that this was the trial night of his life,—that with the homely figure on the road-side he had turned his back on love and kindly happiness and warmth, on all that was weak and useless in the world. He had made his choice; he would abide by it,—he would abide by it. He said that over and over again, dulling down the death-gnawing of his outraged heart.

Miss Herne was quite contented, sitting by him, with herself, and the admiring world. She had no notion of trial nights in life. Not many temptations pierced through her callous, flabby temperament to sting her to defeat or triumph. There was for her no under-current of conflict, in these people whom she passed, between self and the unseen power that Holmes sneered at, whose name was love; they were nothing but movables, pleasant or ugly to look at, well- or ill-dressed. There were no dark iron bars across her life for her soul to clutch and shake madly,—nothing “in the world amiss, to be unriddled by-and-by.” Little Margaret, sitting by the muddy road, digging her fingers dully into the clover-roots, while she looked at the spot where the wheels had passed, looked at life differently, it may be;—or old Joe Yare by the furnace-fire, his black face and gray hair bent over a torn old spelling-book Lois had given him. The night perhaps was going to be more to them than so many rainy hours for sleeping,—the time to be looked back on through coming lives as the hour when good and ill came to them, and they made their choice, and, as Holmes said, did abide by it.

Page 56

It grew cool and darker. Holmes left the phaeton before they entered town, and turned back. He was going to see this Margaret Howth, tell her what he was going to do. Because he was going to leave a clean record. No one should accuse him of want of honor. This girl alone of all living beings had a right to see him as he stood, justified to himself. Why she had this right, I do not think he answered to himself. Besides, he must see her, if only on business. She must keep her place at the mill: he would not begin his new life by an act of injustice, taking the bread out of Margaret's mouth. *Little Margaret!* He stopped suddenly, looking down into a deep pool of water by the roadside. What madness of weariness crossed his brain just then I do not know. He shook it off. Was he mad? Life was worth more to him than to other men, he thought; and perhaps he was right. He went slowly through the cool dusk, looking across the fields, up at the pale, frightened face of the moon hooded in clouds: he did not dare to look, with all his iron nerve, at the dark figure beyond him on the road. She was sitting there just where he had left her: he knew she would be. When he came closer, she got up, not looking towards him; but he saw her clasp her hands behind her, the fingers plucking weakly at each other. It was an old, childish fashion of hers, when she was frightened or hurt. It would only need a word, and he could be quiet and firm,—she was such a child compared to him: he always had thought of her so. He went on up to her slowly, and stopped; when she looked at him, he untied the linen bonnet that hid her face, and threw it back. How thin and tired the little face had grown! Poor child! He put his strong arm kindly about her, and stooped to kiss her hand, but she drew it away. God! what did she do that for? Did not she know that he could put his head beneath her foot then, he was so mad with pity for the woman he had wronged? Not love, he thought, controlling himself,—it was only justice to be kind to her.

“You have been ill, Margaret, these two years, while I was gone?”

He could not hear her answer; only saw that she looked up with a white, pitiful smile. Only a word it needed, he thought,—very kind and firm: and he must be quick,—he could not bear this long. But he held the little worn fingers, stroking them with an unutterable tenderness.

“You must let these fingers work for me, Margaret,” he said, at last, “when I am master in the mill.”

“It is true, then, Stephen?”

“It is true,—yes.”

She lifted her hand to her head, uncertainly: he held it tightly, and then let it go. What right had he to touch the dust upon her shoes,—he, bought and sold? She did not speak for a time; when she did, it was a weak and sick voice.

“I am glad. I saw her, you know. She is very beautiful.”

The fingers were plucking at each other again; and a strange, vacant smile on her face, trying to look glad.

Page 57

"You love her, Stephen?"

He was quiet and firm enough now.

"I do not. Her money will help me to become what I ought to be. She does not care for love. You want me to succeed, Margaret? No one ever understood me as you did, child though you were."

Her whole face glowed.

"I know! I know! I did understand you!"

She said, lower, after a little while,—

"I knew you did not love her."

"There is no such thing as love in real life," he said, in his steeled voice. "You will know that, when you grow older. I used to believe in it once, myself."

She did not speak, only watched the slow motion of his lips, not looking into his eyes,—as she used to do in the old time. Whatever secret account lay between the souls of this man and woman came out now, and stood bare on their faces.

"I used to think that I, too, loved," he went on, in his low, hard tone. "But it kept me back, Margaret, and"—

He was silent.

"I know, Stephen. It kept you back"—

"And I put it away. I put it away to-night, forever."

She did not speak; stood quite quiet, her head bent on her breast. His conscience was quite clear now. But he almost wished he had not said it, she was such a weak, sickly thing. She sat down at last, burying her face in her hands, with a shivering sob. He dared not trust himself to speak again.

"I am not proud,—as a woman ought to be," she said, wearily, when he wiped her clammy forehead.

"You loved me, then?" he whispered.

Her face flashed at the unmanly triumph; her puny frame started up, away from him.



"I did love you, Stephen. I love you now,—as you might be, not as you are,—not with those cold, inhuman eyes. I do understand you,—I do. I know you for a better man than you know yourself this night."

She turned to go. He put his hand on her arm; something we have never seen on his face struggled up,—the better soul that she knew.

"Come back," he said, hoarsely; "don't leave me with myself. Come back, Margaret."

She did not come; stood leaning, her sudden strength gone, against the broken wall. There was a heavy silence. The night throbbed slow about them. Some late bird rose from the sedges of the pool, and with a frightened cry flapped its tired wings, and drifted into the dark. His eyes, through the gathering shadow, devoured the weak, trembling body, met the soul that looked at him, strong as his own. Was it because it knew and trusted him that all that was pure and strongest in his crushed nature struggled madly to be free? He thrust it down; the self-learned lesson of years was not to be conquered in a moment.

"There have been times," he said, in a smothered, restless voice, "when I thought you belonged to me. Not here, but before this life. My soul and body thirst and hunger for you, then, Margaret."

Page 58

She did not answer; her hands worked feebly together.

He came nearer, and held up his arras to where she stood,—the heavy, masterful face pale and wet.

“I need you, Margaret. I shall be nothing without you, now. Come, Margaret, little Margaret!”

She came to him, and put her hands in his.

“No, Stephen,” she said.

If there were any pain in her tone, she kept it down, for his sake.

“Never, I could never help you,—as you are. It might have been, once. Good-bye, Stephen.”

Her childish way put him in mind of the old days when this girl was dearer to him than his own soul. She was so yet. He held her, looking down into her eyes. She moved uneasily; she dared not trust her resolution.

“You will come?” he said. “It might have been,—it shall be again.”

“It may be,” she said, humbly. “God is good. And I believe in you, Stephen. I will be yours some time: we cannot help it, if we would: but not as you are.”

“You do not love me?” he said, flinging off her hand.

She said nothing, gathered her damp shawl around her, and turned to go. Just a moment they stood, looking at each other. If the dark square figure standing there had been an iron fate trampling her young life down into hopeless wretchedness, she forgot it now. Women like Margaret are apt to forget. His eye never abated in its fierce question.

“I will wait for you yonder, if I die first,” she whispered.

He came closer, waiting for an answer.

“And—I love you, Stephen.”

He gathered her in his arms, and put his cold lips to hers, without a word; then turned and left her slowly.

She made no sign, shed no tear, as she stood watching him go. It was all over: she had willed it, herself, and yet—he could not go! God would not suffer it! Oh, he could



not leave her,—he could not!—He went down the hill, slowly. If it were a trial of life and death for her, did he know or care?—He did not look back. What if he did not? his heart was true; he suffered in going; even now he walked wearily. God forgive her, if she had wronged him!—What did it matter, if he were hard in this life, and it hurt her a little? It would come right,—beyond, some time. But life was long.—She would not sit down, sick as she was: he might turn, and it would vex him to see her suffer.—He walked slowly; once he stopped to pick up something. She saw the deep-cut face and half-shut eyes. How often those eyes had looked into her soul, and it had answered! They never would look so any more.—There was a tree by the place where the road turned into town. If he came back, he would be sure to turn there.—How tired he walked, and slow! —If he was sick, that beautiful woman could be near him,—help him.—She never would touch his hand again,—never again, never,—unless he came back now.—He was near the tree: she closed her eyes, turning away. When she looked again, only the bare road lay there, yellow and wet. It was over, now.

Page 59

How long she sat there she did not know. She tried once or twice to go to the house, but the lights seemed so far off that she gave it up and sat quiet, unconscious except of the damp stones her head leaned on and the stretch of muddy road. Some time, she knew not when, there was a heavy step beside her, and a rough hand shook hers where she stooped feebly tracing out the lines of mortar between the stones. It was Knowles. She looked up, bewildered.

“Hunting catarrhs, eh?” he growled, eying her keenly. “Got your father on the Bourbons, so took the chance to come and find you. He’ll not miss *me* for an hour. That man has a natural hankering after treason against the people. Lord, Margaret! what a stiff old head he’d have carried to the guillotine! How he’d have looked at the *canaille!*”

He helped her up gently enough.

“Your bonnet’s like a wet rag,”—with a furtive glance at the worn-out face. A hungry face always, with her life unfed by its stingy few crumbs of good; but to-night it was vacant with utter loss.

She got up, trying to laugh cheerfully, and went beside him down the road.

“You saw that painted Jezebel to-night, and”—stopping abruptly.

She had not heard him, and he followed her doggedly, with an occasional snort or grunt or other inarticulate damn at the obstinate mud. She stopped at last, with a quick gasp. Looking at her, he chafed her limp hands,—his huge, uncouth face growing pale. When she was better, he said, gravely,—

“I want you, Margaret. Not at home, child. I want to show you something.”

He turned with her suddenly off the main road into a by-path, helping her along, watching her stealthily, but going on with his disjointed, bearish growls. If it stung her from her pain, vexing her, he did not care.

“I want to show you a bit of hell: outskirts. You’re in a fit state: it’ll do you good. I’m minister there. The clergy can’t attend to it just now: they’re too busy measuring God’s truth by the States’-Rights doctrine or the Chicago Platform. Consequence, religion yields to majorities. Are you able? It’s only a step.”

She went on indifferently. The night was breathless and dark. Black, wet gusts dragged now and then through the skyless fog, striking her face with a chill. The Doctor quit talking, hurrying her, watching her anxiously. They came at last to the railway-track, with long trains of empty freight-cars.

“We are nearly there,” he whispered. “It’s time you knew your work, and forgot your weakness. The curse of pampered generations. ‘High Norman blood,’—pah!”



There was a broken gap in the fence. He led her through it into a muddy yard. Inside was one of those taverns you will find in the suburbs of large cities, haunts of the lowest vice. This one was a smoky frame standing on piles over an open space where hogs were rooting. Half a dozen drunken Irishmen were playing poker with a pack of greasy cards in an out-house. He led her up the rickety ladder to the one room, where a flaring tallow-dip threw a saffron glare into the darkness. A putrid odor met them at the door. She drew back, trembling.

Page 60

"Come here!" he said, fiercely, clutching her hand. "Women as fair and pure as you have come into dens like this,—and never gone away. Does it make your delicate breath faint? And you a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus! Look here! and here!"

The room was swarming with human life. Women, idle trampers, whiskey-bloated, filthy, lay half-asleep or smoking on the floor, and set up a chorus of whining begging when they entered. Half-naked children crawled about in rags. On the damp, mildewed walls there was hung a picture of the Benicia Boy, and close by Pio Nono, crook in hand, with the usual inscription, "Feed my sheep." The Doctor looked at it.

"*Tu es Petrus, et super hanc*'—Good God! what is truth?" he muttered, bitterly.

He dragged her closer to the women, through the darkness and foul smell.

"Look in their faces," he whispered. "There is not one of them that is not a living lie. Can they help it? Think of the centuries of serfdom and superstition through which their blood has crawled. Come closer,—here."

In the corner slept a heap of half-clothed blacks. Going on the underground railroad to Canada. Stolid, sensual wretches, with here and there a broad, melancholy brow and desperate jaws. One little pickaninny rubbed its sleepy eyes and laughed at them.

"So much flesh and blood out of the market, unweighed!"

Margaret took up the child, kissing its brown face. Knowles looked at her.

"Would you touch her? I forgot you were born down South. Put it down, and come on."

They went out of the door. Margaret stopped, looking back.

"Did I call it a bit of hell? It's only a glimpse of the under-life of America,—God help us! —where all men are born free and equal."

The air in the passage grew fouler. She leaned back faint and shuddering. He did not heed her. The passion of the man, the terrible pity for these people, came out of his soul now, whitening his face and dulling his eyes.

"And you," he said, savagely, "you sit by the road-side, with help in your hands, and Christ in your heart, and call your life lost, quarrel with your God, because that mass of selfishness has left you,—because you are balked in your puny hope! Look at these women. What is their loss, do you think? Go back, will you, and drone out your life whimpering over your lost dream, and go to Shakspeare for tragedy when you want it? Tragedy! Come here,—let me hear what you call this."

He led her through the passage, up a narrow flight of stairs. An old woman in a flaring cap sat at the top, nodding,—wakening now and then, to rock herself to and fro, and give the shrill Irish keen.

“You know that stoker who was killed in the mill a month ago? Of course not,—what are such people to you? There was a girl who loved him,—you know what that is? She’s dead now, here. She drank herself to death,—a most unpicturesque suicide. I want you to look at her. You need not blush for her life of shame, now; she’s dead.—Is Hetty here?”

Page 61

The woman got up.

“She is, Zur. She is, Mem. She’s lookin’ foine in her Sunday suit. Shrouds is gone out, Mem, they say.”

She went tipping over the floor to something white that lay on a board, a candle at the head, and drew off the sheet. A girl of fifteen, almost a child, lay underneath, dead,—her lithe, delicate figure decked out in a barred plaid skirt, and stained, faded velvet bodice,—her neck and arms bare. The small face was purely cut, haggard, patient in its sleep,—the soft, fair hair gathered off the tired forehead. Margaret leaned over her shuddering, pinning her handkerchief about the child’s dead neck.

“How young she is!” muttered Knowles. “Merciful God, how young she is!—What is that you say?” sharply, seeing Margaret’s lips move.

““He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.””

“Ah, child, that is old-time philosophy. Put your hand here, on her dead face. Is your loss like hers?” he said lower, looking into the dull pain in her eyes. Selfish pain he called it.

“Let me go,” she said. “I am tired.”

He took her out into the cool, open road, leading her tenderly enough,—for the girl suffered, he saw.

“What will you do?” he asked her then. “It is not too late,—will you help me save these people?”

She wrung her hands helplessly.

“What do you want with me?” she cried, weakly. “I have enough to bear.”

The burly black figure before her seemed to tower and strengthen; the man’s face in the wan light showed a terrible life-purpose coming out bare.

“I want you to do your work. It is hard; it will wear out your strength and brain and heart. Give yourself to these people. God calls you to it. There is none to help them. Give up love, and the petty hopes of women. Help me. God calls you to the work.”

She went on blindly: he followed her. For years he had set apart this girl to help him in his scheme: he would not be balked now. He had great hopes from his plan: he meant to give all he had: it was the noblest of aims. He thought some day it would work like leaven through the festering mass under the country he loved so well, and raise it to a

new life. If it failed,—if it failed, and saved one life, his work was not lost. But it could not fail.

“Home!” he said, stopping her as she reached the stile,—“oh, Margaret, what is home? There is a cry going up night and day from homes like that den yonder, for help,—and no man listens.”

She was weak; her brain faltered.

“Does God call me to this work? Does He call me?” she moaned.

He watched her eagerly.

“He calls you. He waits for your answer. Swear to me that you will help His people. Give up father and mother and love, and go down as Christ did. Help me to give liberty and truth and Jesus’ love to these wretches on the brink of hell. Live with them, raise them with you.”

Page 62

She looked up, white; she was a weak, weak woman, sick for her natural food of love.

"Is it my work?"

"It is your work. Listen to me, Margaret," softly. "Who cares for you? You stand alone to-night. There is not a single human heart that calls you nearest and best. Shiver, if you will,—it is true. The man you wasted your soul on left you in the night and cold to go to his bride,—is sitting by her now, holding her hand in his."

He waited a moment, looking down at her, until she should understand.

"Do you think you deserved this of God? I know that yonder on the muddy road you looked up to Him, and knew it was not just; that you had done right, and this was your reward. I know that for these two years you have trusted in the Christ you worship to make it right, to give you your heart's desire. Did He do it? Did He hear your prayer? Does He care for your weak love, when the nations of the earth are going down? What is your poor hope to Him, when the very land you live in is a wine-press that will be trodden some day by the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God? O Christ!—if there be a Christ,—help me to save it!"

He looked up,—his face white with pain. After a time he said to her,—

"Help me, Margaret! Your prayer was selfish; it was not heard. Give up your idle hope that Christ will aid you. Swear to me, this night when you have lost all, to give yourself to this work."

The storm had been dark and windy: it cleared now slowly, the warm summer rain falling softly, the fresh blue stealing broadly from behind the gray. It seemed to Margaret like a blessing; for her brain rose up stronger, more healthful.

"I will not swear," she said, weakly. "I think He heard my prayer. I think He will answer it. He was a man, and loved as we do. My love is not selfish; it is the best gift God has given me."

Knowles went slowly with her to the house. He was not baffled. He knew that the struggle was yet to come; that, when she was alone, her faith in the far-off Christ would falter; that she would grasp at this work, to fill her empty hands and starved heart, if for no other reason,—to stifle by a sense of duty her unutterable feeling of loss. He was keenly read in woman's heart, this Knowles. He left her silently, and she passed through the dark passage to her own room.

Putting her damp shawl off, she sat down on the floor, leaning her head on a low chair, —one her father had given her for a Christmas gift when she was little. How fond Holmes and her father used to be of each other! Every Christmas he spent with them.

She remembered them all now. “He was sitting by her now, holding her hand in his.” She said that over to herself, though it was not hard to understand.

After a long time, her mother came with a candle to the door.

“Good-night, Margaret. Why, your hair is wet, child!”

Page 63

For Margaret, kissing her good-night, had laid her head down a minute on her breast. She stroked the hair a moment, and then turned away.

“Mother, could you stay with me to-night?”

“Why, no, Maggie,—your father wants me to read to him.”

“Oh, I know. Did he miss me to-night,—father?”

“Not much; we were talking old times over,—in Virginia, you know.”

“I know; good-night.”

She went back to the chair. Tige was there,—for he used to spend half of his time on the farm. She put her arm about his head. God knows how lonely the poor child was when she drew the dog so warmly to her heart: not for his master’s sake alone; but it was all she had. He grew tired at last, and whined, trying to get out.

“Will you go, Tige?” she said, and opened the window.

He jumped out, and she watched him going towards town. Such a little thing, it was! But not even a dog “called her nearest and best.”

Let us be silent; the story of the night is not for us to read. Do you think that He, who in the far, dim Life holds the worlds in His hand, knew or cared how alone the child was? What if she wrung her thin hands, grew sick with the slow, mad, solitary tears?—was not the world to save, as Knowles said?

He, too, had been alone; He had come unto His own, and His own received him not: so, while the struggling world rested, unconscious, in infinite calm of right, He came close to her with human eyes that had loved, and not been loved, and had suffered with that pain. And, trusting Him, she only said, “Show me my work! Thou that takest away the pain of the world, have mercy upon me!”

For that night, at least, Holmes swept his soul clean of doubt and indecision; one of his natures was conquered,—finally, he thought. Polston, if he had seen his face as he paced the street slowly home to the mill, would have remembered his mother’s the day she died. How the stern old woman met death half-way! why should she fear? she was as strong as he. Wherein had she failed of duty? her hands were clean: she was going to meet her just reward.

It was different with Holmes, of course, with his self-existent soul. It was life he accepted to-night, he thought,—a life of growth, labor, achievement,—eternal.

“*Ohne Hast, aber ohne Rast*,”—favorite words with him. He liked to study the nature of the man who spoke them; because, I think, it was like his own,—a Titan strength of endurance, an infinite capability of love and hate and suffering, and over all (the peculiar identity of the man) a cold, speculative eye of reason, that looked down into the passion and depths of his growing self, and calmly noted them, a lesson for all time.

Page 64

“*Ohne Hast.*” Going slowly through the night, he strengthened himself by marking how all things in Nature accomplish a perfected life through slow, narrow fixedness of purpose,—each life complete in itself: why not his own, then? The windless gray, the stars, the stone under his feet, stood alone in the universe, each working out its own soul into deed. If there were any all-embracing harmony, one soul through all, he did not see it. Knowles—that old skeptic—believed in it, and called it Love. Even Goethe himself, what was it he said? “*Der Allumfasser, der Allerhalter, fasst und erhaelt er nicht dich, mich, sich selbst?*”

There was a curious power in the words, as he lingered over them, like half-comprehended music,—as simple and tender as if they had come from the depths of a woman’s heart: it touched him deeper than his power of control. Pah! it was a dream of Faust’s; he, too, had his Margaret; he fell, through that love.

He went on slowly to the mill. If the name or the words woke a subtle remorse or longing, he buried them under restful composure. Whether they should ever rise like angry ghosts of what might have been, to taunt the man, only the future could tell.

Going through the gas-lit streets, Holmes met some cordial greeting at every turn. What a just, clever fellow he was! people said: one of those men improved by success: just to the defrauding of himself: saw the true worth of everybody, the very lowest: hadn’t one spark of self-esteem: despised all humbug and show, one could see, though he never said it: when he was a boy, he was moody, with passionate likes and dislikes; but success had improved him, vastly. So Holmes was popular, though the beggars shunned him, and the lazy Italian organ-grinders never held their tambourines up to him.

The mill street was dark; the building threw its great shadow over the square. It was empty, he supposed; only one hand generally remained to keep in the furnace-fires. Going through one of the lower passages, he heard voices, and turned aside to examine. The management was not strict, and in case of a fire the mill was not insured: like Knowles’s carelessness.

It was Lois and her father,—Joe Yare being feeder that night. They were in one of the great furnace-rooms in the cellar,—a very comfortable place that stormy night. Two or three doors of the wide brick ovens were open, and the fire threw a ruddy glow over the stone floor, and shimmered into the dark recesses of the shadows, very home-like after the rain and mud without. Lois seemed to think so, at any rate, for she had made a table of a store-box, put a white cloth on it, and was busy getting up a regular supper for her father,—down on her knees before the red coals, turning something on an iron plate, while some slices of ham sent up a cloud of juicy, hungry smell.

The old stoker had just finished slaking the out-fires, and was putting some blue plates on the table, gravely straightening them. He had grown old, as Polston said,—Holmes

saw, stooped much, with a low, hacking cough; his coarse clothes were curiously clean: that was to please Lois, of course. She put the ham on the table, and some bubbling coffee, and then, from a hickory board in front of the fire, took off, with a jerk, brown, flaky slices of Virginia johnny-cake.

Page 65

"Ther' yoh are, father, hot 'n' hot," with her face on fire,—“ther'—yoh—are,—coaxin' to be eatin'.—Why, Mr. Holmes! Father! Now, ef yoh jes' hedn't hed yer supper?”

She came up, coaxingly. What brooding brown eyes the poor cripple had! Not many years ago he would have sat down with the two poor souls and made a hearty meal of it: he had no heart for such follies now.

Old Yare stood in the background, his hat in his hand, stooping in his submissive negro fashion, with a frightened watch on Holmes.

“Do you stay here, Lois?” he asked, kindly, turning his back on the old man.

“On'y to bring his supper. I couldn't bide all night 'n th' mill,”—the old shadow coming on her face,—“I couldn't, yoh know. *He* doesn't mind it.”

She glanced quickly from one to the other in the silence, seeing the fear on her father's face.

“Yoh know father, Mr. Holmes? He's back now. This is him.”

The old man came forward, humbly.

“It's me, Master Stephen.”

The sullen, stealthy face disgusted Holmes. He nodded, shortly.

“Yoh've been kind to my little girl while I was gone,” he said, catching his breath. “I thank yoh, master.”

“You need not. It was for Lois.”

“'Twas fur her I comed back hyur. 'Twas a resk,”—with a dumb look of entreaty at Holmes,—“but fur her I thort I'd try it. I know 'twas a resk; but I thort them as cared fur Lo wud be merciful. She's a good girl, Lo. She's all I hev.”

Lois brought a box over, lugging it heavily.

“We hev'n't chairs; but yoh'll sit down, Mr. Holmes?” laughing as she covered it with a cloth. “It's a warrm place, here. Father studies 'n his watch, 'n I'm teacher,”—showing the torn old spelling-book.

The old man came eagerly forward, seeing the smile flicker on Holmes's face.

“It's slow work, master,—slow. But Lo's a good teacher, 'n I'm tryin',—I'm tryin' hard.”

“It's not slow, Sir, seein' father hedn't 'dvantages, like me. He was a”—

She stopped, lowering her voice, a hot flush of shame on her face.

"I know."

"Ben't that 'n 'xcuse, master, seein' I knowed noght at the beginnin'? Thenk o' that, master. I'm tryin' to be a different man. Fur Lo. I *am* tryin'."

Holmes did not notice him.

"Good-night, Lois," he said, kindly, as she lighted his lamp.

He put some money on the table.

"You must take it," as she looked uneasy. "For Tiger's board, say. I never see him now. A bright new frock, remember."

She thanked him, her eyes brightening, looking at her father's patched coat.

The old man followed Holmes out.

"Master Holmes"—

"Have done with this," said Holmes, sternly. "Whoever breaks law abides by it. It is no affair of mine."

The old man clutched his hands together fiercely, struggling to be quiet.

Page 66

"Ther's none knows it but yoh," he said, in a smothered voice. "Fur God's sake be merciful! It'll kill my girl,—it'll kill her. Gev me a chance, master."

"You trouble me. I must do what is just."

"It's not just," he said, savagely. "What good'll it do me to go back ther'? I was goin' down, down, an' bringin' th' others with me. What good'll it do you or the rest to hev me ther'? To make me afraid? It's poor learnin' frum fear. Who taught me what was right? Who cared? No man cared fur my soul, till I thieved 'n' robbed; 'n' then judge 'n' jury 'n' jailers was glad to pounce on me. Will yoh gev me a chance? will yoh?"

It was a desperate face before him; but Holmes never knew fear.

"Stand aside," he said, quietly. "To-morrow I will see you. You need not try to escape."

He passed him, and went slowly up through the vacant mill to his chamber.

The man sat down on the lower step a few moments, quite quiet, crushing his hat up in a slow, steady way, looking up at the mouldy cobwebs on the wall. He got up at last, and went in to Lois. Had she heard? The old scarred face of the girl looked years older, he thought,—but it might be fancy. She did not say anything for a while, moving slowly, with a new gentleness, about him; her very voice was changed, older. He tried to be cheerful, eating his supper: she need not know until to-morrow. He would get out of the town to-night, or—There were different ways to escape. When he had done, he told her to go; but she would not.

"Let me stay th' night," she said. "I ben't afraid o' th' mill."

"Why, Lo," he said, laughing, "yoh used to say yer death was hid here, somewheres."

"I know. But ther's worse nor death. But it'll come right," she said, persistently, muttering to herself, as she leaned her face on her knees, watching,—“it'll come right.”

The glimmering shadows changed and faded for an hour. The man sat quiet. There was not much in the years gone to soften his thought, as it grew desperate and cruel: there was oppression and vice heaped on him, and flung back out of his bitter heart. Nor much in the future: a blank stretch of punishment to the end. He was an old man: was it easy to bear? What if he were black? what if he were born a thief? what if all the sullen revenge of his nature had made him an outcast from the poorest poor? Was there no latent good in this soul for which Christ died, that a kind hand might not have brought to life? None? Something, I think, struggled up in the touch of his hand, catching the skirt of his child's dress, when it came near him, with the timid tenderness of a mother touching her dead baby's hair,—as something holy, far off, yet very near: something in his old crime-marked face,—a look like this dog's, putting his head on my knee,—a dumb, unhelpful love in his eyes, and the slow memory of a wrong done to his

soul in a day long past. A wrong to both, you say, perhaps; but if so, irreparable, and never to be recompensed. Never?

Page 67

"Yoh must go, my little girl," he said at last.

Whatever he did must be done quickly. She came up, combing the thin gray hairs through her fingers.

"Father, I dunnot understan' what it is, rightly. But stay with me,—stay, father!"

"Yoh've a many frien's, Lo," he said, with a keen flash of jealousy. "Ther's none like yoh, —none."

She put her misshapen head and scarred face down on his hand, where he could see them. If it had ever hurt her to be as she was, if she had ever compared herself bitterly with fair, beloved women, she was glad now and thankful for every fault and deformity that brought her nearer to him, and made her dearer.

"They're kind, but ther's not many loves me with true love, like yoh. Stay, father! Bear it out, whatever it be. Th' good time'll come, father."

He kissed her, saying nothing, and went with her down the street. When he left her, she waited, and, creeping back, hid near the mill. God knows what vague dread was in her brain; but she came back to watch and help.

Old Yare wandered through the great loom-rooms of the mill with but one fact clear in his cloudy, faltering perception,—that above him the man lay quietly sleeping who would bring worse than death on him to-morrow. Up and down, aimlessly, with his stoker's torch in his hand, going over the years gone and the years to come, with the dead hatred through all of the pitiless man above him,—with now and then, perhaps, a pleasanter thought of things that had been warm and cheerful in his life,—of the corn-huskings long ago, when he was a boy, down in "th' Alabam',"—of the scow his young master gave him once, the first thing he really owned: he was almost as proud of it as he was of Lois when she was born. Most of all remembering the good times in his life, he went back to Lois. It was all good, there, to go back to. What a little chub she used to be! Remembering, with bitter remorse, how all his life he had meant to try and do better, on her account, but had kept putting off and putting off until now. And now—Did nothing lie before him but to go back and rot yonder? Was that the end, because he never had learned better, and was a "dam' nigger"?

"I'll *not* leave my girl!" he muttered, going up and down,—*"I'll not leave my girl!"*

If Holmes did sleep above him, the trial of the day, of which we have seen nothing, came back sharper in sleep. While the strong self in the man lay torpid, whatever holier power was in him came out, undaunted by defeat, and unwearied, and took the form of dreams, those slighted messengers of God, to soothe and charm and win him out into fuller, kindlier life. Let us hope that they did so win him; let us hope that even in that

unreal world the better nature of the man triumphed at last, and claimed its reward before the terrible reality broke upon him.

Page 68

Lois, over in the damp, fresh-smelling lumber-yard, sat coiled up in one of the creviced houses made by the jutting boards. She remembered how she used to play in them, before she went into the mill. The mill,—even now, with the vague dread of some uncertain evil to come, the mill absorbed all fear in its old hated shadow. Whatever danger was coming to them lay in it, came from it, she knew, in her confused, blurred way of thinking. It loomed up now, with the square patch of ashen sky above, black, heavy with years of remembered agony and loss. In Lois's hopeful, warm life this was the one uncomprehended monster. Her crushed brain, her unwakened powers, resented their wrong dimly to the mass of iron and work and impure smells, unconscious of any remorseless power that wielded it. It was a monster, she thought, through the sleepy, dreading night,—a monster that kept her wakeful with a dull, mysterious terror.

When the night grew sultry and deepest, she started from her half-doze to see her father come stealthily out and go down the street. She must have slept, she thought, rubbing her eyes, and watching him out of sight,—and then, creeping out, turned to glance at the mill. She cried out, shrill with horror. It was a live monster now,—in one swift instant, alive with fire,—quick, greedy fire, leaping like serpents' tongues out of its hundred jaws, hungry sheets of flame maddening and writhing towards her, and under all a dull and hollow roar that shook the night. Did it call her to her death? She turned to fly, and then—He was alone, dying! He had been so kind to her! She wrung her hands, standing there a moment. It was a brave hope that was in her heart, and a prayer on her lips never left unanswered, as she hobbled, in her lame, slow way, up to the open black door, and, with one backward look, went in.

* * * * *

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.

The publication, now brought to a close, of a new edition of the novels of Cooper[6] gives us a fair occasion for discharging a duty which Maga has too long neglected, and saying something upon the genius of this great writer, and, incidentally, upon the character of a man who would have been a noticeable, not to say remarkable person, had he never written a line. These novels stand before us in thirty-two goodly duodecimo volumes, well printed, gracefully illustrated, and, in all external aspects, worthy of generous commendation. With strong propriety, the publishers dedicate this edition of the "first American novelist" to "the American People." No one of our great writers is more thoroughly American than Cooper; no one has caught and reproduced more broadly and accurately the spirit of our institutions, the character of our people, and even the aspects of Nature in this our Western world. He was a patriot to the very core of his heart; he loved his country with a fervid, but not an undiscerning love: it was an intelligent, vigilant, discriminating affection that bound his heart to his native land; and thus, while no man defended his country more vigorously when it was in the right,

no one reproved its faults more courageously, or gave warning and advice more unreservedly, where he felt that they were needed.

Page 69

[6] We refer to the new edition of the novels of Cooper by Messrs.
W.A. Townsend & Co., with illustrations by Darley.

This may be one reason why Cooper has more admirers, or at least fewer disparagers, abroad than at home. On the Continent of Europe his novels are everywhere read, with an eager, unquestioning delight. His popularity is at least equal to that of Scott; and we think a considerable amount of testimony could be collected to prove that it is even greater. But the fact we have above stated is not the only explanation of this. He was the first writer who made foreign nations acquainted with the characters and incidents of American frontier and woodland life; and his delineations of Indian manners and traits were greatly superior in freshness and power, if not in truth, to any which had preceded them. His novels opened a new and unwrought vein of interest, and were a revelation of humanity under aspects and influences hitherto unobserved by the ripe civilization of Europe. The taste which had become cloyed with endless imitations of the feudal and mediaeval pictures of Scott turned with fresh delight to such original figures—so full of sylvan power and wildwood grace—as Natty Bumppo and Uncas. European readers, too, received these sketches with an unqualified, because an ignorant admiration. We, who had better knowledge, were more critical, and could see that the drawing was sometimes faulty, and the colors more brilliant than those of life.

The acute observer can detect a parallel between the relation of Cooper to America and that of Scott to Scotland. Scott was as hearty a Scotchman as Cooper an American: but Scott was a Tory in politics and an Episcopalian in religion; and the majority of Scotchmen are Whigs in politics and Presbyterians in religion. In Scott, as in Cooper, the elements of passion and sympathy were so strong that he could not be neutral or silent on the great questions of his time and place. Thus, while the Scotch are proud of Scott, as they well may be,—while he has among his own people most intense and enthusiastic admirers,—the proportion of those who yield to his genius a cold and reluctant homage is probably greater in Scotland than in any other country in Christendom. “The rest of mankind recognize the essential truth of his delineations, and his loyalty to all the primal instincts and sympathies of humanity”; but the Scotch cannot forget that he opposed the Reform Bill, painted the Covenanters with an Episcopalian pencil, and made a graceful and heroic image of the detested Claverhouse.

The novels of Cooper, in the dates of their publication, cover a period of thirty years: beginning with “Precaution,” in 1820, and ending with “The Ways of the Hour,” in 1850. The production of thirty-two volumes in thirty years is honorable to his creative energy, as well as to the systematic industry of his habits. But even these do not constitute the whole of his literary

Page 70

labors during these twenty-nine years. We must add five volumes of naval history and biography, ten volumes of travels and sketches in Europe, and a large amount of occasional and controversial writings, most of which is now hidden away in that huge wallet wherein Time puts his alms for Oblivion. His literary productions other than his novels would alone be enough to save him from the reproach of idleness. In estimating a writer's claims to honor and remembrance, the quantity as well as the quality of his work should surely be taken into account; and in summing up the case of our great novelist to the jury of posterity, this point should be strongly put.

Cooper's first novel, "Precaution," was published when he was in his thirty-first year. It owed its existence to an accident, and was but an ordinary production, as inferior to the best of his subsequent works as Byron's "Hours of Idleness" to "Childe Harold." It was a languid and colorless copy of exotic forms: a mere scale picked from the surface of the writer's mind, with neither beauty nor vital warmth to commend it. We speak from the vague impressions which many long years have been busy in effacing; and we confess that it would require the combined forces of a long voyage and a scanty library to constrain us to the task of reading it anew.

And yet, such as it was, it made a certain impression at the time of its appearance. The standard by which it was tried was very unlike that which would now be applied to it: there was all the difference between the two that there is between strawberries in December and strawberries in June. American literature was then just beginning to "glint forth" like Burns's mountain daisy, and rear its tender form above the parent earth. The time had, indeed, gone by—which a friend of ours, not yet venerable, affirms he can well remember—when school-boys and collegians, zealous for the honor of indigenous literature, were obliged to cite, by way of illustration, such works as Morse's Geography and Hannah Adams's "History of the Jews"; but it was only a faint, crepuscular light, that streaked the east, and gave promise of the coming day. Irving had just completed his "Sketch-Book," which was basking in the full sunshine of unqualified popularity. Dana, in the thoughtful and meditative beauty of "The Idle Man," was addressing a more limited public. Percival had just before published a small volume of poems; Halleck's "Fanny" had recently appeared; and so had a small duodecimo volume by Bryant, containing "The Ages," and half a dozen smaller poems. Miss Sedgwick's "New England Tale" was published about the same time. But a large proportion of those who are now regarded as our ablest writers were as yet unknown, or just beginning to give sign of what they were. Dr. Channing was already distinguished as an eloquent and powerful preacher, but the general public had not yet recognized in him that remarkable combination of loftiness of

Page 71

thought with magic charm of style, which was soon to be revealed in his essays on Milton and Napoleon Bonaparte. Ticknor and Everett were professors in Harvard College, giving a new impulse to the minds of the students by their admirable lectures; and the latter was also conducting the "North American Review." Neither had as yet attained to anything more than a local reputation. Prescott, a gay and light-hearted young man,—gay and light-hearted, in spite of partial blindness,—the darling of society and the idol of his home, was silently and resolutely preparing himself for his chosen function by a wide and thorough course of patient study. Bancroft was in Germany, and working like a German. Emerson was a Junior in College. Hawthorne, Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, and Poe were school-boys; Mrs. Stowe was a school-girl; Whipple and Lowell were in the nursery, and Motley and the younger Dana had not long been out of it.

"Precaution," though an indifferent novel, was yet a novel; of the orthodox length, with plot, characters, and incidents; and here and there a touch of genuine power, as in the forty-first chapter, where the scene is on board a man-of-war bringing her prizes into port. It found many readers, and excited a good deal of curiosity as to who the author might be.

"Precaution" was published on the 25th of August, 1820, and "The Spy" on the 17th of September, 1821. The second novel was a great improvement upon the first, and fairly took the public by storm. We are old enough to remember its first appearance; the eager curiosity and keen discussion which it awakened; the criticism which it called forth; and, above all, the animated delight with which it was received by all who were young or not critical. Distinctly, too, can we recall the breathless rapture with which we hung over its pages, in those happy days when the mind's appetite for books was as ravenous as the body's for bread-and-butter, and a novel, with plenty of fighting in it, was all we asked at a writer's hands. In order to qualify ourselves for the task which we have undertaken in this article, we have read "The Spy" a second time; and melancholy indeed was the contrast between the recollections of the boy and the impressions of the man. It was the difference between the theatre by gas-light and the theatre by day-light: the gold was pinchbeck, the gems were glass, the flowers were cambric and colored paper, the goblets were gilded pasteboard. Painfully did the ideal light fade away, and the well-remembered scene stand revealed in disenchanting day. With incredulous surprise, with a constant struggle between past images and present revelations, were we forced to acknowledge the improbability of the story, the clumsiness of the style, the awkwardness of the dialogue, the want of Nature in many of the characters, the absurdity of many of the incidents, and the painfulness of some of the scenes. But with all this, a candid, though critical judgment

Page 72

could not but admit that these grave defects were attended by striking merits, which pleaded in mitigation of literary sentence. It was stamped with a truth, earnestness, and vital power, of which its predecessor gave no promise. Though the story was improbable, it seized upon the attention with a powerful grasp from the very start, and the hold was not relaxed till the end. Whatever criticism it might challenge, no one could call it dull: the only offence in a book which neither gods nor men nor counters can pardon. If the narrative flowed languidly at times, there were moments in which the incidents flashed along with such vivid rapidity that the susceptible reader held his breath over the page. The character of Washington was an elaborate failure, and the author, in his later years, regretted that he had introduced this august form into a work of fiction; but Harvey Birch was an original sketch, happily conceived, and, in the main, well sustained. His mysterious figure was recognized as a new accession to the repertory of the novelist, and not a mere modification of a preexisting type. And, above all, "The Spy" had the charm of reality; it tasted of the soil; it was the first successful attempt to throw an imaginative light over American history, and to do for our country what the author of "Waverley" had done for Scotland. Many of the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary War were still living, receiving the reward of their early perils and privations in the grateful reverence which was paid to them by the contemporaries of their children and grandchildren. Innumerable traditionary anecdotes of those dark days of suffering and struggle, unrecorded in print, yet lingered in the memories of the people, and were told in the nights of winter around the farm-house fire; and of no part of the country was this more true than of the region in which the scene of the novel is laid. The enthusiasm with which it was there read was the best tribute to the substantial fidelity of its delineations. All over the country, it enlisted in its behalf the powerful sentiment of patriotism; and whatever the critics might say, the author had the satisfaction of feeling that the heart of the people was with him.

