

Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science, October, 1877, Vol. XX. No. 118 eBook

Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science, October, 1877, Vol. XX. No. 118

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

Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science, October, 1877, Vol. XX. No. 118 eBook	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	9
Page 1.....	10
Page 2.....	12
Page 3.....	14
Page 4.....	15
Page 5.....	16
Page 6.....	17
Page 7.....	19
Page 8.....	20
Page 9.....	21
Page 10.....	22
Page 11.....	24
Page 12.....	25
Page 13.....	26
Page 14.....	27
Page 15.....	28
Page 16.....	29
Page 17.....	30
Page 18.....	32
Page 19.....	34
Page 20.....	36
Page 21.....	38

Page 22.....	40
Page 23.....	42
Page 24.....	44
Page 25.....	46
Page 26.....	48
Page 27.....	49
Page 28.....	51
Page 29.....	53
Page 30.....	54
Page 31.....	56
Page 32.....	57
Page 33.....	59
Page 34.....	61
Page 35.....	63
Page 36.....	64
Page 37.....	65
Page 38.....	66
Page 39.....	67
Page 40.....	68
Page 41.....	70
Page 42.....	71
Page 43.....	72
Page 44.....	73
Page 45.....	74
Page 46.....	75
Page 47.....	76

Page 48.....	77
Page 49.....	78
Page 50.....	79
Page 51.....	80
Page 52.....	81
Page 53.....	82
Page 54.....	84
Page 55.....	85
Page 56.....	87
Page 57.....	89
Page 58.....	90
Page 59.....	92
Page 60.....	94
Page 61.....	96
Page 62.....	98
Page 63.....	100
Page 64.....	101
Page 65.....	102
Page 66.....	104
Page 67.....	106
Page 68.....	108
Page 69.....	110
Page 70.....	112
Page 71.....	113
Page 72.....	114
Page 73.....	115

Page 74.....	116
Page 75.....	117
Page 76.....	118
Page 77.....	120
Page 78.....	121
Page 79.....	122
Page 80.....	124
Page 81.....	125
Page 82.....	127
Page 83.....	129
Page 84.....	131
Page 85.....	133
Page 86.....	135
Page 87.....	137
Page 88.....	139
Page 89.....	141
Page 90.....	143
Page 91.....	144
Page 92.....	145
Page 93.....	147
Page 94.....	149
Page 95.....	151
Page 96.....	153
Page 97.....	155
Page 98.....	157
Page 99.....	159

Page 100.....	161
Page 101.....	163
Page 102.....	164
Page 103.....	165
Page 104.....	166
Page 105.....	167
Page 106.....	168
Page 107.....	169
Page 108.....	170
Page 109.....	171
Page 110.....	172
Page 111.....	173
Page 112.....	174
Page 113.....	175
Page 114.....	176
Page 115.....	177
Page 116.....	178
Page 117.....	179
Page 118.....	180
Page 119.....	182
Page 120.....	183
Page 121.....	185
Page 122.....	187
Page 123.....	189
Page 124.....	191
Page 125.....	192

Page 126.....	193
Page 127.....	195
Page 128.....	197
Page 129.....	198
Page 130.....	200
Page 131.....	202
Page 132.....	203
Page 133.....	204
Page 134.....	205
Page 135.....	206
Page 136.....	207
Page 137.....	208
Page 138.....	209
Page 139.....	210
Page 140.....	211
Page 141.....	212
Page 142.....	214
Page 143.....	215
Page 144.....	216
Page 145.....	217
Page 146.....	218
Page 147.....	219
Page 148.....	220
Page 149.....	221
Page 150.....	223
Page 151.....	225

Page 152.....	226
Page 153.....	227
Page 154.....	228
Page 155.....	229
Page 156.....	230
Page 157.....	231
Page 158.....	232

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHESTER AND THE DEE.		1
FOR ANOTHER.		10
AMONG THE KABYLES.		10
CHAPTER I.		17
CHAPTER II.		22
CHAPTER III.		34
ABBEYS AND CASTLES.		41
LITTLE LIZAY.		52
THE BASS OF THE POTOMAC.		69
THE CHRYSALIS OF A BOOKWORM.		81
A LAW UNTO HERSELF.		82
CHAPTER X.		82
CHAPTER XI.		84
CHAPTER XII.		89
CHAPTER XIII.		95
ALFRED DE MUSSET.		100
THE BEE.		121
COMMUNISM IN THE UNITED STATES.		131
OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.		141
A DAY AT THE PARIS CONSERVATOIRE.		145
BRIGHAM YOUNG AND MORMONISM.		149
THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA.		150
LITERATURE OF THE DAY.		152

Page 1

Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Christine D and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

Transcriber's note: Punctuation normalized, original spelling retained.

[Illustration: "He stepped forward with a smile." For Percival. Page 420.]

Lippincott's magazine
of
POPULAR LITERATURE AND SCIENCE.

October, 1877.
Vol XX—No. 118

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877, by J.B. *Lippincott & co.*, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

CHESTER AND THE DEE.

Two papers.—I.

[Illustration: *The Dee above Bala.*]

The history of Chester is that of a key. It was the last city that gave up Harold's unlucky cause and surrendered to William the Conqueror, and the last that fell in the no less unlucky cause of the Stuart king against the Parliamentarians. In much earlier times it was held by the famous Twentieth Legion, the *Valens Victrix*, as the key of the Roman dominion in the north-west of Britain, and at present it has peculiarities of position, as well as of architecture, which make it unique in England and a lodestone to Americans. Curiously planted on the border of the newest and most bustling manufacturing district in England, close to the coalfields of North Wales, the mines of Lancashire, the quays of its sea-rival Liverpool and the mills of grimy, wealthy Manchester, it still exercises, besides its artistic and historic supremacy, a *bona fide* ecclesiastical sway over most of these new places. It is the first ancient city accessible to American travellers, many of whom have given practical tokens of their affectionate remembrance of it by largely subscribing to the fund for the restoration of the cathedral, a work that has already cost some eighty thousand pounds.

[Illustration: *Caer-gai.*]

The neighborhood of Chester is as suggestive of antiquity and foreigners as the city itself. Volumes might be written about the quaint, Dutch-like scenery of the low rich land reclaimed from the sea; the broad, sandy estuary of the Dee, with the square-headed peninsula, the Wirrall, which divides this quiet river from the noisy Mersey; the Hoylake,



Parkgate and Neston fisher-folk on the sandy shores, with their queer lives, monotonous scratching-up of mussels and cockles, a never-failing trade, their terms of praise—"the biggest scat," for instance, "in all the island," being the form of commendation for the woman who can with her rake at the end of a long pole scratch up most shellfish in a given time; the low, fertile green pastures, the creamy cheese and the eight yearly cheese-fairs. The city itself is the most foreign-looking in all England, and the

Page 2

inhabitants have the good taste to be proud of this. The river Dee—Milton’s “wizard stream”—celebrated both by English and Welsh bards, is not seen to as much advantage under the walls of the Roman “camp” (*castra*=Chester) as elsewhere, but its bridges serve to supply the want of fine scenery, especially the Old Bridge, which crosses the river just at its bend, and whose massive pointed arches took the place, when they were first built, of a ferry by which the city was entered at the “Ship Gate,” whence now you look over “the Cop” or high bank on the right side of the stream, and view, as from a dike in Holland, the reclaimed land stretching eight miles beyond Chester, though the resemblance ceases at Saltney, where behind the iron-works tower the Welsh hills—Moel-Famman conspicuous above the rest—that bound the Vale of Clwyd.

The Dee is more a Welsh than an English river. It rises in the bleak mountain-region of Merionethshire, the most intensely Welsh of all counties, above Bala Lake, which is commonly but incorrectly called its source. Thence it flows through the Vale of Llangollen, famous in poetry, and waters the meadows of Wynnestay, the splendid home of one of Wales’s most national representatives, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, and only beyond that does it become English by flowing round and into Cheshire. On a very tiny scale the Dee follows something of the course of the Rhine: three streamlets combine to form it; these unite at the village of Llanwchllyn, and the river flows on, a mere mountain-torrent, past an old farmhouse, *Caer-gai*, lying on a desolate moor at the head of Bala Lake, and through the lake itself, after which its scenery alternates, like the Rhine’s below Constance, between rocky gorges and flat moist meadows dotted with hamlets, churches and towns. Bala—otherwise *Lin-Jegid* and *Pimblemere* (“Lake of the Five Parishes”)—has some traditional connection with the great British epic, or rather with its accessories—the *Morte d’Arthur*—of which Tennyson has availed himself in *Enid*, mentioning that Enid’s gentle ministrations soothed the wounded Geraint

As the south-west that blowing Bala Lake,
Fills all the sacred Dee.

Arthur’s own home, according to Spenser, was at the source of the Dee: Vortigern’s castle was near by on the head-waters of the Conway; and “under the foot of Rauran’s mossy base” was the dwelling of old Timon, where Merlin came and gave to his care the wonderful infant who was to become the Christian Hercules of Britain. “Rauran” is the mountain which in Welsh is *Arran-Pon-Llin*, and which with its rocky shelves overlooks the yews of Bala’s churches and the unaccustomed shade trees which the little town boasts in its principal streets. The lake, quiet and hardly visited as it is now, has great resources which are likely to be called upon in the future, and a survey was made ten years ago with a view of supplying Liverpool, Manchester, Blackburn, Birkenhead, etc. with water whenever a fresh demand for it should arise. This would imply the building of a breakwater at the narrow outlet of the lake, the damming up of a few mountain

passes, and the “impounding” of a tributary of the Dee below the lake—the Tryweryn, which has an extensive drainage-area; but these works are still only projected.