Abroad, "The Spy" was received with equal favor. It was soon translated into most of the languages of Europe; and even the "gorgeous East" opened for it its rarely moving portals. In 1847, a Persian version was published in Ispahan; and by this time it may have crossed the Chinese wall, and be delighting the pig-tailed critics and narrow-eyed beauties of Peking.

The success of "The Spy" unquestionably determined Cooper's vocation, and made him a man of letters. But he had not yet found where his true strength lay. His training and education had not been such as would seem to be a good preparation for a literary career. His reading had been desultory, and not extensive; and the habit of composition had not been formed in early life. Indeed, in mere

Page 73

style, in the handling of the tools of his craft, Cooper never attained a master's ease and power. In his first two novels the want of technical skill and literary accomplishment was obvious; and the scenery, subjects, and characters of these novels did not furnish him with the opportunity of turning to account the peculiar advantages which had come to him from the events of his childhood and youth. In his infancy he was taken to Cooperstown, a spot which his father had just begun to reclaim from the dominion of the wilderness. Here his first impressions of the external world, as well as of life and manners, were received. At the age of sixteen he became a midshipman in the United States navy, and remained in the service for six years. A father who, in training up his son for the profession of letters, should send him into the wilderness in his infancy and to sea at sixteen, would seem to be shooting very wide of the mark; but in this, as in so many things, there is a divinity that shapes our rough-hewn ends. Had Cooper enjoyed the best scholastic advantages which the schools and colleges of Europe could have furnished, they could not have fitted him for the work he was destined to do so well as the apparently untoward elements we have above adverted to; for Natty Bumppo was the fruit of his woodland experience, and Long Tom Coffin of his sea-faring life.

"The Pioneers" and "The Pilot" were both published in 1823; "Lionel Lincoln" in 1825; and "The Last of the Mohicans" in 1826. We may put "Lionel Lincoln" aside, as one of his least successful productions; but the three others were never surpassed, and rarely equalled, by any of his numerous subsequent works. All the powerful, and nearly all the attractive, qualities of his genius were displayed in these three novels, in their highest degree and most ample measure. Had he never written any more,—though we should have missed many interesting narratives, admirable pictures, and vigorously drawn characters,—we are not sure that his fame would not have been as great as it is now. From these, and "The Spy," full materials may be drawn for forming a correct estimate of his merits and his defects. In these, his strength and weakness, his gifts and deficiencies, are amply shown. Here, then, we may pause, and, without pursuing his literary biography any farther, proceed to set down our estimate of his claims as a writer. Any critic who dips his pen in ink and not in gall would rather praise than blame; therefore we will dispose of the least gracious part of our task first, and begin with his blemishes and defects.

Page 74

A skilful construction of the story is a merit which the public taste no longer demands, and it is consequently fast becoming one of the lost arts. The practice of publishing novels in successive numbers, so that one portion is printed before another is written, is undoubtedly one cause of this. But English and American readers have not been accustomed to this excellence in the works of their best writers of fiction; and therefore they are not sensitive to the want of it. This is certainly not one of Scott's strong points. Fielding's "Tom Jones" is, in this respect, superior to any of the "Waverley Novels," and without an equal, so far as we know, in English literature. But, in sitting in judgment upon a writer of novels, we cannot waive an inquiry into his merits on this point. Are his stories, simply as stories, well told? Are his plots symmetrically constructed and harmoniously evolved? Are his incidents probable? and do they all help on the catastrophe? Does he reject all episodic matter which would clog the current of the narrative? Do his novels have unity of action? or are they merely a series of sketches, strung together without any relation of cause and effect? Cooper, tried by these rules, can certainly command no praise. His plots are not carefully or skilfully constructed. His incidents are not probable in themselves, nor do they succeed each other in a natural and dependent progression. His characters get into scrapes from which the reasonable exercise of common faculties should have saved them; and they are rescued by incredible means and impossible instruments. The needed man appears as unaccountably and mysteriously as if he had dropped from the clouds, or emerged from the sea, or crept up through a fissure in the earth. The winding up of his stories is often effected by devices nearly as improbable as a violation of the laws of Nature. His personages act without adequate motives; they rush into needless dangers; they trust their fate, with unsuspecting simplicity, to treacherous hands.

In works of fiction the skill of the writer is most conspicuously shown when the progress of the story is secured by natural and probable occurrences. Many events take place in history and in common life which good taste rejects as inadmissible in a work of imagination. Sudden death by disease or casualty is no very uncommon occurrence in real life; but it cannot be used in a novel to clear up a tangled web of circumstance, without betraying something of a poverty of invention in the writer. He is the best artist who makes least use of incidents which lie out of the beaten path of observation and experience. In constructive skill Cooper's rank is not high; for all his novels are more or less open to the criticism that too frequent use is made in them of events very unlikely to have happened. He leads his characters into such formidable perils that the chances are a million to one against their being rescued. Such a run is made upon our credulity that the fund is soon exhausted, and the bank stops payment.

Page 75

For illustration of the above strictures we will refer to a single novel, "The Last of the Mohicans," which everybody will admit to be one of the most interesting of his works,—full of rapid movement, brilliant descriptions, hair-breadth escapes, thrilling adventures,—which young persons probably read with more rapt attention than any other of his narratives. In the opening chapter we find at Fort Edward, on the head-waters of the Hudson, the two daughters of Colonel Munro, the commander of Fort William Henry, on the shores of Lake George; though why they were at the former post, under the protection of a stranger, and not with their father, does not appear. Information is brought of the approach of Montcalm, with a hostile army of Indians and Frenchmen, from the North; and the young ladies are straightway hurried off to the more advanced, and consequently more dangerous post, when prudence and affection would have dictated just the opposite course. Nor is this all. General Webb, the commander of Fort Edward, at the urgent request of Colonel Munro, sends him a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men, who march off through the woods, by the military road, with drums beating and colors flying; and yet, strange to say, the young ladies do not accompany the troops, but set off, on the very same day, by a by-path, attended by no other escort than Major Heyward, and guided by an Indian whose fidelity is supposed to be assured by his having been flogged for drunkenness by the orders of Colonel Munro. The reason assigned for conduct so absurd that in real life it would have gone far to prove the parties having a hand in it not to be possessed of that sound and disposing mind and memory which the law requires as a condition precedent to making a will is, that hostile Indians, in search of chance scalps, would be hovering about the column of troops, and so leave the by-path unmolested. But the servants of the party follow the route of the column: a measure, we are told, dictated by the sagacity of the Indian guide, in order to diminish the marks of their trail, if, haply, the Canadian savages should be prowling about so far in advance of their army! Certainly, all the sagacity of the fort would seem to have been concentrated in the person of the Indian. How much of this improbability might have been avoided, if the action had been reversed, and the young ladies, in view of the gathering cloud of war, had been sent from the more exposed and less strongly guarded point of Fort William Henry to the safe fortress of Fort Edward! Then the smallness of the escort and the risks of the journey would have been explained and excused by the necessity of the case; and the subsequent events of the novel might have been easily accommodated to the change we have indicated.

Page 76

One of the best of Cooper's novels—as a work of art perhaps the very best—is “The Bravo.” But the character of Jacopo Frontoni is a sort of moral impossibility, and the clearing up of the mystery which hangs over his life and conduct, which is skilfully reserved to the last moment, is consequently unsatisfactory. He is represented as a young man of the finest qualities and powers, who, in the hope of rescuing a father who had been falsely imprisoned by the Senate, consents to assume the character, and bear the odium, of a public bravo, or assassin, though entirely innocent. This false position gives rise to many most effective scenes and incidents, and the character is in many respects admirably drawn. But when the end comes, we lay down the book and say,—“This could never have been: a virtuous and noble young man could not for years have been believed to be the most hateful of mankind; the laws of Nature and the laws of the human mind forbid it: so vast a web of falsehood could not have been woven without a flaw: we can credit much of the organized and pitiless despotism of Venice, but could it work miracles?”

Further illustrations of this same defect might easily be cited, if the task were not ungracious. Neither books, nor pictures, nor men and women should be judged by their defects. It is enough to say that Cooper never wrote a novel in regard to which the reader must not lay aside his critical judgment upon the structure of the story and the interdependence of the incidents, and let himself be borne along by the rapid flow of the narrative, without questioning too curiously as to the nature of the means and instruments employed to give movement to the stream.

In the delineation of character, Cooper may claim great, but not unqualified praise. This is a vague statement; and to draw a sharper line of discrimination, we should say that he is generally successful—sometimes admirably so—in drawing personages in whom strong primitive traits have not been effaced by the attritions of artificial life, and generally unsuccessful when he deals with those in whom the original characteristics are less marked, or who have been smoothed by education and polished by society. It is but putting this criticism in another form to say that his best characters are persons of humble social position. He wields his brush with a vigorous hand, but the brush itself has not a fine point. Of all the children of his brain, Natty Bumppo is the most universal favorite,—and herein the popular judgment is assuredly right. He is an original conception,—and not more happily conceived than skilfully executed. It was a hazardous undertaking to present the character backwards, and let us see the closing scenes of his life first,—like a Hebrew Bible, of which the beginning is at the end; but the author's genius has triumphed over the perils of the task, and given us a delineation as consistent and symmetrical as it is striking and vigorous. Ignorant of books,

Page 77

simple, and credulous, guileless himself, and suspecting no evil in others, with moderate intellectual powers, he commands our admiration and respect by his courage, his love of Nature, his skill in woodland lore, his unerring moral sense, his strong affections, and the veins of poetry that run through his rugged nature like seams of gold in quartz. Long Tom Coffin may be described as Leatherstocking suffered a sea-change,—with a harpoon instead of a rifle, and a pea-jacket instead of a hunting-shirt. In both the same primitive elements may be discerned: the same limited intellectual range combined with professional or technical skill; the same generous affections and unerring moral instincts; the same religious feeling, taking the form at times of fatalism or superstition. Long Tom's love of the sea is like Leatherstocking's love of the woods; the former's dislike of the land is like the latter's dislike of the clearings. Cooper himself, as we are told by his daughter, was less satisfied, in his last years, with Long Tom Coffin than most of his readers,—and, of the two characters, considered that of Boltrope the better piece of workmanship. We cannot assent to this comparative estimate; but we admit that Boltrope has not had full justice done to him in popular judgment. It is but a slight sketch, but it is extremely well done. His death is a bit of manly and genuine pathos; and in his conversations with the chaplain there is here and there a touch of true humor, which we value the more because humor was certainly not one of the author's best gifts.

Antonio, the old fisherman, in "The Bravo," is another very well drawn character, in which we can trace something of a family likeness to the hunter and sailor above mentioned. The scene in which he is shrived by the Carmelite monk, in his boat, under the midnight moon, upon the Lagoons, is one of the finest we know of in the whole range of the literature of fiction, leaving upon the mind a lasting impression of solemn and pathetic beauty. In "The Chainbearer," the Yankee squatter, Thousandacres, is a repulsive figure, but drawn with a powerful pencil. The energy of character, or rather of action, which is the result of a passionate love of money, is true to human nature. The closing scenes of his rough and lawless life, in which his latent affection for his faithful wife throws a sunset gleam over his hard and selfish nature, and prevents it from being altogether hateful, are impressively told, and are touched with genuine tragic power.

On the other hand, Cooper generally fails when he undertakes to draw a character which requires for its successful execution a nice observation and a delicate hand. His heroes and heroines are apt to abuse the privilege which such personages have enjoyed, time out of mind, of being insipid. Nor can he catch and reproduce the easy grace and unconscious dignity of high-bred men and women. His gentlemen, whether young or old, are apt to be stiff, priggish,

Page 78

and commonplace; and his ladies, especially his young ladies, are as deficient in individuality as the figures and faces of a fashion-print. Their personal and mental charms are set forth with all the minuteness of a passport; but, after all, we cannot but think that these fine creatures, with hair, brow, eyes, and lips of the most orthodox and approved pattern, would do very little towards helping one through a rainy day in a country-house. Judge Temple, in "The Pioneers," and Colonel Howard, in "The Pilot," are highly estimable and respectable gentlemen, but, in looking round for the materials of a pleasant dinner-party, we do not think they would stand very high on the list. They are fair specimens of their class,—the educated gentleman in declining life,—many of whom are found in the subsequent novels. They are wanting in those natural traits of individuality by which, in real life, one human being is distinguished from another. They are obnoxious to this one general criticism, that the author is constantly reminding us of the qualities of mind and character on which he rests their claims to favor, without causing them to appear naturally and unconsciously in the course of the narrative. The defect we are adverting to may be illustrated by comparing such personages of this class as Cooper has delineated with Colonel Talbot, in "Waverley," Colonel Mannering and Counsellor Pleydell, in "Guy Mannering," Monkbarns, in "The Antiquary," and old Osbaldistone, in "Rob Roy." These are all old men: they are all men of education, and in the social position of gentlemen; but each has certain characteristics which the others have not: each has the distinctive individual flavor-perceptible, but indescribable, like the savor of a fruit—which is wanting in Cooper's well-dressed and well-behaved lay-figures.

In the delineation of female loveliness and excellence Cooper is generally supposed to have failed,—at least, comparatively so. But in this respect full justice has hardly been done him; and this may be explained by the fact that it was from the heroines of his earlier novels that this unfavorable judgment was drawn. Certainly, such sticks of barley-candy as Frances Wharton, Cecilia Howard, and Alice Munro justify the common impression. But it would be as unfair to judge of what he can do in this department by his acknowledged failures as it would be to form an estimate of the genius of Michel Angelo from the easel-picture of the Virgin and Child in the Tribune at Florence. No man ever had a juster appreciation of, and higher reverence for, the worth of woman than Cooper. Towards women his manners were always marked by chivalrous deference, blended as to those of his own household with the most affectionate tenderness. His own nature was robust, self-reliant, and essentially masculine: such men always honor women, but they understand them better as they grow older. There is so much foundation for the saying, that men are apt to love their first wives best, but to treat their

Page 79

second wives best. Thus the reader who takes up his works in chronological order will perceive that the heroines of his later novels have more spirit and character, are drawn with a more discriminating touch, take stronger hold upon the interest, than those of his earlier. Ursula Malbone is a finer girl than Cecilia Howard, or even Elizabeth Temple. So when he has occasion to delineate a woman who, from her position in life, or the peculiar circumstances into which she is thrown, is moved by deeper springs of feeling, is obliged to put forth sterner energies, than are known to females reared in the sheltered air of prosperity and civilization,—when he paints the heart of woman roused by great perils, overborne by heavy sorrows, wasted by strong passions,—we recognize the same master-hand which has given us such powerful pictures of character in the other sex. In other words, Cooper is not happy in representing those shadowy and delicate graces which belong exclusively to woman, and distinguish her from man; but he is generally successful in sketching in woman those qualities which are found in both sexes. In “The Bravo,” Donna Violetta, the heroine, a rich and high-born young lady, is not remarkable one way or the other; but Gelsomina, the jailer’s daughter, born in an inferior position, reared in a sterner school of discipline and struggle, is a beautiful and consistent creation, constantly showing masculine energy and endurance, yet losing nothing of womanly charm. Ruth, in “The Wept of the Wish-ton-Wish,” Hetty Hutter, the weak-minded and sound-hearted girl, in “The Deerslayer,” Mabel Dunham, and the young Indian woman, “Dew of June,” in “The Pathfinder,” are further cases in point. No one can read the books in which these women are represented and say that Cooper was wanting in the power of delineating the finest and highest attributes of womanhood,

Cooper cannot be congratulated upon his success in the few attempts he has made to represent historical personages. Washington, as shown to us in “The Spy,” is a formal piece of mechanism, as destitute of vital character as Maelzel’s automaton trumpeter. This, we admit, was a very difficult subject, alike from the peculiar traits of Washington, and from the reverence in which his name and memory are held by his countrymen. But the sketch, in “The Pilot,” of Paul Jones, a very different person, and a much easier subject, is hardly better. In both cases, the failure arises from the fact that the author is constantly endeavoring to produce the legitimate effect of mental and moral qualities by a careful enumeration of external attributes. Harper, under which name Washington is introduced, appears in only two or three scenes; but, during these, we hear so much of the solemnity and impressiveness of his manner, the gravity of his brow, the steadiness of his gaze, that we get the notion of a rather oppressive personage, and sympathize with the satisfaction of the Whartons, when he retires to his own room, and

Page 80

relieves them of his tremendous presence. Mr. Gray, who stands for Paul Jones, is more carefully elaborated, but the result is far from satisfactory. We are so constantly told of his calmness and abstraction, of his sudden starts and bursts of feeling, of his low voice, of his fits of musing, that the aggregate impression is that of affectation and self-consciousness, rather than of a simple, passionate, and heroic nature. Mr. Gray does not seem to us at all like the rash, fiery, and dare-devil Scotchman of history. His conduct and conversation, as recounted in the fifth chapter of the novel, are unnatural and improbable; and we cannot wonder that the first lieutenant did not know what to make of so melodramatic and sententious a gentleman, in the guise of a pilot.

Cooper, as we need hardly say, has drawn copiously upon Indian life and character for the materials of his novels; and among foreign nations much of his reputation is due to this fact. Civilized men and women always take pleasure in reading about the manners and habits of savage life; and those in whom the shows of things are submitted to the desires of the mind delight to invest them with those ideal qualities which they do not find, or think they do not, in the artificial society around them. Cooper had enjoyed no peculiar opportunities of studying by personal observation the characteristics of the Indian race, but he had undoubtedly read everything he could get hold of in illustration of the subject. No one can question the vividness and animation of his sketches, or their brilliant tone of color. He paints with a pencil dipped in the glow of our sunset skies and the crimson of our autumn maples. Whenever he brings Indians upon the stage, we may be sure that scenes of thrilling interest are before us: that rifles are to crack, tomahawks to gleam, and arrows to dart like sunbeams through the air; that a net of peril is to be drawn around his hero or heroine, from the meshes of which he or she is to be extricated by some unexpected combination of fortunate circumstances. We expect a succession of startling incidents, and a rapid course of narrative without pauses or languid intervals. We do not object to his idealizing his Indians: this is the privilege of the novelist, time out of mind. He may make them swift of foot, graceful in movement, and give them a form like the Apollo's; he may put as much expression as he pleases into their black eyes; he may tessellate their speech as freely as he will with poetical and figurative expressions, drawn from the aspects of the external world: for all this there is authority, and chapter and verse may be cited in support of it. But we have a right to ask that he shall not transcend the bounds of reason and possibility, and represent his red men as moved by motives and guided by sentiments which are wholly inconsistent with the inexorable facts of the case. We confess to being a little more than skeptical as to the Indian of poetry and romance: like the

Page 81

German's camel, he is evolved from the depth of the writer's own consciousness. The poet takes the most delicate sentiments and the finest emotions of civilization and cultivation, and grafts them upon the best qualities of savage life; which is as if a painter should represent an oak-tree bearing roses. The life of the North-American Indian, like that of all men who stand upon the base-line of civilization, is a constant struggle, and often a losing struggle, for mere subsistence. The sting of animal wants is his chief motive of action, and the full gratification of animal wants his highest ideal of happiness. The "noble savage," as sketched by poets, weary of the hollowness, the insincerity, and the meanness of artificial life, is really a very ignoble creature, when seen in the "open daylight" of truth. He is selfish, sensual, cruel, indolent, and impassive. The highest graces of character, the sweetest emotions, the finest sensibilities,—which make up the novelist's stock in trade,—are not and cannot be the growth of a so-called state of Nature, which is an essentially unnatural state. We no more believe that Logan ever made the speech reported by Jefferson, in so many words, than we believe that Chatham ever made the speech in reply to Walpole which begins with, "The atrocious crime of being a young man"; though we have no doubt that the reporters in both cases had something fine and good to start from. We accept with acquiescence, nay, with admiration, such characters as Magua, Chingachgook, Susquesus, Tamenund, and Canonchet; but when we come to Uncas, in "The Last of the Mohicans," we pause and shake our heads with incredulous doubt. That a young Indian chief should fall in love with a handsome quadroon like Cora Munro—for she was neither more nor less than that—is natural enough; but that he should manifest his passion with such delicacy and refinement is impossible. We include under one and the same name all the affinities and attractions of sex, but the appetite of the savage differs from the love of the educated and civilized man as much as charcoal differs from the diamond. The sentiment of love, as distinguished from the passion, is one of the last and best results of Christianity and civilization: in no one thing does savage life differ from civilized more than in the relations between man and woman, and in the affections that unite them. Uncas is a graceful and beautiful image; but he is no Indian.

We turn now to a more gracious part of our task, and proceed to say something of the many striking excellences which distinguish Cooper's writings, and have given him such wide popularity. Popularity is but one test of merit, and not the highest,—gauging popularity by the number of readers, at any one time, irrespective of their taste and judgment. In this sense, "The Scottish Chiefs" and "Thaddeus of Warsaw" were once as popular as any of the Waverley Novels. But Cooper's novels have enduring merit, and will surely keep their place in

Page 82

the literature of the language. The manners, habits, and costumes of England have greatly changed during the last hundred years; but Richardson and Fielding are still read. We must expect corresponding changes in this country during the next century; but we may confidently predict that in the year 1962 young and impressible hearts will be saddened at the fate of Uncas and Cora, and exult when Captain Munson's frigate escapes from the shoals.

A few pages back we spoke of Cooper's want of skill in the structure of his plots, and his too frequent recurrence to improbable incidents to help on the course of his stories. But most readers care little about this defect, provided the writer betrays no poverty of invention, and succeeds in making his narratives interesting. Herein Cooper never lays himself open to that instinctive and unconscious criticism, which is the only kind an author need dread, because from it there is no appeal. It is bad to have a play hissed down, but it is worse to have it yawned down. But over Cooper's pages his readers never yawn. They never break down in the middle of one of his stories. The fortunes of his characters are followed with breathless and accumulating interest to the end. In vain does the dinner-bell sound, or the clock strike the hour of bed-time: the book cannot be laid down till we know whether Elizabeth Temple is to get out of the woods without being burned alive, or solve the mystery that hangs over the life of Jacopo Frontoni. He has in ample measure that paramount and essential merit in a novelist of fertility of invention. The resources of his genius, alike in the devising of incidents and the creation of character, are inexhaustible. His scenes are laid on the sea and in the forest,—in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Spain,—amid the refinements and graces of civilization and the rudeness and hardships of frontier and pioneer life; but everywhere he moves with an easy and familiar tread, and everywhere, though there may be the motive and the cue for minute criticism, we recognize the substantial truth of his pictures. In all his novels the action is rapid and the movement animated: his incidents may not be probable, but they crowd upon each other so thickly that we have not time to raise the question: before one impression has become familiar, the scene changes, and new objects enchain the attention. All rapid motion is exhilarating alike to mind and body; and in reading Cooper's novels we feel a pleasure analogous to that which stirs the blood when we drive a fast horse or sail with a ten-knot breeze. This fruitfulness in the invention of incidents is nearly as important an element in the composition of a novelist as a good voice in that of a singer. A powerful work of fiction may be produced by a writer who has not this gift; but such works address a comparatively limited public. To the common mind no faculty in the novelist is so fascinating as this. "Caleb Williams" is a story of remarkable power; but "Ivanhoe" has a thousand readers to its one.

Page 83

In estimating novelists by the number and variety of characters with which they have enriched the repertory of fiction, Cooper's place, if not the highest, is very high. The fruitfulness of his genius in this regard is kindred to its fertility in the invention of incidents. We can pardon in a portrait-gallery of such extent here and there an ill-drawn figure or a face wanting in expression. With the exception of Scott, and perhaps of Dickens, what writer of prose fiction has created a greater number of characters such as stamp themselves upon the memory so that an allusion to them is well understood in cultivated society? Fielding has drawn country squires, and Smollett has drawn sailors; but neither has intruded upon the domain of the other, nor could he have made the attempt without failure. Some of our living novelists have a limited list of characters; they have half a dozen types which we recognize as inevitably as we do the face and voice of an actor in the king, the lover, the priest, or the bandit: but Cooper is not a mere mannerist, perpetually copying from himself. His range is very wide: it includes white men, red men, and black men,—sailors, hunters, and soldiers,—lawyers, doctors, and clergymen,—past generations and present,—Europeans and Americans,—civilized and savage life. All his delineations are not successful; some are even unsuccessful: but the aberrations of his genius must be viewed in connection with the extent of the orbit through which it moves. The courage which led him to expose himself to so many risks of failure is itself a proof of conscious power.

Cooper's style has not the ease, grace, and various power of Scott's,—or the racy, idiomatic character of Thackeray's,—or the exquisite purity and transparency of Hawthorne's: but it is a manly, energetic style, in which we are sure to find good words, if not the best. It has certain wants, but it has no marked defects; if it does not always command admiration, it never offends. It has not the highest finish; it sometimes betrays carelessness: but it is the natural garb in which a vigorous mind clothes its conceptions. It is the style of a man who writes from a full mind, without thinking of what he is going to say; and this is in itself a certain kind of merit. His descriptive powers are of a high order. His love of Nature was strong; and, as is generally the case with intellectual men, it rather increased than diminished as he grew older. It was not the meditative and self-conscious love of a sensitive spirit, that seeks in communion with the outward world a relief from the burdens and struggles of humanity, but the hearty enjoyment of a thoroughly healthy nature, the schoolboy's sense of a holiday dwelling in a manly breast. His finest passages are those in which he presents the energies and capacities of humanity in combination with striking or beautiful scenes in Nature. His genius, which sometimes moves with "compulsion and laborious flight" when dealing with artificial

Page 84

life and the manners and speech of cultivated men, and women, here recovers all its powers, and sweeps and soars with victorious and irresistible wing. The breeze from the sea, the fresh air and wide horizon of the prairies, the noonday darkness of the forest are sure to animate his drooping energies, and breathe into his mind the inspiration of a fresh life. Here he is at home, and in his congenial element: he is the swan on the lake, the eagle in the air, the deer in the woods. The escape of the frigate, in the fifth chapter of "The Pilot," is a well-known passage of this kind; and nothing can be finer. The technical skill, the poetical feeling, the rapidity of the narrative, the distinctness of the details, the vividness of the coloring, the life, power, and animation which breathe and burn in every line, make up a combination of the highest order of literary merit. It is as good a sea-piece as the best of Turner's; and we cannot give it higher praise. We hear the whistling of the wind through the rigging, and the roar of the pitiless sea, bellowing for its prey; we see the white caps of the waves flashing with spectral light through the darkness, and the gallant ship whirled along like a bubble by the irresistible current; we hold our breath as we read of the expedients and manoeuvres which most of us but half understand, and heave a long sigh of relief when the danger is past, and the ship reaches the open sea. A similar passage, though of more quiet and gentler beauty, is the description of the deer-chase on the lake, in the twenty-seventh chapter of "The Pioneers." Indeed, this whole novel is full of the finest expressions of the author's genius. Into none of his works has he put more of the warmth of personal feeling and the glow of early recollection. His own heart beats through every line. The fresh breezes of the morning of life play round its pages, and its unexhaled dew hangs upon them. It is colored throughout with the rich hues of sympathetic emotion. All that is attractive in pioneer life is reproduced with substantial truth; but the pictures are touched with those finer lights which time pours over the memories of childhood. With what spirit and power all the characteristic incidents and scenes of a new settlement are described,—pigeon-shooting, bass-fishing, deer-hunting, the making of maple-sugar, the turkey-shooting at Christmas, the sleighing-parties in winter! How distinctly his landscapes are painted,—the deep, impenetrable forest, the gleaming lake, the crude aspect and absurd architecture of the new-born village! How full of poetry in the ore is the conversation of Leatherstocking! The incongruities and peculiarities of social life which are the result of a sudden rush of population into the wilderness are also well sketched; though with a pencil less free and vivid than that with which he paints the aspects of Nature and the movements of natural man. As respects the structure of the story, and the probability of the incidents, the novel is open to criticism; but such is the fascination that hangs over it, that it is impossible to criticize. To do this would be as ungracious as to correct the language and pronunciation of an old friend who revives by his conversation the fading memories of school-boy and college life.

Page 85

Cooper would have been a better writer, if he had had more of the quality of humor, and a keener sense of the ridiculous; for these would have saved him from his too frequent practice of introducing both into his narrative and his conversations, but more often into the latter, scraps of commonplace morality, and bits of sentiment so long worn as to have lost all their gloss. In general, his genius does not appear to advantage in dialogue. His characters have not always a due regard to the brevity of human life. They make long speeches, preach dull sermons, and ventilate very self-evident propositions with great solemnity of utterance. Their discourse wants not only compression, but seasoning. They are sometimes made to talk in such a way that the force of caricature can hardly go farther. For instance, in "The Pioneers," Judge Temple, coming into a room in his house, and seeing a fire of maple-logs, exclaims to Richard Jones, his kinsman and factotum,—“How often have I forbidden the use of the sugar-maple in my dwelling! The sight of that sap, as it *exudes* with the heat, is painful to me, Richard.” And in another place, he is made to say to his daughter,—“Remember the heats of July, my daughter; nor venture farther than thou canst *retrace before the meridian*.” We may be sure that no man of woman born, in finding fault about the burning of maple-logs, ever talked of the sap’s “exuding”; or, when giving a daughter a caution against walking too far, ever translated getting home before noon into “retracing before the meridian.” This is almost as bad as Sir Piercie Shafton’s calling the cows “the milky mothers of the herds.”

So, too, a lively perception of the ludicrous would have saved Cooper from certain peculiarities of phrase and awkwardnesses of expression, frequently occurring in his novels, such as might easily slip from the pen in the rapidity of composition, but which we wonder should have been overlooked in the proof-sheet. A few instances will illustrate our meaning. In the elaborate description of the personal charms of Cecilia Howard, in the tenth chapter of "The Pilot," we are told of “a small hand which *seemed to blush at its own naked beauties*.” In "The Pioneers," speaking of the head and brow of Oliver Edwards, he says,—“The very air and manner with which *the member haughtily maintained itself* over the coarse and even wild attire,” *etc.* In "The Bravo," we read,—“As the stranger passed, his *glittering organs rolled over* the persons of the gondolier and his companion,” *etc.*; and again, in the same novel,—“The packet was received calmly, though *the organ* which glanced at its seal,” *etc.* In "The Last of the Mohicans," the complexion of Cora appears “charged with the color of the rich blood that *seemed ready to burst its bounds*.” These are but trivial faults; and if they had not been so easily corrected, it would have been hypercriticism to notice them.

Page 86

Every author in the department of imaginative literature, whether of prose or verse, puts more or less of his personal traits of mind and character into his writings. This is very true of Cooper; and much of the worth and popularity of his novels is to be ascribed to the unconscious expressions and revelations they give of the estimable and attractive qualities of the man. Bryant, in his admirably written and discriminating biographical sketch, originally pronounced as a eulogy, and now prefixed to "Precaution" in Townsend's edition, relates that a distinguished man of letters, between whom and Cooper an unhappy coolness had for some time existed, after reading "The Pathfinder," remarked,—"They may say what they will of Cooper, the man who wrote this book is not only a great man, but a good man." This is a just tribute; and the impression thus made by a single work is confirmed by all. Cooper's moral nature was thoroughly sound, and all his moral instincts were right. His writings show in how high regard he held the two great guardian virtues of courage in man and purity in woman. In all his novels we do not recall a single expression of doubtful morality. He never undertakes to enlist our sympathies on the wrong side. If his good characters are not always engaging, he never does violence to virtue by presenting attractive qualities in combination with vices which in real life harden the heart and coarsen the taste. We do not find in his pages those moral monsters in which the finest sensibilities, the richest gifts, the noblest sentiments are linked to heartless profligacy, or not less heartless misanthropy. He never palters with right; he enters into no truce with wrong; he admits of no compromise on such points. How admirable in its moral aspect is the character of Leatherstocking! he is ignorant, and of very moderate intellectual range or grasp; but what dignity, nay, even grandeur, is thrown around him from his noble moral qualities,—his undeviating rectitude, his disinterestedness, his heroism, his warm affections! No writer could have delineated such a character so well who had not an instinctive and unconscious sympathy with his intellectual offspring. Praise of the same kind belongs to Long Tom Coffin, and Antonio, the old fisherman. The elements of character—truth, courage, and affection—are the same in all. Harvey Birch and Jacopo Frontoni are kindred conceptions: both are in a false relation to those around them; both assume a voluntary load of obloquy; both live and move in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust; but in both the end sanctifies and exalts the means; the element of deception in both only adds to the admiration finally awakened. The carrying out of conceptions like these—the delineation of a character that perpetually weaves a web of untruth, and yet through all maintains our respect, and at last secures our reverence—was no easy task; but Cooper's success is perfect.

Page 87

Cooper was fortunate in having been born with a vigorous constitution, and in having kept through life the blessing of robust health. He never suffered from remorse of the stomach or protest of the brain; and his writings are those of a man who always digested his dinner and never had a headache. His novels, like those of Scott, are full of the breeze and sunshine of health. They breathe of manly tastes, active habits, sound sleep, a relish for simple pleasures, temperate enjoyments, and the retention in manhood of the fresh susceptibilities of youth. His genius is thoroughly masculine. He is deficient in acute perception, in delicate discrimination, in fine analysis, in the skill to seize and arrest exceptional peculiarities; but he has in large measure the power to present the broad characteristics of universal humanity. It is to this power that he owes his wide popularity. At this moment, in every public and circulating library in England or America, the novels of Cooper will be found to be in constant demand. He wrote for the many, and not for the few; he hit the common mind between wind and water; a delicate and fastidious literary appetite may not be attracted to his productions, but the healthy taste of the natural man finds therein food alike convenient and savory.

In a manly, courageous, somewhat impulsive nature like Cooper's we should expect to find prejudices; and he was a man of strong prejudices. Among others, was an antipathy to the people of New England. His characters, male and female, are frequently Yankees, but they are almost invariably caricatures; that is, they have all the unamiable characteristics and unattractive traits which are bestowed upon the people of New England by their ill-wishers. Had he ever lived among them, with his quick powers of observation and essentially kindly judgment of men and life, he could not have failed to correct his misapprehensions, and to perceive that he had taken the reverse side of the tapestry for the face.

Cooper, with a very keen sense of injustice, conscious of inexhaustible power, full of vehement impulses, and not largely endowed with that safe quality called prudence, was a man likely to get involved in controversies. It was his destiny, and he never could have avoided it, to be in opposition to the dominant public sentiment around him. Had he been born in Russia, he could hardly have escaped a visit to Siberia; had he been born in Austria, he would have wasted some of his best years in Spielberg. Under a despotic government he would have been a vehement Republican; in a Catholic country he would have been the most uncompromising of Protestants. He had full faith in the institutions of his own country; and his large heart, hopeful temperament, and robust soul made him a Democrat; but his democracy had not the least tinge of radicalism. He believed that man had a right to govern himself, and that he was capable of self-government; but government, the

Page 88

subordination of impulse to law, he insisted upon as rigorously as the veriest monarchist or aristocrat in Christendom. He would have no authority that was not legitimate; but he would tolerate no resistance to legitimate authority. All his sentiments, impulses, and instincts were those of a gentleman; and vulgar manners, coarse habits, and want of respect for the rights of others were highly offensive to him. When in Europe, he resolutely, and at no little expense of time and trouble, defended America from unjust imputations and ignorant criticism; and when at home, with equal courage and equal energy, he breasted the current of public Opinion where he deemed it to be wrong, and resisted those most formidable invasions of right, wherein the many combine to oppress the one. His long controversy with the press was too important an episode in his life to be passed over by us without mention; though our limits will not permit us to make anything more than a passing allusion to it. The opinion which will be formed upon Cooper's course in this matter will depend, in a considerable degree, upon the temperament of the critic. Timid men, cautious men, men who love their ease, will call him Quixotic, rash, imprudent, to engage in a controversy in which he had much to lose and little to gain; but the reply to such suggestions is, that, if men always took counsel of indolence, timidity, and selfishness, no good would ever be accomplished, and no abuses ever be reformed. Cooper may not have been judicious in everything he said and did; but that he was right in the main, both in motive and conduct, we firmly believe. He acted from a high sense of duty; there was no alloy of vindictiveness or love of money in the impulses which moved him. Criticism the most severe and unsparing he accepted as perfectly allowable, so long as it kept within the limits of literary judgment; but any attack upon his personal character, especially any imputation or insinuation involving a moral stain, he would not submit to. He appealed to the laws of the land to vindicate his reputation and punish his assailants. Long and gallant was the warfare he maintained,—a friendless, solitary warfare,—and all the hydra-heads of the press hissing and ejaculating their venom upon him,—with none to stand by his side and wish him God-speed. But he persevered, and, what is more, he succeeded: that, is to say, he secured all the substantial fruits of success. He vindicated the principle for which he contended: he compelled the newspapers to keep within the pale of literary criticism; he confirmed the saying of President Jackson, that “desperate courage makes one a majority.”

Page 89

Two of his novels, "Homeward Bound" and "Home as Found," bear a strong infusion of the feelings which led to his contest with the press. After the publication of these, he became much interested in the well-known Anti-Rent agitation by which the State of New York was so long shaken; and three of his novels, "Satanstoe," "The Chainbearer," and "The Redskins," forming one continuous narrative, were written with reference to this subject. Many professed novel-readers are, we suspect, repelled from these books, partly because of this continuity of the story, and partly because they contain a moral; but we assure them, that, if on these grounds they pass them by, they lose both pleasure and profit. They are written with all the vigor and spirit of his prime; they have many powerful scenes and admirably drawn characters; the pictures of colonial life and manners in "Satanstoe" are animated and delightful; and in all the legal and ethical points for which the author contends he is perfectly right. In his Preface to "The Chainbearer" he says,—"In our view, New York is at this moment a disgraced State; and her disgrace arises from the fact that her laws are trampled under foot, without any efforts—at all commensurate with the object—being made to enforce them." That any commonwealth is a disgraced State against which such charges can with truth be made no one will deny; and any one who is familiar with the history of that wretched business will agree, that, at the time it was made, the charge was not too strong. Who can fail to admire the courage of the man who ventured to write and print such a judgment as the above against a State of which he was a native, a citizen, and a resident, and in which the public sentiment was fiercely the other way? Here, too, Cooper's motives were entirely unselfish: he had almost no pecuniary interest in the question of Anti-Rentism; he wrote all in honor, unalloyed by thrift. His very last novel, "The Ways of the Hour," is a vigorous exposition of the defects of the trial by jury in cases where a vehement public sentiment has already tried the question, and condemned the prisoner. The story is improbable, and the leading character is an impossible being; but the interest is kept up to the end,—it has many most impressive scenes,—it abounds with shrewd and sound observations upon life, manners, and politics,—and all the legal portion is stamped with an acuteness and fidelity to truth which no professional reader can note without admiration.

Cooper's character as a man is the more admirable to us because it was marked by strong points which are not common in our country, and which the institutions of our country do not foster. He had the courage to defy the majority: he had the courage to confront the press: and not from the sting of ill-success, not from mortified vanity, not from wounded self-love, but from an heroic sense of duty. How easy a life might he have purchased by the cheap virtues

Page 90

of silence, submission, and acquiescence! Booksellers would have enriched him; society would have caressed him; political distinction would have crowned him: he had only to watch the course of public sentiment, and so dispose himself that he should seem to lead where he only followed, and all comfortable things would have been poured into his lap. But he preferred to breast the stream, to speak ungrateful truths. He set a wholesome example in this respect; none the less valuable because so few have had the manliness and self-reliance to imitate him. More than twenty years ago De Tocqueville said,—“I know of no country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as in America”: words which we fear are not less true to-day than when they were written. Cooper’s dauntless courage would have been less admirable, had he been hard, cold, stern, and impassive: but he was none of these. He was full of warm affections, cordial, sympathetic, and genial; he had a woman’s tenderness of heart; he was the most faithful of friends; and in his own home no man was ever more gentle, gracious, and sweet. The blows he received fell upon a heart that felt them keenly; but he bared his breast none the less resolutely to the contest because it was not protected by an armor of insensibility.

But we must bring this long paper to a close. We cannot give to it the interest which comes from personal recollections. We saw Cooper once, and but once. This was the very year before he died, in his own home, and amid the scenes which his genius has made immortal. It was a bright midsummer’s day, and we walked together about the village, and around the shores of the lake over which the canoe of Indian John had glided. His own aspect was as sunny as that of the smiling heavens above us; age had not touched him with its paralyzing finger: his vigorous frame, elastic step, and animated glance gave promise of twenty years more of energetic life. His sturdy figure, healthy face, and a slight bluntness of manner reminded one more of his original profession than of the life and manners of a man of letters. He looked like a man who had lived much in the open air,—upon whom the rain had fallen, and against whom the wind had blown. His conversation was hearty, spontaneous, and delightful from its frankness and fulness, but it was not pointed or brilliant; you remembered the healthy ring of the words, but not the words themselves. We recollect, that, as we were standing together on the shores of the lake,—shores which are somewhat tame, and a lake which can claim no higher epithet than that of pretty,—he said: “I suppose it would be patriotic to say that this is finer than Como, but we know that it is not.” We found a chord of sympathy in our common impressions of the beauty of Sorrento, about which, and his residence there, he spoke with contagious animation. Who could have thought that that rich and abundant life was so near its close?



Page 91

Nothing could be more thoroughly satisfying than the impression he left in this brief and solitary interview. His air and movement revealed the same manly, brave, true-hearted, warm-hearted man that is imaged in his books. Grateful are we for the privilege of having seen, spoken with, and taken by the hand the author of "The Pathfinder" and "The Pilot": "it is a pleasure to have seen a great man." Distinctly through the gathering mists of years do his face and form rise up before the mind's eye: an image of manly self-reliance, of frank courage, of generous impulse; a frank friend, an open enemy; a man whom many misunderstood, but whom no one could understand without honoring and loving.

* * * * *

PER TENEBRAS, LUMINA.

I know how, through the golden hours
When summer sunlight floods the deep,
The fairest stars of all the heaven
Climb up, unseen, the effulgent steep.

Orion girds him with a flame;
And, king-like, from the eastward seas,
Comes Aldebaran, with his train
Of Hyades and Pleiades.

In far meridian pride, the Twins
Build, side by side, their luminous thrones;
And Sirius and Procyon pour
A splendor that the day disowns.

And stately Leo, undismayed,
With fiery footstep tracks the Sun,
To plunge adown the western blaze,
Sublimely lost in glories won.

I know, if I were called to keep
Pale morning watch with Grief and Pain,
Mine eyes should see their gathering might
Rise grandly through the gloom again.

And when the Winter Solstice holds
In his diminished path the Sun,—



When hope, and growth, and joy are o'er,
And all our harvesting is done,—

When, stricken, like our mortal Life,
Darkened and chill, the Year lays down
The summer beauty that she wore,
Her summer stars of Harp and Crown,—

Thick trooping with their golden tread
They come, as nightfall fills the sky,
Those strong and solemn sentinels,
To hold their mightier watch on high.

Ah, who shall shrink from dark and cold,
Or fear the sad and shortening days,
Since God doth only so unfold
The wider glory to his gaze?

Since loyal Truth, and holy Trust,
And kingly Strength defying Pain,
Stern Courage, and sure Brotherhood
Are born from out the depths again?

Dear Country of our love and pride!
So is thy stormy winter given!
So, through the terrors that betide,
Look up, and hail thy kindling heaven!

* * * * *

LOVE AND SKATES.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

Page 92

A KNOT AND A MAN TO CUT IT.

Consternation! Consternation in the back office of Benjamin Brummage, Esq., banker in Wall Street.

Yesterday down came Mr. Superintendent Whiffler, from Dunderbunk, up the North River, to say, that, “unless something be done, *at once*, the Dunderbunk Foundry and Iron-Works must wind up.” President Brummage forthwith convoked his Directors. And here they sat around the green table, forlorn as the guests at a Barmecide feast.

Well they might be forlorn! It was the rosy summer solstice, the longest and fairest day of all the year. But rose-color and sunshine had fled from Wall Street. Noisy Crisis towing black Panic, as a puffing steam-tug drags a three-decker cocked and primed for destruction, had suddenly sailed in upon Credit.

As all the green inch-worms vanish on the tenth of every June, so on the tenth of that June all the money in America had buried itself and was as if it were not. Everybody and everything was ready to fail. If the hindmost brick went, down would go the whole file.

There were ten Directors of the Dunderbunk Foundry.

Now, not seldom, of a Board of ten Directors, five are wise and five are foolish: five wise, who bag all the Company’s funds in salaries and commissions for indorsing its paper; five foolish, who get no salaries, no commissions, no dividends,—nothing, indeed, but abuse from the stockholders, and the reputation of thieves. That is to say, five of the ten are pick-pockets; the other five, pockets to be picked.

It happened that the Dunderbunk Directors were all honest and foolish but one. He, John Churm, honest and wise, was off at the West, with his Herculean shoulders at the wheels of a dead-locked railroad. These honest fellows did not wish Dunderbunk to fail for several reasons. First, it was not pleasant to lose their investment. Second, one important failure might betray Credit to Crisis with Panic at its heels, whereupon every investment would be in danger. Third, what would become of their Directorial reputations? From President Brummage down, each of these gentlemen was one of the pockets to be picked in a great many companies. Each was of the first Wall-Street fashion, invited to lend his name and take stock in every new enterprise. Any one of them might have walked down town in a long patchwork toga made of the newspaper advertisements of boards in which his name proudly figured. If Dunderbunk failed, the toga was torn, and might presently go to rags beyond repair. The first rent would inaugurate universal rupture. How to avoid this disaster?—that was the question.

“State the case, Mr. Superintendent Whiffler,” said President Brummage, in his pompous manner, with its pomp a little collapsed, *pro tempore*.

Inefficient Whiffler whimpered out his story.

Page 93

The confessions of an impotent executive are sorry stuff to read. Whiffler's long, dismal complaint shall not be repeated. He had taken a prosperous concern, had carried on things in his own way, and now failure was inevitable. He had bought raw material lavishly, and worked it badly into half-ripe material, which nobody wanted to buy. He was in arrears to his hands. He had tried to bully them, when they asked for their money. They had insulted him, and threatened to knock off work, unless they were paid at once. "A set of horrid ruffians," Whiffler said,—“and his life wouldn't be safe many days among them.”

“Withdraw, if you please, Mr. Superintendent,” President Brummage requested. “The Board will discuss measures of relief.”

The more they discussed, the more consternation. Nobody said anything to the purpose, except Mr. Sam Gwelp, his late father's lubberly son and successor.

“Blast!” said he; “we shall have to let it slide!”

Into this assembly of imbeciles unexpectedly entered Mr. John Churm. He had set his Western railroad trains rolling, and was just returned to town. Now he was ready to put those Herculean shoulders at any other bemired and rickety no-go-cart.

Mr. Churm was not accustomed to be a Director in feeble companies. He came into Dunderbunk recently as executor of his friend Damer, a year ago bored to death by a silly wife.

Churm's bristly aspect and incisive manner made him a sharp contrast to Brummage. The latter personage was flabby in flesh, and the oppressively civil counter-jumper style of his youth had grown naturally into a deportment of most imposing pomposity.

The Tenth Director listened to the President's recitative of their difficulties, chorused by the Board.

“Gentlemen,” said Director Churm, “you want two things. The first is Money!”

He pronounced this cabalistic word with such magic power that all the air seemed instantly filled with a cheerful flight of gold American eagles, each carrying a double eagle on its back and a silver dollar in its claws; and all the soil of America seemed to sprout with coin, as after a shower a meadow sprouts with the yellow buds of the dandelion.

“Money! yes, Money!” murmured the Directors.

It seemed a word of good omen, now.

“The second thing,” resumed the newcomer, “is a Man!”

The Directors looked at each other and did not see such a being.

“The actual Superintendent of Dunderbunk is a dunderhead,” said Churm.

“Pun!” cried Sam Gwelp, waking up from a snooze.

Several of the Directors, thus instructed, started a complimentary laugh.

“Order, gentlemen! Orrderr!” said the President, severely, rapping with a paper-cutter.

“We must have a Man, not a Whiffler!” Churm continued. “And I have one in my eye.”

Everybody examined his eye.

“Would you be so good as to name him?” said Old Brummage, timidly.

Page 94

He wanted to see a Man, but feared the strange creature might be dangerous.

“Richard Wade,” says Churm. They did not know him. The name sounded forcible.

“He has been in California,” the nominator said.

A shudder ran around the green table. They seemed to see a frowzy desperado, shaggy as a bison, in a red shirt and jackboots, hung about the waist with an assortment of six-shooters and bowie-knives, and standing against a background of mustangs, monte-banks, and lynch-law.

“We must get Wade,” Churm says, with authority. “He knows Iron by heart. He can handle Men. I will back him with my blank check, to any amount, to his order.”

Here a murmur of applause, swelling to a cheer, burst from the Directors.

Everybody knew that the Geological Bank deemed Churm’s deposits the fundamental stratum of its wealth. They lay there in the vaults, like underlying granite. When hot times came, they boiled up in a mountain to buttress the world.

Churm’s blank check seemed to wave in the air like an oriflamme of victory. Its payee might come from Botany Bay; he might wear his beard to his knees, and his belt stuck full of howitzers and boomerangs; he might have been repeatedly hung by Vigilance Committees, and as often cut down and revived by galvanism; but brandishing that check, good for anything less than a million, every Director in Wall Street was his slave, his friend, and his brother.

“Let us vote Mr. Wade in by acclamation,” cried the Directors.

“But, gentlemen,” Churm interposed, “if I give him my blank check, he must have *carte blanche*, and no one to interfere in his management.”

Every Director, from President Brummage down, drew a long face at this condition.

It was one of their great privileges to potter in the Dunderbunk affairs and propose ludicrous impossibilities.

“Just as you please,” Churm continued. “I name a competent man, a gentleman and fine fellow. I back him with all the cash he wants. But he must have his own way. Now take him, or leave him!”

Such despotic talk had never been heard before in that Directors’ Room. They relucted a moment. But they thought of their togas of advertisements in danger. The blank check shook its blandishments before their eyes.

“We take him,” they said, and Richard Wade was the new Superintendent unanimously.

“He shall be at Dunderbunk to take hold to-morrow morning,” said Churm, and went off to notify him.

Upon this, Consternation sailed out of the hearts of Brummage and associates.

They lunched with good appetites over the green table, and the President confidently remarked,—

“I don’t believe there is going much of a crisis, after all.”

CHAPTER II.

BARRACKS FOR THE HERO.

Wade packed his kit, and took the Hudson-River train for Dunderbunk the same afternoon.

Page 95

He swallowed his dust, he gasped for his fresh air, he wept over his cinders, he refused his “lozengers,” he was admired by all the pretty girls and detested by all the puny men in the train, and in good time got down at his station.

He stopped on the platform to survey the land—and water-privileges of his new abode.

“The June sunshine is unequalled,” he soliloquized, “the river is splendid, the hills are pretty, and the Highlands, north, respectable; but the village has gone to seed. Place and people look lazy, vicious, and ashamed. I suppose those chimneys are my Foundry. The smoke rises as if the furnaces were ill-fed and weak in the lungs. Nothing, I can see, looks alive, except that queer little steamboat coming in,—the ‘I. Ambuster,’—jolly name for a boat!”

Wade left his traps at the station, and walked through the village. All the gilding of a golden sunset of June could not make it anything but commonplace. It would be forlorn on a gray day, and utterly dismal in a storm.

“I must look up a civilized house to lodge in,” thought the stranger. “I cannot possibly camp at the tavern. Its offence is rum, and smells to heaven.”

Presently our explorer found a neat, white, two-story, home-like abode on the upper street, overlooking the river.

“This promises,” he thought. “Here are roses on the porch, a piano, or at least a melodeon, by the parlor-window, and they are insured in the Mutual, as the Mutual’s plate announces. Now, if that nice-looking person in black I see setting a table in the back-room is a widow, I will camp here.”

Perry Purtett was the name on the door, and opposite the sign of an *omnium-gatherum* country-store hinted that Perry was deceased. The hint was a broad one. Wade read, “Ringdove, Successor to late P. Purtett.”

“It’s worth a try to get in here out of the pagan barbarism around. I’ll propose—as a lodger—to the widow.”

So said Wade, and rang the bell under the roses. A pretty, slim, delicate, fair-haired maiden answered.

“This explains the roses and the melodeon,” thought Wade, and asked, “Can I see your mother?”

Mamma came. “Mild, timid, accustomed to depend on the late Perry, and wants a friend,” Wade analyzed, while he bowed. He proposed himself as a lodger.

“I didn’t know it was talked of generally,” replied the widow, plaintively; “but I have said that we felt lonesome, Mr. Purtett bein’ gone, and if the new minister”—

Here she paused. The cut of Wade’s jib was unclerical. He did not stoop, like a new minister. He was not pallid, meagre, and clad in unwholesome black, like the same. His bronzed face was frank and bold and unfamiliar with speculations on Original Sin or Total Depravity.

“I am not the new minister,” said Wade, smiling slightly over his moustache; “but a new Superintendent for the Foundry.”

“Mr. Whiffler is goin’?” exclaimed Mrs. Purtett.

Page 96

She looked at her daughter, who gave a little sob and ran out of the room.

“What makes my daughter Belle feel bad,” says the widow, “is, that she had a friend,—well, it isn’t too much to say that they was as good as engaged,—and he was foreman of the Foundry finishin’-shop. But somehow Whiffler spoilt him, just as he spoils everything he touches; and last winter, when Belle was away, William Tarbox—that’s his name, and his head is runnin’ over with inventions—took to spreein’ and liquor, and got ashamed of himself, and let down from a foreman to a hand, and is all the while lettin’ down lower.”

The widow’s heart thus opened, Wade walked in as consoler. This also opened the lodgings to him. He was presently installed in the large and small front-rooms up-stairs, unpacking his traps, and making himself permanently at home.

Superintendent Whiffler came over, by-and-by, to see his successor. He did not like his looks. The new man should have looked mean or weak or rascally, to suit the outgoer.

“How long do you expect to stay?” asks Whiffler, with a half-sneer, watching Wade hanging a map and a print *vis-a-vis*.

“Until the men and I, or the Company and I, cannot pull together.”

“I’ll give you a week to quarrel with both, and another to see the whole concern go to everlasting smash. And now, if you’re ready, I’ll go over the accounts with you and prove it.”

Whiffler himself, insolent, cowardly, and a humbug, if not a swindler, was enough, Wade thought, to account for any failure. But he did not mention this conviction.

CHAPTER III.

HOW TO BEHEAD A HYDRA!

At ten next morning, Whiffler handed over the safe-key to Wade, and departed to ruin some other property, if he could get one to ruin. Wade walked with him to the gate.

“I’m glad to be out of a sinking ship,” said the ex-boss. “The Works will go down, sure as shooting. And I think myself well out of the clutches of these men. They’re a bullying, swearing, drinking set of infernal ruffians. Foremen are just as bad as hands. I never felt safe of my life with ’em.”

“A bad lot, are they?” mused Wade, as he returned to the office. “I must give them a little sharp talk by way of Inaugural.”

He had the bell tapped and the men called together in the main building.

Much work was still going on in an inefficient, unsystematic way.

While hot fires were roaring in the great furnaces, smoke rose from the dusty beds where Titanic castings were cooling. Great cranes, manacled with heavy chains, stood over the furnace-doors, ready to lift steaming jorums of melted metal, and pour out, hot and hot, for the moulds to swallow.

Raw material in big heaps lay about, waiting for the fire to ripen it. Here was a stack of long, rough, rusty pigs, clumsy as the shillelubs of the Anakim. There was a pile of short, thick masses, lying higgledy-piggledy, stuff from the neighboring mines, which needed to be crossed with foreign stock before it could be of much use in civilization.

Page 97

Here, too, was raw material organized: a fly-wheel, large enough to keep the knoggiest of asteroids revolving without a wobble; a cross-head, cross-tail, and piston-rod, to help a great sea-going steamer breast the waves; a light walking-beam, to whirl the paddles of a fast boat on the river; and other members of machines, only asking to be put together and vivified by steam and they would go at their work with a will.

From the black rafters overhead hung the heavy folds of a dim atmosphere, half dust, half smoke. A dozen sunbeams, forcing their way through the grimy panes of the grimy upper windows, found this compound quite palpable and solid, and they moulded out of it a series of golden bars set side by side aloft, like the pipes of an organ out of its perpendicular.

Wade grew indignant, as he looked about him and saw so much good stuff and good force wasting for want of a little will and skill to train the force and manage the stuff. He abhorred bankruptcy and chaos.

"All they want here is a head," he thought.

He shook his own. The brain within was well developed with healthy exercise. It filled its case, and did not rattle like a withered kernel, or sound soft like a rotten one. It was a vigorous, muscular brain. The owner felt that he could trust it for an effort, as he could his lungs for a shout, his legs for a leap, or his fist for a knock-down argument.

At the tap of the bell, the "bad lot" of men came together. They numbered more than two hundred, though the Foundry was working short. They had been notified that "that gonoph of a Whiffler was kicked out, and a new feller was in, who looked cranky enough, and wanted to see 'em and tell 'em whether he was a damn' fool or not."

So all hands collected from the different parts of the Foundry to see the head.

They came up with easy and somewhat swaggering bearing,—a good many roughs, with here and there a ruffian. Several, as they approached, swung and tossed, for mere overplus of strength, the sledges with which they had been tapping at the bald shiny pates of their anvils. Several wielded their long pokers like lances.

Grimy chaps, all with their faces streaked, like Blackfeet in their warpaint. Their hairy chests showed, where some men parade elaborate shirt-bosoms. Some had their sleeves pushed up to the elbow to exhibit their compact flexors and extensors. Some had rolled their flannel up to the shoulder, above the bulging muscles of the upper arm. They wore aprons tied about the neck, like the bibs of our childhood,—or about the waist, like the coquettish articles which young housewives affect. But there was no coquetry in these great flaps of leather or canvas, and they were besmeared and rust-stained quite beyond any bib that ever suffered under bread-and-molasses or mud-pie treatment.

They lounged and swaggered up, and stood at ease, not without rough grace, in a sinuous line, coiled and knotted like a snake.

Page 98

Ten feet back stood the new Hercules who was to take down that Hydra's two hundred crests of insubordination.

They inspected him, and he them as coolly. He read and ticketed each man, as he came up,—good, bad, or on the fence,—and marked each so that he would know him among a myriad.

The Hands faced the Head. It was a question whether the two hundred or the one would be master in Dunderbunk.

Which was boss? An old question.

It has to be settled whenever a new man claims power, and there is always a struggle until it is fought out by main force of brain or muscle.

Wade had made up his mind on this subject. He waited a moment until the men were still. He was a Saxon six-footer of thirty. He stood easily on his pins, as if he had eyed men and facts before. His mouth looked firm, his brow freighted, his nose clipper,—that the hands could see. But clipper noses are not always backed by a stout hull. Seemingly freighted brows sometimes carry nothing but ballast and dunnage. The firmness may be all in the moustache, while the mouth hides beneath, a mere silly slit. All which the hands knew.

Wade began, short and sharp as a trip-hammer, when it has a bar to shape.

"I'm the new Superintendent. Richard Wade is my name. I rang the bell because I wanted to see you and have you see me. You know as well as I do that these Works are in a bad way. They can't stay so. They must come up and pay you regular wages and the Company profits. Every man of you has got to be here on the spot when the bell strikes, and up to the mark in his work. You haven't been,—and you know it. You've turned out rotten iron,—stuff that any honest shop would be ashamed of. Now there's to be a new leaf turned over here. You're to be paid on the nail; but you've got to earn your money. I won't have any idlers or shirkers or rebels about me. I shall work hard myself, and every man of you will, or he leaves the shop. Now, if anybody has a complaint to make, I'll hear him before you all."

The men were evidently impressed with Wade's Inaugural. It meant something. But they were not to be put down so easily, after long misrule. There began to be a whisper,
—

"B'il in, Bill Tarbox! and talk up to him!"

Presently Bill shouldered forward and faced the new ruler.

Since Bill took to drink and degradation, he had been the butt-end of riot and revolt at the Foundry. He had had his own way with Whiffler. He did not like to abdicate and give in to this new chap without testing him.

In a better mood, Bill would have liked Wade's looks and words; but today he had a sore head, a sour face, and a bitter heart from last night's spree. And then he had heard—it was as well known already in Dunderbunk as if the town-crier had cried it—that Wade was lodging at Mrs. Purtett's, where poor Bill was excluded. So Bill stepped forward as spokesman of the ruffianly element, and the immoral force gathered behind and backed him heavily.

Page 99

Tarbox, too, was a Saxon six-footer of thirty. But he had sagged one inch for want of self-respect. He had spoilt his color and dyed his moustache. He wore foxy-black pantaloons tucked into red-topped boots, with the name of the maker on a gilt shield. His red flannel shirt was open at the neck and caught with a black handkerchief. His damaged tile was in permanent crape for the late lamented Poole.

"We allow," says Bill, in a tone halfway between Lablache's *De profundis* and a burglar's bull-dog's snarl, "that we've did our work as good as need to be did. We 'xpect we know our rights. We ha'n't ben treated fair, and I'm damned if we're go'n' to stan' it."

"Stop!" says Wade. "No swearing in this shop!"

"Who the Devil is go'n' to stop it?" growled Tarbox.

"I am. Do you step back now, and let some one come out who can talk like a gentleman!"

"I'm damned if I stir till I've had my say out," says Bill, shaking himself up and looking dangerous.

"Go back!"

Wade moved close to him, also looking dangerous.

"Don't tech me!" Bill threatened, squaring off.

He was not quick enough. Wade knocked him down flat on a heap of moulding-sand. The hat in mourning for Poole found its place in a puddle.

Bill did not like the new Emperor's method of compelling *kotou*. Round One of the mill had not given him enough.

He jumped up from his soft bed and made a vicious rush at Wade. But he was damaged by evil courses. He was fighting against law and order, on the side of wrong and bad manners.

The same fist met him again, and heavier.

Up went his heels! Down went his head! It struck the ragged edge of a fresh casting, and there he lay stunned and bleeding on his hard black pillow.

"Ring the bell to go to work!" said Wade, in a tone that made the ringer jump. "Now, men, take hold and do your duty and everything will go smooth!"

The bell clanged in. The line looked at its prostrate champion, then at the new boss standing there, cool and brave, and not afraid of a regiment of sledge-hammers.

They wanted an Executive. They wanted to be well governed, as all men do. They wanted disorder out and order in. The new man looked like a man, talked fair, hit hard. Why not all hands give in with a good grace and go to work like honest fellows?

The line broke up. The hands went off to their duty. And there was never any more insubordination at Dunderbunk.

This was June.

Skates in the next chapter.

Love in good time afterward shall glide upon the scene.

CHAPTER IV.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT.

The pioneer sunbeam of next Christmas morning rattled over the Dunderbunk hills, flashed into Richard Wade's eyes, waked him, and was off, ricocheting across the black ice of the river.

Page 100

Wade jumped up, electrified and jubilant. He had gone to bed, feeling quite too despondent for so healthy a fellow. Christmas Eve, the time of family-meetings, reminded him how lonely he was. He had not a relative in the world, except two little nieces,—one as tall as his knee, the other almost up to his waist; and them he had safely bestowed in a nook of New England, to gain wit and virtues as they gained inches.

“I have had a stern and lonely life,” thought Wade, as he blew out his candle last night, “and what has it profited me?”

Perhaps the pioneer sunbeam answered this question with a truism, not always as applicable as in this case,—“A brave, able, self-respecting manhood is fair profit for any man’s first thirty years of life.”

But, answered or not, the question troubled Wade no more. He shot out of bed in tip-top spirits; shouted “Merry Christmas!” at the rising disk of the sun; looked over the black ice; thrilled with the thought of a long holiday for skating; and proceeded to dress in a knowing suit of rough clothes, singing, “*Ah, non giunge!*” as he slid into them.

Presently, glancing from his south window, he observed several matinal smokes rising from the chimneys of a country-house a mile away, on a slope fronting the river.

“Peter Skerrett must be back from Europe at last,” he thought. “I hope he is as fine a fellow as he was ten years ago. I hope marriage has not made him a muff, and wealth a weakling.”

Wade went down to breakfast with an heroic appetite. His “Merry Christmas” to Mrs. Purtett was followed up by a ravished kiss and the gift of a silver butter-knife. The good widow did not know which to be most charmed with. The butter-knife was genuine, shining, solid silver, with her initials, M.B.P., Martha Bilsby Purtett, given in luxuriant flourishes; but then the kiss had such a fine twang, such an exhilarating titillation! The late Perry’s kisses, from first to last, had wanted point. They were, as the Spanish proverb would put it, unsavory as unsalted eggs, for want of a moustache. The widow now perceived, with mild regret, how much she had missed when she married “a man all shaven and shorn.” Her cheek, still fair, though forty, flushed with novel delight, and she appreciated her lodger more than ever.

Wade’s salutation to Belle Purtett was more distant. There must be a little friendly reserve between a handsome young man and a pretty young woman several grades lower in the social scale, living in the same house. They were on the most cordial terms, however; and her gift—of course embroidered slippers—and his to her—of course “The Illustrated Poets,” in Turkey morocco—were exchanged with tender goodwill on both sides.

“We shall meet on the ice, Miss Belle,” said Wade. “It is a day of a thousand for skating.”

“Mr. Ringdove says you are a famous skater,” Belle rejoined. “He saw you on the river yesterday evening.”

Page 101

“Yes; Tarbox and I were practising to exhibit to-day; but I could not do much with my dull old skates.”

Wade breakfasted deliberately, as a holiday morning allowed, and then walked down to the Foundry. There would be no work done to-day, except by a small gang keeping up the fires. The Superintendent wished only to give his First Semi-Annual Report an hour's polishing, before he joined all Dunderbunk on the ice.

It was a halcyon day, worthy of its motto, “Peace on earth, good-will to men.” The air was electric, the sun overflowing with jolly shine, the river smooth and sheeny from the hither bank to the snowy mountains opposite.

“I wish I were Rembrandt, to paint this grand shadowy interior,” thought Wade, as he entered the silent, deserted Foundry. “With the gleam of the snow in my eyes, it looks deliciously warm and *chiaroscuro*. When the men are here and ‘*fervet opus*,’—the pot boils,—I cannot stop to see the picturesque.”

He opened his office, took his Report and began to complete it with ,s, ;s, and .s in the right places.

All at once the bell of the Works rang out loud and clear. Presently the Superintendent became aware of a tramp and a bustle in the building. By-and-by came a tap at the office-door.

“Come in,” said Wade, and, enter young Perry Purtett.

Perry was a boy of fifteen, with hair the color of fresh sawdust, white eyebrows, and an uncommonly wide-awake look. Ringdove, his father's successor, could never teach Perry the smirk, the grace, and the seductiveness of the counter, so the boy had found his place in the finishing-shop of the Foundry.

“Some of the hands would like to see you for half a jiff, Mr. Wade,” said he. “Will you come along, if you please?”

There was a good deal of easy swagger about Perry, as there is always in boys and men whose business is to watch the lunging of steam-engines. Wade followed him. Perry led the way with a jaunty air that said,—

“Room here! Out of the way, you lubberly bits of cast-iron! Be careful, now, you big derricks, or I'll walk right over you! Room now for Me and My suite!”

This pompous usher conducted the Superintendent to the very spot in the main room of the Works where, six months before, the Inaugural had been pronounced and the first Veto spoken and enacted.

And there, as six months before, stood the Hands awaiting their Head. But the aprons, the red shirts, and the grime of working-days were off, and the whole were in holiday rig, —as black and smooth and shiny from top to toe as the members of a Congress of Undertakers.

Wade, following in the wake of Perry, took his stand facing the rank, and waited to see what he was summoned for. He had not long to wait.

To the front stepped Mr. William Tarbox, foreman of the finishing-shop, no longer a boy, but an erect, fine-looking fellow, with no nitrate in his moustache, and his hat permanently out of mourning for the late Mr. Poole.

Page 102

"Gentlemen," said Bill, "I move that this meeting organize by appointing Mr. Smith Wheelwright Chairman. As many as are in favor of this motion, please to say 'Aye.'"

"Aye!" said the crowd, very loud and big. And then every man looked at his neighbor, a little abashed, as if he himself had made all the noise.

"This is a free country," continues Bill. "Every woter has a right to a fair shake. Contrary minds, 'No.'"

No contrary minds. The crowd uttered a great silence. Every man looked at his neighbor, surprised to find how well they agreed.

"Unanimous!" Tarbox pronounced. "No fractious minorities *here*, to block the wheels of legislation!"

The crowd burst into a roar at this significant remark, and, again abashed, dropped portcullis on its laughter, cutting off the flanks and tail of the sound.

"Mr. Purtett, will you please conduct the Chairman to the Chair," says Bill, very stately.

"Make way here!" cried Perry, with the manner of a man seven feet high. "Step out now, Mr. Chairman!"

He took a big, grizzled, docile-looking fellow patronizingly by the arm, led him forward, and chaired him on a large cylinder-head, in the rough, just hatched out of its mould.

"Bang away with that, and sing out, 'Silence!'" says the knowing boy, handing Wheelwright an iron bolt, and taking his place beside him, as prompter.

The docile Chairman obeyed. At his breaking silence by hooting "Silence!" the audience had another mighty bob-tailed laugh.

"Say, 'Will some honorable member state the object of this meeting?'" whispered the prompter.

"Will some honorable mumbler state the subject of this 'ere meetin'?" says Chair, a little bashful and confused.

Bill Tarbox advanced, and, with a formal bow, began,—

"Mr. Chairman"—

"Say, 'Mr. Tarbox has the floor,'" piped Perry.

"Mr. Tarbox has the floor," diapasoned the Chair.

“Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen”—Bill began, and stopped.

“Say, ‘Proceed, Sir!’” suggested Perry, which the senior did, magnifying the boy’s whisper a dozen times.

Again Bill began and stopped.

“Boys,” said he, dropping grandiloquence, “when I accepted the office of Orator of the Day at our primary, and promised to bring forward our Resolutions in honor of Mr. Wade with my best speech, I didn’t think I was going to have such a head of steam on that the valves would get stuck and the piston jammed and I couldn’t say a word.

“But,” he continued, warming up, “when I think of the Indian powwow we had in this very spot six months ago,—and what a mean bloat I was, going to the stub-tail dogs with my hat over my eyes,—and what a hard lot we were all round, livin’ on nothing but argee whiskey, and rampin’ off on benders, instead of makin’ good iron,—and how the Works was flat broke,—and how Dunderbunk was full of women crying over their husbands and mothers ashamed of their sons,—boys, when I think how things was, and see how they are, and look at Mr. Wade standing there like a”—

Page 103

Bill hesitated for a comparison.

“Like a thousand of brick,” Perry Purtett suggested, *sotto voce*.

The Chairman took this as a hint to himself.

“Like a thousand of brick,” he said, with the voice of a Stentor.

Here the audience roared and cheered, and the Orator got a fresh start.

“When you came, Mr. Wade,” he resumed, “we was about sick of putty-heads and sneaks that didn’t know enough or didn’t dare to make us stand round and bone in. You walked in, b’ilin’ over with grit. You took hold as if you belonged here. You made things jump like a two-headed tarrier. All we wanted was a live man, to say, ‘Here, boys, all together now! You’ve got your stint, and I’ve got mine. I’m boss in this shop,—but I can’t do the first thing, unless every man pulls his pound. Now, then, my hand is on the throttle, grease the wheels, oil the walves, poke the fires, hook on, and let’s yank her through with a will!’”

At this figure the meeting showed a tendency to cheer. “Silence!” Perry sternly suggested. “Silence!” repeated the Chair.

“Then,” continued the Orator, “you wasn’t one of the uneasy kind, always fussin’ and cussin’ round. You wasn’t always spyin’ to see we didn’t take home a cross-tail or a hundred-weight of cast-iron in our pants’ pockets, or go to swiggin’ hot metal out of the ladles on the sly.”

Here an enormous laugh requited Bill’s joke. Perry prompted, the Chair banged with his bolt and cried, “Order!”

“Well, now, boys,” Tarbox went on, “what has come of having one of the right sort to be boss? Why, this. The Works go ahead, stiddy as the North River. We work full time and full-handed. We turn out stuff that no shop needs to be ashamed of. Wages is on the nail. We have a good time generally. How is that, boys,—Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen?”

“That’s so!” from everybody.

“And there’s something better yet,” Bill resumed. “Dunderbunk used to be full of crying women. They’ve stopped crying now.”

Here the whole assemblage, Chairman and all, burst into an irrepressible cheer.

“But I’m making my speech as long as a lightning-rod,” said the speaker. “I’ll put on the brakes, short. I guess Mr. Wade understands pretty well, now, how we feel; and if he

don't, here it all is in shape, in this document, with 'Whereas' at the top and 'Resolved' entered along down in five places. Mr. Purtett, will you hand the Resolutions to the Superintendent?"

Perry advanced and did his office loftily, much to the amusement of Wade and the workmen.

"Now," Bill resumed, "we wanted, besides, to make you a little gift, Mr. Wade, to remember the day by. So we got up a subscription, and every man put in his dime. Here's the present,—hand 'em over, Perry!

"There, Sir, is THE BEST PAIR OF SKATES to be had in York City, made for work, and no nonsense about 'em. We Dunderbunk boys give 'em to you, one for all, and hope you'll like 'em and beat the world skating, as you do in all the things we've knowed you try.

Page 104

"Now, boys," Bill perorated, "before I retire to the shades of private life, I motion we give Three Cheers—regular Toplifters—for Richard Wade!"

"Hurrah! Wade and Good Government!" "Hurrah! Wade and Prosperity!" "Hurrah! Wade and the Women's Tears Dry!"

Cheers like the shout of Achilles! Wielding sledges is good for the bellows, it appears. Toplifters! Why, the smoky black rafters overhead had to tug hard to hold the roof on. Hurrah! From every corner of the vast building came back rattling echoes. The Works, the machinery, the furnaces, the stuff, all had their voice to add to the verdict.

Magnificent music! and our Anglo-Saxon is the only race in the world civilized enough to join in singing it. We are the only hurrahing people,—the only brood hatched in a "Hurrah's nest."

Silence restored, the Chairman, prompted by Perry, said, "Gentlemen, Mr. Wade has the floor for a few remarks."

Of course Wade had to speak, and did. He would not have been an American in America else. But his heart was too full to say more than a few hearty and earnest words of good feeling.

"Now, men," he closed, "I want to get away on the river and see if my skates will go as they look; so I'll end by proposing three cheers for Smith Wheelwright, our Chairman, three for our Orator, Tarbox, three for Old Dunderbunk,—Works, Men, Women, and Children; and one big cheer for Old Father Iron, as rousing a cheer as ever was roared."

So they gave their three times three with enormous enthusiasm. The roof shook, the furnaces rattled, Perry Purtett banged with the Chairman's hammer, the great echoes thundered through the Foundry.

And when they ended with one gigantic cheer for IRON, tough and true, the weapon, the tool, and the engine of all civilization,—it seemed as if the uproar would never cease until Father Iron himself heard the call in his smithy away under the magnetic pole, and came clanking up, to return thanks in person.

CHAPTER V.

SKATING AS A FINE ART.

Of all the plays that are played by this playful world on its play-days, there is no play like Skating.

To prepare a board for the moves of this game of games, a panel for the drawings of this Fine Art, a stage for the *entrechats* and *pirouettes* of its graceful adepts, Zero, magical artificer, had been, for the last two nights, sliding at full speed up and down the North River.

We have heard of Midas, whose touch made gold, and of the virgin under whose feet sprang roses; but Zero's heels and toes were armed with more precious influences. They left a diamond way, where they slid,—a hundred and fifty miles of diamond, half a mile wide and six inches thick.

Diamond can only reflect sunlight; ice can contain it. Zero's product, finer even than diamond, was filled—at the rate of a million to the square foot—with bubbles immeasurably little, and yet every one big enough to comprise the entire sun in small, but without alteration or abridgment. When the sun rose, each of these wonderful cells was ready to catch the tip of a sunbeam and house it in a shining abode.

Page 105

Besides this, Zero had inlaid its work, all along shore, with exquisite marquetry of leaves, brown and evergreen, of sprays and twigs, reeds and grasses. No parquet in any palace from Fontainebleau to St. Petersburg could show such delicate patterns, or could gleam so brightly, though polished with all the wax in Christendom.

On this fine pavement, all the way from Cohoes to Spuyten Duyvil, Jubilee was sliding without friction, the Christmas morning of these adventures.

Navigation was closed. Navigators had leisure. The sloops and schooners were frozen in along shore, the tugs and barges were laid up in basins, the floating palaces were down at New York, deodorizing their bar-rooms, regilding their bridal chambers, and enlarging their spittoon accommodations alow and aloft, for next summer. All the population was out on the ice, skating, sliding, sledding, slipping, tumbling, to its heart's content.

One person out of every Dunderbunk family was of course at home, roasting Christmas turkey. The rest were already at high jinks on Zero's Christmas present, when Wade and the men came down, from the meeting.

Wade buckled on his new skates in a jiffy. He stamped to settle himself, and then flung off half a dozen circles on the right leg, half a dozen with the left, and the same with either leg backwards.

The ice, traced with these white peripheries, showed like a blackboard where a school has been chalking diagrams of Euclid, to point at with the "slow unyielding finger" of demonstration.

"Hurrah!" cries Wade, halting in front of the men, who, some on the Foundry wharf, some on the deck of our first acquaintance at Dunderbunk, the tug "L Ambuster," were putting on their skates or watching him, "Hurrah! the skates are perfection! Are you ready, Bill?"

"Yes," says Tarbox, whizzing off rings, as exact as Giotto's autograph.

"Now, then," Wade said, "we'll give Dunderbunk a laugh, as we practised last night."

They got under full headway, Wade backwards, Bill forwards, holding hands. When they were near enough to the merry throng out in the stream, both dropped into a sitting posture, with the left knee bent, and each with his right leg stretched out parallel to the ice and fitting compactly by the other man's leg. In this queer figure they rushed through the laughing crowd.

Then all Dunderbunk formed a ring, agog for a grand show of

SKATING AS A FINE ART.

The world loves to see Great Artists, and expects them to do their duty.

It is hard to treat of this Fine Art by the Art of Fine Writing. Its eloquent motions must be seen.