Page 3

[Illustration: *Bala.*]

There is scarcely an English brook that has not some historical associations, some poetical reminiscences, some attractions beyond those of scenery. Wherever water, forest and meadow were combined, an abbey was generally planted. Bala Lake, with its fishing-rights, once belonged to the Cistercian abbey of Basingwerk, while the Dee just above Llangollen was the property of the abbey of Valle Crucis, whose beautiful ruins still stand on its banks. Before we reach them we pass by the country of the Welsh hero, Owen Glendower, from whom are descended many of the families of this neighborhood and others—the Vaughans, for instance; by Glendower's prison at Corwen, and the Parliament House at Dolgelly, where he signed a treaty with France, and where the beautiful oak carving of the roof would alone repay a visitor for his trouble in getting there. The Dee is for the most part wanting in striking natural features, but here and there steep rocks enclose its foaming waters; deep banks covered with trees break the rugged shore-line; a village, such as Llanderfel with a tumbledown bridge, lies nestled in the valley; and coracles shoot here and there over the stream. These primitive boats, basketwork covered with hides, or, as used now, canvas coated with tar, are propelled by a paddle, and are much used for netting salmon. Near Bangor the fishermen are so skilful that they generally win in the coracle-races got up periodically by enthusiastic revivalists of old national sports.

[Illustration: *Remains of Valle Crucis abbey.*]

Llangollen Vale has a beauty of its own, the family likeness of which to that of all valleys in the hearts of mountains makes it none the less welcome. The picturesqueness of thatched houses and a dilapidation of masonry which only age makes beautiful marks the difference between this valley and the Alpine ones with their trim, clean toy houses, or the Transatlantic ones with their square, solid, black log huts and huge well-sweeps; otherwise the fresh greenery, the purple mountain-shadows, the subdued sounds, no one knows whence, the sense of peace and solitude, are akin to every other beautiful valley-scene of mingled wildness and cultivation. A traveller can hardly help making comparisons, yet much escapes him of the peculiar charm that hangs round every place, and is too subtle to disclose itself to the eye of a mere passer. You must live at least six months in one place before its true character unfolds: the broad beauties you see at once, but it needs the microscope of habit to find out the rarest charms. Therefore it is much easier to descant on the tangible, striking beauty of Valle Crucis Abbey than on the aggregate loveliness of Llangollen Vale; and perhaps it is this lack of familiarity that leads novelists, poets and others to dwell so much more and with such detail on buildings than on natural scenery. It may not be given them

Page 4

to understand upon how much higher a plane of beauty stands a bed of ferns on a rocky ledge, a clump of trees even on a flat meadow, and especially a tangled forest-scene or a view of distant mountains in a sunset glow, or the surface of water undotted by a sail, than the highest effect of man-made beauty, be it even York Minster or the Parthenon. What man does has value by reason of the meaning in it, and of course man cannot but fall short of the perfection of his own meaning; whereas Nature is of herself perfection, and perfection in which there is no effort. Valle Crucis is hardly a rival of Fountains or Rivaulx. The Cistercians in the beginning of their foundation were reformers, ascetic, and essentially agriculturists. Their great leader, Bernard of Clairvaux, the advocate of silence and work, once said, "Believe me, I have learnt more from trees than ever I learnt from men." But decay came even into this community of farmer-monks, and the praise and panegyric of the abbey, as handed down to us by a Welsh poet, betray unconsciously things hardly to the credit of a monastic house, for the abbot, "the pope of the glen," he tells us, gave entertainments "like the leaves in summer," with "vocal and instrumental music," wine, ale and curious dishes of fish and fowl, "like a carnival feast," and "a thousand apples for dessert."

[Illustration: *Owen Glendower's prison.*]

[Illustration: *The Parliament house, Dolgelly.*]

The river-scenery changes below Llangollen, and gives us first a glimpse of a wooded, narrow valley, then of the unsightly accessories of the great North Wales coalfield, after which it enters upon a typically English phase—low undulating hills and moist, rich meadows divided by luxuriant hedges and dotted with single spreading trees. The hedgerow timber of Cheshire is beautiful, and to a great extent makes up for the want of tracts of wooded land. This country is not, like the Midland counties and the great Fen district, violently or exclusively agricultural, and these hedges and trees, which are gratefully kept up for the sake of the shade they afford to the cattle, show a very different temper among the farmers from that utilitarianism which marks the men of Leicester shire, Lincoln, Nottingham, Norfolk, or Rutland. There even great land-owners are often obliged to humor their tenants, and keep the unwelcome hedges trimmed so as not to interpose two feet of shade between them and the wheat-crop; and as often as possible hedges are replaced by ugly stone walls or wooden fences. It is only in their own grounds that landlords can afford to court picturesqueness, and in this part of the country the American who is said to have objected to hedges because they were unfit for seats whence to admire the landscape, might safely sit down anywhere; only, as matters are seldom perfectly arranged, there is very little to admire but a flat expanse of wheat,

Page 5

barley and grass. This part of Cheshire has hardly more diversity in its river-scenery, but the mere presence of trees and green arbors makes it a pleasant picture, while here and there, as at Overton (this is Welsh, however, and belongs to Flintshire), a church-tower comes in to complete the scene. Here the Dee winds about a good deal, and receives its beautiful, dashing tributary, the Alyn, which runs through the Vale of Gresford and waters the park of Trevallyn Old Hall, one of the loveliest of old English homes. Its pointed gables and great clustering stacks of chimneys, its mullioned and diamond-paned windows, its finely-wooded park, all realize the stranger's ideal of the antique manor-house. This neighborhood is studded with country-houses in all styles of architecture, from the characteristic national to the uncomfortable and cold foreign type. Houses that were meant to stand in ilex-groves under a purple sky and a sun of bronze look forlorn and uninviting under the gray sky of England and amid its trees leafless for so many months in the year: home associations seem impossible in a porticoed house suggestive of outdoor living and the relegation of chambers to the use of a mere refuge from the weather. For many of these places are no more than villas enlarged, and might be set down with advantage to themselves in the Regent's Park in London, the very acme of the commonplace. On the other hand, all the traditional associations that go with an English hall presuppose a national style of architecture. Even florid Tudor, even sturdy "Queen Anne," can stand juxtaposition with groups of horses, dogs and huntsmen; Christmas cheer and Christmas weather set them off all the better; leafless trees are no drawback; the house looks warmer, cosyer, more home-like, the worse the blast and rush without. A roaring fire is natural to the huge hall fireplace, while in a mosaic-paved "ante-room" or a frescoed "saloon" it looks foreign and out of place. Many an odd Welsh and English house has unfortunately disappeared to make room for a cold, unsuccessful monstrosity that reminds one of a mammoth railway-station or a new hotel; and when Welsh names are tacked on to these absurd dwellings the contrast is as painful as it is forcible. Such, for instance, is Bryn-y-Pys, on the Dee—a house you might guess to belong to a Liverpool merchant who had trusted to a common builder for a comfortable home. Overton Cottage, on the other side, fills in with its walks and plantations an abrupt bend of the river, and the view from the up-going road at its back is very lovely, though the scene is purely pastoral. Overton Churchyard is one of the "seven wonders" of North Wales: it has a very trim and stately appearance, not that ragged, free if melancholy, outspreadedness which distinguishes many country cemeteries, that unpremeditated luxuriance of creepers and flowers, blossoming bushes and grasses, that make up at least half of one's pleasant reminiscences of such

Page 6

places. How much more interesting to find an old tomb or quaint “brass” under the temple of a wild rosebush or in the firm clasp of an ivy-root than to walk up to it and read the inscription newly scraped and cleaned by the voluble attendant who volunteers to show you the place! The great elms by Overton Church and the half-timbered and thatched houses crowding up to its gates somewhat make up for the splendor of the coped wall and new monuments in the churchyard. A scene wholly old is the Erbistock Ferry, which one might mistake for a rope-ferry on the Mosel. The cottage looks like the dilapidated lodge of an old monastery, and here, at least, is no trimness. Two walls with a flight of steps in each enclose a grass terrace between them, and trees and bushes straggle to the edge of the river, hardly keeping clear of the swinging rope. Coracles are sometimes used for ferrying—also punts. Bangor is a familiar name to students of church history, and to those who are not, the startling tale of the massacre of twelve hundred British monks by the Saxon and heathen king of Northumbria, who conquered Chester and invaded Wales in the seventh century, is repeated by the local guides. At present, Bangor is interesting to anglers and to lovers of curiosities—to the former as a good salmon-ground, and to the latter for the quaint verses, which, though trivial in themselves, borrow a value from the date of their inscription and the “laws” to which they refer. They are on the wall of the lower story of the bell-tower:

[Illustration: *In the vale of Llangollen.*]

If that to ring you would come here,
You must ring well with hand and ear;
But if you ring in spur or hat,
Fourpence always is due for that;
But if a bell you overthrow,
Sixpence is due before you go;
But if you either swear or curse,
Twelvepence is due; pull out your purse.
Our laws are old, they are not new;
Therefore the clerk must have his due.
If to our laws you do consent,
Then take a bell: we are content.