To skate Fine Art, you must have a Body and a Soul, each of the First Order; otherwise you will never get out of coarse art and skating in one syllable. So much for yourself, the motive power. And your machinery,—your smooth-bottomed rockers, the same shape stem and stern,—this must be as perfect as the man it moves, and who moves it.

Page 106

Now suppose you wish to skate so that the critics will say, "See! this athlete docs his work as Church paints, as Darley draws, as Palmer chisels, as Wittier strikes the lyre, and Longfellow the dulcimer; he is as terse as Emerson, as clever as Holmes, as graceful as Curtis; he is as calm as Seward, as keen as Phillips, as stalwart as Beecher; be is Garibaldi, he is Kit Carson, he is Blondin; he is as complete as the steamboat Metropolis, as Steers's yacht, as Singer's sewing-machine, as Colt's revolver, as the steam-plough, as Civilization." You wish to be so ranked among the people and things that lead the age;—consider the qualities you must have, and while you consider, keep your eye on Richard Wade, for he has them all in perfection.

First,—of your physical qualities. You must have lungs, not bellows; and an active heart, not an assortment of sluggish auricles and ventricles. You must have legs, not shanks. Their shape is unimportant, except that they must not interfere at the knee. You must have muscles, not flabbiness; sinews like wire; nerves like sunbeams; and a thin layer of flesh to cushion the gable-ends, where you will strike, if you tumble,—which, once for all be it said, you must never do. You must be all *momentum*, and no *inertia*. You must be one part grace, one force, one agility, and the rest caoutchouc, Manila hemp, and watch-spring. Your machine, your body, must be thoroughly obedient. It must go just so far and no farther. You have got to be as unerring as a planet holding its own, emphatically, between forces centripetal and centrifugal. Your *aplomb* must be as absolute as the pounce of a falcon.

So much for a few of the physical qualities necessary to be a Great Artist in Skating. See Wade, how he shows them!

Now for the moral and intellectual. Pluck is the first;—it always is the first quality. Then enthusiasm. Then patience. Then pertinacity. Then a fine aesthetic faculty,—in short, good taste. Then an orderly and submissive mind, that can consent to act in accordance with the laws of Art. Circumstances, too, must have been reasonably favorable. That well-known skeptic, the King of tropical Bantam, could not skate, because he had never seen ice and doubted even the existence of solid water. Widdrington, after the Battle of Chevy Chace, could not have skated, because he had no legs,—poor fellow!

But granted the ice and the legs, then if you begin in the elastic days of youth, when cold does not sting, tumbles do not bruise, and duckings do not wet; if you have pluck and ardor enough to try everything; if you work slowly ahead and stick to it; if you have good taste and a lively invention; if you are a man, and not a lubber;—then, in fine, you may become a Great Skater, just as with equal power and equal pains you may put your grip on any kind of Greatness.

The technology of skating is imperfect. Few of the great feats, the Big Things, have admitted names. If I attempted to catalogue Wade's achievements, this chapter might become an unintelligible rhapsody. A sheet of paper and a pen-point cannot supply the

place of a sheet of ice and a skate-edge. Geometry must have its diagrams, Anatomy its *corpus* to carve. Skating also refuses to be spiritualized into a Science; it remains an Art, and cannot be expressed in a formula.

Page 107

Skating has its Little Go, its Great Go, its Baccalaureate, its M.A., its F.S.D., (Doctor of Frantic Skipping,) its A.G.D., (Doctor of Airy Gliding,) its N.T.D., (Doctor of No Tumbles,) and finally its highest degree, U.P. (Unapproachable Podographer).

Wade was U.P.

There were a hundred of Dunderbunkers who had passed their Little Go and could skate forward and backward easily. A half-hundred, perhaps, were through the Great Go; these could do outer edge freely. A dozen had taken the Baccalaureate, and were proudly repeating the pirouettes and spread-eagles of that degree. A few could cross their feet, on the edge, forward and backward, and shift edge on the same foot, and so were *Magistri Artis*.

Wade, U.P., added to these an indefinite list of combinations and fresh contrivances. He spun spirals slow, and spirals neck or nothing. He pivoted on one toe, with the other foot cutting rings, inner and outer edge, forward and back. He skated on one foot better than the M.A.s could on both. He ran on his toes; he slid on his heels; he cut up shines like a sunbeam on a bender; he swung, light as if he could fly, if he pleased, like a wing-footed Mercury; he glided as if will, not muscle, moved him; he tore about in frenzies; his pivotal leg stood firm, his balance leg flapped like a graceful pinion; he turned somersets; he jumped, whirling backward as he went, over a platoon of boys laid flat on the ice;—the last boy winced, and thought he was amputated; but Wade flew over, and the boy still holds together as well as most boys. Besides this, he could write his name, with a flourish at the end, like the *rubrica* of a Spanish *hidalgo*. He could podograph any letter, and multitudes of ingenious curlicues which might pass for the alphabets of the unknown tongues. He could *not* tumble.

It was Fine Art.

Bill Tarbox sometimes pressed the champion hard. But Bill stopped just short of Fine Art, in High Artisanish.

How Dunderbunk cheered this wondrous display! How delighted the whole population was to believe they possessed the best skater on the North River! How they struggled to imitate! How they tumbled, some on their backs, some on their faces, some with dignity like the dying Caesar, some rebelliously like a cat thrown out of a garret, some limp as an ancient acrobat! How they laughed at themselves and at each other!

"It's all in the new skates," says Wade, apologizing for his unapproachable power and finish.

"It's suthin' in the man," says Smith Wheelwright.

"Now chase me, everybody," said Wade.

And, for a quarter of an hour, he dodged the merry crowd, until at last, breathless, he let himself be touched by pretty Belle Purtett, rosiest of all the Dunderbunk bevy of rosy maidens on the ice.

“He rayther beats Bosting,” says Captain Isaac Ambuster to Smith Wheelwright. “It’s so cold there that they can skate all the year round; but he beats them, all the same.”

Page 108

The Captain was sitting in a queer little bowl of a skiff on the deck of his tug, and rocking it like a cradle, as he talked.

“Bosting’s always hard to beat in anything,” rejoined the ex-Chairman. “But if Bosting is to be beat, here’s the man to do it.”

* * * * *

And now, perhaps, gentle reader, you think I have said enough in behalf of a limited fraternity, the Skaters.

The next chapter, then, shall take up the cause of the Lovers, a more numerous body, and we will see whether True Love, which never makes “smooth running,” can help its progress by a skate-blade.

CHAPTER VI.

“GO NOT, HAPPY DAY, TILL THE MAIDEN YIELDS.”

Christmas noon at Dunderbunk. Every skater was in galloping glee,—as the electric air, and the sparkling sun, and the glinting ice had a right to expect that they all should be.

Belle Purtett, skating simply and well, had never looked so pretty and graceful. So thought Bill Tarbox.

He had not spoken to her, nor she to him, for more than six months. The poor fellow was ashamed of himself and penitent for his past bad courses. And so, though he longed to have his old flame recognize him again, and though he was bitterly jealous and miserably afraid he should lose her, he had kept away and consumed his heart like a true despairing lover.

But to-day Bill was a lion, only second to Wade, the unapproachable lion-in-chief. Bill was reinstated in public esteem, and had won back his standing in the Foundry. He had to-day made a speech which Perry Purtett gave everybody to understand “none of Senator Bill Seward’s could hold the tallow to.” Getting up the meeting and presenting Wade with the skates was Bill’s own scheme, and it had turned out an eminent success. Everything began to look bright to him. His past life drifted out of his mind like the rowdy tales he used to read in the Sunday newspapers.

He had watched Belle Purtett all the morning, and saw that she distinguished nobody with her smiles, not even that *coq du village*, Ringdove. He also observed that she was furtively watching him.

By-and-by she sailed out of the crowd, and went off a little way to practise.

“Now,” said he to himself, “sail in, Bill Tarbox!”

Belle heard the sharp strokes of a powerful skater coming after her. Her heart divined who this might be. She sped away like the swift Camilla, and her modest drapery showed just enough and “*ne quid nimis*” of her ankles.

Bill admired the grace and the ankles immensely. But his hopes sank a little at the flight,—for he thought she perceived his chase and meant to drop him. Bill had not had a classical education, and knew nothing of Galatea in the Eclogue,—how she did not hide, until she saw her swain was looking fondly after.

“She wants to get away,” he thought “But she sha’n’t,—no, not if I have to follow her to Albany.”

Page 109

He struck out mightily. Presently the swift Camilla let herself be overtaken.

“Good morning, Miss Purtett.” (Dogged air.)

“Good morning, Mr. Tarbox.” (Taken-by-surprise air.)

“I’ve been admiring your skating,” says Bill, trying to be cool.

“Have you?” rejoins Belle, very cool and distant.

“Have you been long on the ice?” he inquired, hypocritically.

“I came on two hours ago with Mr. Ringdove and the girls,” returned she, with a twinkle which said, “Take that, Sir, for pretending you did not see me.”

“You’ve seen Mr. Wade skate, then,” Bill said, ignoring Ringdove.

“Yes; isn’t it splendid?” Belle replied, kindling.

“Tip-top!”

“But then he does everything better than anybody.”

“So he does!” Bill said,—true to his friend, and yet beginning to be jealous of this enthusiasm. It was not the first time he had been jealous of Wade; but he had quelled his fears, like a good fellow.

Belle perceived Bill’s jealousy, and could have cried for joy. She had known as little of her once lover’s heart as he of hers. She only knew that he stopped coming to see her when he fell, and had not renewed his visits now that he was risen again. If she had not been charmingly ruddy with the brisk air and exercise, she would have betrayed her pleasure at Bill’s jealousy with a fine blush.

The sense of recovered power made her wish to use it again. She must tease him a little. So she continued, as they skated on in good rhythm,—

“Mother and I wouldn’t know what to do without Mr. Wade. We like him so much,”—said ardently.

What Bill feared was true, then, he thought. Wade, noble fellow, worthy to win any woman’s heart, had fascinated his landlady’s daughter.

“I don’t wonder you like him,” said he. “He deserves it.”

Belle was touched by her old lover’s forlorn tone.

“He does indeed,” she said. “He has helped and taught us all so much. He has taken such good care of Perry. And then”—here she gave her companion a little look and a little smile—“he speaks so kindly of you, Mr. Tarbox.”

Smile, look, and words electrified Bill. He gave such a spring on his skates that he shot far ahead of the lady. He brought himself back with a sharp turn.

“He has done kinder than he can speak,” says Bill. “He has made a man of me again, Miss Belle.”

“I know it. It makes me very happy to hear you able to say so of yourself.” She spoke gravely.

“Very happy”—about anything that concerned him? Bill had to work off his overjoy at this by an exuberant flourish. He whisked about Belle,—outer edge backward. She stopped to admire. He finished by describing on the virgin ice, before her, the letters B.P., in his neatest style of podography,—easy letters to make, luckily.

“Beautiful!” exclaimed Belle. “What are those letters? Oh! B.P.! What do they stand for?”

Page 110

"Guess!"

"I'm so dull," said she, looking bright as a diamond. "Let me think! B.P.? British Poets, perhaps."

"Try nearer home!"

"What are you likely to be thinking of that begins with B.P.?—Oh, I know! Boiler Plates!"

She looked at him,—innocent as a lamb. Bill looked at her, delighted with her little coquetry. A woman without coquetry is insipid as a rose without scent, as Champagne without bubbles, or as corned beef without mustard.

"It's something I'm thinking of most of the time," says he; "but I hope it's softer than Boiler Plates. B.P. stands for Miss Isabella Purtett."

"Oh!" says Belle, and she skated on in silence.

"You came down with Alonzo Ringdove?" Bill asked, suddenly, aware of another pang after a moment of peace.

"He came with me and his sisters," she replied.

Yes; poor Ringdove had dressed himself in his shiniest black, put on his brightest patent-leather boots, with his new swan-necked skates newly strapped over them, and wore his new dove-colored overcoat with the long skirts, on purpose to be lovely in the eyes of Belle on this occasion. Alas, in vain!

"Mr. Ringdove is a great friend of yours, isn't he?"

"If you ever came to see me now, you would know who my friends are, Mr. Tarbox."

"Would you be my friend again, if I came, Miss Belle?"

"Again? I have always been so,—always, Bill."

"Well, then, something more than my friend,—now that I am trying to be worthy of more, Belle?"

"What more can I be?" she said, softly.

"My wife."

She curved to the right. He followed. To the left. He was not to be shaken off.

“Will you promise me not to say *walves* instead of *valves*, Bill?” she said, looking pretty and saucy as could be. “I know, to say W for V is fashionable in the iron business; but I don’t like it.”

“What a thing a woman is to dodge!” says Bill. “Suppose I told you that men brought up inside of boilers, hammering on the inside against twenty hammering like Wulcans on the outside, get their ears so dumfounded that they can’t tell whether they are saying *valves* or *walves*, *wice* or *virtue*,—suppose I told you that,—what would you say, Belle?”

“Perhaps I’d say that you pronounce *virtue* so well, and act it so sincerely, that I can’t make any objection to your other words. If you’d asked me to be your *vife*, Bill, I might have said I didn’t understand; but *wife* I do understand, and I say”—

She nodded, and tried to skate off. Bill stuck close to her side.

“Is this true, Belle?” he said, almost doubtfully.

“True as truth!”

Page 111

She put out her hand. He took it, and they skated on together,—hearts beating to the rhythm of their movements. The uproar and merriment of the village came only faintly to them. It seemed as if all Nature was hushed to listen to their plighted troth, their words of love renewed, more earnest for long suppression. The beautiful ice spread before them, like their life to come, a pathway untouched by any sorrowful or weary footstep. The blue sky was cloudless. The keen air stirred the pulses like the vapor of frozen wine. The benignant mountains westward kindly surveyed the happy pair, and the sun seemed created to warm and cheer them.

“And you forgive me, Belle?” said the lover. “I feel as if I had only gone bad to make me know how much better going right is.”

“I always knew you would find it out. I never stopped hoping and praying for it.”

“That must have been what brought Mr. Wade here.”

“Oh, I did hate him so, Bill, when I heard of something that happened between you and him! I thought him a brute and a tyrant. I never could get over it, until he told mother that you were the best machinist he ever knew, and would some time grow to be a great inventor.”

“I’m glad you hated him. I suffered rattlesnakes and collapsed flues for fear you’d go and love him.”

“My affections were engaged,” she said, with simple seriousness.

“Oh, if I’d only thought so long ago! How lovely you are!” exclaims Bill, in an ecstasy. “And how refined! And how good! God bless you!”

He made up such a wishful mouth,—so wishful for one of the pleasurable duties of mouths, that Belle blushed, laughed, and looked down, and as she did so saw that one of her straps was trailing.

“Please fix it, Bill,” she said, stopping and kneeling.

Bill also knelt, and his wishful mouth immediately took its chance.

A manly smack and sweet little feminine chirp sounded as their lips met.

Boom! twanging gay as the first tap of a marriage-bell, a loud crack in the ice rang musically for leagues up and down the river. “Bravo!” it seemed to say. “Well done, Bill Tarbox! Try again!” Which the happy fellow did, and the happy maiden permitted.

“Now,” said Bill, “let us go and hug Mr. Wade!”

“What! Both of us?” Belle protested. “Mr. Tarbox, I am ashamed of you!”

* * * * *

LIGHT LITERATURE.

Though the smallest boulder is heavy, and even the merest pebble has a perceptible weight, yet the entire planet, toward which both gravitate, floats more lightly than any feather. In literature somewhat analogous may be observed. Here also are found the insignificant lightness of the pebble and the mighty lightness of the planet; while between them range the weighty masses, superior to the petty ponderability of the one, and

Page 112

unequal to the firmamental float of the other. Accordingly, setting out from the mote-and-pebble extreme, you find, that, up to a certain point, increasing values of thought are commonly indicated by increasing gravity, by more and more of state-paper weightiness; but beyond this the rule is reversed, and lightness becomes the sign and measure of excellence. Bishop Butler and Richard Hooker—especially the latter, the first book of whose “Ecclesiastical Polity” is a truly noble piece of writing—stand, perhaps, at the head of the weighty class of writers in our language; but going beyond these to the “Areopagitica” of Milton, or even to the powerful prose of Raleigh, you pass the boundary-line, and are touched with the buoyant influences of the Muse. Shakspeare and Plato are lighter than levity; they are lifting forces, and weigh less than nothing. The novelette of the season, or any finest and flimsiest gossamer that is fabricated in our literary looms, compares with “Lear,” with “Prometheus Bound,” with any supreme work, only as cobwebs and thistle-down, that are easily borne by the breeze, may compare with sparrows and thrushes, that can fly and withal sing.

There is a call for “light reading,” and I for one applaud the demand. A lightening influence is the best that books or men can bestow upon us. Information is good, but invigoration is a thousand times better. Cheer, cheer and vigor for the world’s heart! It is because man’s hope is so low, and his imaginations so poor, that he is earthly and evil. Wings for these unfledged hearts! Transformation for these grubs! Give us animation, inspiration, joy, faith! Give us enlivening, lightsome airs, to which our souls shall, on a sudden, begin to dance, keeping step with the angels! What else is worth having? Each one of these sordid sons of men—is he not a new-born Apollo, who waits only for the ambrosia from Olympus, to spring forth in divineness of beauty and strength?

Nevertheless, I know not of any reading so hopelessly heavy as large portions of that which claims the name of light. Light writing it may be; but, considered as reading, one would be unjust to charge upon it any lack of avoirdupois. It is like the bran of wheat, which, though of little weight in the barrel, is heavy enough in the stomach,—Dr. Sylvester Graham to the contrary notwithstanding. It is related of an Italian culprit, that, being required, in punishment of his crime, to make choice between lying in prison for a term of years and reading the history of Guicciardini, he chose the latter, but, after a brief trial, petitioned for leave to reverse his election. I never attempted Guicciardini; but I *did* once attempt Pope’s “Dunciad.” And was it really the doom of a generation of readers to find delight in this book? One must suppose so. There are those in our day whose hard fate it is to read and to like James’s and Bulwer’s novels. But greatly mistaken is the scholar who, for relief from severe studies, goes to an empty or insincere book. It is like saying money, after large and worthy expenditures, by purchasing at a low price that which is worth nothing,—buying “gold” watches at a mock-auction room.

Page 113

Indeed, no book, however witty, lively, saltatory, can have the volant effects we covet, if it want substance and seriousness. Substance, however, is to be widely distinguished from ponderability. Oxygen is not so ponderous as lead or granite, but it is far more substantial than either, and, as every one knows, infinitely more serviceable to life. The distinction is equally valid when applied to books and to men. The “airy nothings” of imagination prove to be the most enduring somethings of the world’s literature; and the last lightness of heart may go with the purest truth of soul and the most precious virtue of intelligence. All expressions carry the perpetual savor of their origin; and as brooks that dance and frolic with the sunbeams and murmur to the birds, light-hearted forever, will yet bear sands of gold, if they flow from auriferous hills, so any bubble and purl of laughter, proceeding from a wise and wealthy soul, will bear a noble significance. In point of fact, some of the merriest books in the world are among the most richly freighted. And as airy and mirthful books may be substantial and serious, so it is an effect very similar to that of noble and significant mirth that is produced upon us by the grandest pieces of serious writing. Thus, he who rightly reads the “Phaedon” or “Phaedrus” of Plato smiles through all the depths of his brain, though no pronounced smile show on his face; and he who rightly reads the book of Cervantes, though the laughs plunge, as it were, in cascades from his lips, is earnest at heart, and full of sound and tender meditations.

If now, setting aside all books, whether pretending to gayety or gravity, that are simply empty and ineffectual, we inquire for the prime distinction between books light in a worthy and unworthy sense, it will appear to be the distinction between inspiration and alcohol,—between effects divinely real and effects illusory and momentary. The drunkard dreams of flying, and fancies the stars themselves left below him, while he is really lying in the gutter. There are those, and numbers of those, who in reading seek no more than to be cheated in a similar way. Indeed, to acknowledge a disagreeable fact, there is a very great deal of reading in our day that is simply a substitute for the potations and “heavy-handed revel” of our Saxon ancestors. In both cases it is a spurious exaltation of feeling that is sought; in both cases those who for a moment seem to themselves larks ascending to meet the sun are but worms eating earth.

This celestial lightness, which constitutes the last praise and causes the purest benefit of books, comes not of any manner of writing; no mere vivacity, though that of a French writer of memoirs, though that of Arsene Houssaye himself, can compass it; by no knack or talents is it to be attained. Perfect style has, indeed, many allurements, and is of exceeding price; but it is no chariot of Elijah, nevertheless. Was ever style more delightful, of its kind, than

Page 114

Dryden's? Was ever style more heavy and monotonous than that of Swedenborg in his theological works? But I have read Dryden, not indeed without pleasure in his masterly exquisite ease and sureness of statement and his occasional touches of admirable good sense, yet with no slightest liberation of spirit, with no degree, greater or less, of that magical and marvellous evocation, of inward resource, whose blessed surprise now and then in life makes for us angelic moments, and feelingly persuades us that our earth also is a star and in the sky. On the other hand, I once read Swedenborg's "Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom" with such enticement, such afflatus, such quickening and heightening of soul, as I cannot describe without seeming excessive. Until half through the book, I turned every page with the feeling that before another page I might see the chasm between the real and phenomenal worlds fairly bridged over. Of course, it disappointed me in the end; but what of that? To have kindled and for a time sustained the expectation which should render possible such disappointment was a benefit that a whole Bodleian Library might fail to confer. These benefits come to us not from the writer as such, but from the man behind the writer. He who dwells aloft amid the deathless orient imaginations of the human race, easily inhabiting their atmosphere as his native element,—about him, and him only, are the halos and dawns of immortal youth; and his speech, though with many babyish or barbarous fancies, many melancholies and vices of the blood compounded, carries nevertheless some refrain of divine hilarity, that beguiles men of their sordidness, their sullenness, and low cares, they know not how nor why.

* * * * *

PILGRIMAGE TO OLD BOSTON.

We set out at a little past eleven, and made our first stage to Manchester. We were by this time sufficiently Anglicized to reckon the morning a bright and sunny one; although the May sunshine was mingled with water, as it were, and distempered with a very bitter east-wind.

Lancashire is a dreary county, (all, at least, except its hilly portions,) and I have never passed through it without wishing myself anywhere but in that particular spot where I then happened to be. A few places along our route were historically interesting; as, for example, Bolton, which was the scene of many remarkable events in the Parliamentary War, and in the market-square of which one of the Earls of Derby was beheaded. We saw, along the way-side, the never-failing green fields, hedges, and other monotonous features of an ordinary English landscape. There were little factory villages, too, or larger towns, with their tall chimneys, and their pennons of black smoke, their uglinesses of brick-work, and their heaps of refuse matter from the furnace, which seems to be the only kind of stuff which Nature cannot take back to herself and resolve

into the elements, when man has thrown it aside. These hillocks of waste and effete mineral always disfigure the neighborhood of ironmongering towns, and, even after a considerable antiquity, are hardly made decent with a little grass.

Page 115

At a quarter to two we left Manchester by the Sheffield and Lincoln Railway. The scenery grew rather better than that through which we had hitherto passed, though still by no means very striking; for (except in the show-districts, such as the Lake country, or Derbyshire) English scenery is not particularly well worth looking at, considered as a spectacle or a picture. It has a real, homely charm of its own, no doubt; and the rich verdure, and the thorough finish added by human, art, are perhaps as attractive to an American eye as any stronger feature could be. Our journey, however, between Manchester and Sheffield was not through a rich tract of country, but along a valley walled in by bleak, ridgy hills extending straight as a rampart, and across black moorlands with here and there a plantation of trees. Sometimes there were long and gradual ascents, bleak, windy, and desolate, conveying the very impression which the reader gets from many passages of Miss Bronte's novels, and still more from those of her two sisters. Old stone or brick farm-houses, and, once in a while, an old church-tower, were visible: but these are almost too common objects to be noticed in an English landscape.

On a railway, I suspect, what little we do see of the country is seen quite amiss, because it was never intended to be looked at from any point of view in that straight line; so that it is like looking at the wrong side of a piece of tapestry. The old highways and footpaths were as natural as brooks and rivulets, and adapted themselves by an inevitable impulse to the physiognomy of the country; and, furthermore, every object within view of them had some subtle reference to their curves and undulations: but the line of a railway is perfectly artificial, and puts all precedent things at sixes-and-sevens. At any rate, be the cause what it may, there is seldom anything worth seeing—within the scope of a railway traveller's eye; and if there were, it requires an alert marksman to take a flying shot at the picturesque.

At one of the stations, (it was near a village of ancient aspect, nestling round a church, on a wide Yorkshire moor,) I saw a tall old lady in black, who seemed to have just alighted from the train. She caught my attention by a singular movement of the head, not once only, but continually repeated, and at regular intervals, as if she were making a stern and solemn protest against some action that developed itself before her eyes, and were foreboding terrible disaster, if it should be persisted in. Of course, it was nothing more than a paralytic or nervous affection; yet one might fancy that it had its origin in some unspeakable wrong, perpetrated half a lifetime ago in this old gentlewoman's presence, either against herself or somebody whom she loved still better. Her features had a wonderful sternness, which, I presume, was caused by her habitual effort to compose and keep them quiet, and thereby counteract the tendency to paralytic movement. The slow, regular, and inexorable character of the motion,—her look of force and self-control, which had the appearance of rendering it voluntary, while yet it was so fateful,—have stamped this poor lady's face and gesture into my memory; so that, some dark day or other, I am afraid she will reproduce herself in a dismal romance.

Page 116

The train stopped a minute or two, to allow the tickets to be taken, just before entering the Sheffield station, and thence I had a glimpse of the famous town of razors and penknives, enveloped in a cloud of its own diffusing. My impressions of it are extremely vague and misty,—or, rather, smoky: for Sheffield seems to me smokier than Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham,—smokier than all England besides, unless Newcastle be the exception. It might have been Pluto's own metropolis, shrouded in sulphurous vapor; and, indeed, our approach to it had been by the Valley of the Shadow of Death, through a tunnel three miles in length, quite traversing the breadth and depth of a mountainous hill.

After passing Sheffield, the scenery became softer, gentler, yet more picturesque. At one point we saw what I believe to be the utmost northern verge of Sherwood Forest,—not consisting, however, of thousand-year oaks, extant from Robin Hood's days, but of young and thriving plantations, which will require a century or two of slow English growth to give them much breadth of shade. Earl Fitzwilliam's property lies in this neighborhood, and probably his castle was hidden among some soft depth of foliage not far off. Farther onward the country grew quite level around us, whereby I judged that we must now be in Lincolnshire; and shortly after six o'clock we caught the first glimpse of the Cathedral towers, though they loomed scarcely huge enough for our preconceived idea of them. But, as we drew nearer, the great edifice began to assert itself, making us acknowledge it to be larger than our receptivity could take in.

At the railway-station we found no cab, (it being an unknown vehicle in Lincoln,) but only an omnibus belonging to the Saracen's Head, which the driver recommended as the best hotel in the city, and took us thither accordingly. It received us hospitably, and looked comfortable enough; though, like the hotels of most old English towns, it had a musty fragrance of antiquity, such as I have smelt in a seldom-opened London church where the broad-aisle is paved with tombstones. The house was of an ancient fashion, the entrance into its interior court-yard being through an arch, in the side of which is the door of the hotel. There are long corridors, an intricate arrangement of passages, and an up-and-down meandering of staircases, amid which it would be no marvel to encounter some forgotten guest who had gone astray a hundred years ago, and was still seeking for his bed-room while the rest of his generation were in their graves. There is no exaggerating the confusion of mind that seizes upon a stranger in the bewildering geography of a great old-fashioned English inn.

Page 117

This hotel stands in the principal street of Lincoln, and within a very short distance of one of the ancient city-gates, which is arched across the public way, with a smaller arch for foot-passengers on either side; the whole, a gray, time-gnawn, ponderous, shadowy structure, through the dark vista of which you look into the Middle Ages. The street is narrow, and retains many antique peculiarities; though, unquestionably, English domestic architecture has lost its most impressive features, in the course of the last century. In this respect, there are finer old towns than Lincoln: Chester, for instance, and Shrewsbury,—which last is unusually rich in those quaint and stately edifices where the gentry of the shire used to make their winter-abodes, in a provincial metropolis. Almost everywhere, nowadays, there is a monotony of modern brick or stuccoed fronts, hiding houses that are older than ever, but obliterating the picturesque antiquity of the street.

Between seven and eight o'clock (it being still broad daylight in these long English days) we set out to pay a preliminary visit to the exterior of the Cathedral. Passing through the Stone Bow, as the city-gate close by is called, we ascended a street which grew steeper and narrower as we advanced, till at last it got to be the steepest street I ever climbed,—so steep that any carriage, if left to itself, would rattle downward much faster than it could possibly be drawn up. Being almost the only hill in Lincolnshire, the inhabitants seem disposed to make the most of it. The houses on each side had no very remarkable aspect, except one with a stone portal and carved ornaments, which is now a dwelling-place for poverty-stricken people, but may have been an aristocratic abode in the days of the Norman kings, to whom its style of architecture dates back. This is called the Jewess's House, having been inhabited by a woman of that faith who was hanged six hundred years ago.

And still the street grew steeper and steeper. Certainly, the Bishop and clergy of Lincoln ought not to be fat men, but of very spiritual, saint-like, almost angelic habit, if it be a frequent part of their ecclesiastical duty to climb this hill; for it is a real penance, and was probably performed as such, and groaned over accordingly, in monkish times. Formerly, on the day of his installation, the Bishop used to ascend the hill barefoot, and was doubtless cheered and invigorated by looking upward to the grandeur that was to console him for the humility of his approach. We, likewise, were beckoned onward by glimpses of the Cathedral towers, and, finally, attaining an open square on the summit, we saw an old Gothic gateway to the left hand, and another to the right. The latter had apparently been a part of the exterior defences of the Cathedral, at a time when the edifice was fortified. The west front rose behind. We passed through one of the side-arches of the Gothic portal, and found ourselves in the Cathedral Close,

Page 118

a wide, level space, where the great old Minster has fair room to sit, looking down on the ancient structures that surround it, all of which, in former days, were the habitations of its dignitaries and officers. Some of them are still occupied as such, though others are in too neglected and dilapidated a state to seem worthy of so splendid an establishment. Unless it be Salisbury Close, however, (which is incomparably rich as regards the old residences that belong to it,) I remember no more comfortably picturesque precincts round any other cathedral. But, in, truth, almost every cathedral close, in turn, has seemed to me the loveliest, coziest, safest, least wind-shaken, most decorous, and most enjoyable shelter that ever the thrift and selfishness of mortal man contrived for himself. How delightful, to combine all this with the service of the temple!

Lincoln Cathedral is built of a yellowish brown-stone, which appears either to have been largely restored, or else does not assume the hoary, crumbly surface that gives such a venerable aspect to most of the ancient churches and castles in England. In many parts, the recent restorations are quite evident; but other, and much the larger portions, can scarcely have been touched for centuries: for there are still the gargoyles, perfect, or with broken noses, as the case may be, but showing that variety and fertility of grotesque extravagance which no modern imitation can effect. There are innumerable niches, too, up the whole height of the towers, above and around the entrance, and all over the walls: most of them empty, but a few containing the lamentable remnants of headless saints and angels. It is singular what a native animosity lives in the human heart against carved images, insomuch that, whether they represent Christian saint or Pagan deity, all unsophisticated men seize the first safe opportunity to knock off their heads! In spite of all dilapidations, however, the effect of the west front of the Cathedral is still exceedingly rich, being covered from massive base to airy summit with the minutest details of sculpture and carving: at least, it was so once; and even now the spiritual impression of its beauty remains so strong, that we have to look twice to see that much of it has been obliterated. I have seen a cherry-stone carved all over by a monk, so minutely that it must have cost him half a lifetime of labor; and this cathedral front seems to have been elaborated in a monkish spirit, like that cherry-stone. Not that the result is in the least petty, but miraculously grand, and all the more so for the faithful beauty of the smallest details.

Page 119

An elderly man, seeing us looking up at the west front, came to the door of an adjacent house, and called to inquire if we wished to go into the Cathedral; but as there would have been a dusky twilight beneath its roof, like the antiquity that has sheltered itself within, we declined for the present. So we merely walked round the exterior, and thought it more beautiful than that of York; though, on recollection, I hardly deem it so majestic and mighty as that. It is vain to attempt a description, or seek even to record the feeling which the edifice inspires. It does not impress the beholder as an inanimate object, but as something that has a vast, quiet, long-enduring life of its own,—a creation which man did not build, though in some way or other it is connected with him, and kindred to human nature. In short, I fall straightway to talking nonsense, when I try to express my inner sense of this and other cathedrals.

While we stood in the close, at the eastern end of the Minster, the clock chimed the quarters; and then Great Tom, who hangs in the Rood Tower, told us it was eight o'clock, in far the sweetest and mightiest accents that I ever heard from any bell,—slow, and solemn, and allowing the profound reverberations of each stroke to die away before the next one fell. It was still broad daylight in that upper region of the town, and would be so for some time longer; but the evening atmosphere was getting sharp and cool. We therefore descended the steep street,—our younger companion running before us, and gathering such headway that I fully expected him to break his head against some projecting wall.

In the morning we took a fly, (an English term for an exceedingly sluggish vehicle,) and drove up to the Minster by a road rather less steep and abrupt than the one we had previously climbed. We alighted before the west front, and sent our charioteer in quest of the verger; but, as he was not immediately to be found, a young girl let us into the nave. We found it very grand, it is needless to say, but not so grand, methought, as the vast nave of York Cathedral, especially beneath the great central tower of the latter. Unless a writer intends a professedly architectural description, there is but one set of phrases in which to talk of all the cathedrals in England, and elsewhere. They are alike in their great features: an acre or two of stone flags for a pavement; rows of vast columns supporting a vaulted roof at a dusky height; great windows, sometimes richly bedimmed with ancient or modern stained glass; an elaborately carved screen between the nave and chancel, breaking the vista that might else be of such glorious length, and which is further choked up by a massive organ,—in spite of which obstructions, you catch the broad, variegated glimmer of the painted east window, where a hundred saints wear their robes of transfiguration. Within the screen are the carved oaken stalls of the Chapter and Prebendaries,

Page 120

the Bishop's throne, the pulpit, the altar, and whatever else may furnish out the Holy of Holies. Nor must we forget the range of chapels, (once dedicated to Catholic saints, but which have now lost their individual consecration,) nor the old monuments of kings, warriors, and prelates, in the side-aisles of the chancel. In close contiguity to the main body of the Cathedral is the Chapter-House, which, here at Lincoln, as at Salisbury, is supported by one central pillar rising from the floor, and putting forth branches like a tree, to hold up the roof. Adjacent to the Chapter-House are the cloisters, extending round a quadrangle, and paved with lettered tombstones, the more antique of which have had their inscriptions half obliterated by the feet of monks taking their noontide exercise in these sheltered walks, five hundred years ago. Some of these old burial-stones, although with ancient crosses engraved upon them, have been made to serve as memorials to dead people of very recent date.

In the chancel, among the tombs of forgotten bishops and knights, we saw an immense slab of stone purporting to be the monument of Catherine Swineferd, wife of John of Gaunt; also, here was the shrine of the little Saint Hugh, that Christian child who was fabled to have been crucified by the Jews of Lincoln. The Cathedral is not particularly rich in monuments; for it suffered grievous outrage and dilapidation, both at the Reformation and in Cromwell's time. This latter iconoclast is in especially bad odor with the sextons and vergers of most of the old churches which I have visited. His soldiers stabled their steeds in the nave of Lincoln Cathedral, and hacked and hewed the monkish sculptures, and the ancestral memorials of great families, quite at their wicked and plebeian pleasure. Nevertheless, there are some most exquisite and marvellous specimens of flowers, foliage, and grape-vines, and miracles of stone-work twined about arches, as if the material had been as soft as wax in the cunning sculptor's hands,—the leaves being represented with all their veins, so that you would almost think it petrified Nature, for which he sought to steal the praise of Art. Here, too, were those grotesque faces which always grin at you from the projections of monkish architecture, as if the builders had gone mad with their own deep solemnity, or dreaded such a catastrophe, unless permitted to throw in something ineffably absurd.

Originally, it is supposed, all the pillars of this great edifice, and all these magic sculptures, were polished to the utmost degree of lustre; nor is it unreasonable to think that the artists would have taken these further pains, when they had already bestowed so much labor in working out their conceptions to the extremest point. But, at present, the whole interior of the Cathedral is smeared over with a yellowish wash, the very meanest hue imaginable, and for which somebody's soul has a bitter reckoning to undergo.

Page 121

In the centre of the grassy quadrangle about which the cloisters perambulate is a small, mean, brick building, with a locked door. Our guide,—I forgot to say that we had been captured by a verger, in black, and with a white tie, but of a lusty and jolly aspect,—our guide unlocked this door, and disclosed a flight of steps. At the bottom appeared what I should have taken to be a large square of dim, worn, and faded oil-carpeting, which might originally have been painted of a rather gaudy pattern. This was a Roman tessellated pavement, made of small colored bricks, or pieces of burnt clay. It was accidentally discovered here, and has not been meddled with, further than by removing the superincumbent earth and rubbish.

Nothing else occurs to me, just now, to be recorded about the interior of the Cathedral, except that we saw a place where the stone pavement had been worn away by the feet of ancient pilgrims scraping upon it, as they knelt down before a shrine of the Virgin.

Leaving the Minster, we now went along a street of more venerable appearance than we had heretofore seen, bordered with houses, the high, peaked roofs of which were covered with red earthen tiles. It led us to a Roman arch, which was once the gateway of a fortification, and has been striding across the English street ever since the latter was a faint village-path, and for centuries before. The arch is about four hundred yards from the Cathedral; and it is to be noticed that there are Roman remains in all this neighborhood, some above ground, and doubtless innumerable more beneath it; for, as in ancient Rome itself, an inundation of accumulated soil seems to have swept over what was the surface of that earlier day. The gateway which I am speaking about is probably buried to a third of its height, and perhaps has as perfect a Roman pavement (if sought for at the original depth) as that which runs beneath the Arch of Titus. It is a rude and massive structure, and seems as stalwart now as it could have been two thousand years ago; and though Time has gnawed it externally, he has made what amends he could by crowning its rough and broken summit with grass and weeds, and planting tufts of yellow flowers on the projections up and down the sides.

There are the ruins of a Norman castle, built by the Conqueror, in pretty close proximity to the Cathedral; but the old gateway is obstructed by a modern door of wood, and we were denied admittance because some part of the precincts are used as a prison. We now rambled about on the broad back of the hill, which, besides the Minster and ruined castle, is the site of some stately and queer old houses, and of many mean little hovels. I suspect that all or most of the life of the present day has subsided into the lower town, and that only priests, poor people, and prisoners dwell in these upper regions. In the wide, dry moat at the base of the castle-wall are clustered whole colonies of small houses, some of brick,

Page 122

but the larger portion built of old stones which once made part of the Norman keep, or of Roman structures that existed before the Conqueror's castle was ever dreamed about. They are like toadstools that spring up from the mould of a decaying tree. Ugly as they are, they add wonderfully to the picturesqueness of the scene, being quite as valuable, in that respect, as the great, broad, ponderous ruin of the castle-keep, which rose high above our heads, heaving its huge gray mass out of a bank of green foliage and ornamental shrubbery, such as lilacs and other flowering-plants, in which its foundations were completely hidden.

After walking quite round the castle, I made an excursion through the Roman gateway, along a pleasant and level road bordered with dwellings of various character. One or two were houses of gentility, with delightful and shadowy lawns before them; many had those high, red-tiled roofs, ascending into acutely pointed gables, which seem to belong to the same epoch as some of the edifices in our own earlier towns; and there were pleasant-looking cottages, very sylvan and rural, with hedges so dense and high, fencing them in, as almost to hide them up to the eaves of their thatched roofs. In front of one of these I saw various images, crosses, and relics of antiquity, among which were fragments of old Catholic tombstones, disposed by way of ornament.

We now went home to the Saracen's Head; and as the weather was very unpropitious, and it sprinkled a little now and then, I would gladly have felt myself released from further thralldom to the Cathedral. But it had taken possession of me, and would not let me be at rest; so at length I found myself compelled to climb the hill again, between daylight and dusk. A mist was now hovering about the upper height of the great central tower, so as to dim and half obliterate its battlements and pinnacles, even while I stood in the close beneath it. It was the most impressive view that I had had. The whole lower part of the structure was seen with perfect distinctness; but at the very summit the mist was so dense as to form an actual cloud, as well denned as ever I saw resting on a mountain-top. Really and literally, here was a "cloud-capt tower."

The entire Cathedral, too, transfigured itself into a richer beauty and more imposing majesty than ever. The longer I looked, the better I loved it. Its exterior is certainly far more beautiful than that of York Minster; and its finer effect is due, I think, to the many peaks in which the structure ascends, and to the pinnacles which, as it were, repeat and re-echo them into the sky. York Cathedral is comparatively square and angular in its general effect; but here there is a continual mystery of variety, so that at every glance you are aware of a change, and a disclosure of something new, yet working an harmonious development of what you have heretofore seen. The west front is unspeakably grand, and may be read over and over

Page 123

again forever, and still show undetected meanings, like a great, broad page of marvellous writing in black-letter,—so many sculptured ornaments there are, blossoming out before your eyes, and gray statues that have grown there since you looked last, and empty niches, and a hundred airy canopies beneath which carved images used to be, and where they will show themselves again, if you gaze long enough.—But I will not say another word about the Cathedral.

We spent the rest of the day within the sombre precincts of the Saracen's Head, reading yesterday's "Times," "The Guide-Book of Lincoln," and "The Directory of the Eastern Counties." Dismal as the weather was, the street beneath our window was enlivened with a great bustle and turmoil of people all the evening, because it was Saturday night, and they had accomplished their week's toil, received their wages, and were making their small purchases against Sunday, and enjoying themselves as well as they knew how. A band of music passed to and fro several times, with the rain-drops falling into the mouth of the brazen trumpet and pattering on the bass-drum; a spirit-shop, opposite the hotel, had a vast run of custom; and a coffee-dealer, in the open air, found occasional vent for his commodity, in spite of the cold water that dripped into the cups. The whole breadth of the street, between the Stone Bow and the bridge across the Witham, was thronged to overflowing, and humming with human life.

Observing in the Guide-Book that a steamer runs on the River Witham between Lincoln and Boston, I inquired of the waiter, and learned that she was to start on Monday, at ten o'clock. Thinking it might be an interesting trip, and a pleasant variation of our customary mode of travel, we determined to make the voyage. The Witham flows through Lincoln, crossing the main street under an arched bridge of Gothic construction, a little below the Saracen's Head. It has more the appearance of a canal than of a river, in its passage through the town,—being bordered with hewn stone mason-work on each side, and provided with one or two locks. The steamer proved to be small, dirty, and altogether inconvenient. The early morning had been bright; but the sky now lowered upon us with a sulky English temper, and we had not long put off before we felt an ugly wind from the German Ocean blowing right in our teeth. There were a number of passengers on board, country-people, such as travel by third-class on the railway; for, I suppose, nobody but ourselves ever dreamt of voyaging, by the steamer for the sake of what he might happen upon in the way of river-scenery.

Page 124

We bothered a good while about getting through a preliminary lock; nor, when fairly under way, did we ever accomplish, I think, six miles an hour. Constant delays were caused, moreover, by stopping to take up passengers and freight,—not at regular landing-places, but anywhere along the green banks. The scenery was identical with that of the railway, because the latter runs along by the river-side through the whole distance, or nowhere departs from it except to make a short cut across some sinuosity; so that our only advantage lay in the drawling, snail-like slothfulness of our progress, which allowed us time enough and to spare for the objects along the shore.

Unfortunately, there was nothing, or next to nothing, to be seen,—the country being one unvaried level over the whole thirty miles of our voyage,—not a hill in sight, either near or far, except that solitary one on the summit of which we had left Lincoln Cathedral. And the Cathedral was our landmark for four hours or more, and at last rather faded out than was hidden by any intervening object.

It would have been a pleasantly lazy day enough, if the rough and bitter wind had not blown directly in our faces, and chilled us through, in spite of the sunshine that soon succeeded a sprinkle or two of rain. These English east-winds, which prevail from February till June, are greater nuisances than the east-wind of our own Atlantic coast, although they do not bring mist and storm, as with us, but some of the sunniest weather that England sees. Under their influence, the sky smiles and is villanous.

The landscape was tame to the last degree, but had an English character that was abundantly worth our looking at. A green luxuriance of early grass; old, high-roofed farm-houses, surrounded by their stone barns and ricks of bay and grain; ancient villages, with the square, gray tower of a church seen afar over the level country, amid the cluster of red roofs; here and there a shadowy grove of venerable trees, surrounding what was perhaps an Elizabethan ball, though it looked more like the abode of some rich yeoman. Once, too, we saw the tower of a mediaeval castle, that of Tattershall, built by a Cromwell, but whether of the Protector's family I cannot tell. But the gentry do not appear to have settled multitudinously in this tract of country; nor is it to be wondered at, since a lover of the picturesque would as soon think of settling in Holland. The river retains its canal-like aspect all along; and only in the latter part of its course does it become more than wide enough for the little steamer to turn itself round,—at broadest, not more than twice that width.

The only memorable incident of our voyage happened when a mother-duck was leading her little fleet of five ducklings across the river, just as our steamer went swaggering by, stirring the quiet stream into great waves that lashed the banks on either side. I saw the imminence of the catastrophe, and hurried to the stern of the boat to witness, since I could not possibly avert it. The poor ducklings had uttered their baby-quacks, and striven with all their tiny might to escape: four of them, I believe, were washed aside and thrown off unhurt from the steamer's prow; but the fifth must have gone under the whole length of the keel, and never could have come up alive.

Page 125

At last, in, mid-afternoon, we beheld the tall tower of Saint Botolph's Church (three hundred feet high, the same elevation as the tallest tower of Lincoln Cathedral) looming in the distance. At about half-past four we reached Boston, (which name has been shortened, in the course of ages, by the quick and slovenly English pronunciation, from Botolph's town,) and were taken by a cab to the Peacock, in the market-place. It was the best hotel in town, though a poor one enough; and we were shown into a small, stilled parlor, dingy, musty, and scented with stale tobacco-smoke,—tobacco-smoke two days old, for the waiter assured us that the room had not more recently been fumigated. An exceedingly grim waiter he was, apparently a genuine descendant of the old Puritans of this English Boston, and quite as sour as those who peopled the daughter-city in New England. Our parlor had the one recommendation of looking into the market-place, and affording a sidelong glimpse of the tall spire and noble old church.

In my first ramble about the town, chance led me to the river-side, at that quarter where the port is situated. Here were long buildings of an old-fashioned aspect, seemingly warehouses, with windows in the high, steep roofs. The Custom-House found ample accommodation within an ordinary dwelling-house. Two or three large schooners were moored along the river's brink, which had here a stone margin; another large and handsome schooner was evidently just finished, rigged and equipped for her first voyage; the rudiments of another were on the stocks, in a ship-yard bordering on the river. Still another, while I was looking on, came up the stream, and lowered her main-sail, from a foreign voyage. An old man on the bank hailed her and inquired about her cargo; but the Lincolnshire people have such a queer way of talking English that I could not understand the reply. Farther down the river, I saw a brig, approaching rapidly under sail. The whole scene made an odd impression of bustle, and sluggishness, and decay, and a remnant of wholesome life; and I could not but contrast it with the mighty and populous activity of our own Boston, which was once the feeble infant of this old English town;—the latter, perhaps, almost stationary ever since that day, as if the birth of such an offspring had taken away its own principle of growth. I thought of Long Wharf, and Faneuil Hall, and Washington Street, and the Great Elm, and the State-House, and exulted lustily,—but yet began to feel at home in this good old town, for its very name's sake, as I never had before felt, in England.

The next morning we came out in the early sunshine, (the sun must have been shining nearly four hours, however, for it was after eight o'clock,) and strolled about the streets, like people who had a right to be there. The market-place of Boston is an irregular square, into one end of which the chancel of the church slightly projects. The gates of the church-yard were open and free to all passengers,

Page 126

and the common footway of the towns-people seems to lie to and fro across it. It is paved, according to English custom, with flat tombstones; and there are also raised, or altar-tombs, some of which have armorial bearings on them. One clergyman has caused himself and his wife to be buried right in the middle of the stone-bordered path that traverses the church-yard; so that not an individual of the thousands who pass along this public way can help trampling over him or her. The scene, nevertheless, was very cheerful in the morning sun: people going about their business in the day's primal freshness, which was just as fresh here as in younger villages; children, with milk-pails, loitering over the burial-stones; school-boys playing leap-frog with the altar-tombs; the simple old town preparing itself for the day, which would be like myriads of other days that had passed over it, but yet would be worth living through. And down on the church-yard, where were buried many generations whom it remembered in their time, looked the stately tower of Saint Botolph; and it was good to see and think of such an age-long giant, intermarrying the present epoch with a distant past, and getting quite imbued with human nature by being so immemorially connected with men's familiar knowledge and homely interests. It is a noble tower; and the jackdaws evidently have pleasant homes in their hereditary nests among its topmost windows, and live delightful lives, flitting and cawing about its pinnacles and flying-buttresses. I should almost like to be a jackdaw myself, for the sake of living up there.

In front of the church, not more than twenty yards off, and with a low brick wall between, flows the River Witham. On the hither bank a fisherman was washing his boat; and another skiff, with her sail lazily half-twisted, lay on the opposite strand. The stream, at this point, is about of such width, that, if the tall tower were to tumble over flat on its face, its top-stone might perhaps reach to the middle of the channel. On the farther shore there is a line of antique-looking houses, with roofs of red tile, and windows opening out of them,—some of these dwellings being so ancient, that the Reverend Mr. Cotton, subsequently our first Boston minister, must have seen them with his own bodily eyes, when he used to issue from the front-portal after service. Indeed, there must be very many houses here, and even some streets, that bear much the aspect that they did when the Puritan divine paced solemnly among them.

In our rambles about town, we went into a bookseller's shop to inquire if he had any description of Boston for sale. He offered me (or, rather, produced for inspection, not supposing that I would buy it) a quarto history of the town, published by subscription, nearly forty years ago. The bookseller showed himself a well-informed and affable man, and a local antiquary, to whom a party of inquisitive strangers were a godsend. He had met with several Americans,

Page 127

who, at various times, had come on pilgrimages to this place, and had been in correspondence with others. Happening to have heard the name of one member of our party, he showed us great courtesy and kindness, and invited us into his inner domicile, where, as he modestly intimated, he kept a few articles which it might interest us to see. So we went with him through the shop, up-stairs, into the private part of his establishment; and, really, it was one of the rarest adventures I ever met with, to stumble upon this treasure of a man, with his treasury of antiquities and curiosities, veiled behind the unostentatious front of a bookseller's shop, in a very moderate line of village-business. The two up-stair rooms into which he introduced us were so crowded with inestimable articles, that we were almost afraid to stir, for fear of breaking some fragile thing that had been accumulating value for unknown centuries.

The apartment was hung round with pictures and old engravings, many of which were extremely rare. Premising that he was going to show us something very curious, Mr. Porter went into the next room and returned with a counterpane of fine linen, elaborately embroidered with silk, which so profusely covered the linen that the general effect was as if the main texture were silken. It was stained, and seemed very old, and had an ancient fragrance. It was wrought all over with birds and flowers in a most delicate style of needle-work, and among other devices, more than once repeated, was the cipher, M.S.,—being the initials of one of the most unhappy names that ever a woman bore. This quilt was embroidered by the hands of Mary-Queen of Scots, during her imprisonment at Fotheringay Castle; and having evidently been a work of years, she had doubtless shed many tears over it, and wrought many doleful thoughts and abortive schemes into its texture, along with the birds and flowers. As a counterpart to this most precious relic, our friend produced some of the handiwork of a former Queen of Otaheite, presented by her to Captain Cook: it was a bag, cunningly made of some delicate vegetable stuff, and ornamented with feathers. Next, he brought out a green silk waistcoat of very antique fashion, trimmed about the edges and pocket-holes with a rich and delicate embroidery of gold and silver. This (as the possessor of the treasure proved, by tracing its pedigree till it came into his hands) was once the vestment of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Burleigh: but that great statesman must have been a person of very moderate girth in the chest and waist; for the garment was hardly more than a comfortable fit for a boy of eleven, the smallest American of our party, who tried on the gorgeous waistcoat. Then, Mr. Porter produced some curiously engraved drinking-glasses, with a view of Saint Botolph's steeple on one of them, and other Boston edifices, public or domestic, on the remaining two, very admirably done. These crystal goblets had been a present, long ago, to an old master of the Free School from his pupils; and it is very rarely, I imagine, that a retired schoolmaster can exhibit such trophies of gratitude and affection, won from the victims of his birch rod.

Page 128

Our kind friend kept bringing out one unexpected and wholly unexpected thing after another, as if he were a magician, and had only to fling a private signal into the air, and some attendant imp would hand forth any strange relic we might choose to ask for. He was especially rich in drawings by the Old Masters, producing two or three, of exquisite delicacy, by Raphael, one by Salvator, a head by Rembrandt, and others, in chalk or pen-and-ink, by Giordano, Benvenuto Cellini, and hands almost as famous; and besides what were shown us, there seemed to be an endless supply of these art-treasures in reserve. On the wall hung a crayon-portrait of Sterne, never engraved, representing him as a rather young man, blooming, and not uncomely: it was the worldly face of a man fond of pleasure, but without that ugly, keen, sarcastic, odd expression that we see in his only engraved portrait. The picture is an original, and must needs be very valuable; and we wish it might be prefixed to some new and worthier biography of a writer whose character the world has always treated with singular harshness, considering how much it owes him. There was likewise a crayon-portrait of Sterne's wife, looking so haughty and unamiable, that the wonder is, how he ever contrived to live a week with such an awful woman.

After looking at these, and a great many more things than I can remember, above stairs, we went down to a parlor, where this wonderful bookseller opened an old cabinet, containing numberless drawers, and looking just fit to be the repository of such knick-knacks as were stored up in it. He appeared to possess more treasures than he himself knew of, or knew where to find; but, rummaging here and there, he brought forth things new and old: rose-nobles, Victoria crowns, gold angels, double-sovereigns of George IV., two-guinea pieces of George II.; a marriage-medal of the first Napoleon, only forty-five of which were ever struck off, and of which even the British Museum does not contain a specimen like this, in gold; a brass medal, three or four inches in diameter, of a Roman Emperor; together with buckles, bracelets, amulets, and I know not what besides. There was a green silk tassel from the fringe of Queen Mary's bed at Holyrood Palace. There were illuminated missals, antique Latin Bibles, and (what may seem of especial interest to the historian) a Secret-Book of Queen Elizabeth, written, for aught I know, by her own hand. On examination, however, it proved to contain, not secrets of State, but recipes for dishes, drinks, medicines, washes, and all such matters of housewifery, the toilet, and domestic quackery, among which we were horrified by the title of one of the nostrums, "How to kill a Fellow quickly"! We never doubted that bloody Queen Bess might often have had occasion for such a recipe, but wondered at her frankness, and at her attending to these anomalous necessities in such a methodical way. The truth is, we had read amiss, and the Queen had spelt amiss: the word was "Fellon,"—a sort of whitlow,—not "Fellow."

Page 129

Our hospitable friend now made us drink a glass of wine, as old and genuine as the curiosities of his cabinet; and while sipping it, we ungratefully tried to excite his envy, by telling of various things, interesting to an antiquary and virtuoso, which we had seen in the course of our travels about England. We spoke, for instance, of a missal bound in solid gold and set round with jewels, but of such intrinsic value as no setting could enhance, for it was exquisitely illuminated, throughout, by the hand of Raphael himself. We mentioned a little silver case which once contained a portion of the heart of Louis XIV, nicely done up in spices, but, to the owner's horror and astonishment, Dean Buckland popped the kingly morsel into his mouth, and swallowed it. We told about the black-letter prayer-book of King Charles the Martyr, used by him upon the scaffold, taking which into our hands, it opened of itself at the Communion Service; and there, on the left-hand page, appeared a spot about as large as a sixpence, of a yellowish or brownish hue: a drop of the King's blood had fallen there.

Mr. Porter now accompanied us to the church, but first leading us to a vacant spot of ground where old John Cotton's vicarage had stood till a very short time since. According to our friend's description, it was a humble habitation, of the cottage order, built of brick, with a thatched roof. The site is now rudely fenced in, and cultivated as a vegetable garden. In the right-hand aisle of the church there is an ancient chapel, which, at the time of our visit, was in process of restoration, and was to be dedicated to Cotton, whom these English people consider as the founder of our American Boston. It would contain a painted memorial-window, in honor of the old Puritan minister. A festival in commemoration of the event was to take place in the ensuing July, to which I had myself received an invitation, but I knew too well the pains and penalties incurred by an invited guest at public festivals in England to accept it. It ought to be recorded, (and it seems to have made a very kindly impression on our kinsfolk here,) that five hundred pounds had been contributed by persons in the United States, principally in Boston, towards the cost of the memorial-window, and the repair and restoration of the chapel.

After we emerged from the chapel, Mr. Porter approached us with the vicar, to whom he kindly introduced us, and then took his leave. May a stranger's benediction rest upon him! He is a most pleasant man; rather, I imagine, a virtuoso than an antiquary; for he seemed to value the Queen of Otaheite's bag as highly as Queen Mary's embroidered quilt, and to have an omnivorous appetite for everything strange and rare. Would that we could fill up his shelves and drawers (if there are any vacant spaces left) with the choicest trifles that have dropped out of Time's carpet-bag, or give him the carpet-bag itself, to take out what he will!

Page 130

The vicar looked about thirty years old, a gentleman, evidently assured of his position, (as clergymen of the Established Church invariably are,) comfortable and well-to-do, a scholar and a Christian, and fit to be a bishop, knowing how to make the most of life without prejudice to the life to come. I was glad to see such a model English priest so suitably accommodated with an old English church. He kindly and courteously did the honors, showing us quite round the interior, giving us all the information that we required, and then leaving us to the quiet enjoyment of what we came to see.

The interior of Saint Botolph's is very fine and satisfactory, as stately, almost, as a cathedral, and has been repaired—so far as repairs were necessary—in a chaste and noble style. The great eastern window is of modern painted glass, but is the richest, mellowest, and tenderest modern window that I have ever seen: the art of painting these glowing transparencies in pristine perfection being one that the world has lost. The vast, clear space, of the interior church delighted me. There was no screen,—nothing between the vestibule and the altar to break the long vista; even the organ stood aside,—though it by-and-by made us aware of its presence by a melodious roar. Around the walls there were old engraved brasses, and a stone coffin, and an alabaster knight of Saint John, and an alabaster lady, each recumbent at full length, as large as life, and in perfect preservation, except for a slight modern touch at the tips of their noses. In the chancel we saw a great deal of oaken work, quaintly and admirably carved, especially about the seats formerly appropriated to the monks, which were so contrived as to tumble down with a tremendous crash, if the occupant happened to fall asleep.

We now essayed to climb into the upper regions. Up we went, winding and still winding round the circular stairs, till we came to the gallery beneath the stone roof of the tower, whence we could look down and see the raised Fort, and my Talma lying on one of the steps, and looking about as big as a pocket-handkerchief. Then up again, up, up, up, through a yet smaller staircase, till we emerged into another stone gallery, above the jackdaws, and far above the roof beneath which we had before made a halt. Then up another flight, which led us into a pinnacle of the temple, but not the highest; so, retracing our steps, we took the right turret this time, and emerged into the loftiest lantern, where we saw level Lincolnshire, far and near, though with a haze on the distant horizon. There were dusty roads, a river, and canals, converging towards Boston, which—a congregation of red-tiled roofs—lay beneath our feet, with pigmy people creeping about its narrow streets. We were three hundred feet aloft, and the pinnacle on which we stood is a landmark forty miles at sea.

Page 131

Content, and weary of our elevation, we descended the corkscrew stairs and left the church; the last object that we noticed in the interior being a bird, which appeared to be at home there, and responded with its cheerful notes to the swell of the organ. Pausing on the church-steps, we observed that there were formerly two statues, one on each side of the door-way; the canopies still remaining, and the pedestals being about a yard from the ground. Some of Mr. Cotton's Puritan parishioners are probably responsible for the disappearance of these stone saints. This door-way at the base of the tower is now much dilapidated, but must once have been very rich and of a peculiar fashion. It opens its arch through a great square tablet of stone, reared against the front of the tower. On most of the projections, whether on the tower or about the body of the church, there are gargoyles of genuine Gothic grotesqueness,—fiends, beasts, angels, and combinations of all three; and where portions of the edifice are restored, the modern sculptors have tried to imitate these wild fantasies, but with very poor success. Extravagance and absurdity have still their law, and should pay as rigid obedience to it as the primmest things on earth.

In our further rambles about Boston, we crossed the river by a bridge, and observed that the larger part of the town seems to lie on that side of its navigable stream. The crooked streets and narrow lanes reminded me much of Hanover Street, Ann Street, and other portions of the North End of our American Boston, as I remember that picturesque region in my boyish days. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the local habits and recollections of the first settlers may have had some influence on the physical character of the streets and houses in the New-England metropolis; at any rate, here is a similar intricacy of bewildering lanes, and numbers of old peaked and projecting-storied dwellings, such as I used to see there. It is singular what a home-feeling and sense of kindred I derived from this hereditary connection and fancied physiognomical resemblance between the old town and its well-grown daughter, and how reluctant I was, after chill years of banishment, to leave this hospitable place, on that account. Moreover, it recalled some of the features of another American town, my own dear native place, when I saw the seafaring people leaning against posts, and sitting on planks, under the lee of warehouses,—or lolling on long-boats, drawn up high and dry, as sailors and old wharf-rats are accustomed to do, in seaports of little business. In other respects, the English town is more village-like than either of the American ones. The women and budding girls chat together at their doors, and exchange merry greetings with young men; children chase one another in the summer twilight; school-boys sail little boats on the river, or play at marbles across the flat tombstones in the churchyard; and ancient men, in breeches and long

Page 132

waistcoats, wander slowly about the streets, with a certain familiarity of deportment, as if each one were everybody's grandfather. I have frequently observed, in old English towns, that Old Age comes forth more cheerfully, and genially into the sunshine than among ourselves, where the rush, stir, bustle, and irreverent energy of youth are so preponderant, that the poor, forlorn grandsires begin to doubt whether they have a right to breathe in such a world any longer, and so hide their silvery heads in solitude. Speaking of old men, I am reminded of the scholars of the Boston Charity-School, who walk about in antique, long-skirted blue coats, and knee-breeches, and with bands at their necks,—perfect and grotesque pictures of the costume of three centuries ago.

On the morning of our departure, I looked from the parlor-window of the Peacock into the market-place, and beheld its irregular square already well-covered with booths, and more in process of being put up, by stretching tattered sail-cloth on poles. It was market-day. The dealers were arranging their commodities, consisting chiefly of vegetables, the great bulk of which seemed to be cabbages. Later in the forenoon there was a much greater variety of merchandise: basket-work, both for fancy and use; twig-brooms, beehives, oranges, rustic attire; all sorts of things, in short, that are commonly sold at a rural fair. I heard the lowing of cattle, too, and the bleating of sheep, and found that there was a market for cows, oxen, and pigs, in another part of the town. A crowd of towns-people and Lincolnshire yeomen elbowed one another in the square; Mr. Punch was squeaking in one corner, and a vagabond juggler tried to find space for his exhibition in another: so that my final glimpse of Boston was calculated to leave a livelier impression than my former ones. Meanwhile the tower of Saint Botolph's looked benignantly down; and I fancied that it was bidding me farewell, as it did Mr. Cotton, two or three hundred years ago, and telling me to describe its venerable height, and the town beneath it, to the people of the American city, who are partly akin, if not to the living inhabitants of Old Boston, yet to some of the dust that lies in its churchyard.

One thing more. They have a Bunker Hill in the vicinity of their town; and (what could hardly be expected of an English community) seem proud to think that their neighborhood has given name to our first and most widely celebrated and best-remembered battle-field.

* * * * *

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF A STRENGTH-SEEKER.

"There goes the smallest fellow in our class."

I was crossing one of the paths that intersect the college green of old Harvard when this remark fell upon my ears. Looking up, I saw two stalwart Freshmen on their way to recitation, one of whom had called the other's attention to my humble self by this observation, reminding me of a distinction which I did not covet.

Page 133

It was not quite true. There was one, and only one, member of the class of '54 who was as small as I. Some consolation, though not much, in that! But the air of amused compassion with which the lusty Down-Easter, who had made me feel what the *digito monstrari* was, now looked down on me, raised a feeling of resentment and self-depreciation which left me in no mood to make a brilliant show of scholarship in construing my "Isocrates" that morning.

"True, I am small, nay, diminutive," I soliloquized, as I wended my way homeward under the classic umbrage of venerable elms. "But surely this is no fault of mine.—Hold there! Are you quite sure it's no fault of yours? Are we not responsible to a much greater extent than we imagine for our physical condition? After making all abatement for insurmountable hereditary influences upon organization,—after granting to that remorseless law of genealogical transmission its proper weight,—after admitting the seemingly capricious facts of what the modern French physiologists call *atavism*, under which we are made drunkards or consumptives, lunatics or wise men, short or tall, because of certain dominant traits in some remote ancestor,—after conceding all this, does not Nature leave it largely in our own power to counteract both physical and moral tendencies, and to mould the body as well as the mind, if we will only put forth in action the requisite energy of will?"

This disposition to cavil at received axioms has beset me through life. No sooner does a truth present itself than I want to see it on its other side. If I hear the Devil spoken ill of, I puzzle myself to find what can be said in his favor. The man who thus halts between conflicting opinions, solicitous to give both their due, and to see the truth, pure and simple and entire, may miss laying hold of great convictions till it is too late for him to act on them; but what he accepts he generally holds.

My meditations on the subject of my inferior stature led me to a determination to try what gymnastic practice could do to remedy the defect. For some thirty years, gymnastics, first introduced into this country, I believe, at the Round-Hill School at Northampton, then under the charge of Messrs. Cogswell and Bancroft, had languished and revived fitfully at Cambridge. It was during one of the languishing periods that I began my practice. For some five or six weeks I kept it up with enthusiasm. Then I began to grow less methodical and regular in my habits of exercise; and then to find excuses for my delinquencies.

After all, what matter, if, like Paul's, my "bodily presence is weak"? Were not Alexander the Great and Napoleon small men? Were not Pope, and Dr. Watts, and Moore, and Campbell, and a long list of authors, artists, and philosophers, considerably under medium height? Were not Garrick and Kean and the elder Booth all under five feet four or five? Is there not a volume somewhere in our college library, written by a learned Frenchman, devoted exclusively to the biography of men who have been great in mind, though diminutive in stature? Is not Lord John Russell as small almost as I? Have I many inches to grow before I shall be as tall as Dr. Holmes?



Page 134

These consolatory considerations softened my chagrin at the contemplation of my height. "Care I for the limb, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big assemblance of a man? Give me the spirit, Master Shallow,—the spirit!"

And so my gymnastic ardor, after a brief blaze, flickered, fell, was ashes. But it was destined to be soon revived by an incident, trifling in itself, though of a character to assume exaggerated proportions in the mind of a sensitive boy. A youth, who had considerably the advantage of me both in inches and in years, and whose overflow of animal spirits required some object to vent itself upon, selected me as the victim of his ebullient vivacity. He began by tossing my book down stairs. This seemed to me rather rough play, especially from one with whom I was not, at the time, on terms of intimacy; but, making allowance for the hilarity of classmates just let loose from recitation, I picked up, without a thought of resentment, the abused volume, and took no further notice of the matter. I subsequently found that it was merely the commencement of a series of similar annoyances. This lively classmate would even play tricks on me at the dinner table.

What was to be done? I mentioned the grievance to a friend, and he remonstrated with my lively classmate, threatening him with my serious displeasure. "Pooh! how can he help himself?" was the reply which came duly to my ears.

Sure enough! How could I help myself? The aggressor was my superior in weight and size. It was a plain case that I should get badly and ridiculously whipped, if I attempted to cope with him in any pugilistic encounter. But how would it do to demand of him the satisfaction of a gentleman? True, I knew nothing of pistol-shooting, and had never handled a small-sword. No matter for that!

But another consideration speedily drove this scheme of vengeance *a l'outrance* out of my head. Not many years before, a peppery little Freshman had been insulted, as he thought, by a Sophomore. The Soph, I believe, had knocked the young one's hat over his eyes, as they were kicking foot-ball in the Delta. Freshman sent a challenge, the effect of which was to excite inextinguishable laughter among the Sophs convened over their cigars in the aggressor's room. Amid roars, one of the conspirators penned an acceptance, fixing as the weapon, hair triggers,—time, five o'clock in the morning,—place, the Delta,—second, the bearer, Mr. M——, the writer of this reply.

It was a cruel business. A sham second was imposed on poor little Fresh. Brave as Julius Caesar, he sat up all night writing letters and preparing his will. Prompt to the moment, he was on the chosen ground. An unusually large delegation for such a delicate affair seemed to be present. One rascal who wore enormous green goggles was pointed out to the innocent as Dr. Von Guldenstubbe, a celebrated German surgeon, just from Leipsic. Little Fresh shook hands with him gravely, amid the smothered laughter of the conspirators. The distance was to be five paces; for it was whispered so as to reach the ear of Fresh, that Soph was thirsting for his heart's blood.

They take their places,—the signal is given,—they fire,—and with a hideous groan and a wild pirouette, the Soph falls to the ground.

Page 135

The Freshman is led up near enough to see the fellow's face covered with blood, and to hear his cries to his friends to put him out of his misery. Intensely agitated, poor little Fresh is hurried by pretended friends into a carriage, and driven off; and it is not till a week afterwards that he learns he has been the victim of a hoax.

No! it would never answer for me to run the risk of being *sold* in any such way as this. I must select a surer and more practical vengeance. I thought the matter over intently, and finally resolved that I would put myself on a physical equality with my persecutor, and then meet him in a fair fight with such weapons as Nature had given us both. I accordingly said to the friend and classmate who had played the part of intercessor, "Wait two years, and I promise you I will either make my tormentor apologize or give him such a thrashing as he will remember for the rest of his life."

Thus was my resolve renewed to accomplish myself as a gymnast, and, above all, to develop my physical strength. My previous attempts in the gymnasium had been spasmodic and irregular. Having now a definite object in view, I set about my work in earnest, and went through a daily systematic practice of a little more than an hour's duration.

The gymnasium was kept by a Mr. Law, and, though ordinary in its accommodations, had a good arrangement of apparatus, of which I faithfully availed myself. The spring-board, horse, vaulting-apparatus, parallel bars, suspended rings, horizontal and inclined ladders, pulley-weights, pegs, climbing-rope, trapezoid, *etc.*, were all put in frequent requisition. My time for exercise was generally in the evening, when I would find myself almost alone,—while the clicking of balls from the billiard-rooms and bowling-alleys down-stairs announced that a busy crowd—if amusement may be called a business—were there assembled.

Naturally indolent, it was not without a severe struggle that I overcame a besetting propensity to confine myself to sedentary pursuits. The desire of retaliation soon became extinct. My pledge to my friend and sympathizer, that in two years I would cry *quittance* to my foe, would occasionally act as a spur in the side of my intent; but my two best aids in supplying me with the motive power to keep up my gymnastic practice were *habit* and *progress*. What will not habit make easy to us, whether it be for good or for evil? And what an incentive we have to renewed effort in finding that we are making actual progress,—that we can do with comparative facility to-day what we could do only with difficulty yesterday!

Two years, while we are yet on the sunny side of twenty, are no trifle; but for two years I persistently and methodically went through the exercises of the gymnasium. At the end of that time I had quite lost sight of my original object in cultivating my athletic powers; for all annoyances towards me had long since been dropped by my old enemy. But punctually on the day of expiration, the friend who had listened to my pledge came to me and claimed its fulfilment. From some evidences which he had recently had of my

strength he felt a soothing assurance that I should have no difficulty in making good my promise.

Page 136

I accordingly called on the lively young gentleman who two years before had indulged in those little frolics at my expense. With diplomatic ceremony and circumlocution I introduced the object of my visit, and wound up with an *ultimatum* to this effect: There must either be a frank apology for past indignities, or he must accompany me, each with a friend, to some suitable spot, and there decide which was “the better man.”

If he had been called on to expiate an offence committed before he was breeched, the young gentleman could not have been more astounded. Two years had made some change in our relative positions. I was now about his equal in size, and felt a comfortable sense of my superiority, so far as strength was concerned. My shoulders had broadened, and my muscles been developed, so as to present to the critical and interested observer a somewhat threatening appearance. Mr. —— (who, by the way, was a good fellow in the main) protested that he had never intended to give me any offence,—that he, in fact, did not remember the circumstances to which I referred,—and finished by peremptorily declining my proposal. When I reflected on the disparity between us in strength, which my two years’ practice had established, I felt that it would be cowardly for me to urge the matter further, especially as it was so long a time since he had given me cause of complaint. I have only to add, that we parted without a collision, and that, in my heart, I could not help thanking him for the service he had rendered in inciting me to the regimen which had resulted so beneficially to my health.

The impetus given to my gymnastic education by the little incident I have just related was continued without abatement through my whole college life. Gradually I acquired the reputation of being the strongest man in my class. I discovered that with every day’s development of my strength there was an increase of my ability to resist and overcome all fleshly ailments, pains, and infirmities,—a discovery which subsequent experience has so amply confirmed, that, if I were called on to condense the proposition which sums it up into a formula, it would be in these words: *Strength is Health*.

Until I had renovated my bodily system by a faithful gymnastic training, I had been subject to nervousness, headache, indigestion, rush of blood to the head, and a weak circulation. It was torture to me to have to listen to the grating of a slate-pencil, the filing of a saw, or the scratching of glass. As I grew in strength, my nerves ceased to be impressible to such annoyances. Another good effect was to take away all appetite for any stimulating food or drink. Although I had never applied “rebellious liquors” to my blood, I had been in the habit of taking a bowl of strong coffee morning and night. Now a craving for milk took the place of this want, and my coffee was gradually diminished to less than a fourth of what had been a customary indulgence.

Page 137

At last arrived the eagerly looked-for day of release from collegiate restrictions and labors. I graduated, and the question, so momentous in the history of all adolescents, "What shall I be?" addressed itself seriously to my mind. My father was desirous that I should choose medicine for a profession, and become the fourth physician, in lineal sequence, of my family on the paternal side.

Medicine. I cavilled at it awhile, that I might bring out to view its grimmest and most discouraging aspect. The cares, trials, humiliations of a young physician, his months and years of uncompensated drudgery, passed in awful review before me. I thought of his toils among the poor and lowly, the vicious and depraved,—of his broken sleep,—the interruptions of his social ease,—and then of the many scenes so repugnant to delicate nerves which he has to pass through,—scenes of pain and insanity, of maimed and severed limbs, and all the eccentricities and fearful forms of disease. These considerations pressed with such weight on my mind that for a time my ancestral craft was in danger of being ignominiously rejected by me. Indeed, I began to think seriously of adopting a very different vocation. And here I will make a confession, if the gentle reader will take it confidentially.

It is a familiar fact, that every college-boy has to pass through an attack of the rhyming frenzy as regularly as the child has to submit to measles and the whooping-cough. A less frequent, but not less trying complaint, is that which manifests itself in a passion for the stage and in an espousal of the delusion that one was born for a great actor. At any rate, this last was the type which my juvenile *malaise-du-coeur* finally assumed.

I have heard of a young gentleman who, whenever he was hard up for money, went to his nearest relatives and threatened them with the publication of a volume of his original poems. This threat never failed to open the paternal purse. I do not know what effect the intimation of my histrionic aspirations would have had; but one fine day I found myself on my way to Rochester, in the State of New York.

My *role* of dramatic characters was a very modest one for a beginner. It embraced only Richelieu, Bertram, Brutus, Lear, Richard, Shylock, Sir Giles Overreach, Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth. My principal literary recreation for several years had been in studying these parts; and as I knew them by heart, I did not doubt that a few rehearsals would put me in possession of the requisite stage-business. And yet my familiarity with the theatre was very limited. I had never been behind the scenes. Once, with a classmate, I had penetrated in the daytime to the stage of the old Federal-Street Theatre, and looked with awe on the boards formerly trodden by the elder Kean; but a growl from that august functionary, the prompter, sent us back in quick retreat, and I had never ventured again into those sacred precincts.

Page 138

Arrived at Rochester,—which place I had selected for my *debut* because of its remoteness from home,—I looked in, the evening of my arrival, to see the performances at the theatre. It was a hall of humble dimensions, seating an audience of five or six hundred. The piece was a travesty of “Hamlet,” neither edifying nor amusing. A little of the *couleur-de-rose* which had flushed my prospect faded that night; but the few friends at home to whom I had confided my plans had so pertinaciously assured me that I—the most diffident man in the world—could never appear before an audience without letting them see I was shaky in the knees, that I resolved to do what I could to show my depreciators they were false prophets.

And so I called on the manager,—with a beating heart, as you may suppose. He was a small, quiet, gentlemanly person, whom I regret I cannot, consistently with historical truth, show up as a Crummles. But not even Dickens could have found any salient trait for ridicule in the man. Frankly and kindly he went into the statistics of the theatrical business, and showed me, that, unless I was rich, and could afford to play for my own amusement, the stage held out few inducements; it was barren of promise to a young man anxious to make himself independent of the world.

I did not reply, “Perish the lucre!” but said that I would be content, in the early part of my career, to labor for reputation. He soon satisfied me that he could not give up his stage to an experimentalist, and I did not urge my suit; but bade Mr. S. good morning, and, a day or two afterwards, started for Niagara. Here, wet by the mist and listening to the roar of the great cataract, I speedily forgot my chagrin, and took a not unfriendly leave of the illusions which had lured me on to try my fortune on the stage. Even now they return occasionally with all their fascination.

While at Rochester, as I was passing through the principal street, I met a crowd assembled about a lifting-machine. On making trial of it, I found I could lift four hundred and twenty pounds. I had then been for four years a gymnast, and I supposed my practice would have qualified me to make the crowd stare at my achievement. But the result was far from triumphant. I found what many other gymnasts will find, that *main strength*, by which I mean the strength of the truckman and the porter, cannot be acquired in the ordinary exercises of the gymnasium.

Returning home, I began the study of anatomy and physiology, and in the autumn of 1854 entered the Harvard Medical School. The question of the extent to which human strength can be developed had long been invested with a scientific interest to my mind. One of the greatest lifting feats on authentic record is that of Thomas Topham, an Englishman, who in Bath Street, Cold Bath Fields, London, on the 28th of May, 1741, lifted three hogsheads of water, said to weigh, with the connections,

Page 139

eighteen hundred and thirty-six pounds. In the performance of this feat, Topham stood on a raised platform, his hands grasping a fixture on either side, and a broad strap over his shoulders communicating with the weight. An immense concourse of persons was assembled on the occasion,—the performance having been announced as “in honor of Admiral Vernon,” or rather, “in commemoration of his taking Porto Bello with six ships only.” Being a descendant myself from the Vernon family of Haddon Hall, Derbyshire, England, I have reserved it for future genealogical inquiry to learn whether the Admiral was connected with that branch of the Vernons. If so, a somewhat remarkable coincidence is involved.

I now informed my father that I intended to go through a series of experiments in lifting. He was afraid I should injure myself, and expressly forbade any such practice on his premises. To gratify him, I gave up testing the question for a whole year.

But the desire re-awoke, and I had frequent arguments with my father in the endeavor to overcome his objections.