[Illustration: *Llangollen.*]

Farndon Bridge and Wrexham Church (the latter looks like a small cathedral to the unpractised eye) are the last Welsh points of attraction before the Dee becomes quite an English river. Malpas (*mauvais pas* = “bad step”), on the English bank, is significantly so-called from its situation as a border town: the rector, too, might consider it not ill named, as regards the odd partition of the church tithes, which has been in force from time immemorial, and has given rise to an explanatory legend concerning a



travelling king whom the resident curate wisely entertained in the absence of the rector, receiving for his guerdon a promise of an equal share in the income, not only for himself, but for all future curates. In the upper rectory (the lower is the curate's house) was born Bishop Heber in 1783, and in the early

Page 7

years of this century, before missionary meetings were as common as they are now, the young clergyman wrote on the spur of the moment, with only one word corrected, the well-known hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." A missionary sermon was announced for Sunday at Wrexham, the vicarage of Heber's father-in-law, Shirley, and the want of a suitable hymn was felt. He was asked on Saturday to write one, and did so, seated at a window of the old vicarage-house. It was printed that evening, and sung the next day in Wrexham Church. The original manuscript is in a collection at Liverpool, and the printer who set up the type when a boy was still living at Wrexham within the last twenty years.

[Illustration: *Chester, from the Aldford road.*]

The river now makes a turn, sweeping along into English ground and making almost a natural moat round Chester, the great Roman camp whose form and intersecting streets still bear the stamp of Roman regularity, and whose history long bore traces of the influence of Roman inflexibility mingled with British dash. The view of the city is fine from the Aldford road (or Old Ford, where a Roman pavement is sometimes visible in the bed of the stream), with the cathedral and St. John's towering over the peaks and gables that shoot up above the walls. The mention of the ford brings to mind a famous crossing of the river during the civil wars. It was just before the battle of Rowton Moor, which Charles I. watched from the tower that now bears his name; and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, one of his leal soldiers, wishing to send the king notice of his having crossed the Dee at Farndon Bridge and pressing on the Parliamentarians, bade Colonel Shakerley convey the message as speedily as possible. The latter, to avoid the long circuit by the bridge, galloped to the Dee, took a wooden tub used for slaughtering swine, employed "a batting-staff, used for batting of coarse linen," as an oar, put his servant in the tub, his horse swimming by him, and once across left the tub in charge of the man while he rode to the king, delivered his message and returned to cross over the same way.

[Illustration: *Coracles.*]

Eaton and Wynnestay are the grandest of the Dee country-seats, though not the most interesting as to architecture. The former, like many Italian houses, has its park open to the public, and is an exception to the jealously-guarded places in most parts of England, but its avenues, rather formal though very magnificent, are approached by lodges. The Wrexham avenue leads to a farmhouse called Belgrave, and here is the christening-point of the new, fashionable London of society, of novelists and of contractors. Another like avenue leads to Pulford, where there is another lodge: a third leads from Grosvenor Bridge to the deer-park, and a fourth to the village of Aldford. The hall is an immense pile, strikingly like, at first glance, the Houses of Parliament, with the Victoria

Page 8

Tower (this in the hall is one hundred and seventy feet high, and built above the chapel), and the style is sixteenth-century French, florid and costly. The plan is perhaps unique in England, and comfort has been attained, though one would hardly believe it, such size seeming to swamp everything except show. The description of the house, as given by a visitor there, reads like that of a palace: "The hall is an octagonal room in the centre of the house about seventy-five feet in length and from thirty to forty broad: on each side, at the end farthest from the entrance, are two doors leading into anterooms—one the ante-drawing-room, and the other the ante-dining-room; each is lighted by three large windows, and is thirty-three feet in length: they are fine rooms in themselves, and well-proportioned. From these lead the drawing-room and the dining-room respectively, both exceedingly grand rooms, ingenious in design and shape, each with two oriel windows and lighted by three others and a large bay window: this suite completes the east side. The south is occupied by the end of the drawing-room and a vast library—all *en suite*. The library is lighted by four bay windows, three flat ones and a fine alcove, and the rest of the main building to the west is made up of billiard- and smoking-rooms, waiting-hall, groom-of-chambers' sitting- and bed-rooms, and a carpet-room, besides the necessary staircases. This completes the main building, and a corridor leads to the kitchen and cook's offices: this corridor, which passes over the upper part of the kitchen, branches off into two parts—one leading to an excellently-planned mansion for the family and the private secretary, and another leading to the stables, which are arranged with great skill. The pony stable, the carriage-horse stable, the riding horses, occupy different sides, and through these are arranged, just in the right places, the rooms for livery and saddle grooms and coachmen. The laundry, wash-house, gun-room and game-larder occupy another building, which, however, is easily approached, and the whole building, though it extends seven hundred feet in length, is a perfect model of compactness. Great facilities are given to any one who desires to see it." The mention of a "mansion for the family" shows how the associations of a home are lost in this wilderness of magnificence: indeed, I remember a remark of a person whose husband had three or four country-houses in England and Scotland and a house in London, that "she never felt at home anywhere."

[Illustration: *Chester cathedral and city wall.*]

Page 9

The farms in this neighborhood are mostly small, the average being seventy acres, and some are still smaller, though when one gets down to ten, one is tempted to call them gardens. Grazing and dairy-work are the chief industries. Farther inland, beyond the manufacturing town of Stockport, is a house of the Leghs, an immense building, more imposing than lovely in its exterior, but one of the most individual and pleasant houses in its interior as well as in its human associations. It has been altered at various times, and bears traces, like a corrected map, of each new phase of architecture for several hundred years. The four sides form a huge quadrangle, entered by foreign-looking gateways, and the rooms all open into a wide passage that runs round three sides of the building, and is a museum in itself. Old and new are just enough blended to produce comfort, and the stately, old-English look of the drawing-room, with its dark panelling and tapestry, is a reproach to the pink-and-white, plaster-of-Paris style of too many remodelled houses. Outside there is a garden distinguished by a heavy old wall overrun with creepers, dividing two levels and making a striking object in the landscape; and beyond that, where the country grows bleak and begins to remind one of moors, there are the last survivors of a unique breed of wild cattle, which, like the mastiffs at the house, bear the name of the place. The name of another Cheshire house, formerly belonging to the Stanleys, and now to Mr. Gladstone, is probably familiar to American readers—Hawarden Castle. The present house must trust entirely to associations for its interest, having been built in 1809, before much taste was applied to restore old places, but the old castle in the park dates from the middle of the thirteenth century. The park is not unlike that of Arundel, but the views from the ruin are finer and more varied. The counties of Caernarvon, Denbigh, Flint, Cheshire and Lancashire are spread out around it, and the ruin itself is beautiful and extensive.

The road from Hawarden to Boughton is exceedingly grand: we come upon one of the widest panoramas of the Dee and one of the most typical of English country scenes. A vast sweep of country unsurpassed in richness spreads along the river on the Cheshire side: sixty square miles of fields and pastures are in sight, with elms, sycamores and formal rows of Lombardy poplars. Wherever the trees cluster in a grove they usually mark the site of a country-house or a cherished ruin, like this one of old Hawarden, where one enormous oak tree sweeps its branches on the ground on every side, and forms a canopy whence you can peer out, as through the delicate tracery of a Gothic window, at the landscape beyond. The mouth of the Dee is visible from this road, whence at low water it seems reduced to a huge sandbank, through which the tired river trickles like a brook. The dun sky and yellow sands and gray sea, with the island of Hilbree, a counterpart of Lindisfarne both

Page 10

in its legend of a recluse and its continual alternation twice a day between the state of an island and a peninsula, make a picture pleasant to look back upon. Hence too come the shoals of cockles and mussels that go to delight Londoners. Then the open-sea fishing, the lithe boats that seem all sail, the wide waste of waters, with the point of Air and the Great Orme's Head walling it in on the receding Welsh coasts, the remembrance of the shipwreck a little beyond the mouth of the Dee which led to Milton's poem of *Lycidas* (containing the phrase "wizard stream" which has become peculiar to the Dee),—all claim our notice, and it seems impossible that we are so few miles from Manchester and so far from the historic, romantic times of old.

Lady Blanche Murphy.

[Illustration: *Overton church.*]

FOR ANOTHER.

Sweet—sweet? My child, some sweeter word than sweet,
Some lovelier word than love, I want for you.
Who says the world is bitter, while your feet
Are left among the lilies and the dew?

Ah? So some other has, this night, to fold
Such hands as his, and drop some precious head
From off her breast as full of baby-gold?
I, for her grief, will not be comforted.

S.M.B. Piatt.

AMONG THE KABYLES.

Concluding paper.

[Illustration: *Roman sepulchre at TAKSEBT.*]

Few countries twenty-five leagues long by ten wide have such an assortment of climates as Grand Kabylia. From the Mediterranean on the north to the Djurjura range on the south, a distance of two hours' ride by rail if there were a railway, the ascent is equal to that from New York Bay to the summit of Mount Washington. The palm is at home on the shore, while snow is preserved through the summer in the hollows of the peaks. This epitome of the zones is more condensed than that so often remarked upon on the eastern slope of Mexico, although it does not embrace such extremes of



temperature as those presented by Vera Cruz and the uppermost third of Orizaba. The country being more broken, the lower and higher levels are brought at many points more closely together than on the Mexican ascent. It happens thus that semi-tropical and semi-arctic plants come not simply into one and the same landscape, but into actual contact. Each hill is a miniature Orizaba, so far as it rises, and hundreds of abrupt hills collected in a space comparatively so limited so dovetail the floras of different levels as in a degree to cause them to coalesce and effect a certain mutual adaptation of habits. Good neighborhood has established itself rather more completely among the vegetable than with the human part of the inhabitants.