“Look at that man,” he said to me one day,—pointing to a large, stout individual in front of us,—“you might practise lifting all your life, and never be able to lift as much as that big fellow.”

“Let me construct a lifting-apparatus in the back-yard, and I will soon prove to you that you are mistaken,” I replied.

Finding that I was bent on the experiment, he at length gave a reluctant consent.

It was now the August of 1855, and I was in my twenty-second year. My first lifting-apparatus was constructed in the following manner. I first sank into the ground a hogshead, and into the hogshead a flour-barrel. Then I lowered to the bottom of the barrel a rope having at the end a round stick transversely balanced, about four inches in diameter and fifteen inches long. A quantity of gravel, nearly sufficient to bury the stick, was then thrown into the barrel; some oblong stones were placed across the stick and across and between one another, and the interstices filled with smaller stones and gravel. When I had by this method about two-thirds filled the barrel, taking care to keep the axis of the rope in correspondence with the long axis of the barrel, I judged I had a sufficient weight for a first trial. I now formed a loop in the end of the rope over the top of the barrel, and put through it a piece of a hoe-handle, about two feet long; and standing astride of the hogshead, and holding the handle with one hand before me and the other behind,—straightening my body, previously a little flexed,—with mouth closed, head up, chest out, and shoulders down,—I succeeded in lifting the barrel, containing a weight of between four and five hundred pounds, some five or six inches from the bottom of the hogshead.

Page 140

It was no great feat, after all, considering that I had been for five years a gymnast. I found that I was inharmoniously developed in many points of my frame,—was perilously weak in the sides, between the shoulders, and at the back of the head. However, the day after this trial, I succeeded in lifting the same weight with somewhat less difficulty. This induced me to add on a few pounds; and in three or four weeks I could lift between six and seven hundred. I now had the satisfaction of seeing the stout gentleman, whom a few months before my father had pointed out as possessed of a strength I could never attain to, introduced to an inspection of my apparatus. Through the blinds of a back-parlor window I watched his movements, as, encouraged by *pater-familias*, he drew off his coat, moistened his hands, and undertook to “snake up” the big weight. An ignominious failure to start the barrel was the result. The stout gentleman tugged till he was so red in the face that apoplexy seemed imminent, and then he dejectedly gave it up. The reputation he had long enjoyed of being one of the “strongest men about” must henceforth be a thing of the past till it fades into a myth.

In the December of 1855 I was admitted to the arcana of the dissecting-room, and forthwith commenced some experiments with the view of testing the sustaining power of human bones. Some one had told me, that, in lifting a heavy weight, there was danger of fracturing the neck of the thigh-bone; but my experiments satisfied me, that, if properly positioned, it would safely bear a strain of two or three thousand pounds. And so I concluded that I might securely continue my practice of lifting till I reached the last-named limit.

In order to get all possible hints from the inspiration and experience of the past, I studied some of the ancient statues. The specimens of Grecian statuary at the Boston Athenaeum were objects of my frequent contemplation,—especially the Farnesian Hercules. From this I derived a proper conception of the bodily outline compatible with the exercise of the greatest amount of strength. I was particularly struck by the absence of all exaggeration in the muscular developments as represented. I saw by this statue that a Hercules must be free from superfluous flesh, neatly made, and finely organized,—that form and quality were of more account than quantity in his formation. Some years earlier I might have been more attracted by the Apollo Belvedere; but it was a Hercules I dreamed of becoming, and the Apollo was but the incipient and potential Hercules. Two other statues that shared my admiration and study were the Quoit-Thrower and the Dying Gladiator. From the careful inspection of all these relics of ancient Art I obtained some valuable hints as to my own physical deficiencies. I learned that the upper region of my chest needed developing, and that in other points I had not yet reached the artist’s ideal of a strong man.

Page 141

Good casts of these and other masterpieces in statuary may be had at a trifling cost. Why are they not generally introduced into the gymnasia attached to our colleges and schools? The habitual contemplation of such works could not fail to have a good effect upon the physical bearing and development of the young. We are the creatures of imitation. I remember, at the school I attended in my seventh year, the strongest boy among my mates was quite round-shouldered. Fancying that he derived his strength from his stoop, I began to imitate him; and it was not till I learned that he was strong in spite of his round shoulders, and not because of them, that I gave up aping his peculiarity.

On the 29th of January, 1856, I lifted seven hundred pounds in Bailey's Gymnasium, Franklin Street, Boston. The exhibition created great surprise among the lookers-on; and at that time it was, perhaps, an extraordinary feat; but since the extension and growth of the lifting mania, it would not be regarded by the knowing ones as anything to marvel at. The fourth of April following, my lifting capacity had reached eight hundred and forty pounds.

On Fast-Day of that year, two Irishmen knocked at my door and asked to see the strong man. I presented myself, and they told me there was great curiosity among the "ould countrymen" in the vicinity to ascertain if one Pat Farren, the strongest Irishman in Roxbury, could lift my weight. "Would it be convanient for me to let him thry?" "Certainly,—and I think he'll lift it," I modestly added.

Soon afterwards a delegation of Irishmen, rather startling from its numbers, entered the yard. Among them was Mr. Farren. They surrounded my lifting-apparatus, while I, unseen, surveyed them from a back window. I saw Mr. Farren take the handle, straddle the hogshead, throw himself into a lifting posture, and, straining every muscle to its utmost tension, give a tremendous pull. But the weight made no sign; and his friends, thinking he was merely feeling it, said, "Wait a bit,—Pat'll have it up the next pull." Mr. Farren rested a moment,—then threw off his coat, rubbed his hands, and, seizing the handle a second time, tugged away at it till his muscles swelled and his frame quivered. But he failed in starting the barrel, and a burst of laughter from his friends and backers announced his defeat.

It is now but justice to Mr. Farren to say that it could hardly be expected of him to lift such a weight at either the first trial or the second. A want of confidence, or the maladjustment of the rope, might have interfered with the full exercise of his strength. I need not say that his discomfiture was witnessed by me from my hiding-place with the liveliest satisfaction; for I had begun to pride myself on being able to outlift any man in the country.

Page 142

In May, 1856, I received the appointment of medical assistant to Dr. Walker, at the Lunatic Hospital, South Boston, and gave up for a couple of months my practice of lifting. The consequence was a rapid diminution of strength, which suggested to me a return to the lifting exercise. Near the hospital was a large unoccupied building, formerly the House of Industry. In the cellar of this building I put a barrel, and loaded it with rocks and gravel as I had done in Roxbury. Immediately overhead, on the first floor, I cut a hole, about six inches square, and passed up a rope attached to the barrel. This rope I looped at the end, for the reception of a handle. On the floor I nailed two cleats between three and four feet apart, as guards to keep my feet from slipping. Beginning with about six hundred pounds, I added a few pounds daily, till I was able, in November, 1856, to lift with my hands alone nine hundred pounds.

Returning home the ensuing winter, I attended a second course of medical lectures, and, in the routine of labors incident to a medical student's life, omitted to develop further my powers as a lifter. In the summer of 1857 I became a practitioner of medicine. In the autumn of that year, a gentleman, who had been looking at my lifting-apparatus, remarked to me, "If you are as strong as they tell me, what is to prevent your seizing hold of me, (I weigh only a hundred and eighty pounds) holding me at arm's-length over your head, and pitching me over that fence?" To this I replied, that, if he would give me six weeks for practice, I would satisfy him the thing could be done. He agreed to be on hand at the end of the time named.

In order to be sure of the muscles that would be brought into play by the feat, I procured an oblong box with a handle on either side running the whole length. Into the box I threw a number of brick-bats,—then raised the box at arm's-length above my head, and threw it over my vaulting-pole, which was at an elevation of six and a half feet from the ground. Subsequently I added more brick-bats, till gradually their weight amounted to precisely one hundred and eighty pounds. Having practised till I could easily handle and throw the box thus charged, I informed my challenger that I was ready for him. He came, when, seizing him by the middle, I lifted him struggling above my head, and threw him over the fence before he was hardly aware of my intent. As he was somewhat corpulent and puffy, and the act involved an abdominal pressure which was by no means agreeable, he expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the experiment, but objected very decidedly to its repetition.

Page 143

In June, 1858, I commenced practising with two fifty-pound dumb-bells, and subsequently added one of a hundred pounds, which I was prompted to get from hearing that one of that weight was used by Mr. James Montgomery, at that time a celebrated gymnast of New York City, and afterwards a successful teacher at the Albany Gymnasium. Not having given much attention to the development of the extensor muscles of the arms for several months previous, it was a number of weeks before I could put this dumb-bell up at arm's-length above my head with one hand. As soon as I succeeded in doing this with comparative ease, I procured another hundred-pound dumb-bell, and in a few months succeeded in exercising with both of the instruments at the same time, raising each alternately above my head. I then commenced practice with a dumb-bell weighing one hundred and forty-one pounds. It consisted of two shells connected by a handle, which, being removable, allowed me to introduce shot, from time to time, into the cavities of the shells. After a few months of practice, I could, with a jerk, raise the instrument from my shoulder to arm's-length above my head. My first public exhibition of this feat took place in Philadelphia, in April, 1860.

The spring of 1859 was now drawing nigh, and I began to think of giving a public lecture on Physical Culture, illustrating it with some exhibitions of the strength to which I had attained. My father approved the venture, but, bethinking himself of my extreme diffidence, significantly asked, *when* I would be ready to permit a public announcement of my intention. "Oh, in a few days," I replied, as if it were as small a matter for me to lecture in public as to lift a thousand pounds in a gymnasium. Weeks flew by, and still to the galling inquiry, "*When?*" I could only answer, "Soon, but not just yet." February and March had come and gone, and still I was not ready. Finally, to the oft-renewed interrogatory, I made this reply: "As soon as I can shoulder a barrel of flour, a feat which I am determined to accomplish before an audience, you may announce my lecture."

I had then been practising some two months with a loaded barrel, so contrived that it should weigh a little more each succeeding day; and it had now reached a hundred and ninety pounds. About this time it occurred to me, that, among my many experiments, I had never fairly tried that of a vegetable diet. I read anew the works of Graham and Alcott; and conceiving that my strength had reached a stagnation-point, I gave up meat, and restricted my animal diet to milk.

A barrel of flour weighs on an average two hundred and sixteen pounds. I therefore could not succeed in shouldering one until twenty-six pounds had been added to my loaded barrel. Day after day I shouldered my one hundred and ninety pounds, but could not get an ounce beyond that limit. My grand theory of the possible development of a man's strength began to look somewhat insecure.

Page 144

“So fares the system-building sage,
Who, plodding on from youth to age,
Has proved all other reasoners fools,
And bound all Nature by his rules,—
So fares he in that dreadful hour
When injured Truth exerts her power
Some new phenomenon to raise,
Which, bursting on his frightened gaze,
From its proud summit to the ground,
Proves the whole edifice unsound.”

JAMES BEATTIE

The shouldering of a barrel of flour is a feat, by the way, which many an old inhabitant will tell you that he, or some friend of his, could accomplish in his eighteenth year. Why it should always be among the *res gestae temporis acti* cannot be readily explained. It is a common belief that any stout truckman can do the thing; but I have been assured by one of the leading truckmen of Boston, that there are not, probably, three individuals in the city who are equal to the accomplishment.

The mode of life that I had hitherto found essential to the keeping up of my strength was quite simple, and rather negative than positive. From tobacco and all ardent spirits, including wine, I had to abstain as a matter of course. Beer and all fermented liquors had also been ruled out. Impure air must be avoided like poison. Summer and winter I slept with my windows open. Badly ventilated apartments were scrupulously shunned. Cold bathing of the entire person was rarely practised oftener than once a week in cold weather or twice a week in warm weather. A more frequent ablution seemed to overstimulate the excretory functions of the skin, so that excessive bathing defeated its very object. The “tranquil mind” must be preserved with little or no interruption. Great physical strength cannot coexist with an unhappy, discontented temper. You must be habitually cheerful, if you would be strong. With regard to diet,—that was the very experiment I was trying,—the experiment, namely, of going without solid animal food. With me it did not succeed. So far from gaining in strength, hardly did I hold my own. Suddenly I resolved to give up my vegetable diet, and return to beef-steaks, mutton-chops, and loins of veal. A daily appreciable increase of strength was soon the consequence. Within ten days I succeeded in shouldering the loaded barrel weighing two hundred and sixteen pounds; and a day or two after I shouldered, in the presence of our grocer himself, a barrel of flour.

I had now no further excuse for deferring my promised lecture. The month of May had arrived. My father delicately broached the subject of the announcement. Being a little fractious, perhaps from some ebb in my strength, I hastily replied,—

“Announce it for the 30th of May.”

“What hall shall I engage?”

“Any hall in Boston. Why not the Music Hall?” I added, affecting a valor I was far from feeling; but, like Macbeth, I now realized that “returning were as tedious as go o’er.”

Page 145

Mercantile Hall, in Summer Street, was engaged for me,—it being central, modest in point of size, commodious, and favorably known. At this time I was in excellent health and weighed one hundred and forty-three pounds. But from the moment of the public announcement of my lecture, my appetite for food, for meat particularly, began to fail me. “How peevish and irritable he is growing!” I heard one member of the family remark to another. Soon the grocer’s scales indicated that my weight was diminishing. It fell to one hundred and forty-one,—then to one hundred and forty,—then to one hundred and thirty-eight,—and finally, when the 30th of May arrived, I found I weighed only one hundred and thirty-four pounds!

The crisis was now at hand. Do not laugh at me, ye self-assured ones, with your comfortable sense of your own powers,—ye who care as little for an audience as for a field of cabbages,—do not jeer at one who has felt the pangs of shyness and quailed under the imaginary terrors of a first public appearance. For you it may be a small matter to face an audience,—that nearest approximation to the many-headed monster which we can palpably encounter; but for one whose diffidence had become the standard of that quality to his acquaintances the venture was perilous and desperate, as the sequel showed.

Never had time rolled by with such fearful velocity as on that eventful day. Breakfast was hardly over before preparations were being made for dinner. Small appetite had I for either. Before I had finished pacing the parlor there was a summons to tea. It was like the summons to the criminal: “Rise up, Master Barnardine, and be hanged.” With a most shallow affectation of *nonchalance* I sat down at the table. A child might have detected my agitation; and yet, with horrible insincerity, I alluded to the news of the day, and asked the family why they were all so silent. They saw from my look that they might as well have joked with a man on his way to execution.

Having dressed and adorned myself for the sacrifice, I returned to the parlor, when the rumbling of coach-wheels, the sudden letting down of steps, and then a frightfully discordant ring of the doorbell, sent the blood from my cheeks and made my heart palpitate like a trip-hammer. “Is th-th-that the off-officer,—I mean the coachman?” I stammered. Yes, there was no doubt about it.

Straightening my person, I affected a dignified calmness, and assured my dear, anxious mother that I was not in the least nervous,—oh, not in the least!

It was a gloomy night, and the streets wore a dismal aspect. The hall was distant about three miles; but in some mysterious manner, or by some route which I have never been able to discover, the coachman seemed to abridge the distance to less than half a mile. We are in Summer Street,—before the door. Some juvenile amateurs, attracted by stories of the strong man, surround the carriage to get a sight of him.

Page 146

“Ha! what are these? Sure, hangmen, That come to bind my hands, and then to drag me Before the judgment-seat: now they are new shapes, And do appear like Furies!”

The words of Sir Giles Overreach, one of the parts I had studied during my histrionic *acces*, were not at all inappropriate to the state of mind in which, with knee-joints slipping from under me, I now made my way up-stairs. Having reached the upper entry, I paused, and glanced at the audience through the windows, before entering the little retiring-room behind the stage. With an inward groan at my presumption, I passed on. To think, that, but for my own madness, I might have been at that moment comfortably at home, reading the evening paper! Nay, were it not better to be tossing on stormy seas, driving on a lee-shore, toiling as a slave under a tropic sun, than here, with a gaping audience waiting to devour me with their eyes and ears?

The first thing I did, on reaching the retiring-room, was to give way to a fearful fascination and take another peep at the audience from behind a curtain at the side-entrance. I then looked at my watch. Twenty minutes to eight! People were pouring in, notwithstanding the inclement weather. The hall was nearly crowded already. One familiar face after another was recognized. Surely everybody I know is present.

Another look at my watch. Quarter to eight! Suddenly the frantic thought occurred to me, What if I have lost my manuscript? Where did I put it? 'Tis in none of my pockets! Good gracious! Has any one seen my manuscript? Come, Jerome, no fooling at a time like this! Where have you hidden it? What! You know nothing about it? *Hunt* for it, then! Wouldn't it be a charming scrape, if I couldn't find my lecture? Isn't this it, in the drawer? Oh, yes! I must have put it there unconsciously.

Being in a high state of perspiration, and wiping my forehead incessantly, I disarrange my hair. Where's that brush? No one can tell. Agony! Where's the brush? Here on the floor. Oh, yes! There! What a blaze my cheeks are in! The audience will think they are flushed with Bourbon. No matter. That manuscript has disappeared again. Confusion! Where is it? Here in your overcoat-pocket. All right.

Five minutes to eight. Grasping the scroll, I rush to the side-entrance. The audience begin to manifest their impatience by applause. Suddenly I hear the bell of the Old South Church strike eight. The last vibration passes like an ice-bolt through my heart. Wrought up to desperation, I thrust aside the curtain. This gives a portion of the audience a sight of me, and I hear some one exclaim, “There he is!” Horrible exposure! I dodge back out of view, as if to escape the discharge of a battery. A round of impatient applause rouses me. I count three, and precipitate myself forward to the centre of the stage.

Page 147

The hall is filled,—all the seats and most of the standing-places occupied. But I can no longer recognize any one. Friend and foe are confounded in an undistinguishable mass; or, rather, they are but parts and members of one hideous monster, moving itself by one volition, winking its thousand eyes all at once, and ready to swallow me with a single deglutition. However, the plunge is made. The worst is over. I rallied from the shock, and in a clear, but unnecessarily loud and ponderous voice, pitched many degrees too high, I commenced my lecture.

For some ten minutes, if I may believe the tender reports in the newspapers the next day, I got on very respectably. I had won the attention of the audience. But, at an unlucky moment, a fresh arrival of persons at the door made the monster turn his thousand eyes in that direction. I mistook it for an indication that he was getting weary of my talk. My attention was distracted. Then came a suspension of all thought, an appalling paralysis of memory. Having learnt the first part of my discourse by heart, I had been reciting it without turning over the leaves of the manuscript; and now I was unable to recollect at what point I had left off, or whether I had given five pages or ten.

Frightful dilemma! Stupefied with horror, I gazed intently on the page before me till the lines became all blurred, and a blue mist wavered before my eyes. Then came a pause of intensest silence. The monster lying in wait for me evidently began to anticipate that his victim's time was come, and so, like a crafty monster, he remained still and patient. Who could endure a nightmare like this? I felt myself reeling to and fro. Then a pleasant thrill, like that, perhaps, which drowning men feel, ran through my frame. All became dark,—and the strong man dropped, like a felled ox, senseless on the stage.

When consciousness returned I was lying flat on my back, and several persons were bending over me.

"Keep down,—don't rise," some one said.

"What has happened?" I asked.

"Nothing,—only you were a little faint."

"Faint? A man who can lift a thousand pounds faint—at the sight of an audience? Absurd! Let me rise."

And in spite of all opposition I rose, grasped my manuscript, walked to the front of the stage, and resumed my lecture. Alas!

"Reaching above our nature does no good;
We must sink back into our own flesh and blood."

I had not proceeded far before I felt symptoms of a repetition of the calamity; and lest I should be overtaken before I could retreat, I stammered a few words of apology, and

withdrew ingloriously from public view. Fresh air and a draught of water, which some obliging friend had dashed with *eau-de-vie*, soon restored me. But I took the advice of friends and did not make a third attempt that evening.

The audience, had it been wholly composed of brothers and sisters, could not have been more indulgent and considerate. One skeptical gentleman was heard to say,—

Page 148

"I don't believe he can lift nine hundred pounds."

And another added,—

"Nor I,—any more than that he can shoulder a barrel of flour."

"Or raise his body by the little finger of one hand," said another.

Whereupon a venerable citizen, a gentleman long known and respected as the very soul of honor, truthfulness, and uprightness, came forward on the stage before the audience, and with emphatic earnestness, and in a loud, intrepid tone of voice, exclaimed,—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—The heat of the room was too much for the lecturer; but he can easily do all the feats announced in the bills. *I've seen him do them twenty times.*"

The dear, but infatuated old gentleman! He had never seen me do anything of the kind. He hardly knew me by sight. He thought only of coming to the rescue of an unfortunate lecturer, prostrated on the very threshold of his career; and a friendly hallucination made him for the moment really believe what he said. His unpremeditated assertion must have been set down by the recording angel on the same page with Uncle Toby's oath, and then obliterated in the same manner.

Ten days after the above-mentioned catastrophe, having engaged the largest hall in Boston, (the Music Hall,) I delivered my lecture—in the words of the newspapers—"with *ec/lat.*" The illustrations of strength which I exhibited on the occasion, though far inferior to subsequent efforts, were looked on as most extraordinary. The weight I lifted before the audience, with my hands alone, was nine hundred and twenty-nine pounds. This was testified to by the City Sealer of Weights and Measures, Mr. Moulton. My success induced me to repeat my lecture in other places. Invitations and liberal offers poured in upon me from all directions; and during the ensuing seasons, I lectured in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Albany, and many of the principal cities throughout the Northern States and the Canadas.

To return to my lifting experiments. I had promised my father to "stop at a thousand pounds." In the autumn of 1859 I had reached ten hundred and thirty-two pounds. An incident now occurred that induced me to reconsider my promise and get absolution from it. One day, while engaged in lifting, I had a visit from two powerful-looking men who asked permission to try my weight. One of them was five feet ten inches in height, and a hundred and ninety-two pounds in weight. The other was fully six feet in his stockings, and two hundred and twelve pounds in weight,—a fearful superiority in the eyes of a man, under five feet seven and weighing less than a hundred and fifty pounds. The smaller of these men failed to lift eight of my iron disks, which, with the connections, amounted to eight hundred and twenty-seven pounds. The larger

individual fairly lifted them at the second or third trial, but declined to attempt an increase. They left me, and I soon, afterward heard that they were practising with a view of “outlifting Dr. Windship.”

Page 149

My father had incautiously remarked to me, "Those huge fellows, with a little practice, can lift your weight and you on top of it. You can't expect to compete with giants." This decided me to test the question whether five feet seven must necessarily yield to mere bulk in the attainment of the maximum of human strength. I had the start of my competitors by some two hundred pounds, and I determined to preserve that distance between us. In the autumn of that year I advanced to lifting with the hands eleven hundred and thirty-three pounds, and in the spring of 1860 to twelve hundred and eight. I have had no evidence that my competitors ever got beyond a thousand pounds; though I doubt not, if they had had my leisure for practice, they might have surpassed me.

In July, 1860, I commenced lifting by means of a padded rope over my shoulders,—my body, during the act of lifting, being steadied and partly supported by my hands grasping a stout frame at each side. After a few unsuccessful preliminary trials, I quickly advanced to fourteen hundred pounds. The stretching of the rope now proved so great an annoyance, that I substituted for it a stout leather band of double thickness, about two inches and a half wide, and which had been subjected to a process which was calculated to render it proof against stretching more than half an inch under any weight it was capable of sustaining. But on trial, I found, almost to my despair, that it was of a far more yielding nature than the rope, and consequently the rope was again brought into requisition. A few weeks of unsatisfactory practice followed, when it occurred to me that an iron chain, inasmuch as it could not stretch, might be advantageously used, provided it could be so padded as not to chafe my shoulders. After many experiments I succeeded in this substitution; but the chain had yet one objection in common with the rope and the strap, arising from the difficulty of getting it properly adjusted. I contented myself with its use, however, until the spring of 1861, when I hit upon a contrivance which has proved a complete success. It consists of a wooden yoke fitting across my shoulders, and having two chains connected with it in such a manner as to enable me to lift on every occasion to the most advantage. With this contrivance my lifting-power has advanced with mathematical certainty, slowly, but surely, to *two thousand and seven pounds*, up to this twenty-third day of November, 1861.

In my public experiments in lifting, when I have not used the iron weights cast for the purpose, I have, as a convenient substitute, used kegs of nails. It recently occurred to me, that, if, instead of these kegs, I could employ a number of men selected from the audience, the spectacle would be still more satisfactory to the skeptical. Accordingly I contrived an apparatus by means of which I have been able to present this convincing proof of the actual weight lifted. I introduced it after my lecture at the Town-Hall in Brighton, Massachusetts, on the 9th of October, 1861; and the following account of the result appeared in one of the city papers:—

Page 150

“Standing upon a staging at an elevation of about eight or ten feet from the floor, the Doctor lifted and sustained, for a considerable time and without apparent difficulty, a platform suspended beneath him on which stood twelve gentlemen, all heavier individually than the Doctor himself, and weighing, inclusive of the entire apparatus lifted with them, *nearly nineteen hundred pounds avoirdupois*. In the performance of this tremendous feat, Dr. W. employed neither straps, bands, nor girdle,—nothing in short but a stout oaken stick fitting across his shoulders, and having attached to it a couple of rather formidable-looking chains. At his request, a committee, appointed by the audience, and furnished with one of Fairbanks’s scales, superintended all the experiments.”

The exact weight lifted on this occasion was eighteen hundred and thirty-six pounds. A few evenings after, I lifted, in the same way, in Lynn, eighteen hundred and sixty; in Brookline, eighteen hundred and ninety; in Medford, nineteen hundred and thirty-four; in Maiden, nineteen hundred and two; and in Charlestown, nineteen hundred and forty.

As my strength is still increasing in an undiminished ratio, I am fairly beginning to wonder where the limit will be; and the old adage of the camel’s back and the last feather occasionally suggests itself. I have fixed three thousand pounds as my *ne plus ultra*.

* * * * *

FREMONT’S HUNDRED DAYS IN MISSOURI.

I.

The narrative we propose to give of events in Missouri is not intended to be a defence of General Fremont, nor in any respect an answer to the charges which have been made against him. Our purpose is the more humble one of presenting a hasty sketch of the expedition to Springfield, confining ourselves almost entirely to the incidents which came under the observation of an officer of the General’s staff.

General Fremont was in command of the Western Department precisely One Hundred Days. He assumed the command at the time when the army with which Lyon had captured Camp Jackson and won the Battle of Booneville was on the point of dissolution. The enemy, knowing that the term for which our soldiers had been enlisted was near its close, began offensive movements along their whole line. Cairo, Bird’s Point, Iron-ton, and Springfield were simultaneously threatened. Jeff Thompson wrote to his friends in St. Louis, promising to be in that city in a month. The sad, but glorious day upon Wilson’s Creek defeated the Rebel designs, and compelled McCulloch, Pillow, Hardee, and Thompson to retire.

Page 151

Relieved from immediate danger, General Fremont found an opportunity to organize the expedition down the Mississippi. Won by the magic of his name and the ceaseless energy of his action, the hardy youth of the Northwest, flocked into St. Louis, eager to share his labors and his glory. There was little time for organization and discipline. They were armed with such weapons as could be procured against the competition of the General Government, and at once forwarded to the exposed points. History can furnish few parallels to the hasty levy and organization of the Army of the West. When suddenly required to defend Washington, the Government was able to summon the equipped and disciplined militia of the East, and could call upon the inexhaustible resources of a wealthy and skilful people. But in the West there was neither a disciplined militia nor trained mechanics. Men, indeed, brave, earnest, patriotic men, were plenty,—men who appreciated the magnitude and importance of the task before them, and who were confident of their ability to accomplish it. But to introduce order into their tumultuous ranks, to place arms in their eager hands, to clothe and feed them, to provide them with transportation and equipage for the march, and inspire them with confidence for the siege and the battle,—this labor the General, almost unaided, was called upon to perform. Like all the rest of our generals, he was without experience in military affairs of such magnitude and urgency, and he was compelled to rely chiefly upon the assistance of men entirely without military training and knowledge. The general staff and the division and brigade staffs were, from the necessity of the case, made up mainly of civilians. A small number of foreign officers brought to his aid their learning and experience, and a still smaller number of West-Point officers gave him their invaluable assistance. In spite of all difficulties the work proceeded. In six weeks the strategic positions were placed in a state of defence, and an army of sixty thousand men, with a greater than common proportion of cavalry and artillery, stood ready to clear Missouri of the invader and to open the valley of the Mississippi. At this time the sudden appearance of Price in the West, and the fall of Lexington, compelled the General to take the field.

We will now confine ourselves to the narrative of the incidents of the march to Springfield, as it is given in the journal which has been placed in our hands.

FROM ST. LOUIS TO WARSAW.

St. Louis, September 27th, 1861. For four days the head-quarters have been ready to take the field at an hour's notice. The baggage has been packed, the wagons loaded, horses have stood saddled all through the day, and the officers have been sitting at their desks, booted and spurred, awaiting the order for their departure. It is not unlikely that the suspense in which they are held and the constant condition of readiness which is required of them are a sort of preliminary discipline to which the General is subjecting them. Yesterday the body-guard left by the river, and the staff-horses went upon the same steamer, so that we cannot be detained much longer.

Page 152

Jefferson City, September 28th. Yesterday, at eleven o'clock, we were informed that the General would leave for Jefferson City at noon; and that those members of the staff who were not ready would be left behind, and their places filled in the field. At the appointed hour we were all gathered at the depot. The General drove down entirely unattended. Most of the train was occupied by a battalion of sharp-shooters, but in the rear car the General and his staff found seats. The day was cloudy and damp; there was no one to say farewell; and as the train passed through the cold hills, a feeling of gloom seemed to pervade the company. Nature was in harmony with the clouded fortunes of our General, and the laboring locomotive dragged us at a snail's pace, as if it were unwilling to assist us in our adventure.

Those who were strangers in the West looked out eagerly for the Missouri, hoping to find the valley of the river rich in scenery which would relieve the tedium of the journey. But when we came out upon the river-bank and looked at the dull shores, and the sandy bed, which the scant stream does not cover, but through which it creeps, treacherous and slimy, in half a dozen channels, there was no pleasure to the eye, no relief for the spirit. Late in the afternoon we approached a little village, and were greeted with music and hearty cheers,—the first sign of hospitality the day had furnished. It was the German settlement of Hermann, famous for good cheer and good wines. The Home-Guard was drawn up at the station, files of soldiers kept the passage clear to the dining-room, and through an avenue of muskets, and amidst the shouts of an enthusiastic little crowd, the General passed into a room decorated with flowers, through the centre of which was stretched a table groaning under the weight of delicious fruits and smoking viands. With little ceremony the hungry company seated themselves, and vigorously assailed the tempting array, quite unconscious of the curious glances of a motley assemblage of men, women, and children who assisted at the entertainment. The day had been dark, the journey dull, and the people we had seen silent and sullen; but here was a welcome, the hearty, generous welcome of sympathizing friends, who saw in their guests the defenders of their homes. They were Germans, and our language came broken from their lips. But they are Germans who fill the ranks of our regiments. Look where you will, and the sturdy Teuton meets your eye. If Missouri shall be preserved for the Union and civilization, it will be by the valor of men who learned their lessons of American liberty and glory upon the banks of the Rhine and the Elbe. We think of this at Hermann, and we pledge our German hosts and our German fellow-soldiers in strong draughts of delicious Catawba,—not such Catawba as is sent forth from the slovenly manufactories of Cincinnati, for the careful vintners of Hermann select the choice grapes, and in the quiet cellars of Hermann the Catawba has time to grow old and to ripen.

Page 153

We at length extricate ourselves from the maze of corn-cakes and pancakes, waffles and muffins and pies without number, with which our kind friends of Hermann tempt and tantalize our satiated palates, and once more set forth after the wheezing, reluctant locomotive, over the rough road, through the dreary hills, along the bank of the treacherous river.

At ten o'clock, in ten weary hours, we have accomplished one hundred and twenty miles, and have reached Jefferson City. The train backs and starts ahead, halts and backs and jerks, and finally, with a long sigh of relief, the locomotive stops, and a gentleman in citizen's dress enters the car, carrying a lantern in his hand. It was Brigadier-General Price, commanding at Jefferson City. He took possession of the General, and, with us closely following, left the car. But leaving the train was a somewhat more difficult matter. We went along-side the train, over the train, under the train, but still those cars seemed to surround us like a corral. We at length outflanked the train, but still failed to extricate ourselves from the labyrinth. Informed, or rather deluded, by the "lantern dimly burning," we floundered into ditches and scrambled out of them, we waded mud-puddles and stumbled over boulders, until finally the ever-present train disappeared in the darkness, we rushed up a steep hill, heard the welcome sound as our feet touched a brick walk, and, after turning two or three corners, found ourselves in the narrow hall of the "principal hotel." We were tired and disgusted, and no one stood upon the order of his going, but went at once to sleep upon whatever floor, table, or bed offered itself.

This morning we are pleased to hear that the General has resolved to go into camp. Of course the best houses in the place are at our disposal, but it is wisely thought that our soldier-life will not begin until we are fairly under canvas.

All day we have had an exhibition of a Missouri crowd. The sidewalk has been fringed with curious gazers waiting to catch a glimpse of the General. Foote, the comedian, said, that, until he landed on the quays at Dublin, he never knew what the London beggars did with their old clothes. One should go to Missouri to see what the New-York beggars do with their old clothes. But it is not the dress alone. Such vacant, listless faces, with laziness written in every line, and ignorance seated upon every feature! Is it for these that the descendants of New England and the thrifty Germans are going forth to battle? If Missouri depended upon the Missourians, there would be little chance for her safety, and, indeed, not very much to save.

October 4th. We have been in camp since Sunday, the 29th of September. Our tents are pitched upon a broad shelf half-way down a considerable hill. Behind us the hill rises a hundred feet or more, shutting us in from the south; in front, to the north, the hill inclines to a ravine which separates us from other less lofty hills. Our camp is upon open ground, but there is a fine forest to the east and west.

Page 154

In a few days we have all become very learned in camp-life. We have found out what we want and what we do not want. Fortunately, St. Louis is near at hand, and we send there to provide for our necessities, and also to get rid of our superfluities. The troops have been gathering all the week. There are several regiments in front of us, and batteries of artillery behind us. Go where you will, spread out upon the plain or shining amidst the trees you will see the encampments. Head-quarters are busy providing for the transportation and the maintenance of this great force; and as rapidly as the railway can carry them, regiment after regiment is sent west. There is plenty of work for the staff-officers; and yet our life is not without its pleasures. The horses and their riders need training. This getting used to the saddle is no light matter for the civilian spoiled by years of ease and comfort. But the General gives all his officers plenty of horseback discipline. Then there is the broadsword exercise to fill up the idle time. Evening is the festive hour in camp; though I judge, from what I have seen and heard, that our camp has little of the gayety which is commonly associated with the soldier's life. We are too busy for merrymaking, but in the evening there are pleasant little circles around the fires or in the snug tents. There are old campaigners among us, men who have served in Mexico and Utah, and others whose lives have been passed upon the Plains; they tell us campaign stories, and teach the green hands the slang and the airs of the camp. But the unfailing amusement is the band. This is the special pride of the General, and soon after nightfall the musicians appear upon the little *plaza* around which the tents are grouped. At the first note the audience gather. The guardsmen come up from their camp on the edge of the ravine, the negro-quarter is deserted, the wagoners flock in from the surrounding forest, the officers stroll out of their tents,—a picturesque crowd stands around the huge camp-fire. The programme is simple and not often varied. It uniformly opens with "The Star-Spangled Banner," and closes with "Home, Sweet Home." By way of a grand *finale*, a procession is organized every night, led by some score of negro torch-bearers, which makes the circuit of the camp,—a performance which never fails to produce something of a stampede among the animals.

Last night we had an alarm. About eleven o'clock, when the camp was fairly asleep, some one tried to pass a picket half a mile west of us. The guard fired at the intruder, and in an instant the regimental drums sounded the long roll. We started from our beds, with frantic haste buckled on swords, spurs, and pistols, hurried servants after the horses, and hastened to report for duty to the General. The officer who was first to appear found him standing in front of his tent, himself the first man in camp who was ready for service. Presently a messenger came with information as to the cause of the alarm, and we were dismissed.

Page 155

At two o'clock in the morning there was another alarm. Again the body-guard bugles sounded and the drums rolled. Again soldiers sprang to their arms, and officers rushed to report to the General,—the first man finding him, as before, leaning upon his sword in front of his tent. But, alas for the reputation of our mess, not one of its number appeared. In complete unconsciousness of danger or duty, we slept on. Colonel S. said he heard “the music, but thought it was a continuation of the evening’s serenade,” and went to sleep again. It was not long before we discovered that the General knew that four members of his staff did not report to him when the long roll was sounded.

There are several encampments on the hill-sides north of us which are in full view from our quarters, and it is not the least of our amusements to watch the regiments going through the afternoon drill. In the soft light of these golden days we see the long blue lines, silver-tipped, wheel and turn, scatter and form, upon the brown hill-sides. Now the slopes are dotted with skirmishers, and puffs of gray smoke rise over the kneeling figures; again a solid wall of bayonets gleams along the crest of the hill, and peals of musketry echo through the woods in the ravines.

Colonel Myscall Johnson, a Methodist exhorter and formidable Rebel marauder, is said to be forty miles south of us with a small force, and some of the Union farmers came into camp to-day asking for protection. Zagonyi, the commander of the body-guard, is anxious to descend upon Johnson and scatter his thieving crew; but it is not probable he will obtain permission. The Union men of Missouri are quite willing to have you fight for them, but their patriotism does not go farther than this. These people represent that three-fourths of the inhabitants of Miller County are loyal. The General probably thinks, if this be true, they ought to be able to take care of Johnson’s men. But a suggestion that they should defend their own homes and families astonishes our Missouri friends. General Lyon established Home-Guards throughout the State, and armed them with several thousand Springfield muskets taken from the arsenal at St. Louis. Most of these muskets are now in Price’s army, and are the most formidable weapons he has. In some instances the Rebels enlisted in the Home-Guards and thus controlled the organization, carrying whole companies into Price’s ranks. In other cases bands of Rebels scoured the country, went to the house of every Home-Guard, and took away his musket. In the German settlements alone the Guards still preserve their organization and their arms.

Page 156

A few days ago it fell to the lot of our mess to entertain a Rebel officer who had come in with a flag of truce. Strange to say, he was a New-Yorker, and had a younger brother in one of the Indiana regiments. He was a pleasant and courteous gentleman, albeit his faded dress, with its red-flannel trimmings, did not indicate great prosperity in the enemy's camp. We gave him the best meal we could command. I apologized because it was no better. He replied,—“Make no apology, Sir. It is the best dinner I have eaten these three months. I have campaigned it a good deal this summer upon three ears of roast corn a day.” He added,—“I never have received a cent of pay. None of us have. We never expect to receive any.” This captain has already seen considerable service. He was at Booneville, Carthage, Wilson's Creek, and Lexington. His descriptions of these engagements were animated and interesting, his point of view presenting matters in a novel light. He spoke particularly of a gunner stationed at the first piece in Totten's battery, saying that his energy and coolness made him one of the most conspicuous figures of the day. “Our sharp-shooters did their best, but they failed to bring him down. There he was all day long, doing his duty as if on parade.” He also told us there was no hard fighting at Lexington. “We knew,” said he, “the place was short of water, and so we spared our men, and waited for time to do the work.”

Camp Lovejoy, October 7th. For the last two days the troops have been leaving Jefferson City, and the densely peopled hills are bare. This morning, at seven o'clock, we began to break camp. There was no little trouble and confusion in lowering the tents and packing the wagons. It took us a long time to-day, but we shall soon get accustomed to it, and become able to move more quickly. At noon we left Jefferson City, going due west.