Page 11

What more amiable example of give-and-take than the intertwining of birch and orange, the thin ghostly sprays of the hyperborean caressing the fragrant leaf and golden globes of the sub-tropical? This, and other conjunctions less eloquent of contrast, may be seen on the headland of Zeffoun or Cape Corbelin. They stand out from a prevailing background of the familiar forest trees of temperate Europe and America—the ash, elm, beech, oak, fir and walnut. The orchards, above those of oranges and lemons, are of figs and olives. The cork-oak covers considerable tracts, but is less attended to than in Spain. A non-European aspect is imparted by the tufts of cactus and aloes which abound in the most arid localities.

[Illustration: *The Djurjura range.*]

Wherever intelligent farming is met with in Northern Africa it is a safe assertion that the Kabyles are either on the spot or not far off. Like other farmers, they are conservative and adhere to old rules or fancies, which in some cases verge upon superstition. The practice of fertilizing fig trees by hanging them with fruits of the wild fig is one of those which it is difficult to class—whether with the visionary or the practical. Be that as it may, people who know nothing about figs except to eat them have no right to a say in the matter. Tradition and experience are in favor of the Kabyle. He does what has been done since Aristotle, Theophrastus and Pliny, all of whom insist on “caprification” as essential to a large crop of figs adapted to drying. He will go or send many miles to procure the wild fruit if it does not grow in his neighborhood, and the traffic in it reaches a value of some thousands of dollars annually, trains of thirty, fifty and sixty mule-loads passing from one tribe to another. As with other valuable things, this inedible fruit is food for quarrelling. The tribe which is rich in the *dokhar*, or wild fig, is fortunate, and especially so if its neighbors have none or if their crop of it fails. It is then able to “bull the market,” and proceeds to do so with a promptness and vim that would turn a Wall street operator blue with envy. But it is compelled to take account of troubles in its path unknown at the Board. The party who is “short” on *dokhar* may be “long” on matchlocks. If so, the speculation is apt to come to an unhappy end. A sudden raid will capture the stock and at once equalize the market. To many communities figs are at once meat and pocket-money. To lose the harvest is not to be thought of. The aspect of the means of preventing such a disaster is altogether a secondary consideration. *Dokhar* at all hazards is the cry of men, women and children. The comparative cessation of fig-wars is one of the blessings due to French rule.

[Illustration: *Road across the Djurjura at mount TIROURDA.*]

Page 12

What we deem the fruit of the fig is, it will be remembered, only the husk, the apparent seeds being the true fruit and—before ripening—the blossom. A small fly establishes itself in the interior of the wild fig, escaping in great numbers when the fruit is ripe. This happens before the ripening of the improved fig, and the fly is supposed to carry the wild pollen to the flowers of the latter. A single insect, say the Kabyles, will perfect ninety-nine figs, the hundredth becoming its tomb. Some varieties of figs do not need caprification, but they are said to be unsuitable for drying or shipment.

The Italian practice of touching the eye of each fig, while yet on the tree, with a drop of olive oil seems opposed to the African plan; since the oil would certainly exclude the insect. And there are no better figs in the world than those of the Southern States of the Union, which are not treated in either way, and receive the least possible cultivation of any kind. Those States, if it be true that the difference in the yield of a “caprified” and non-caprified tree is that between two hundred and eighty and twenty-five pounds, cannot do better than borrow a leaf from the Kabyle book, should it only be a fig-leaf to aid in clothing the nakedness of bare sands and galled hillsides. The United States Department of Agriculture should by all means introduce the dokhar. Some of our agricultural machinery would be an exchange in the highest degree beneficial to the other side.

[Illustration: *The Peak of TIROURDA.*]

Long before the French occupation the Kabyles had maintained a regulation which is, we believe, peculiar in Europe to France—the *ban*, or legally-established day for the beginning of the vintage and the harvest of other fruits. The cultivator may repose under his own vine and fig tree, but he shall not until the word is given by the proper authority put forth his hand to pluck its luscious boon, though perfectly mature or past maturity. Exceptions are made in case of invalids and distinguished guests, and doubtless the hale schoolboy decrees an occasional dispensation in his own favor. The birds share his defiance of the law, and both are abetted by a third group of transgressors, the monkeys.

Africans of this last-named race are in some localities extremely numerous, and they do not restrict their foraging parties to succulent food. Grain is very acceptable to them, and has the advantage of keeping better than fruit, the art of drying which they have not yet mastered any more than the Bushmen or the Pi-Utes. They establish granaries in the crevices of the rocks; and these reserves of provision are sometimes of such magnitude as to make exploring expeditions on the part of the plundered Kabyles quite remunerative.

[Illustration: DJEMA-SAHRIDJ.]

Page 13

These most ancient of all the devastators which have successively descended upon Barbary are baboons of small size. They have no tails, that ancestral organ having dwindled to a wart the size of a pea. This approach to the form of man is aided by another point of personal resemblance—long whiskers. That the tail should have been worn off against the rocks, or in climbing the fences to get at orchards and melon-patches, is easily conceivable. How the evolutionists account for the retention of the beard does not yet appear. The females carry their young as adroitly and carefully as do the Kabyle women, and ascend the rocks with them with much greater activity. A young monkey has a less neglected look than a young Kabyle. His ablutions cannot be less frequent. Tourists complain that all Kabylia does not boast a single bath-house—a privation the more striking to one who has to pick his way often for miles among the ruins of Roman aqueducts, tanks and baths, the great basin in cut stone at Djema-Sahridj, which gives name to the place, being a noted example of these works.

[Illustration: A DISH-FACTORY.]

As the vultures, dogs, negroes, Jews and jackals keep exact memoranda of the market-days, so the baboons are always on hand at harvest. Ranged in long ranks on an amphitheatre of cliffs, stroking gravely their long white beards like so many reverend *episcopi* or “on-lookers” confident of their tithes, they calmly contemplate the toilers in the vale below. Swift was not more certain of his “tithe-pig and mortuary guinea.” Sunset comes sooner below than above. The reapers are early home, and the peaks are still purple when the marauders pour down upon the fields, and their share of the work is done with a neatness unsurpassable by reiver, ritter or kateran. The monkey-tax thus collected is quite a calculable percentage of the crop, and few taxes are more regularly paid. As it goes to non-producers, its reduction is an object constantly kept in view. The wretched guns of the natives are, however, but a feeble instrument of reform. The chassepot may succeed after having finished the rest of its task, and dispose of the baboons after the settlement of the men. The former, though not incomparably smaller than the French conscript after a protracted war, will never be made to bear arms. He is therefore useless to modern statesmen, and needs to be got rid of.

While the barn is defrauded by these little vegetarians, the barnyard is laid under tribute by a family of equally unauthorized flesh-eaters—the panthers. If this large spotted cat, known in other parts of the world as ounce, jaguar, leopard and chetah, has any choice of diet, it is for veal. But his appreciation of kid is none the less lively. Lamb, in season, comes well to him also. As there are many panthers, each of them of “unbounded stomach,” and they can find little to eat in the way of wild quadrupeds, the destruction they must cause among domestic animals

Page 14

is seen to be serious. In the Mokuea neighborhood each village has its panther-killer, an enterprising man set apart for a profession which sometimes becomes hereditary. One of these boasts of having killed thirty-six panthers. His father before him had bagged seventy-five, and he hoped before pulling his final trigger to have done as well. This expectation was a just one, as at twenty-eight he had already nearly halved the paternal count. The method of hunting is very simple. The sportsman fixes a bleating little victim from the herd at the foot of a tree, and climbs with his flint gun into the branches. Had the North African beast the arboreal habits of the South African tree-leopard or the American jaguar, this proceeding would be less effectual with him. But he can neither climb nor reflect like his countryman the monkey, and is picked off like a beef. One finds it difficult to get up sympathy for an animal so little able to take care of himself, or to suppose that panthers could have furnished a particularly high-spiced ingredient to the enjoyments of the Roman arena. An English bull-dog, if less picturesque, would have been far more fruitful of fighting.

Products edible neither to the wild beast nor the tooth of time are the Kabyle vases in clay. The amphorae in common use by the women for carrying water are generally of graceful forms, comparing well in design with many of the archaic vases of Greece and the Levant. The patterns vary somewhat with the locality, but there is a resemblance which speaks of a common origin and taste. Those of the Beni-Raten all come to a blunt point at the bottom, and will not stand unsupported. The jar is made to rest upon the girdle of the bearer, while she supports it upon her back by one or both of the handles. Among the tribes nearer the Djurjura the jar has a broader and hollowed bottom, fitted to rest upon the head of the woman. It must therefore be less elongated and more rotund to admit of her reaching the handles for the purpose of balancing it. These jars weigh, filled with water, sixty pounds. In carrying one of them a Kabyle woman, it may easily be supposed, is not in a condition to study lightness of step or grace of carriage. Yet this heavy task, to which she begins to accustom herself at the age of twelve, does not appear to injure her figure or health. Such a result is more often due to violent and exceptional strains than to habitual exertion even greater in extent. The muscles are not less susceptible of education than the mind. Whatever brings out the full power of either without suddenly overtasking is healthy and beneficial.

It has been remarked that the most usual size of the Kabyle water-jar is as nearly as possible identical with the amphora kept for a standard measure in the Capitol at Rome. This coincidence may well be due rather to a correspondence in the average strength of the carriers than to a common system of authorized measures. In decoration the Kabyle vases approach the Arabic more than the Roman style. But the feeling, both in form and coloring, is decidedly more artistic than in the similar ware of Northern Europe.

Page 15

Very ancient influences are manifest, too, in the work of the Kabyle silversmiths. Their diadems, ear-drops, bracelets and anklets remind one of the forms unearthed at Hissarlik and in Cyprus. In outline and chasing the rectangular, mathematical and monumental rules at the expense of the flowing and floriated. A certain pre-Phidian stiffness of handling seems to hamper the workman, as though twenty-three hundred years had been lost for him.

[Illustration: THE BOUDOIR AND KITCHEN.]

That there should be so much of hopeful force left in the Kabyle, artisan, agriculturist or adventurer, is creditable to him, and suggests “an original glory not yet lost.” He obstinately refuses to accept the sheer professional vagabondism of the Arab, confident, as it were, that the world has in reserve better use for him than that. “Day-dawn in Africa” will probably gild his hills sooner than the tufted swamps of Guinea or the slimy huts of the Nile. A class of missionaries quite different from the Livingstones and the Moffatts have devoted themselves to his improvement. They approach him in a different way, and begin on his commercial and industrial side, not on the spiritual. The latter does not appear to be by any means so accessible. Unlike the Ashantees, the Kafirs and the M'pongwe, he was a Christian once, and may become one again. But he is not going to be evangelized on the hurrah system; and that fact his new rulers, with all their alleged defects as reformers and colonizers, have sense enough to recognize. The new faith must push its way in the rear of works. Peace, good government, good roads, better implements and methods of labor will promote the enlightenment necessary to its success.

Bougie, the port of Eastern Kabylia, lying under Cape Carbon, has one Catholic church, standing in the midst of new streets, squares and public constructions indicative of prosperity wrought by the French regime. It is still in need of easy communication with the interior, having but one road—one more than in the time of the Turks. Wax is the chief commodity traversing that line of traffic. That circumstance has, however, nothing to do with the name of the town. The name was there when the French came, as was the wax, and very little else but ruins. If the present state of improvement has been effected with so little aid from good roads, what would not a number of them accomplish? A railway running to the other end of the province longitudinally through its centre would have but one ridge to overcome, and would find a very fair business ready for it. The railway and vandalism, in the proverbial sense of the word, could not coexist. When the Vandals buy railway-tickets and ship fat oxen on fast stock-trains the African world will move. Nobody ever heard of chronic war between two adjacent railroad-stations, or of a gang of raiders dressed only in shirts and armed with spears and matchlocks going out on the morning mail for a day's shooting among their fellow-countrymen in the next county.

Page 16

Let us quote a sketch of the region lying a few leagues west and north-west of Bougie:

“Near Tarourt we found thermal springs. An open park-like country, beautiful with trees and turf, is defaced only by charred spots where the cork-woods have been burned by the natives to effect clearings much less in extent than the space thus denuded. Ten acres of cork trees will be thoughtlessly burned to make one of fig-orchard. And this evil rather increases than lessens, prevention being difficult by reason of the want of good roads for reaching the delinquents.... In six hours' march we reached Toudja, at the foot of Mount Arbalon, in the most delicious oasis imaginable. The soil, threaded by clear and cool rivulets which spring in abundance from the rocks forming the base of the mountain, is wonderfully fertile. We are surrounded by more than a square league of tufted verdure, composed in great part of orange and lemon groves, mingled with some palms and immense carob trees. The houses are well built, and even show fancy in their designs. Vines bending with enormous clusters of grapes festoon themselves from tree to tree, tasselling the topmost branches with fruit and tendrils. It is not uncommon to see four or five large trees taken possession of by a single vine, its trunk as large as the body of a man. The grapes are mostly of a light-red color, large and sweet.”

[Illustration: REPOSE.]

All this indicates that France did not deceive herself as to the capabilities of Algeria, and that her conquest of it was inspired by considerations more solid than the glory she has been accused of recognizing as an all-sufficient motive. She has made the country much more valuable to the commerce of the world than any other part of Barbary. Had she done nothing more with it than hold it prostrate and put an end to its existence as a den of pirates, she would by that alone have earned the gratitude of the nations. She has done a great deal more. European civilization has discovered a penetrable spot in the dense armor of African barbarism. It has effected a lodgment in the darkest and most hopeless of the continents. Should the movement fail, like so many before it, to extend itself, and become localized after a period of promise, the cause must be sought mainly in natural obstacles almost impossible to be overcome.

To have lifted the dead, brutal weight of Ottoman tyranny from any corner of the broad territory it blasts is to deserve well of humanity. Still stronger is the case when the rescued territory is fertile, beautiful, and inhabited by a race worthy of a better fate than the bondage against which it had never ceased to struggle.

France has not been guiltless of acts of severity, always attendant, in a greater or less degree, on violent political changes. It is not doubtful, nevertheless, that by repressing the endless turbulence of the tribes and driving out a foreign rule that knew no law but force, she has saved many more lives than she has taken. A genius for organization was never denied her. Organization was the first thing wanted in Algeria.



Page 17

EDWARD C. BRUCE.

“FOR PERCIVAL.”

CHAPTER I.

THORNS AND ROSES.

It was a long, narrow and rather low room, with four windows looking out on a terrace. Jasmine and roses clustered round them, and flowers lifted their heads to the broad sills. Within, the lighted candles showed furniture that was perhaps a little faded and dim, though it had a slender, old-fashioned grace which more than made amends for any beauty it had lost. There was much old china, and on the walls were a few family portraits, of which their owner was justly proud; and in the air there lingered a faint fragrance of dried rose-leaves, delicate yet unconquerable. Even the full tide of midsummer sweetness which flowed through the open windows could not altogether overcome that subtle memory of summers long gone by.

The master of the house, with a face like a wrinkled waxen mask, sat in his easy-chair reading the *Saturday Review*, and a lady very like him, only with a little more color and fulness, was knitting close by. The light shone on the old man's pale face and white hair, on the old lady's silver-gray dress and flashing rings: the knitting-pins clicked, working up the crimson wool, and the pages of the paper rustled with a pleasant crispness as they were turned. By the window, where the candlelight faded into the soft shadows, stood a young man apparently lost in thought. His face, which was turned a little toward the garden, was a noteworthy one with its straight forehead and clearly marked, level brows. His features were good, and his clear olive complexion gave him something of a foreign air. He had no beard, and his moustache was only a dark shadow on his upper lip, so that his mouth stood revealed as one which indicated reserve, though it was neither stern nor thin-lipped. Altogether, it was a pleasant face.

A light step sauntering along the terrace, a low voice softly singing “Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes,” roused him from his reverie. He did not move, but his mouth and eyes relaxed into a smile as a white figure came out of the dusk exactly opposite his window, and singer and song stopped together. “Oh, Percival! I didn't know you had come out of the dining-room.”

“Twenty minutes ago. What have you been doing?”

“Wandering about the garden. What could I do on such a perfect night but what I have been doing all this perfect day?”

She stood looking up at him as she spoke. She had an arch, beautiful face—the sort of face which would look well with patches and powder. Only it would have been a sin to



powder the hair, which, though deep brown, had rich touches of gold, as if a happy sunbeam were imprisoned in its waves. Her eyes were dark, her lips were softly red: everything about Sissy Langton's face was delicate and fine. She lifted her hand to reach a spray of jasmine just above her head, and the lace sleeve above fell back from her pretty, slender wrist: "Give it to me. Percival! do you hear? Oh, what a tease you are!" For he drew it back when she would have gathered it. Mrs. Middleton was heard making a remark inside.

Page 18

"You don't deserve it," said Percival. "Here is my aunt saying that the hot weather makes you scandalously idle."

"Scandalously idle! Aunt Harriet!" Sissy repeated it in incredulous amusement, and the old lady's indignant disclaimer was heard: "Percival! Most unusually idle, I said."

"Oh! most unusually idle? I beg your pardon. But doesn't that imply a considerable amount of idleness to be got through by one person?"

"Yes, but you helped me," said Sissy.—"Aunt Harriet, listen. He stood on my thimble ever so long while he was talking this afternoon. How can I work without a thimble?"

"Impossible!" said Percival. "And I don't think I can get you another to-morrow: I am going out. On Thursday I shall come back and bring you one that won't fit. Friday you must go with me to change it. Yes, we shall manage three days' holiday very nicely."

"Nonsense! But it *is* your fault if I am idle."

"Why, yes. Having no thimble, you are naturally unable to finish your book, for instance."

"Oh, I sha'n't finish that: I don't like it. The heroine is so dreadfully strong-minded I don't believe in her. She never does anything wrong; and though she suffers tortures—absolute agony, you know—she always rises to the occasion—nasty thing!"

"A wonderful woman," said Percival, idly picking sprays of jasmine as he spoke.

Sissy's voice sank lower: "Do you think there are really any women like that?"

"Oh yes, I suppose so."

She took the flowers which he held out, and looked doubtfully into his face: "But—do you *like* them, Percival?"

"Make the question a little clearer," he said. "I don't like your ranting, pushing, unwomanly women who can talk of nothing but their rights. They are very terrible. But heroic women—" He stopped short. The pause was more eloquent than speech.

"Ah!" said Sissy, "Well—a woman like Jael? or Judith?"

He repeated the name "Judith." "Or Charlotte Corday?" he suggested after a moment.

It was Sissy's turn to hesitate, and she compressed her pretty lips doubtfully. Being in the Old Testament, Jael must of course come out all right, even if one finds it difficult to like her. Judith's position, is less clear. Still, it is a great thing to be in the Apocrypha,



and then living so long ago and so far away makes a difference. But Charlotte Corday—a young Frenchwoman, not a century dead, who murdered a man, and was guillotined in those horrible revolutionary times,—would Percival say *that* was the type of woman he liked?