Our little column consists of three companies of the body-guard, numbering about two hundred and fifty men, a battalion of sharp-shooters (infantry) under Major Holman, one hundred and eighty strong, and the staff. The march is in the following order. The first company of the guard act as advance-guard; then comes the General, followed by his staff, riding by twos, according to rank; the other two companies of the guard come next. The sharp-shooters accompany and protect the train. Our route lay through a broken and heavily wooded region. The roads were very bad, but the day was bright, and the march was a succession of beautiful pictures, of which the long and brilliant line of horsemen winding through the forest was the chief ornament.

We reached camp at three o'clock. It is a lovely spot, upon a hill-side, with a clear, swift-running brook washing the foot of the hill. Presently the horses are tied along the fences, riders are lounging under the trees, the kitchen-fires are lighted, guardsmen are scattered along the banks of the stream bathing, the wagons roll heavily over the prairie and are drawn up along the edge of the wood, tents are raised, tent-furniture is hastily arranged, and the camp looks as if it had been there a month. Before dark a regiment of infantry and two batteries of artillery come up. The men sleep in the open air without tents, and innumerable fires cover the hill-sides.

Page 157

We are upon land which is owned by an influential and wealthy citizen, who is an open Secessionist in opinion, though he has had the prudence not to take up arms. By way of a slight punishment, the General has annoyed the old man by naming his farm "Camp Owen Lovejoy," a name which the Union neighbors will not fail to make perpetual.

California, October 8th. This morning we broke camp at six o'clock and marched at eight. The road was bad, for which the beauty of the scenery did not entirely compensate. To-day's experience has taught us how completely an army is tied to the wheels of the wagons. Tell a general how fast the train can travel and he will know how long the journey will be. We passed our wagons in a terrible plight: some upset, some with balky mules, some stuck in the mud, and some broken down. The loud-swearing drivers, and the stubborn, patient, hard-pulling mules did not fail to vary and enliven the scene.

A journey of eighteen miles brought us to this place, where we are encamped upon the county fair-ground. California is a mean, thriftless village; there are no trees shading the cottages, no shrubbery in the yards. The place is only two or three years old, but already wears a slovenly air of decay.

I set out with Colonel L. upon a foraging expedition. We passed a small house, in front of which a fat little negro-girl was drawing a bucket of water from the well, the girl puffing and the windlass creaking.

"Will Massa have a drink of water?"

It was the first token of hospitality since Hermann. We stopped and drank from the bucket, but had not been there a minute before the mistress ran out, with suspicion in her face, to protect her property. A single question sufficed to show the politics of that house.

"Where is your husband?"

"He went off a little while ago."

This was the Missouri way of informing us that he was in the Rebel army.

A little farther on we came to what was evidently the chief house of the place. A bevy of maidens stood at the gate, supported by a pleasant matron, fair and fat.

"Can you sell us some bread?" was our rather practical inquiry.

"We have none baked, but will bake you some by sundown," was the answer, given in a hearty, generous voice.

The bargain was soon made. Our portly dame proved to be a Virginian, who still cherished a true Virginian love for the Union.

Tipton, October 9th. The General was in the saddle very early, and left camp before the staff was ready. I was fortunate enough to be on hand, and indulged in some excusable banter when the tardy members of our company rode up after we were a mile or two on the way. We have marched twelve miles to-day through a lovely country. We have left the hills and stony roads behind us, and now we pass over beautiful little prairies, bordered by forests blazing with the crimson and gold of autumn. The

Page 158

day's ride has been delightful, the atmosphere soft and warm, the sky cloudless, and the prairie firm and hard under our horses' feet. We passed several regiments on the road, who received the General with unbounded enthusiasm; and when we entered Tipton, we found the country covered with tents, and alive with men and horses. Amidst the cheers of the troops, we passed through the camps, and settled down upon a fine prairie-farm a mile to the southwest of Tipton. The divisions of Asboth and Hunter are here, not less than twelve thousand men, and from this point our course is to be southward.

Camp Asboth, near Tipton, October 11th. For the last twenty-four hours it has rained violently, and the prairie upon which we are encamped is a sea of black mud. But the tents are tight, and inside we contrive to keep comparatively warm.

The camp is filled with speculations as to our future course. Shall we follow Price, who is crossing the Osage now, or are we to garrison the important positions upon this line and return to St. Louis and prepare for the expedition down the river? The General is silent, his reserve is never broken, and no one knows what his plans are, except those whose business it is to know. I will here record the plan of the campaign.

Our campaign has been in some measure decided by the movements of the Rebels. The sudden appearance of Price in the West, gathering to his standard many thousands of the disaffected, has made it necessary for the General to check his bold and successful progress. Carthage, Wilson's Creek, and Lexington have given to Price a prestige which it is essential to destroy. The gun-boats cannot be finished for two months or more, and we cannot go down the Mississippi until the flotilla is ready; and from the character of the country upon each side of the river it will be difficult to operate there with a large body of men. In Southwestern Missouri we are sure of fine weather till the last of November, the prairies are high and dry, and there are no natural obstacles except such as it will excite the enthusiasm of the troops to overcome. Therefore the General has determined to pursue Price until he catches him. He can march faster than we can now, but we shall soon be able to move faster than it is possible for him to do. The Rebels have no base of operations from which to draw supplies; they depend entirely upon foraging; and for this reason Price has to make long halts wherever he finds mills, and grind the flour. He is so deficient in equipage, also, that it will be impossible for him to carry his troops over great distances. But we can safely calculate that Price and Rains will not leave the State; their followers are enlisted for six months, and are already becoming discontented at their continued retreat, and will not go with them beyond the borders. This is the uniform testimony of deserters and scouts. Price disposed of, either by a defeat or by the dispersal

Page 159

of his army, we are to proceed to Bird's Point, or into Arkansas, according to circumstances. A blow at Little Rock seems now the wisest, as it is the boldest plan. We can reach that place by the middle of November; and if we obtain possession of it, the position of the enemy upon the Mississippi will be completely turned. The communications of Pillow, Hardee, and Thompson, who draw their supplies through Arkansas, will be cut off, they will be compelled to retreat, and our flotilla and the reinforcements can descend the river to assist in the operations against Memphis and the attack upon New Orleans.

This campaign may be difficult, the army will have to encounter hardships and perils, but, unless defeated in the field, the enterprise will be successful. No hardships or perils can daunt the spirit of the General, or arrest the march of the enthusiastic army his genius has created.

Our column is composed of five divisions, under Generals Hunter, Pope, Sigel, McKinstry, and Asboth, and numbers about thirty thousand men, including over five thousand cavalry and eighty-six pieces of artillery, a large proportion of which are rifled. The infantry is generally well, though not uniformly armed. But the cavalry is very badly armed. Colonel Carr's regiment has no sabres, except for the commissioned and non-commissioned officers. The men carry Hall's carbines and revolvers. Major Waring's fine corps, the Fremont Hussars, is also deficient in sabres, and some of the companies are provided with lances,—formidable weapons in skilful bands, but only an embarrassment to our raw troops.

Lane and Sturgis are to come from Kansas and join us on the Osage, and Wyman is to bring his command from Rolla and meet us south of that river.

Paducah, Cairo, Bird's Point, Cape Girardeau, and Ironton are well protected against attack, and the commanders at those posts are ordered to engage the enemy as soon as we catch Price; and if the Rebels retreat, they are to pursue them. Thus our expedition is part of a combined and extended movement, and, instead of having no purpose except the defeat of Price, we are on the road to New Orleans.

Next Monday we are to start. Asboth will go from here, Hunter by way of Versailles, McKinstry from Syracuse, Pope from his present position in the direction of Booneville, and Sigel from Sedalia. We are to cross the Osage at Warsaw; and as Sigel has the shortest distance to march, he is expected to reach that town first.

Precious time has already been lost because of a lack of transportation and supplies. Foraging parties have been scouring the country, and large numbers of wagons, horses, and mules have been brought in. This property is all appraised, and when taken from Union men it is paid for. In doubtful cases a certificate is given to the owner, which

recites that he is to be paid in case he shall continue to be loyal to the Government. We thus obtain a hold upon these people which an oath of allegiance every day would not give us.

Page 160

Camp Asboth, October 13th. Mr. Cameron, Senator Chandler of Michigan, and Adjutant-General Thomas arrived at an early hour this morning; and at eight o'clock, the General, attended by his staff and body-guard, repaired to the Secretary's quarters. After a short stay there, the whole party, except General Thomas, set out for Syracuse to review the division of General McKinstry. The day was fine, and we proceeded at a hand gallop until we reached a prairie some three or four miles wide. Here the Secretary set spurs to his horse, and we tore across the plain as fast as our animals could be driven. Passing from the open plain into a forest, the whole cortege dashed over a very rough road with but little slackening of our pace; nor did we draw rein until we reached Syracuse. A few moments were passed in the interchange of the usual civilities, and we then went a mile farther on, to a large prairie upon which the division was drawn up. McKinstry has the flower of the army. He has in his ranks some regular infantry, cavalry, and artillery, and among his subordinate officers are Totten, Steele, Kelton, and Stanley, all distinguished in the regular service. There was no time for the observance of the usual forms of a review. The Secretary passed in front and behind the lines, made a short address, and left immediately by rail for St. Louis, stopping at Tipton to review Asboth's division. The staff and guard rode slowly back to camp, both men and animals having had quite enough of the day's work. It is said, that Adjutant-General Thomas has expressed the opinion that we shall not be able to move from here, because we have no transportation. As we are ordered to march to-morrow, the prediction will soon be tested.

Camp Zagonyi, October 14th. We were in the saddle this morning at nine o'clock, A short march of eleven miles, in a south-westerly direction, and through a prairie country, brought us to our camp. As we came upon the summit of a hill which lies to the west of our present position, our attention was directed to a group standing in front of a house about a mile distant. We had hardly caught sight of them when half a dozen men and three women mounted their horses and started at full speed towards the northeast, each man leading a horse. The General ordered some of the body-guard to pursue and try to stop the fugitives. We eagerly watched the chase. A narrow valley separated us from the elevation upon which the farm-house stood, and a small stream with low banks ran through the bottom of the valley. The pursuit was active, the guardsmen ran their horses down the slope, leaped the pool, and rushed up the opposite hill; but the runaways were on fresh horses, and had no rough ground to pass, and so they escaped. One of them lost the horse he was leading, and it was caught by a guardsman. This was the first exhibition we have seen of a desire on the part of the inhabitants to avoid us.

Page 161

The General established head-quarters along-side the house where we first discovered the Rebel party. Our position is the most beautiful one we have yet found. To the west stretches an undulating prairie, separated from us by a valley, into which our camping-ground subsides with a mild declivity; to the north is a range of low hills, their round sides unbroken by shrub or tree; while to the south stretches an extensive tract of low land, densely covered with timber, and resplendent with the colors of autumn.

Before dark the whole of Asboth's division came up and encamped on the slopes to the west and north: not less than seven thousand men are here. This evening the scene is beautiful. I sit in the door of my lodge, and as far as the eye can reach the prairie is dotted with tents, the dark forms of men and horses, the huge white-topped wagons,—and a thousand fires gleam through the faint moonlight. Our band is playing near the General's quarters, its strains are echoed by a score of regimental bands, and their music is mingled with the numberless noises of camp, the hum of voices, the laughter from the groups around the fires, the clatter of hoofs as some rider hurries to the General, the distant challenges of the sentries, the neighing of horses, the hoarse bellowing of the mules, and the clinking of the cavalry anvils. This, at last, is the romance of war. How soon will our ears be saluted by sterner music?

Camp Hudson, October 15th. We moved at seven o'clock this morning. For the first four miles the road ran through woods intersected by small streams. The ground was as rough as it could well be, and the teams which had started before us were struggling through the mire and over the rocks. We dashed past them at a fast trot, and in half an hour came upon a high prairie. The prairies of Southern Missouri are not large and flat, like the monotonous levels of Central Illinois, but they are rolling, usually small, and broken by frequent narrow belts of timber. In the woods there are hills, rocky soil, and always one, often two streams, clear and rapid as a mountain-brook in New England.

The scenery to-day was particularly attractive, a constant succession of prairies surrounded by wooded hills. As we go south, the color of the forest becomes richer, and the atmosphere more mellow and hazy.

During the first two hours we passed several regiments of foot. The men were nearly all Germans, and I scanned the ranks carefully, longing to see an American countenance. I found none, but caught sight of one arch-devil-may-care Irish face. I doubt whether there is a company in the army without an Irishman in it, though the proportion of Irishmen in our ranks is not so great as at the East.

Page 162

Early in the afternoon we rode up to a farm-house, at the gate of which a middle-aged woman was standing, crying bitterly. The General stopped, and the woman at once assailed him vehemently. She told him the soldiers had that day taken her husband and his team away with them. She said that there was no one left to take care of her old blind mother,—at which allusion, the blind mother tottered down the walk and took a position in the rear of the attacking party,—that they had two orphan girls, the children of a deceased sister, and the orphans had lost their second father. The assailants were here reinforced by the two orphan girls. She protested that her husband was loyal,—“Truly, Sir, he was a Union man and voted for the Union, and always told his neighbors Disunion would do nothing except bring trouble upon innocent people, as indeed it has,” said she, with a fresh flood of tears. The General was moved by her distress, and ordered Colonel E. to have the man, whose name is Rutherford, sent back at once.

A few rods farther on we came to another house, in front of which was another weeping woman afflicted in the same way. Several little flaxen-haired children surrounded her, and a white-bearded man, trembling with age, stood behind, leaning upon a staff. Her earnestness far surpassed that of Mrs. Rutherford. She wrung her hands, and could hardly speak for her tears. She seized the General's hand and entreated him to return her husband, with an expression of distress which the hardest heart could not resist. The General comforted the poor woman with a few kind words, and promised to grant what she asked.

It is very difficult to refuse such requests, and yet, in point of fact, no great hardship or sacrifice is required of these men. They profess to be Union men, but they are not in arms for the Union, and a Federal general now asks of them that they shall help the army for a day with their teams. To those who come here from all parts of the nation to defend these homes this does not appear to be a harsh demand.

We arrived at camp about five o'clock. Our day's march was twenty-two miles, and the wagons were far behind. A neighboring farm-house afforded the General and a few of his officers a dinner, but it was late in the evening before the tents were pitched.

Warsaw, October 17th. Yesterday we made our longest march, making twenty-five miles, and encamped three miles north of this place.

It is a problem, why riding in a column should be so much more wearisome than riding alone, but so it undeniably is. Men who would think little of a sixty-mile ride were quite broken down by to-day's march.

Page 163

As soon as we reached camp, the General asked for volunteers from the staff to ride over to Warsaw: of course the whole staff volunteered. On the way we met General Sigel. This very able and enterprising officer is a pleasant, scholarly-looking gentleman, his studious air being increased by the spectacles he always wears. His figure is light, active, and graceful, and he is an excellent horseman. The country has few better heads than his. Always on the alert, he is full of resources, and no difficulties daunt him. Planter, Pope, and McKinstry are behind, waiting for tea and coffee, beans and flour, and army-wagons. Sigel gathered the ox-team and the farmers' wagons and brought his division forward with no food for his men but fresh beef. His advance-guard is already across the Osage, and in a day or two his whole division will be over.

Guided by General Sigel, we rode down to the ford across the Osage. The river here is broad and rapid, and its banks are immense bare cliffs rising one hundred feet perpendicularly from the water's edge. The ford is crooked, uncertain, and never practicable except for horsemen. The ferry is an old flat-boat drawn across by a rope, and the ascent up the farther bank is steep and rocky. It will not answer to leave in our rear this river, liable to be changed by a night's rain into a fierce torrent, with no other means of crossing it than the rickety ferry. A bridge must at once be built, strong and firm, a safe road for the army in case of disaster. So decides the General. And as we look upon the swift-running river and its rocky shores, cold and gloomy in the twilight, every one agrees that the General is right. His decision has since been strongly supported, for to-day two soldiers of the Fremont Hussars were drowned in trying to cross the ford, and the water is now rising rapidly.

This morning we moved into Warsaw, and for the first time the staff is billeted in the Secession houses of the town; but the General clings to his tent. Our mess is quartered in the house of the county judge, who says his sympathies are with the South. But the poor man is so frightened, that we pity and protect him.

Bridge-building is now the sole purpose of the army. There is no saw-mill here, nor any lumber. The forest must be cut down and fashioned into a bridge, as well as the tools and the skill at command will permit. Details are already told off from the sharpshooters, the cadets, and even the body-guard, and the banks of the river now resound with the quick blows of their axes.

Warsaw, October 21st. Four days we have been waiting for the building of the bridge. By night and by day the work goes on, and now the long black shape is striding slowly across the stream. In a few hours it will have gained the opposite bank, and then, Ho, for Springfield!

Page 164

Our scouts have come in frequently the last few days. They tell us Price is at Stockton, and is pushing rapidly on towards the southwest. He has been grinding corn near Stockton, and has now food enough for another journey. His army numbers twenty thousand men, of whom five thousand have no arms. The rest carry everything, from double-barrelled shot-guns to the Springfield muskets taken from the Home-Guards. They load their shot-guns with a Minie-ball and two buck-shot, and those who have had experience say that at one hundred yards they are very effective weapons. There is little discipline in the Rebel army, and the only organization is by companies. The men are badly clothed, and without shoes, and often without food. The deserters say that those who remain are waiting only to get the new clothes which McCulloch is expected to bring from the South.

McCulloch, the redoubtable Ben, does not seem to be held in high esteem by the Rebel soldiers. They say he lacks judgment and self-command. But all speak well of Price. No one can doubt that he is a man of unusual energy and ability. McCulloch will increase Price's force to about thirty-five thousand, which number we must expect to meet.

Hunter and McKinstry have not yet appeared, but Pope reported himself last night, and some of his men came in to-day.

Camp White, October 22d. The bridge is built, and the army is now crossing the Osage. In five days a firm road has been thrown across the river, over which our troops may pass in a day. The General and staff crossed by the ferry, and are now encamped two miles south of the Pomme-de-Terre.

* * * * *

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN, ESQ., TO MR. HOSEA BIGLOW.

Letter from the REVEREND HOMER WILBUR, A.M., inclosing the Epistle aforesaid.

Jaalam, 15th Nov., 1861.

It is not from any idle wish to obtrude my humble person with undue prominence upon the publick view that I resume my pen upon the present occasion. *Juniores ad labores.* But having been a main instrument in rescuing the talent of my young parishioner from being buried in the ground, by giving it such warrant with the world as would be derived from a name already widely known by several printed discourses, (all of which I maybe permitted without immodesty to state have been deemed worthy of preservation in the Library of Harvard College by my esteemed friend Mr. Sibley,) it seemed becoming that

I should not only testify to the genuineness of the following production, but call attention to it, the more as Mr. Biglow had so long been silent as to be in danger of absolute oblivion. I insinuate no claim to any share in the authourship (*vix ea nostra voco*) of the works already published by Mr. Biglow, but merely take to myself the credit of having fulfilled toward them the office of taster, (*experto crede,*) who, having first tried, could

Page 165

afterward bear witness,—an office always arduous, and sometimes even dangerous, as in the ease of those devoted persons who venture their lives in the deglutition of patent medicines (*dolus latet in generalibus*, there is deceit in the most of them) and thereafter are wonderfully preserved long enough to append their signatures to testimonials in the diurnal and hebdomadal prints. I say not this as covertly glancing at the authours of certain manuscripts which have been submitted to my literary judgment, (though an epick in twenty-four books on the “Taking of Jericho” might, save for the prudent forethought of Mrs. Wilbur in secreting the same just as I had arrived beneath the walls and was beginning a catalogue of the various horns and their blowers, too ambitiously emulous in longanimity of Homer’s list of ships, might, I say, have rendered frustrate any hope I could entertain *vacare Musis* for the small remainder of my days,) but only further to secure myself against any imputation of unseemly forthputting. I will barely subjoin, in this connection, that, whereas Job was left to desire, in the soreness of his heart, that his adversary had written a book, as perchance misanthropically wishing to indite a review thereof, yet was not Satan allowed so far to tempt him as to send Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar each with an unprinted work in his wallet to be submitted to his censure. But of this enough. Were I in need of other excuse, I might add that I write by the express desire of Mr. Biglow himself, whose entire winter leisure is occupied, as he assures me, in answering demands for autographs, a labour exacting enough in itself, and egregiously so to him, who, being no ready penman, cannot sign so much as his name without strange contortions of the face (his nose, even, being essential to complete success) and painfully suppressed Saint-Vitus-dance of every muscle in his body. This, with his having been put in the Commission of the Peace by our excellent Governour (*O, si sic omnes!*) immediately on his accession to office, keeps him continually employed. *Haud inexpertus loquor*, having for many years written myself J.P., and being not seldom applied to for specimens of my chirography, a request to which I have sometimes too weakly assented, believing as I do that nothing written of set purpose can properly be called an autograph, but only those unpremeditated sallies and lively runnings which betray the fireside Man instead of the hunted Notoriety doubling on his pursuers. But it is time that I should bethink me of Saint Austin’s prayer, *Libera me a meipso*, if I would arrive at the matter in hand.

Page 166

Moreover, I had yet another reason for taking up the pen myself. I am informed that the “Atlantic Monthly” is mainly indebted for its success to the contributions and editorial supervision of Dr. Holmes, whose excellent “Annals of America” occupy an honoured place upon my shelves. The journal itself I have never seen; but if this be so, it should seem that the recommendation of a brother-clergyman (though *par magis quam similis*) would carry a greater weight. I suppose that you have a department for historical lucubrations, and should be glad, if deemed desirable, to forward for publication my “Collections for the Antiquities of Jaalam” and my (now happily complete) pedigree of the Wilbur family from *fons et origo*, the Wild-Boar of Ardennes. Withdrawn from the active duties of my profession by the settlement of a colleague-pastor, the Reverend Jeduthun Hitchcock, formerly of Brutus Four-Corners, I might find time for further contributions to general literature on similar topicks. I have made large advances toward a completer genealogy of Mrs. Wilbur’s family, the Pilcoxes, not, if I know myself, from any idle vanity, but with the sole desire of rendering myself useful in my day and generation. *Nulla dies sine linea*. I inclose a meteorological register, a list of the births, deaths, and marriages, and a few *memorabilia*, of longevity in Jaalam East Parish for the last half-century. Though spared to the unusual period of more than eighty years, I find no diminution of my faculties or abatement of my natural vigour, except a scarcely sensible decay of memory and a necessity of recurring to younger eyesight for the finer print in Cruden. It would gratify me to make some further provision for declining years from the emoluments of my literary labours. I had intended to effect an insurance on my life, but was deterred therefrom by a circular from one of the offices, in which the sudden deaths of so large a proportion of the insured was set forth as an inducement, that it seemed to me little less than a tempting of Providence. *Neque in summa inopia levis esse senectus potest, ne sapienti quidem*.

Thus far concerning Mr. Biglow; and so much seemed needful (*brevis esse laboro*) by way of preliminary, after a silence of fourteen years. He greatly fears lest he may in this essay have fallen below himself, well knowing, that, if exercise be dangerous on a full stomach, no less so is writing on a full reputation. Beset as he has been on all sides, he could not refrain, and would only imprecate patience till he shall again have “got the hang” (as he calls it) of an accomplishment long disused. The letter of Mr. Sawin was received some time in last June, and others have followed which will in due season be submitted to the publick. How largely his statements are to be depended on, I more than merely dubitate. He was always distinguished for a tendency to exaggeration,—it might almost be qualified by a stronger term. *Fortiter*

Page 167

mentire, aliquid haeret, seemed to be his favourite rule of rhetorick. That he is actually where he says he is the post-mark would seem to confirm; that he was received with the publick demonstrations he describes would appear consonant with what we know of the habits of those regions; but further than this I venture not to decide. I have sometimes suspected a vein of humour in him which leads him to speak by contraries; but since, in the unrestrained intercourse of private life, I have never observed in him any striking powers of invention, I am the more willing to put a certain qualified faith in the incidents and the details of life and manners which give to his narratives some of the interest and entertainment which characterize a Century Sermon.

It may be expected of me that I should say something to justify myself with the world for a seeming inconsistency with my well-known principles in allowing my youngest son to raise a company for the war, a fact known to all through the medium of the publick prints. I did reason with the young man, but *expellas naturam furca, tamenusque recurrit*. Having myself been a chaplain in 1812, I could the less wonder that a man of war had sprung from my loins. It was, indeed, grievous to send my Benjamin, the child of my old age; but after the discomfiture of Manassas, I with my own hands did buckle on his armour, trusting in the great Comforter for strength according to my need. For truly the memory of a brave son dead in his shroud were a greater staff of my declining years than a coward, though his days might be long in the land and he should get much goods. It is not till our earthen vessels are broken that we find and truly possess the treasure that was laid up in them. *Migravi in animam meam*, I have sought refuge in my own soul; nor would I be shamed by the heathen comedian with his *Nequam illud verbum, bene vult, nisi bene facit*. During our dark days, I read constantly in the inspired book of Job, which I believe to contain more food to maintain the fibre of the soul for right living and high thinking than all pagan literature together, though I would by no means vilipend the study of the classicks. There I read that Job said in his despair, even as the fool saith in his heart there is no God,—“The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure.” *Job* xii. 6. But I sought farther till I found this Scripture also, which I would have those perpend who have striven to turn our Israel aside to the worship of strange gods:—“If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maid-servant when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?” *Job* xxxi. 13-14. On this text I preached a discourse on the last day of Fasting and Humiliation with general acceptance, though there were not wanting one or two Laodiceans who said that I should have waited till the President announced his policy. But let us hope and pray, remembering this of Saint Gregory, *Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci*.

Page 168

We had our first fall of snow on Friday last. Frosts have been unusually backward this fall. A singular circumstance occurred in this town on the 20th October, in the family of Deacon Pelatiah Tinkham. On the previous evening, a few moments before family-prayers,

* * * * *

[The editors of the "Atlantic" find it necessary here to cut short the letter of their valued correspondent, which seemed calculated rather on the rates of longevity in Jaalam than for less favored localities. They have every encouragement to hope that he will write again.]

With esteem and respect,

Your obedient servant,

HOMER WILBUR, A.M.

It's some consid'ble of a spell sence I hain't writ no letters,
An' ther' 's gret changes hez took place in all polit'cle metters:
Some canderdates air dead an' gone, an' some hez ben defeated,
Which 'mounts to pooty much the same; fer it's ben proved repeated
A betch o' bread thet hain't riz once ain't goin' to rise agin,
An' it's jest money throwed away to put the emptins in:
But thet's wut folks wun't never larn; they dunno how to go,
Arter you want their room, no more 'n a bullet-headed beau;
Ther' 's ollers chaps a-hangin' roun' thet can't see pea-time's past,
Mis'ble as roosters in a rain, heads down an' tails half-mast:
It ain't disgraceful bein' beat, when a holl nation doos it,
But Chance is like an amberill,—it don't take twice to lose it.

I spose you're kin' o' cur'ous, now, to know why I hain't writ.
Wal, I've ben where a litt'ry taste don't somehow seem to git
Th' encouragement a feller'd think, thet's used to public schools,
An' where sech things ez paper 'n' ink air clean agin the rules:
A kind o' vicyvarsy house, built dreffle strong an' stout,
So 's 't honest people can't git in, ner t' other sort git out,
An' with the winders so contrived, you'd prob'ly like the view
Better a-lookin' in than out, though it seems sing'lar, tu;
But then the landlord sets by ye, can't bear ye out o' sight,
And locks ye up ez reg'lar ez an outside door at night.

This world is awfle contrary: the rope may stretch your neck
Thet mebbly kep' another chap frum washin' off a wreck;



An' you will see the taters grow in one poor feller's patch,
So small no self-respectin' hen thet vallied time 'ould scratch,
So small the rot can't find 'em out, an' then agin, nex' door,
Ez big ez wut hogs dream on when they're 'most too fat to snore.
But groutin' ain't no kin' o' use; an' ef the fust throw fails,
Why, up an' try agin, thet's all,—the coppers ain't all tails;
Though I *hev* seen 'em when I thought they hed n't no more head
Than'd sarve a nussin' Brigadier thet gits some ink to shed.

Page 169

When I writ last, I'd ben turned loose by thet blamed nigger, Pomp,
Ferlorner than a musquash, ef you'd took an' dreened his swamp:
But I ain't o' the meechin' kind, thet sets an' thinks fer weeks
The bottom's out o' th' univarse coz their own gillpot leaks.
I hed to cross bayous an' criks, (wal, it did beat all natur',)
Upon a kin' o' corderoy, fust log, then alligator:
Luck'ly the critters warn't sharp-sot; I guess't wuz overruled
They'd done their mornin's marketin' an' gut their hunger cooled;
Fer missionaries to the Creeks an' runaway's air viewed
By them an' folks ez sent express to be their reg'lar food:
Wutever 't wuz, they laid an' snoozed ez peacefully ez sinners,
Meek ez disgustin' deacons be at ordination dinners;
Ef any on 'em turned an' snapped, I let 'em kin' o' taste
My live-oak leg, an' so, ye see, ther' warn't no gret o' waste,
Fer they found out in quicker time than ef they'd ben to college
'T warn't heartier food than though 't wuz made out o' the tree o'
knowledge.

But I tell *you* my other leg hed larned wut pizon-nettle meant,
An' var'ous other usefle things, afore I reached a settlement,
An' all o' me thet wuz n't sore an' sendin' prickles thru me
Wuz jest the leg I parted with in lickin' Montezumy:
A usefle limb it 's ben to me, an' more of a support
Than wut the other hez ben,—coz I dror my pension for 't.

Wal, I gut in at last where folks wuz civerlized an' white,
Ez I diskivered to my cost afore 't wuz hardly night;
Fer 'z I wuz settin' in the bar a-takin' sunthin' hot,
An' feelin' like a man agin, all over in one spot,
A feller thet sot opposite, arter a squint at me,
Lep up an' drewed his peacemaker, an', "Dash it, Sir," suz he,
"I'm doubledashed if you ain't him thet stole my yaller chettle,
(You're all the stranger thet's around,) so now you've gut to settle;
It ain't no use to argerfy ner try to cut up frisky,
I know ye ez I know the smell o' ole chain-lightnin' whiskey;
We're lor-abidin' folks down here, we'll fix ye so 's 't a bar
Wouldn't tech ye with a ten-foot pole; (Jedge, you jest warm the tar;)
You'll think you'd better ha' gut among a tribe o' Mongrel Tartars,
'Fore we've done showin' how we raise our Southun prize tar-martyrs;
A moultin' fallen cherubim, ef he should see ye, 'd snicker,
Thinkin' he hedn't nary chance. Come, genlemun, le' 's liquor;
An', Gin'ral, when you 've mixed the drinks an' chalked 'em up, tote
roun'
An' see ef ther' 's a feather-bed (thet's borryable) in town.



We'll try ye fair, Ole Grafted-Leg, an' ef the tar wun't stick,
Th' ain't not a juror here but wut'll 'quit ye double-quick."
To cut it short, I wun't say sweet, they gi' me a good dip,
(They ain't *perfessin'* Bahptists here,) then give the bed a rip,—
The jury 'd sot, an' quicker 'n a flash they hatched me out, a livin'
Extemp'ry mammoth turkey-chick fer a Feejee Thanksgivin'.



Page 170

Thet I felt some stuck up is wut it's nat'ral to suppose,
When poppylar enthusiasm hed furnished me sech clo'es;
(Ner 't ain't without edvantiges, this kin' o' suit, ye see,
It's water-proof, an' water's wut I like kep' out o' me;)
But nut content with thet, they took a kerridge from the fence
An' rid me roun' to see the place, entirely free 'f expense,
With forty-'leven new kines o' sarse without no charge acquainted me,
Gi' me three cheers, an' vowed thet I wuz all their fahncy painted me;
They treated me to all their eggs; (they keep 'em, I should think,
Fer sech ovations, pooty long, for they wuz mos' distinc';)
They starred me thick 'z the Milky-Way with indiscrim'nit cherity,
For wut we call reception eggs air sunthin' of a rerity;
Green ones is plentifle anough, skurce wuth a nigger's getherin',
But your dead-ripe ones ranges high fer treatin' Nothun bretherin:
A spottedder, ringstreakeder child the' warn't in Uncle Sam's
Holl farm,—a cross of striped pig an' one o' Jacob's lambs;
'T wuz Dannil in the lions' den, new an' enlarged edition,
An' everythin' fust-rate o' 'ts kind, the' warn't no impersition.
People's impulsiver down here than wut our folks to home be,
An' kin' o' go it 'ith a resh in raisin' Hail Columby:
Thet's so: an' they swarmed out like bees, for your real Southun
men's
Time isn't o' much more account than an ole settin' hen's;
(They jest work semioccashnally, or else don't work at all,
An' so their time an' 'tention both air et saci'ty's call.)
Talk about hospitality! wut Nothun town d' ye know
Would take a totle stranger up an' treat him gratis so?
You'd better b'lieve ther' 's nothin' like this spendin' days an'
nights
Along 'ith a dependent race fer civerlizin' whites.

But this wuz all prelim'nary; it's so Gran' Jurors here
Fin' a true bill, a hendier way than ourn, an' nut so dear;
So arter this they sentenced me, to make all tight 'n' snug,
Afore a reg'lar court o' law, to ten years in the Jug.
I didn' make no gret defence: you don't feel much like speakin',
When, ef you let your clamshells gape, a quart o' tar will leak in:
I hev hearn tell o' winged words, but pint o' fact it tethers
The spoutin' gift to hev your words tu thick sot on with feathers,
An' Choate ner Webster wouldn't ha' made an A 1 kin' o' speech,
Astride a Southun chestnut horse sharper 'n a baby's screech.

Two year ago they ketched the thief, 'n' seein' I wuz innercent,
They jest oncorked an' le' me run, an' in my stid the sinner sent

To see how *he* liked pork 'n' pone flavored with wa'nut saplin',
An' nary social priv'ledge but a one-hoss, starn-wheel chaplin.
When I come out, the folks behaved mos' gen'manly an' harnsome;

Page 171

They 'lowed it wouldn't be more 'n right, ef I should cuss 'n' darn some:

The Cunnle he apolergized; suz he, "I'll du wut 's right,
I'll give ye settisfection now by shootin' ye at sight,
An' give the nigger, (when he's caught,) to pay him fer his trickin'
In gittin' the wrong man took up, a most H fired lickin',—
It's jest the way with all on 'em, the inconsistent critters,
They're 'most enough to make a man blaspheme his mornin' bitters;
I'll be your frien' thru thick an' thin an' in all kines o' weathers,
An' all you'll hev to pay fer 's jest the waste o' tar an' feathers:
A lady owned the bed, ye see, a widder, tu, Miss Shennon;
It wuz her mite; we would ha' took another, ef ther 'd ben one:
We don't make *no* charge for the ride an' all the other fixins.
Le' 's liquor; Gin'ral, you can chalk our friend for all the mixins."
A meetin' then wuz called, where they "RESOLVED, Thet we respec'
B.S. Esquire for quallerties o' heart an' intellec'
Peculiar to Columby's sile, an' not to no one else's,
Thet makes European tyrans scringe in all their gilded pel'ces,
An' doos gret honor to our race an' Southun institootions":
(I give ye jest the substance o' the leadin' resolootions:)
"RESOLVED, Thet we revere in him a soger 'thout a flor,
A martyr to the princerples o' libbaty an' lor:
RESOLVED, Thet other nations all, ef sot 'longside o' us,
For vartoo, larnin', chivverlry, ain't noways wuth a cuss."
They gut up a subscription, tu, but no gret come o' *that*;
I 'xpect in cairin' of it roun' they took a leaky hat;
Though Southun genelmun ain't slow at puttin' down their name,
(When they can write,) fer in the eend it comes to jest the same,
Because, ye see, 't 's the fashion here to sign an' not to think
A critter'd be so sordid ez to ax 'em for the chink:
I didn't call but jest on one, an' *he* drawed toothpick on me,
An' reckoned he warn't goin' to stan' no sech dog-gauned econ'my;
So nothin' more wuz realized, 'ceptin' the good-will shown,
Than ef 't had ben from fust to last a reg'lar Cotton Loan.
It's a good way, though, come to think, coz ye enjy the sense
O' lendin' lib'rally to the Lord, an' nary red o' 'xpense:
Sence then I've gut my name up for a gin'rous-hearted man
By jes' subscribin' right an' left on this high-minded plan;
I've gin away my thousands so to every Southun sort

O' missions, colleges, an' sech, ner ain't no poorer for 't.

I warn't so bad off, arter all; I needn't hardly mention
That Guv'ment owed me quite a pile for my arrears o' pension,—
I mean the poor, weak thing we *hed*: we run a new one now,
Thet strings a feller with a claim up tu the nighest bough,
An' *prectises* the rights o' man, purtects down-trodden debtors,

Page 172

Ner wun't hev creditors about a-scrougin' o' their betters:
Jeff's gut the last idees ther' is, poscrip', fourteenth edition,
He knows it takes some enterprise to run an oppersition;
Ourn's the fust thru-by-daylight train, with all ou'doors for deepot,
Yourn goes so slow you'd think 't wuz drawed by a last cent'ry
teapot;—
Wal, I gut all on 't paid in gold afore our State seceded,
An' done wal, for Confed'rit bonds warn't jest the cheese I needed:
Nut but wut they're ez *good* ez gold, but then it's hard a-breakin'
on 'em,
An' ignorant folks is ollers sot an' wun't git used to takin' on 'em;
They're wuth ez much ez wut they wuz afore ole Mem'nger signed 'em,
An' go off middlin' wal for drinks, when ther' 's a knife behind 'em:
We *du* miss silver, jest fer thet an' ridin' in a bus,
Now we've shook off the despots thet wuz suckin' at our pus;
An' it's *because* the South's so rich; 't wuz nat'ral to expec'
Supplies o' change wuz jest the things we shouldn't recollect';
We'd ough' to ha' thought aforehan', though, o' thet good rule o'
Crockett's,
For 't 's tiresome cairin' cotton-bales an' niggers in your pockets,
Ner 't ain't quite hendy to pass off one o' your six-foot Guineas
An' git your halves an' quarters back in gals an' pickaninnies:
Wal, 't ain't quite all a feller 'd ax, but then ther' 's this to say,
It's on'y jest among ourselves thet we expec' to pay;
Our system would ha' caird us thru in any Bible cent'ry,
'Fore this onscripted plan come up o' books by double entry;
We go the patriarkle here out o' all sight an' hearin',
For Jacob warn't a circumstance to Jeff at financierin';
He never 'd thought o' borryin' from Esau like all nater
An' then cornfiscatin' all debts to sech a small pertater;
There's p'litickle econ'my, now, combined 'ith morril beauty
Thet saycrifices privit eends (your in'my's, tu) to dooty!
Wy, Jeff'd ha' gin him five an' won his eye-teeth 'fore he knowed it,
An', slid o' wastin' pottage, he'd ha' eat it up an' owed it.

But I wuz goin' on to say how I come here to dwell;—
'Nough said, thet, arter lookin' roun', I liked the place so wal,
Where niggers doos a double good, with us atop to stiddy 'em,
By bein' proofs o' prophecy an' cirkleatin' medium,
Where a man's sunthin' coz he's white, an' whiskey's cheap ez fleas,

An' the financial pollercy jest sooted my idees,
Thet I friz down right where I wuz, merried the Widder Shennon,
(Her thirds wuz part in cotton-land, part in the curse o' Canaan,)
An' here I be ez lively ez a chipmunk on a wall,
With nothin' to feel riled about much later 'n Eddam's fall.

Page 173

Ez fur ez human foresight goes, we made an even trade:
She gut an overseer, an' I a fem'ly ready-made,
(The youngest on 'em's 'most growed up,) rugged an' spry ez weazles,
So's 't ther' 's no resk o' doctors' bills fer hoopin'-cough an'
measles.

Our farm's at Turkey-Buzzard Roost, Little Big Boosy River,
Wal located in all respex,—fer 't ain't the chills 'n' fever
Thet makes my writin' seem to squirm; a Southuner'd allow I'd
Some call to shake, for I've jest hed to meller a new cowhide.

Miss S. is all 'f a lady; th' ain't no better on Big Boosy,
Ner one with more accomplishmunt 'twixt here an' Tuscaloosy;
She's an F.F., the tallest kind, an' prouder 'n the Gran' Turk,
An' never hed a relative thet done a stroke o' work;
Hern ain't a scrimpin' fem'ly sech ez *you* git up Down East,
Th' ain't a growed member on 't but owes his thousuns et the least:
She *is* some old; but then agin ther' 's drawbacks in my sheer;
Wut's left o' me ain't more 'n enough to make a Brigadier:
The wust is, she hez tantrums; she is like Seth Moody's gun
(Him thet wuz nicknamed frum his limp Ole Dot an' Kerry One);
He'd left her loaded up a spell, an' hed to git her clear,
So he onhitched,—Jeerusalem! the middle o' last year
Wuz right nex' door compared to where she kicked the critter tu
(Though *jest* where he brought up wuz wut no human never knew);
His brother Asaph picked her up an' tied her to a tree,
An' then she kicked an hour 'n' a half afore she'd let it be:
Wal, Miss S. *doos* hev cuttins-up an' pourins-out o' vials,
But then she hez her widder's thirds, an' all on us hez trials.
My objec', though, in writin' now warn't to allude to sech,
But to another suckemstance more dellykit to tech,—
I want thet you should grad'lly break my merriage to Jerushy,
An' ther' 's a heap of argymunts thet's emple to indooce ye:
Fust place, State's Prison,—wal, it's true it warn't fer crime, o'
course,
But then it's jest the same fer her in gittin' a disvorce;
Nex' place, my State's secedin' out hez leg'lly lef' me free
To merry any one I please, pervidin' it's a she;
Fin'lly, I never wun't come back, she needn't hev no fear on 't,
But then it 's wal to fix things right fer fear Miss S. should hear
on 't;

Lastly, I've gut religion South, an' Rushy she's a pagan
Thet sets by th' graven imiges o' the gret Nothun Dagon;
(Now I hain't seen one in six munts, for, sence our Treasury Loan,



Though yaller boys is thick enough, eagles hez kind o' flown;)
An' ef J. wants a stronger pint than them thet I hev stated,
Wy, she's an aliun in'my now, an' I've ben cornfiscated,—
For sence we've entered on th' estate o' the late nayshnul eagle,
She hain't no kin' o' right but jest wut I allow ez legle:
Wut *doos* Secedin' mean, ef't ain't thet nat'rul rights hez riz, 'n'
Thet wut is mine's my own, but wut's another man's ain't his'n?

Page 174

Bersides, I couldn't do no else; Miss S. suz she to me, "You've sheered my bed," [Thet's when I paid my interdiction fee To Southun rites,] "an' kep' your sheer," [Wal, I allow it sticked So's 't I wuz most six weeks in jail afore I gut me picked,] "Ner never paid no demmiges; but thet wun't do no harm, Pervidin' thet you'll ondertake to oversee the farm; (My eldes' boy is so took up, wut with the Ringtail Rangers An' settin' in the Jestice-Court for welcomin' o' strangers"); [He sot on *me*;] "an' so, ef you'll jest ondertake the care Upon a mod'rit sellery, we'll up an' call it square; But ef you *can't* conclude," suz she, an' give a kin' o' grin, "Wy, the Gran' Jury, I expect, 'll hev to set agin." Thet's the way metters stood at fust; now wut wuz I to du, But jest to make the best on't an' off coat an' buckle tu? Ther' ain't a livin' man thet finds an income necessarier Than me,—bimeby I'll tell ye how I fin'lly come to merry her.

She hed another motive, tu: I mention of it here
T' encourage lads thet's growin' up to study 'n' persevere,
An' show 'em how much better 't pays to mind their winter-schoolin'
Than to go off on benders 'n' sech, an' waste their time in foolin';
Ef 't warn't for studyin', evening, I never 'd ha' ben here
An orn'ment o' saciety, in my approprut spear:
She wanted somebody, ye see, o' taste an' cultivation,
To talk along o' preachers when they stopt to the plantation;
For folks in Dixie th't read an' write, onless it is by jarks,
Is skurce ez wut they wuz among th' oridgenal patriarchs;
To fit a feller f' wut they call the soshle higherarchy,
All thet you've gut to know is jest beyund an evrage darky;
Schoolin' 's wut they can't seem to stan', they're tu consarned
 high-pressure,
An' knowin' t' much might spile a boy for bein' a Secesher.
We hain't no settled preachin' here, ner ministeril taxes;
The min'ster's only settlement 's the carpet-bag he packs his
Razor an' soap-brush intu, with his hymbook an' his Bible,—
But they *du* preach, I swan to man, it's puf'kly indescrib'le!
They go it like an Ericsson's ten-hoss-power coleric ingine,
An' make Ole Split-Foot winch an' squirm, for all he's used to
 singein';
Hawkins's whetstone ain't a pinch o' primin' to the innards
To hearin' on 'em put free grace t' a lot o' tough old sin-hards!

But I must eend this letter now: 'fore long I'll send a fresh un;
I've lots o' things to write about, perticklerly Seceshun:
I'm called off now to mission-work, to let a leetle law in
To Cynthy's hide: an' so, till death,

Yourn,

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

* * * * *

OLD AGE.

Page 175

On the last anniversary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge, the venerable President Quincy, senior member of the Society, as well as senior alumnus of the University, was received at the dinner with peculiar demonstrations of respect. He replied to these compliments in a speech, and, gracefully claiming the privileges of a literary society, entered at some length into an Apology for Old Age, and, aiding himself by notes in his hand, made a sort of running commentary on Cicero's chapter "De Senectute." The character of the speaker, the transparent good faith of his praise and blame, and the *naivete* of his eager preference of Cicero's opinions to King David's, gave unusual interest to the College festival. It was a discourse full of dignity, honoring him who spoke and those who heard.

The speech led me to look over at home—an easy task—Cicero's famous essay, charming by its uniform rhetorical merit; heroic with Stoical precepts; with a Roman eye to the claims of the State; happiest, perhaps, in his praise of life on the farm; and rising, at the conclusion, to a lofty strain. But he does not exhaust the subject; rather invites the attempt to add traits to the picture from our broader modern life.

Cicero makes no reference to the illusions which cling to the element of time, and in which Nature delights. Wellington, in speaking of military men, said,—“What masks are these uniforms to hide cowards! When our journal is published, many statues must come down.” I have often detected the like deception in the cloth shoe, wadded pelisse, wig and spectacles, and padded chair of Age. Nature lends herself to these illusions, and adds dim sight, deafness, cracked voice, snowy hair, short memory, and sleep. These also are masks, and all is not Age that wears them. Whilst we yet call ourselves young, and all our mates are yet youths and boyish, one good fellow in the set prematurely sports a gray or a bald head, which does not impose on us who know how innocent of sanctity or of Platonism he is, but does not less deceive his juniors and the public, who presently distinguish him with a most amusing respect: and this lets us into the secret, that the venerable forms that so awed our childhood were just such impostors. Nature is full of freaks, and now puts an old head on young shoulders, and then a young heart beating under fourscore winters.

For if the essence of age is not present, these signs, whether of Art or Nature, are counterfeit and ridiculous: and the essence of age is intellect. Wherever that appears, we call it old. If we look into the eyes of the youngest person, we sometimes discover that here is one who knows already what you would go about with much pains to teach him; there is that in him which is the ancestor of all around him: which fact the Indian Vedas express, when they say, “He that can discriminate is the father of his father.” And in our old British legends of Arthur and the Round-Table, his friend and counsellor, Merlin the Wise, is a babe found exposed in a basket by the river-side, and, though an infant of only a few days, he speaks to those who discover him, tells his name and history, and presently foretells the fate of the by-standers. Wherever there is power, there is age. Don't be deceived by dimples and curls. I tell you that babe is a thousand years old.

Page 176

Time is, indeed, the theatre and seat of illusion. Nothing is so ductile and elastic. The mind stretches an hour to a century, and dwarfs an age to an hour. Saadi found in a mosque at Damascus an old Persian of a hundred and fifty years who was dying, and was saying to himself, "I said, coming into the world by birth, 'I will enjoy myself for a few moments.' Alas! at the variegated table of life I partook of a few mouthfuls, and the Fates said, '*Enough!*'" That which does not decay is so central and controlling in us, that, as long as one is alone by himself, he is not sensible of the inroads of time, which always begin at the surface-edges. If, on a winter day, you should stand within a bell-glass, the face and color of the afternoon clouds would not indicate whether it were June or January; and if we did not find the reflection of ourselves in the eyes of the young people, we could not know that the century-clock had struck seventy instead of twenty. How many men habitually believe that each chance passenger with whom they converse is of their own age, and presently find it was his father, and not his brother, whom they knew!

But, not to press too hard on these deceits and illusions of Nature, which are inseparable from our condition, and looking at age under an aspect more conformed to the common sense, if the question be the felicity of age, I fear the first popular judgments will be unfavorable. From the point of sensuous experience, seen from the streets and markets and the haunts of pleasure and gain, the estimate of age is low, melancholy, and skeptical. Frankly face the facts, and see the result. Tobacco, coffee, alcohol, hashish, prussic acid, strychnine, are weak dilutions: the surest poison is time. This cup, which Nature puts to our lips, has a wonderful virtue, surpassing that of any other draught. It opens the senses, adds power, fills us with exalted dreams, which we call hope, love, ambition, science: especially, it creates a craving for larger draughts of itself. But they who take the larger draughts are drunk with it, lose their stature, strength, beauty, and senses, and end in folly and delirium. We postpone our literary work until we have more ripeness and skill to write, and we one day discover that our literary talent was a youthful effervescence which we have now lost. We had a judge in Massachusetts who at sixty proposed to resign, alleging that he perceived a certain decay in his faculties: he was dissuaded by his friends, on account of the public convenience at that time. At seventy it was hinted to him that it was time to retire; but he now replied, that he thought his judgment as robust, and all his faculties as good as ever they were. But besides the self-deception, the strong and hasty laborers of the street do not work well with the chronic valetudinarian. Youth is everywhere in place. Age, like woman, requires fit surroundings. Age is comely in coaches, in churches, in chairs of state and ceremony, in council-chambers,

Page 177

in courts of justice, and historical societies. Age is becoming in the country. But in the rush and uproar of Broadway, if you look into the faces of the passengers, there is dejection or indignation in the seniors, a certain concealed sense of injury, and the lip made up with a heroic determination not to mind it. Few envy the consideration enjoyed by the oldest inhabitant. We do not count a man's years, until he has nothing else to count. The vast inconvenience of animal immortality was told in the fable of Tithonus. In short, the creed of the street is, Old Age is not disgraceful, but immensely disadvantageous. Life is well enough, but we shall all be glad to get out of it, and they will all be glad to have us.

This is odious on the face of it. Universal convictions are not to be shaken by the whimsies of overfed butchers and firemen, or by the sentimental fears of girls who would keep the infantile bloom on their cheeks. We know the value of experience. Life and art are cumulative; and he who has accomplished something in any department alone deserves to be heard on that subject. A man of great employments and excellent performance used to assure me that he did not think a man worth anything until he was sixty; although this smacks a little of the resolution of a certain "Young Men's Republican Club," that all men should be held eligible who were under seventy. But in all governments, the councils of power were held by the old; and patricians or *patres*, senate or *senes*, *seigneurs* or seniors, *gerousia*, the senate of Sparta, the presbytery of the Church, and the like, all signify simply old men.

This cynical lampoon is refuted by the universal prayer for long life, which is the verdict of Nature, and justified by all history. We have, it is true, examples of an accelerated pace, by which young men achieved grand works; as in the Macedonian Alexander, in Raffaele, Shakspeare, Pascal, Burns, and Byron; but these are rare exceptions. Nature, in the main, vindicates her law. Skill to do comes of doing; knowledge comes by eyes always open, and working hands; and there is no knowledge that is not power. And if the life be true and noble, we have quite another sort of seniors than the frowzy, timorous, peevish dotards who are falsely old,—namely, the men who fear no city, but by whom cities stand; who appearing in any street, the people empty their houses to gaze at and obey them: as at "My Cid, with the fleecy beard," in Toledo; or Bruce, as Barbour reports him; as blind old Dandolo, elected Doge at eighty-four years, storming Constantinople at ninety-four, and after the revolt again victorious, and elected at the age of ninety-six to the throne of the Eastern Empire, which he declined, and died Doge at ninety-seven. We still feel the force of Socrates, "whom well-advised the oracle pronounced wisest of men"; of Archimedes, holding Syracuse against the Romans by his wit, and himself better

Page 178

than all their nation; of Michel Angelo, wearing the four crowns of architecture, sculpture, painting, and poetry; of Galileo, of whose blindness Castelli said, "The noblest eye is darkened that Nature ever made,—an eye that hath seen more than all that went before him, and hath opened the eyes of all that shall come after him"; of Newton, who made an important discovery for every one of his eighty-five years; of Bacon, who "took all knowledge to be his province"; of Fontenelle, "that precious porcelain vase laid up in the centre of France to be guarded with the utmost care for a hundred years"; of Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams, the wise and heroic statesmen; of Washington, the perfect citizen; of Wellington, the perfect soldier; of Goethe, the all-knowing poet; of Humboldt, the encyclopaedia of science.

Under the general assertion of the well-being of age, we can easily count particular benefits of that condition. It has weathered the perilous capes and shoals in the sea whereon we sail, and the chief evil of life is taken away in removing the grounds of fear. The insurance of a ship expires as she enters the harbor at home. It were strange, if a man should turn his sixtieth year without a feeling of immense relief from the number of dangers he has escaped. When the old wife says, "Take care of that tumor in your shoulder, perhaps it is cancerous,"—he replies, "What if it is?" The humorous thief who drank a pot of beer at the gallows blew off the froth because he had heard it was unhealthy; but it will not add a pang to the prisoner marched out to be shot, to assure him that the pain in his knee threatens mortification. When the pleuro-pneumonia of the cows raged, the butchers said, that, though the acute degree was novel, there never was a time when this disease did not occur among cattle. All men carry seeds of all distempers through life latent, and we die without developing them: such is the affirmative force of the constitution. But if you are enfeebled by any cause, the disease becomes strong. At every stage we lose a foe. At fifty years, 't is said, afflicted citizens lose their sick-headaches. I hope this *hegira* is not as movable a feast as that one I annually look for, when the horticulturists assure me that the rose-bugs in our gardens disappear on the tenth of July: they stay a fortnight later in mine. But be it as it may with the sick-headache,—'t is certain that graver headaches and heart-aches are lulled, once for all, as we come up with certain goals of time. The passions have answered their purpose: that slight, but dread overweight, with which, in each instance, Nature secures the execution of her aim, drops off. To keep man in the planet, she impresses the terror of death. To perfect the commisariat, she implants in each a little rapacity to get the supply, and a little over-supply, of his wants. To insure the existence of the race, she reinforces the sexual instinct, at the risk of disorder,

Page 179

grief, and pain. To secure strength, she plants cruel hunger and thirst, which so easily overdo their office, and invite disease. But these temporary stays and shifts for the protection of the young animal are shed as fast as they can be replaced by nobler resources. We live in youth amidst this rabble of passions, quite too tender, quite too hungry and irritable. Later, the interiors of mind and heart open, and supply grander motives. We learn the fatal compensations that wait on every act. Then,—one mischief at a time,—this riotous time-destroying crew disappear.

I count it another capital advantage of age, this, that a success more or less signifies nothing. Little by little, it has amassed such a fund of merit, that it can very well afford to go on its credit when it will. When I chanced to meet the poet Wordsworth, then sixty-three years old, he told me, “that he had just had a fall and lost a tooth, and, when his companions were much concerned for the mischance, he had replied, that he was glad it had not happened forty years before.” Well, Nature takes care that we shall not lose our organs forty years too soon. A lawyer argued a cause yesterday in the Supreme Court, and I was struck with a certain air of levity and defiance which vastly became him. Thirty years ago it was a serious concern to him whether his pleading was good and effective. Now it is of importance to his client, but of none to himself. It is long already fixed what he can do and cannot do, and his reputation does not gain or suffer from one or a dozen new performances. If he should, on a new occasion, rise quite beyond his mark, and do somewhat extraordinary and great, that, of course, would instantly tell; but he may go below his mark with impunity, and people will say, “Oh, he had headache,” or, “He lost his sleep for two nights.” What a lust of appearance, what a load of anxieties that once degraded him, he is thus rid of! Every one is sensible of this cumulative advantage in living. All the good days behind him are sponsors, who speak for him when he is silent, pay for him when he has no money, introduce him where he has no letters, and work for him when he sleeps.

A third felicity of age is, that it has found expression. Youth suffers not only from ungratified desires, but from powers untried, and from a picture in his mind of a career which has, as yet, no outward reality. He is tormented with the want of correspondence between things and thoughts. Michel Angelo’s head is full of masculine and gigantic figures as gods walking, which make him savage until his furious chisel can render them into marble; and of architectural dreams, until a hundred stone-masons can lay them in courses of travertine. There is the like tempest in every good head in which some great benefit for the world is planted. The throes continue until the child is born. Every faculty new to each man thus goads him and drives him out into doleful deserts,

Page 180

until it finds proper vent. All the functions of human duty irritate and lash him forward, bemoaning and chiding, until they are performed. He wants friends, employment, knowledge, power, house and land, wife and children, honor and fame; he has religious wants, aesthetic wants, domestic, civil, humane wants. One by one, day after day, he learns to coin his wishes into facts. He has his calling, homestead, social connection, and personal power, and thus, at the end of fifty years, his soul is appeased by seeing some sort of correspondence between his wish and his possession. This makes the value of age, the satisfaction it slowly offers to every craving. He is serene who does not feel himself pinched and wronged, but whose condition, in particular and in general, allows the utterance of his mind. In old persons, when thus fully expressed, we often observe a fair, plump, perennial, waxen complexion, which indicates that all the ferment of earlier days has subsided into serenity of thought and behavior.

For a fourth benefit, age sets its house in order, and finishes its works, which to every artist is a supreme pleasure. Youth has an excess of sensibility, to which every object glitters and attracts. We leave one pursuit for another, and the young man's year is a heap of beginnings. At the end of a twelvemonth, he has nothing to show for it, not one completed work. But the time is not lost. Our instincts drove us to hive innumerable experiences, that are yet of no visible value, and which we may keep for twice seven years before they shall be wanted. The best things are of secular growth. The instinct of classifying marks the wise and healthy mind. Linnaeus projects his system, and lays out his twenty-four classes of plants, before yet he has found in Nature a single plant to justify certain of his classes. His seventh class has not one. In process of time, he finds with delight the little white *Trientalis*, the only plant with seven petals and sometimes seven stamens, which constitutes a seventh class in conformity with his system. The conchologist builds his cabinet whilst as yet he has few shells. He labels shelves for classes, cells for species: all but a few are empty. But every year fills some blanks, and with accelerating speed as he becomes knowing and known. An old scholar finds keen delight in verifying all the impressive anecdotes and citations he has met with in miscellaneous reading and hearing, in all the years of youth. We carry in memory important anecdotes, and have lost all clue to the author from whom we had them. We have a heroic speech from Rome or Greece, but cannot fix it on the man who said it. We have an admirable line worthy of Horace, ever and anon resounding in our mind's ear, but have searched all probable and improbable books for it in vain. We consult the reading men: but, strangely enough, they who know everything know not this. But especially we have a certain insulated thought, which haunts us, but remains insulated and

Page 181

barren. Well, there is nothing for all this but patience and time. Time, yes, that is the finder, the unwearable explorer, not subject to casualties, omniscient at last. The day comes when the hidden author of our story is found; when the brave speech returns straight to the hero who said it; when the admirable verse finds the poet to whom it belongs; and best of all, when the lonely thought, which seemed so wise, yet half-wise, half-thought, because it cast no light abroad, is suddenly matched in our mind by its twin, by its sequence, or next related analogy, which gives it instantly radiating power, and justifies the superstitious instinct with which we had hoarded it. We remember our old Greek Professor at Cambridge, an ancient bachelor, amid his folios, possessed by this hope of completing a task, with nothing to break his leisure after the three hours of his daily classes, yet ever restlessly stroking his leg, and assuring himself "he should retire from the University and read the authors." In Goethe's Romance, Makaria, the central figure for wisdom and influence, pleases herself with withdrawing into solitude to astronomy and epistolary correspondence. Goethe himself carried this completion of studies to the highest point. Many of his works hung on the easel from youth to age, and received a stroke in every month or year of his life. A literary astrologer, he never applied himself to any task but at the happy moment when all the stars consented. Bentley thought himself likely to live till fourscore,—long enough to read everything that was worth reading,—"*Et tunc magna mei sub terris ibit imago.*" Much wider is spread the pleasure which old men take in completing their secular affairs, the inventor his inventions, the agriculturist his experiments, and all old men in finishing their houses, rounding their estates, clearing their titles, reducing tangled interests to order, reconciling enmities, and leaving all in the best posture for the future. It must be believed that there is a proportion between the designs of a man and the length of his life: there is a calendar of his years, so of his performances.

America is the country of young men, and too full of work hitherto for leisure and tranquillity; yet we have had robust centenarians, and examples of dignity and wisdom. I have lately found in an old note-book a record of a visit to Ex-President John Adams, in 1825, soon after the election of his *son* to the Presidency. It is but a sketch, and nothing important passed in the conversation; but it reports a moment in the life of a heroic person, who, in extreme old age, appeared still erect, and worthy of his fame.

Page 182

—, *Feb.*, 1825. To-day, at Quincy, with my brother, by invitation of Mr. Adams's family. The old President sat in a large stuffed arm-chair, dressed in a blue coat, black small-clothes, white stockings, and a cotton cap covered his bald head. We made our compliment, told him he must let us join our congratulations to those of the nation on the happiness of his house. He thanked us, and said, "I am rejoiced, because the nation is happy. The time of gratulation and congratulations is nearly over with me: I am astonished that I have lived to see and know of this event. I have lived now nearly a century: [he was ninety in the following October:] a long, harassed, and distracted life."—I said, "The world thinks a good deal of joy has been mixed with it."—"The world does not know," he replied, "how much toil, anxiety, and sorrow I have suffered."—I asked if Mr. Adams's letter of acceptance had been read to him.—"Yes," he said, and added, "My son has more political prudence than any man that I know who has existed in my time; he never was put off his guard: and I hope he will continue such; but what effect age may work in diminishing the power of his mind, I do not know; it has been very much on the stretch, ever since he was born. He has always been laborious, child and man, from infancy."—When Mr. J.Q. Adams's age was mentioned, he said, "He is now fifty-eight, or will be in July"; and remarked that "all the Presidents were of the same age: General Washington was about fifty-eight, and I was about fifty-eight, and Mr. Jefferson, and Mr. Madison, and Mr. Monroe."—We inquired, when he expected to see Mr. Adams.—He said, "Never: Mr. Adams will not come to Quincy, but to my funeral. It would be a great satisfaction to me to see him, but I don't wish him to come on my account."—He spoke of Mr. Lechmere, whom "he well remembered to have seen come down daily, at a great age, to walk in the old town-house,"—adding, "And I wish I could walk as well as he did. He was Collector of the Customs for many years, under the Royal Government"—E. said, "I suppose, Sir, you would not have taken his place, even to walk as well as he."—"No," he replied, "that was not what I wanted."—He talked of Whitefield, and "remembered, when he was a Freshman in college, to have come in to the *Old South*, [I think,] to hear him, but could not get into the house;—I, however, saw him," he said, "through a window, and distinctly heard all. He had a voice such as I never heard before or since. He cast it out so that you might hear it at the meeting-house, [pointing towards the Quincy meeting-house,] and he had the grace of a dancing-master, of an actor of plays. His voice and manner helped him more than his sermons. I went with Jonathan Sewall."—"And you were pleased with him, Sir?"—"Pleased! I was delighted beyond measure."—We asked, if at Whitefield's return the same popularity continued.—"Not the same fury," he said, "not the same wild enthusiasm as before, but a greater esteem, as he became more known. He did not terrify, but was admired."

We spent about an hour in his room. He speaks very distinctly for so old a man, enters bravely into long sentences, which are interrupted by want of breath, but carries them invariably to a conclusion, without ever correcting a word.

Page 183

He spoke of the new novels of Cooper, and “Peep at the Pilgrims,” and “Saratoga,” with praise, and named with accuracy the characters in them. He likes to have a person always reading to him, or company talking in his room, and is better the next day after having visitors in his chamber from morning to night.

He received a premature report of his son’s election, on Sunday afternoon, without any excitement, and told the reporter he had been hoaxed, for it was not yet time for any news to arrive. The informer, something damped in his heart, insisted on repairing to the meeting-house, and proclaimed it aloud to the congregation, who were so overjoyed that they rose in their seats and cheered thrice. The Reverend Mr. Whitney dismissed them immediately.

When life has been well spent, age is a loss of what it can well spare,—muscular strength, organic instincts, gross bulk, and works that belong to these. But the central wisdom, which was old in infancy, is young in fourscore years, and, dropping off obstructions, leaves in happy subjects the mind purified and wise. I have heard that whoever loves is in no condition old. I have heard, that, whenever the name of man is spoken, the doctrine of immortality is announced; it cleaves to his constitution. The mode of it baffles our wit, and no whisper comes to us from the other side. But the inference from the working of intellect, hiving knowledge, hiving skill,—at the end of life just ready to be born,—affirms the inspirations of affection and of the moral sentiment.

* * * * *

REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

Lectures on the Science of Languages, delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in April, May, and June, 1861. By MAX MUELLER, M.A., Fellow of All-Souls College, Oxford; Corresponding Member of the Imperial Institute of France. London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts. 1861. 8vo. pp. xii., 399.

The name of Mr. Max Mueller is familiar to American students as that of a man who, learned in the high German fashion, has the pleasant faculty, unhappily too rare among Germans, of communicating his erudition in a way not only comprehensible, but agreeable to the laity. The Teutonic *Gelehrte*, gallantly devoting a half-century to his pipe and his locative case, fencing the result of his labors with a bristling hedge of abbreviations, cross-references, and untranslated citations that take panglottism for granted as an ordinary incident of human culture, too hastily assumes a tenacity of life on the part of his reader as great as his own. All but those with whom the study of language is a specialty pass him by as Dante does Nimrod, gladly concluding

“Che cosi e a lui ciascun linguaggio,
Come il suo ad altrui, che a nullo e noto.”

Page 184

The brothers Grimm are known to what is called the reading public chiefly as contributors to the literature of the nursery; and as for Bopp, Pott, Zeuss, Lassen, Diefenbach, and the rest, men who look upon the curse of Babel as the luckiest event in human annals, their names and works are terrors to the uninitiated. They are the giants of these latter days, of whom all we know is that they now and then snatch up some unhappy friend of ours and imprison him in their terrible castle of Nongtongpaw, whence, if he ever escape, he comes back to us emaciated, unintelligible, and with a passion for roots that would make him an ornament of society among the Digger Indians.

Yet though in metaphor giants of learning, their office seems practically rather that of the dwarfs, as gatherers and guardians of treasure useless to themselves, but with which some luck's-child may enrich himself and his neighbors. Other analogies between them and the dwarfs, such as their accomplishing superhuman things and being prematurely subject to the dryness of old age, ("*Der Zwerg ist schon im siebenten Jahr ein Greis*," says Grimm,) will at once suggest themselves.

Mr. Mueller is one of the agreeable luck's-children who lay these swarthy miners under contribution for us, understand their mystic sign-language, and save us the trouble of climbing the mountain and scratching through the thickets for ourselves. Happy the man who can make knowledge entertaining! Thrice happy his readers! The author of these Lectures is already well known as not only, perhaps, the best living scholar of Sanscrit literature, (and by scholar we mean one who regards study as a means, not an end, and who is capable of drawing original conclusions,) but a *savant* who can teach without tiring, and can administer learning as if it were something else than medicine. Whoever reads this volume will regret that Mr. Mueller's eminent qualifications for the Boden Professorship at Oxford should have failed to turn the scale against the assumed superior orthodoxy of his competitor. Was it in Sanscrit that he was heterodox? or in Hindoo mythology?

The Lectures are nine in number. The titles of them will show the range and nature of Mr. Mueller's dissertations. They are, (1.) On the science of language as one of the physical sciences; (2.) On the growth of language in contradistinction to the history of language; (3.) On the empirical stage in the science of language; (4.) On the classificatory stage in the same; (5.) On the genealogical classification of languages; (6.) On comparative grammar; (7.) On the constituent elements of language; (8.) On the morphological classification of languages; (9.) On the theoretical stage in the science of languages and the origin of language. An Appendix contains a genealogical table of languages; and an ample Index (why have authors forgotten, what was once so well known, that an index is all that saves the contents of a book from being mere birds in the bush?) makes the volume as useful on the shelf as it is interesting and instructive in the hand. Of the catholic spirit in which Mr. Mueller treats his various topics of discussion and illustration, his own theory of the true method of investigation is the best proof.

Page 185

"There are two ways," he says, in discussing the origin of language, "of judging of former philosophers. One is, to put aside their opinions as simply erroneous, where they differ from our own. This is the least satisfactory way of studying ancient philosophy. Another way is, to try to enter into the opinions of those from whom we differ, to make them, our a time at least, our own, till at least we discover the point of view from which each philosopher looked at the facts before him and catch the light in which he regarded them. We shall then find that there is much less of downright error in the history of philosophy than is commonly supposed; nay, *we shall find nothing so conducive to a right appreciation of truth as a right appreciation of the error by which it is surrounded.*" (p. 360. The Italics are ours.)

A mere philologist might complain that the book contained nothing new. And this is in the main true, though by no means altogether so, especially as regards the nomenclature of classification, and the illustration of special points by pertinent examples. In this last respect Mr. Mueller is particularly happy, as, for instance, in what he says of "Yes 'r and Yes 'm." (pp. 210 ff.) And as regards originality in the treatment of a purely scientific subject, a good deal depends on the meaning we attach to the term. If we understand by it striking conclusions drawn from theoretic premises, (as in Knox's "Races of Man,") clever generalizations from fortuitous analogies and coincidences insufficiently weighed, (as in Pococke's "India in Greece,") or, to take a philologic example, speculations suggestive of thought, it may be, but too insecurely based on positive data, (as in Rapp's "Physiologie der Sprache,") we shall vainly seek for such originality in Mr. Mueller's Lectures. But if we take it to mean, as we certainly prefer to do, safety of conclusion founded on thorough knowledge and comparison, clear statement guarded on all sides by long intimacy with the subject, and theory the result of legitimate deduction and judicial weighing of evidence, we shall find enough in the book to content us. Mr. Mueller does not now enter the lists for the first time to win his spurs as an original writer. The plan of the work before us necessarily excluded any great display of recondite learning or of profound speculation. Delivered at first as popularly scientific lectures, and now published for the general reader, it seems to us admirably conceived and executed. Easily comprehensible, and yet always pointing out the sources of fuller investigation, it is ample both to satisfy the desire of those who wish to get the latest results of philology and to stimulate the curiosity of whoever wishes to go farther and deeper. It is by far the best and clearest summing-up of the present condition of the Science of Language that we have ever seen, while the liveliness of the style and the variety and freshness of illustration make it exceedingly entertaining.

Page 186

We hope that a book of such slight assumption and such solid merit, a model of clear arrangement and popular treatment, may be widely read in this country, where the ignorance, carelessness, or dishonest good-nature even of journals professedly literary is apt to turn over the unlearned reader to such blind guides as Swinton's "Rambles among Words," compounds of plagiarism and pretension. Philology as a science is but just beginning to assert its claims in America, though we may already point with satisfaction to several distinguished workers in the field. The names of Professor Sophocles, at Cambridge, and Professor Whitney, at New Haven, rank with those of European scholars; and we have already borne the warmest testimony in these pages to the value of Mr. Marsh's contributions to the study of English, a judgment which we are glad to see confirmed by the weighty authority of Mr. Mueller.

* * * * *

1. *On Translating Homer*. Three Lectures given at Oxford by MATTHEW ARNOLD, M.A., Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, and formerly Fellow of Oriel College. London: Longmans. 1861. pp. 104. 2. *Homeric Translation in Theory and Practice*. A Reply to Matthew Arnold, Esq., Professor of Poetry at Oxford. By FRANCIS W. NEWMAN, a Translator of the Iliad. London: Williams & Norgate. 1801. pp. 104.

MR. F.W. NEWMAN, Professor of Latin in the University of London, probably without much hope of satisfying himself, and certain to dissatisfy every one who could read, or pretend to read, the original, did nevertheless complete and publish a translation of the "Iliad." And now, unmindful of Bentley's *dictum*, that no man was ever written down but by himself, he has published an answer to Mr. Arnold's criticism of his work. Thackeray has said that it is of no use pretending not to care if your book is cut up by the "Times"; and it is not surprising that Mr. Newman should be uneasy at being first held up as an awful example to the youth of Oxford in academical lectures, and then to the public of England in a printed monograph, by a man of so much reputation for scholarship and taste as the present incumbent of Thomas Warton's chair.

Mr. Arnold's little book is, we need scarcely say, full of delicate criticism and suggestion. He treats his subject with great cleverness, and on many points carries the reader along with him. Especially good is all that he says about the "grand style," so far as his general propositions are concerned. But when he comes to apply his criticisms, he instinctively feels the want of an absolute standard of judgment in aesthetic matters, and accordingly appeals to the verdict of "scholars,"—a somewhat vague term, to be sure, but by which he evidently understands men not merely of learning, but of taste. Of course, his reasoning is all *a posteriori*, and from the narrowest premises,—namely, from an unpleasant effect on his own nerves, to an efficient cause in the badness of Mr. Newman's translation.

Page 187

No quarrels, perhaps, are so bitter as those about matters of taste: hardly even is the *odium theologicum*, so profound as the *odium aestheticum*. A man, perhaps, will more easily forgive another for disbelieving his own total depravity than for believing that Guido is a great painter or Tupper an inspiring poet. The present dispute, therefore, tenderly personal as it is on the part of one of the pleaders, is especially interesting as showing a very decided and gratifying advance in the civilization of literary men to-day as compared with that of a century or indeed half a century ago. If we go back still farther, matters were still worse, and we find Luther and even Milton raking the kennel for dirt dirty enough to fling at an antagonist. But even within the memory of man, the style of the “Dunciad” was hardly obsolete in “Blackwood” and the “Quarterly.” It is very pleasant, in the present case, to see both attack and defence conducted with so gentlemanlike a reserve,—and the latter, which is even more surprising, with an approach to amenity.

In Mr. Newman the Professor of Poetry finds an able and wary antagonist, and one who, in point of learning, carries heavier metal than himself. The dispute turns partly on the character of Homer’s poetry, partly on the true method of translation, (especially Homeric translation,) and partly on the particular merits of Mr. Newman’s attempt as compared with those of others. Of course, many side-topics are incidentally touched upon, among others, the English hexameter, Mr. Newman’s objections to which are particularly worthy of attention.

Mr. Newman instantly sees and strikes at the weak point of his adversary’s argument. “You appeal to scholars,” he says in substance; “you admit that I am one; now you *don’t* like my choice of words or metre; I *do*; who, then, shall decide? Why, the public, of course, which is the court of last appeal in such cases.” It appears to us, that, on most of the points at issue, the truth lies somewhere between the two disputants. We do not think that Mr. Newman has made out his case that Homer was antiquated, quaint, and even grotesque to the Greeks themselves because his cast of thought and his language were archaic, or strange to them because he wrote in a dialect almost as different from Attic as Scotch from English. The Bible is as far from us in language and in the Orientalism of its thought and expression as Homer was from them; yet we are so familiar with it that it produces on us no impression of being antiquated or quaint, seldom of being grotesque, and what is still more to the purpose, produces that impression as little on illiterate persons to whom many of the words are incomprehensible. So, too, it seems to us, no part of Burns is alien to a man whose mother-tongue is English, in the same sense that some parts of Beranger are; because Burns, though a North Briton, was still a Briton, as Homer, though an Ionian, was still a Greek. We think he does

Page 188

prove that neither Mr. Arnold nor any other scholar can form any adequate conception of the impression which the poems of Homer produced either on the ear or the mind of a Greek; but in doing this he proves too much for his own case, where it turns upon the class of words proper to be used in translating him. Mr. Newman says he sometimes used low words; and since his theory of the duty of a translator is, that he should reproduce the moral effect of his author,—be noble where he is noble, barbarous, if he be barbarous, and quaint, if quaint,—so he should render low words by words as low. But here his own dilemma meets him: how does he know that Homer's words *did* seem low to a Greek? We agree with him in refusing to be conventional; so would Mr. Arnold; only one would call conventional what the other would call elegant, the question again resolving itself into one of personal taste. We agree with him also in his preference for words that have it certain strangeness and antique dignity about them, but think he should stop short of anything that needs a glossary. He might learn from Chapman's version, however, that it is not the widest choice of archaic words, but intensity of conception and phrase, that gives a poem life, and keeps it living, in spite of grave defects. Where Chapman, in a famous passage, ("Odyssey," v. 612,) tells us, that, when Ulysses crawled ashore after his shipwreck, "*the sea had soaked his heart through*," it is not the mere simplicity of the language, but the vivid conception which went before and compelled the simplicity, that is impressive. We believe Mr. Newman is right in refusing to sacrifice a good word because it may be pronounced mean by individual caprice, wrong in attempting the fatal impossibility of rescuing a word which to all minds alike conveys a low or ludicrous meaning, as, for example, *pate*, and *dopper*, for which he does battle doughtily. Mr. Newman is guilty of a fallacy when he brings up *brick*, *sell*, and *cut* as instances in support of his position, for in these cases Mr. Arnold would only object to his use of them in their *slang* sense. He himself would hardly venture to say that Hector was a *brick*, that Achilles *cut* Agamemnon, or that Ulysses *sold* Polyphemus. It is precisely because Hobbes used language in this way that his translation of Homer is so ludicrous. Wordsworth broke down in his theory, that the language of poetry should be the every-day speech of men and women, though he nearly succeeded in finally extirpating "poetic diction." We think the proper antithesis is not between prosaic and poetic words, nor between the speech of actual life and a conventionalized diction, but between the language of *real* life (which is something different from the actual, or matter-of-fact) and that of *artificial* life, or society,—that is, between phrases fit to express the highest passion, feeling, aspiration, and those adapted to the intercourse of polite life,

Page 189

whence all violent emotion, or, at least, the expression of it, is excluded. This latter highly artificial and polished dialect is accordingly as suitable to the Mock-Heroic (like "The Rape of the Lock") as it is inefficient and even distasteful when employed for the higher and more serious purposes of poetry. It was most fortunate for English poetry that our translation of the Bible and Shakspeare arrested our language, and, as it were, crystallized it, precisely at its freshest and most vigorous period, giving us an inexhaustible mine of words familiar to the heart and mind, yet unvulgarized to the ear by trivial associations.

The whole question of Homeric translation in its entire range, between Chapman on the one hand and Pope and Cowper on the other, is opened afresh by this controversy. The difficulty of the undertaking, and still more of dogmatizing on the proper mode of executing it, is manifest from the fact that Mr. Newman is quite as successful in turning some specimens of Mr. Arnold's into ridicule as the latter had been with his. Meanwhile we commend the two little books to our readers as containing an able and entertaining discussion on a question of general and permanent interest, and as showing that the "Quarrels of Authors" may be conducted in a dignified and scholarly way.

* * * * *

OBITUARY.

The last English steamer brings us the sad news of the death of Arthur Hugh Clough. Mr. Clough had so many personal friends, as well as warm admirers, in America, that his death will be felt by numbers of our readers both as a private grief and a public loss. The earth will not soon close over a man of more lovely character or more true and delicate genius. This is not the place or the occasion to do justice to the many eminent qualities of his heart and mind, and we only allude to his death at all because in him the "Atlantic" has lost one of its most valued contributors.