“Well—Charlotte Corday, then?”

“Yes, I admire her,” he said slowly. “Though I would rather the heroism did not show itself in bloodshed. Still, she was noble: I honor her. I dare say the others were too, but I don’t know so much about them.”

“What a poor little thing you must think me!” said Sissy. “I could never do anything heroic.”

Page 19

"Why not?"

"I should be frightened. I can't bear people to be angry with me. I should run away, or do something silly."

"Then I hope you won't be tried," said Percival.

She shook her pretty head: "People always talk about casting gold into the furnace, and it's coming out only the brighter and better. Things are not good for much if you would rather they were not tried."

Her hand was on the window-frame as she spoke, and the young man touched a ring she wore: "Gold is tried in the furnace—yes, but not your pearls. Besides, I'm not so sure that you would fail if you were put to the test."

She smiled, well pleased, yet unconvinced.

"You think," he went on, "that people who did great deeds did them without an effort—were always ready, like a bow always strung? No, no, Sissy: they felt very weak sometimes. Isn't there anything in the world you think you could die for? Even if you say 'No' now, there may be something one of these days."

The twilight hid the soft glow which overspread her face. "Anything in the world you could die for?" Anything? Anybody? Her blood flowed in a strong, courageous current as her heart made answer, "Yes—for one."

But she did not speak, and after a moment her companion changed the subject. "That's a pretty ring," he said.

Sissy started from her reverie: "Horace gave it me. Adieu, Mr. Percival Thorne: I'm going to look at my roses."

"Thank you. Yes, I shall be delighted to come." And Percival jumped out. "Don't look at me as if I'd said something foolish. Isn't that the right way to answer your kind invitation?"

"Invitation! What next?" demanded Sissy with pretty scorn. And the pair went off together along the terrace and into the fragrant dusk.

A minute later it occurred to Mrs. Middleton to fear that Sissy might take cold, and she went to the window to look after her. But, as no one was to be seen, she turned away and encountered her brother, who had been watching them too. "Do they care for each other?" he asked abruptly.

“How can I tell?” Mrs. Middleton replied. “Of course she is fond of him in a way, but I can’t help fancying sometimes that Horace—”

“Horace!” Mr. Thorne’s smile was singularly bland. “Oh, indeed! Horace—a charming arrangement! Pray how many more times is Mr. Horace to supplant that poor boy?” His soft voice changed suddenly, as one might draw a sword from its sheath. “Horace had better not cross Percival’s path, or he will have to deal with me. Is he not content? What next must he have?”

Mrs. Middleton paused. She could have answered him. There was an obvious reply, but it was too crushing to be used, and Mr. Thorne braved it accordingly.

“Better leave your grandsons alone, Godfrey,” she said at last, “if you’ll take my advice; which I don’t think you ever did yet. You’ll only make mischief. And there is Sissy to be considered. Let the child choose for herself.”

Page 20

"And you think she can choose—*Horace?*"

"Why not?"

"Choose Horace rather than Percival?"

"I should," said the old lady with smiling audacity. "And I would rather she did. Horace's position is better."

Mr. Thorne uttered something akin to a grunt, which might by courtesy be taken for a groan: "Oh, how mercenary you women are! Well, if you marry a man for his money, Horace has the best of it—if he behaves himself. Yes, I admit that—if *he behaves himself*"

"And Horace is handsomer," said Mrs. Middleton with a smile.

"Pink-and-white prettiness!" scoffed Mr. Thorne.

"Nonsense!" The color mounted to the old lady's forehead, and she spoke sharply: "We didn't hear anything about that when he was a lad, and we were afraid of something amiss with his lungs: it would have been high treason to say a syllable against him then. And now, though I suppose he will always be a little delicate (you'd be sorry if you lost him, Godfrey), it's a shame to talk as if the boys were not to be compared. They are just of a height, not half an inch difference, and the one as brave and manly as the other. Horace is fair, and Percival is dark; and you know, as well as I do, that Horace is the handsomer."

Mr. Thorne shifted his ground: "If I were Sissy I would choose my husband for qualities that are rather more than skin-deep."

"By all means. And still I would choose Horace."

"What is amiss with Percival?"

"He is not so frank and open. I don't want to say anything against him—I like Percival—but I wish he were not quite so reserved."

"What next?" said Mr. Thorne with a short laugh. "Why, only this morning you said he talked more than Horace."

"Talked? Oh yes, Percival can talk, and about himself too," said Mrs. Middleton with a smile. "But he can keep his secrets all the time. I don't want to say anything against him: I like him very much—"

"No doubt," said Mr. Thorne.

“But I don’t feel quite sure that I know him. He isn’t like Horace. You know Horace’s friends—”

“Trust me for that.”

“But what do you know of Percival’s? I heard him tell Sissy he would be out to-morrow. Will you ever know where he went?”

“I sha’n’t ask him.”

“No,” she retorted, “you dare not! Isn’t it a rule that no one is ever to question Percival?”

“And while I’m master here it shall be obeyed. It’s the least I can do. The boy shall come and go, speak or hold his tongue, as he pleases. No one shall cross him—Horace least of all—while I’m master here, Harriet; but that won’t be very long.”

“I don’t want you to think any harm of Percival’s silence,” she answered gently. “I don’t for one moment suppose he has any secrets to be ashamed of. I myself like people to be open, that is all.”

“If I wanted to know anything Percival would tell me,” said Mr. Thorne.

Page 21

Mrs. Middleton's charity was great. She hid the smile she could not repress. "Well," she said, "perhaps I am not fair to Percival, but, Godfrey, you are not quite just to Horace."

He turned upon her: "Unjust to Horace? I?"

She knew what he meant. He had shown Horace signal favor, far above his cousin, yet what she had said was true. Perhaps some of the injustice had been in this very favor. "Here are our truants!" she exclaimed. She and her brother had not talked so confidentially for years, but the moment her eyes fell on Sissy her thoughts went back to the point at which Mr. Thorne had disturbed them: "My dearest Sissy, I am so afraid you will catch cold."

"It can't be done to-night," said Percival. "Won't you come and try?" But the old lady shook her head.

"All right, auntie! we won't stop out," said Sissy; and a moment later she made her appearance in the drawing-room with her hands full of roses, which she tossed carelessly on the table. Mr. Thorne had picked up his paper, and stood turning the pages and pretending to read, but she pushed it aside to put a rosebud in his coat.

"Roses are more fit for you young people than for an old fellow like me," he said, "Why don't you give one to Percival?"

She looked over her shoulder at young Thorne. "Do you want one?" she said.

He smiled, with a slight movement of his head and his dark eyes fixed on hers.

"Then, why didn't you pick one when we were out? Now, weren't you foolish? Well, never mind. What color?"

"Choose for him," said Mr. Thorne.

Sissy hesitated, looking from Percival's face to a bud of deepest crimson. Then, throwing it down, "No, you shall have yellow," she exclaimed: "Laura Falconer's complexion is something like yours, and she always wears yellow. As soon as one yellow dress is worn out she gets another."

"She is a most remarkable young woman if she waits till the first one is worn out," said Percival.

"Am I to put your rose in or not?" Sissy demanded.

He stepped forward with a smile, and looked darkly handsome as he stood there with Sissy putting the yellow rose in his coat and glancing archly up at him.

Mr. Thorne from behind his *Saturday Review* watched the girl who might, perhaps, hold his favorite's future in her hands. "Does he care for her?" he wondered. If he did, the old man felt that he would gladly have knelt to entreat her, "Be good to my poor Percival." But did Percival want her to be good to him? Godfrey Thorne was altogether in the dark about his grandson's wishes in the matter. He tried hard not to think that he was in the dark about every wish or hope of Percival's, and he looked up eagerly when the latter said something about going out the next day. He remembered which horse Percival liked, he assented to everything, but he watched him all the time with

Page 22

a wistful curiosity. He did not really care where Percival went, but he would have given much for such a word about his plans as would have proved to Harriet, and to himself too, that his boy *did* confide in him sometimes. It was not to be, however. Young Thorne had taken up the local paper and the subject dropped. Mr. Thorne may have guessed later, but he never knew where his roan horse went the next day.

CHAPTER II.

“THOSE EYES OF YOURS.”

Not five miles away that same evening a conversation was going on which would have interested Mrs. Middleton.

The scene was an up-stairs room in a pleasant house near the county town. Mrs. Blake, a woman of seven or eight and forty, handsome and well preserved, but of a high-colored type, leant back in an easy-chair lazily unfastening her bracelets, by way of signifying that she had begun to prepare for the night. Her two daughters were with her. Addie, the elder, was at the looking-glass brushing her hair and half enveloped in its silky blackness. She was a tall, graceful girl, a refined likeness of her mother. On the rug lay Lottie, three years younger, hardly more than a growing girl, long-limbed, slight, a little abrupt and angular by her sister's side, her features not quite so regular, her face paler in its cloud of dark hair. Yet there was a look of determination and power which was wanting in Addie; and at times, when Lottie was roused, her eyes had a dark splendor which made her sister's beauty seem comparatively commonplace and tame.

Stretched at full length, she propped her chin on her hands and looked up at her mother. “I don't suppose you care,” she said, in a clear, almost boyish voice.

“Not much,” Mrs. Blake replied with, a smile. “Especially as I rather doubt it.”

Addie paused, brush in hand: “I really think you've made a mistake, Lottie.”

“Do you really? I haven't, though,” said that young lady decidedly.

“It can't be—surely,” Addie hesitated, with a little shadow on her face.

“Of course no. Is it likely?” said Mrs. Blake, as if the discussion were closed.

“I tell you,” said Lottie stubbornly, “Godfrey Hammond told me that Percival's father was the eldest son.”

“But it is Horace who has always lived at Brackenhill. Percival only goes on a visit now and then. Every one knows,” said Addie, in almost an injured tone, “that Horace is the heir.”

Lottie raised her head a little and eyed her sister intently, with amusement, wonder, and a little scorn in her glance. Addie, blissfully unconscious, went on brushing her hair, still with that look of anxious perplexity.

“This is how it was,” Lottie exclaimed suddenly. “Percival was just gone, and you were talking to Horace. Up comes Godfrey Hammond, sits down by me, and says some rubbish about consoling me. I think I laughed. Then he looked at me out of his little, light eyes, and said that you and I seemed to get on well with his young friends. So I said, ‘Oh yes—middling.’”

Page 23

"Upon my word," smiled Mrs. Blake, "you appear to have distinguished yourself in the conversation."

"Didn't I?" said Lottie, untroubled and unabashed: "I know it struck me so at the time. Then he said something—I forget how he put it—about our being just the right number and pairing off charmingly. So I said, 'Oh, of course the elder ones went together: that was only right.'"

"And what did he say?"

"Oh, he pinched his lips together and smiled, and said, 'Don't you know that Percival is the elder?'"

"But, Lottie, that proves nothing as to his father."

"Who supposed it did? I said 'Fiddlededee! I didn't mean that: I supposed they were much about the same age, or if Percy were a month or two older it made no difference. I meant that Horace was the eldest son's son, so of course he was A 1.'"

"Well?" said Addie.

"Well, then he looked twice as pleased with himself as he did before, and said, 'I don't think Horace told you that. It so happens that Percival is not only the elder by a month or two, as you say, but he is the son of the eldest son.' Then I said 'Oh!' and mamma called me for something, and I went."

Mrs. Blake and Addie exchanged glances.

"Now, could I have made a mistake?" demanded Lottie.

"It seems plain enough, certainly," her mother allowed.

"Then, could Godfrey Hammond have made a mistake? Hasn't he known the Thornes all their lives? and didn't he say once that he was named Godfrey after their old grandfather?"

Mrs. Blake assented.

"Then," said the girl, relapsing into her recumbent position, "perhaps you'll believe me another time."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Blake: "we'll see when the other time comes. If it is as you say, it is curious." She rose as she spoke and went to the farther end of the room. As she stood by an open drawer putting away the ornaments which she had taken off, the candlelight revealed a shadow of perplexity on her face which increased the likeness

between herself and Addie. Apparently, Lottie was right as to her facts. The estate was not entailed, then, and despotic power seemed to be rather capriciously exercised by the head of the house. If Horace should displease his grandfather—if, for instance, he chose a wife of whom old Mr. Thorne did not approve—would his position be very secure? Mrs. Blake was uneasy, and felt that it was very wrong of people to play tricks with the succession to an estate like Brackenhill.

Meanwhile, Lottie watched her sister, who was thoughtfully drawing her fingers through her long hair. “Addie,” she said, after a pause, “what will you do if Horace isn’t the heir after all?”

“What a silly question! I shan’t do anything: there’s nothing for me to do.”

“But shall you mind very much? You are very fond of Horace, aren’t you?”

“Fond of him!” Addie repeated. “He is very pleasant to talk to, if you mean that.”

Page 24

"Oh, you can't deceive me so! I believe that you are in love with him," said Lottie solemnly.

The color rushed to Addie's face when her vaguely tender sentiments, indefinite as Horace's attentions, were described in this startling fashion. "Indeed, I'm nothing of the kind," she said hurriedly. "Pray don't talk such utter nonsense, Lottie. If you have nothing more sensible to say, you had better hold your tongue."

"But why are you ashamed of it?" Lottie persisted: "I wouldn't be." She had an unsuspected secret herself, but she would have owned it proudly enough had she been challenged.

"I'm not ashamed," said Addie; "and you know nothing about being in love, so you had better not talk about it."

"Oh yes, I do!" was the reply, uttered with Lottie's calm simplicity of manner: "I know how to tell whether you are in love or not, Addie. What would you do if a girl were to win Horace Thorne away from you?"

Pride and a sense of propriety dictated Addie's answer and gave sharpness to her voice: "I should say she was perfectly welcome to him."

Lottie considered for a moment: "Yes, I suppose one might say so to her, but what would you do? Wouldn't you want to kill her? And wouldn't you die of a broken heart?"

Addie was horrified: "I don't want to kill anybody, and I'm not going to die for Mr. Horace Thorne. Please don't say such things, Lottie: people never do. You forget he is only an acquaintance."

"No; I don't think you are in love with him, certainly." Lottie pronounced this decision with the air of one who has solved a difficult problem.

"What are you talking about?" Mrs. Blake inquired, coming back, and glancing from Addie's flushed and troubled face to Lottie's thoughtful eyes.

"I was asking Addie if she didn't want Horace to be the heir. I know you do, mamma—oh, just for his own sake, because you think he's the nicest, don't you? I heard you tell him one day—"here Lottie looked up with a candid gaze and audaciously imitated Mrs. Blake's manner—"that though we knew his cousin *first*, he—Horace, you know—seemed to drop so naturally into *all* our ways that it was quite *delightful* to feel that we needn't stand on *any* ceremony with him."

"Good gracious, Lottie! what do you mean by listening to every word I say?"



"I didn't listen—I heard," said Lottie. "I always do hear when you say your words as if they had little dashes under them."

"Well, Horace Thorne *is* easier to get on with than his cousin," said Mrs. Blake, taking no notice of Lottie's mimicry.

"There, I said so: mamma would like it to be Horace. Nobody asks what I should like—nobody thinks about me and Percival."

"Oh, indeed! I wasn't aware," said Mrs. Blake. "When is that to come off? I dare say you will look very well in orange-blossoms and a pinafore!"

Page 25

"Oh, you think I'm too young, do you? But a little while ago you were always saying that I was grown up, and oughtn't to want any more childish games. What was I to do?"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mrs. Blake. "I'll buy you a doll for a birthday present, to keep you out of mischief."

"Too late," said Lottie from the rug. She burst into sudden laughter, loud but not unmelodious. "What rubbish we are talking! Seventeen to-morrow, and Addie is nearly twenty; and sometimes I think I must be a hundred!"

"Well, you are talking nonsense now," Mrs. Blake exclaimed. "Why, you baby! only last November you would go into that wet meadow by the rectory to play trap-and-ball with Robin and Jack. And such a fuss as there was if one wanted to make you the least tidy and respectable!"

"Was that last November?" Lottie stared thoughtfully into space. "Queer that last November should be so many years ago, isn't it? Poor little Cock Robin! I met him in the lane the day before he went away. They will keep him in jackets, and he hates them so! I laughed at him, and told him to be a good little boy and mind his book. He didn't seem to like it, somehow."

"I dare say he didn't," said Addie, who had been silently recovering herself: "there's no mistake about it when you laugh at any one."

"There shall be no mistake about anything I do," Lottie asserted. "I'm going to bed now." She sprang to her feet and stood looking at her sister: "What jolly hair you've got, Addie!"

"Yours is just as thick, or thicker," said Addie.

"Each individual hair is a good deal thicker, if you mean that. 'Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horse-hairs!' That's what Percy quoted to me one day when I was grumbling, and I said I wasn't sure he wasn't rude. Addie, are Horace and Percival fond of each other?"

"How can I tell? I suppose so."

"I have my doubts," said Lottie sagely. "Why should they be? There must be something queer, you know, or why doesn't that stupid old man at Brackenhill treat Percival as the eldest? Well, good-night." And Lottie went off, half saying, half singing, "Who killed Cock Robin? I, said the Sparrow—with my bow and arrow." And with a triumphant outburst of "I killed Cock Robin!" she banged the door after her.

There was a pause. Then Addie said, "Seventeen to-morrow! Mamma, Lottie really is grown-up now."

“Is she?” Mrs. Blake replied doubtfully. “Time she should be, I’m sure.”

Lottie had been a sore trial to her mother. Addie was pretty as a child, tolerably presentable even at her most awkward age, glided gradually into girlhood and beauty, and finally “came out” completely to Mrs. Blake’s satisfaction. But Lottie at fifteen or sixteen was her despair—“Exactly like a great unruly boy,” she lamented. She dashed through her lessons fairly well, but the moment she was released she was unendurable. She

Page 26

whistled, she sang at the top of her voice, and plunged about the house in her thick boots, till she could be off to join the two boys at the rectory, her dear friends and comrades. Robin Wingfield, the elder, was her junior by rather more than a year; and this advantage, especially as she was tall and strong for her age, enabled her fully to hold her own with them. Nor could Mrs. Blake hinder this friendship, as she would gladly have done, for her husband was on Lottie's side.

"Let the girl alone," he said. "Too big for this sort of thing? Rubbish! The milliner's bills will come in quite soon enough. And what's amiss with Robin and Jack? Good boys as boys go, and she's another; and if they like to scramble over hedges and ditches together, let them. For Heaven's sake, Caroline, don't attempt to keep her at home: she'll certainly drive me crazy if you do. No one ever banged doors as Lottie does: she ought to patent the process. Slams them with a crash which jars the whole house, and yet manages not to latch them, and the moment she is gone they are swinging backward and forward till I'm almost out of my senses. Here she comes down stairs, like a thunderbolt.—Lottie, my dear girl, I'm sure it's going to be fine: better run out and look up those Wingfield boys, I think."

So the trio spent long half-holidays rambling in the fields; and on these occasions Lottie might be met, an immense distance from home, in the shabbiest clothes and wearing a red cap of Robin's tossed carelessly on her dark hair. Percival once encountered them on one of these expeditions. Lottie's beauty was still pale and unripe, like those sheathed buds which will come suddenly to their glory of blossom, not like rosebuds which have a loveliness of their own; but the young man was struck by the boyish mixture of shyness and bluntness with which she greeted him, and attracted by the great eyes which gazed at him from under Robin's shabby cap. When he and Horace went to the Blakes' he amused himself idly enough with the school-girl, while his cousin flirted with Addie. He laughed one day when Mrs. Blake was unusually troubled about Lottie's apparel, and said something about "a sweet neglect." But the soul of Lottie's mamma was not to be comforted with scraps of poetry. How could it be, when she had just arraigned her daughter on the charge of having her pockets bulging hideously, and had discovered that those receptacles overflowed with a miscellaneous assortment of odds and ends, the accumulations of weeks, tending to show that Lottie and Cock Robin, as she called him, had all things in common? How could it be, when Lottie was always outgrowing her garments in the most ungainly manner, so that her sleeves seemed to retreat in horror from her wrists and from her long hands, tanned by sun and wind, seamed with bramble-scratches and smeared with school-room ink? Once Lottie came home with an unmistakable black eye, for which Robin's cricket-ball was

Page 27

accountable. Then, indeed, Mrs. Blake felt that her cup of bitterness was full to overflowing, though Lottie did assure her, "You should have seen Jack's eye last April: his was much more swollen, and all sorts of colors, than mine." It was impossible to avoid the conclusion that Jack must have been, to say the least of it, unpleasant to look at. Percival happened to come to the house just then, and was tranquilly amused at the good lady's despair. It was before the Blakes knew much of Horace, and she had not yet discovered that Percival's cousin was so much more friendly than Percival himself; so she made the latter her confidant. He recommended a raw beefsteak with a gravity worthy of a Spanish grandee. He was not allowed to see Lottie, who was kept in seclusion as being half culprit, half invalid, and wholly unpresentable; but as he was going away the servant gave him a little note in Lottie's boyish scrawl:

"DEAR PERCIVAL: Mamma was cross with Robin and sent him away do tell him I'm all right, and he is not to mind he will be sure to be about somewhere It is very stupid being shut up here Addie says she can't go running about giving messages to boys and Papa said if he saw him he should certainly punch his head so please tell him he is not to bother himself about me I shall soon be all right."

Percival went away, smiling a little at his letter and at Lottie herself. Just as he reached the first of the fields which were the short cut from the house, he spied Robin lurking on the other side of the hedge, with Jack at his heels. He halted, and called "Robin! Robin Wingfield! I want to speak to you."

The boy hesitated: "There's a gate farther on."

Coming to the gate, Percival rested his arms on it and looked at Robin. The boy was not big for his age, but there was a good deal of cleverness in his upturned freckled face. "I've a message for you," said the young man.

"From her?" Robin indicated the Blakes' house with a jerk of his head.

"Yes. She asked me to tell you that she is all right, though, of course, she can't come out at present. She made sure I should find you somewhere about."

Robin nodded: "I did try to hear how she was, but that old dragon—"

"Meaning my friend Mrs. Blake?" said young Thorne. "Ah! Hardly civil perhaps, but forcible."

"Well—Mrs. Blake, then—caught me in the shrubbery and pitched into me. Said I ought to be ashamed of myself. Supposed I should be satisfied when I'd broken Lottie's neck. Told me I'd better not show my face there again."



“Well,” said Percival, “you couldn’t expect Mrs. Blake to be particularly delighted with your afternoon’s work. And, Wingfield, though I was especially to tell you that you were not to vex yourself about it, you really ought to be more careful. Knocking a young lady’s eye half out—”

“Young lady!” in a tone of intense scorn. “Lottie isn’t a *young lady*.”

Page 28

"Oh! isn't she?" said Percival.

"I should think not, indeed!" And Robin eyed the big young man who was laughing at him as if he meditated wiping out the insult to Lottie then and there. But even with Jack, his sturdy satellite, to help, it was not to be thought of. "She's a brick!" said Cock Robin, half to himself.

"No doubt," said Percival. "But, as I was saying, it isn't exactly the way to treat her.—At least—I don't know: upon my word, I don't know," he soliloquized. "Judging by most women's novels, from *Jane Eyre* downward, the taste for muscular bullies prevails. Robin may be the coming hero—who knows?—and courtship commencing with a black eye the future fashion.—Well, Robin, any answer?"

"Tell her I hope she'll soon be all right. Shall you see her?"

"I can see that she gets any message you want to send."

Robin groped among his treasures: "Look here: I brought away her knife that afternoon. She lent it me. She'd better have it—it's got four blades—she may want it, perhaps."

Percival dropped the formidable instrument carelessly into his pocket: "She shall have it. And, Robin, you'd better not be hanging about here: Lottie says so. You'll only vex Mrs. Blake."

"All right!" said the boy, and went off, with Jack after him.

Percival, who was staying in the neighborhood, went straight home, tied up a parcel of books he thought might amuse Lottie in her imprisonment, and wrote a note to go with them. He was whistling softly to himself as he wrote, and, if the truth be told, had a fair vision floating before his eyes—a girl of whom Lottie had reminded him by sheer force of contrast. Still, he liked Lottie in her way. He was young enough to enjoy the easy sense of patronage and superiority which made the words flow so pleasantly from his pen. Never had Lottie seemed to him so utterly a child as immediately after his talk with her boy-friend.

"Here are some books," said the hurrying pen, "which I think you will like if your eye is not so bad as to prevent your reading. Robin was keeping his disconsolate watch close by, as you foretold, and asked anxiously after you, so I gave him your message and dismissed him. He especially charged me to send you the enclosed—knife I believe he called it: it looks to me like a whole armory of deadly weapons—which he seemed to think would be a comfort to you in your affliction. I sincerely hope it may prove so. I was very civil to him, remembering that I was your ambassador; but if he isn't a little less rough with you in future, I shall be tempted to adopt Mr. Blake's plan if I happen to

meet your friend again. You really mustn't let him damage those eyes of yours in this reckless fashion. Mrs. Blake was nearly heartbroken this morning."

Page 29

He sent his parcel off, and speedily ceased to think of it. And Lottie herself might have done the same, not caring much for his books, but for four little words—"those eyes of yours." Had Percival written "your eyes," it would have meant nothing, but "those eyes of yours" implied notice—nay, admiration. Again and again she looked at the thick paper, with the crest at the top and the vigorous lines of writing below; and again and again the four words, "those eyes of yours," seemed to spring into ever-clearer prominence. She hid the letter away with a sudden comprehension of the roughness of her pencil scrawl which it answered, and began to take pride in her looks when they least deserved it. Only a day or two before she had envied Robin the possession of sight a little keener than her own, but now she smiled to think that Percival Thorne would never have regretted injury to "those eyes of yours" had she owned Robin's light-gray orbs.

Her transformation had begun. The knife was still a treasure, but she was ashamed of her delight in it. She breathed on the shining blades and rubbed them to brightness again, but she did it stealthily, with a glance over her shoulder first. She went rambling with Robin and Jack, but not when she knew that Percival Thorne was in the neighborhood. She was very sure of his absence on the November day to which her mother had alluded, when she had insisted on playing trap-and-ball in the rectory meadows. Mrs. Blake did not realize it, but it was almost the last day of Lottie's old life. At Christmas-time they were asked to stay for a few days at a friend's house. There was to be a dance, and the hostess, being Lottie's godmother, pointedly included her in the invitation; so Mrs. Blake and Addie did what they could to improve their black sheep's appearance.

Lottie, dressed for the eventful evening, was left alone for a moment before the three went down. She felt shy, dispirited and sullen. Her ball-dress encumbered and constrained her. "I hate it all," she said to herself, beating impatiently with her foot upon the ground. Something moving caught her eye: it was her reflection in a mirror. She paused and gazed in wonder. Was this slender girl, arrayed in a cloud of semi-transparent white, really herself—the Lottie who only a few days before had raced Robin Wingfield home across the fields, had been the first over the gap and through the ditch into the rectory meadow, and had rushed away with the November rain-drops driving in her face? She gazed on: the transformation had its charms, after all. But the shadow came back: "It's no use. Addie's prettier than I ever shall be: I must be second all my life. Second! If I can't be A 1, I'd as soon be Z 1000! I won't go about to be a foil to her. I'd ten times rather race with Robin; and I will too! They sha'n't coop me up and make a young lady of me!"

She caught the flash of her indignant glance in the glass and paused.

Page 30

"Those eyes of yours!"

Must she be second all her life? Had she not a power and witchery of her own? Might she not even distance Addie in the race? "I've more brains than she has," mused Lottie.

Her heart was beating fast as they came down stairs. They had only arrived by a late train, which gave them just time to dress; and Mrs. Blake had rather exceeded the allowance, so that most of the guests had arrived and the first quadrille was nearly ended as they came in. Lottie followed her mother and Addie as they glided through the crowd, and when they paused she stood shy and fierce, casting lowering glances around.

She heard their hostess say to some one, "Do let me find you a partner."

A well-known voice replied, "Not this time, thank you: I'm going to try to find one for myself;" and Percival stood before her, looking, to her girlish fancy, more of a hero than ever in the evening-dress which became him well. The perfectly-fitting gloves, the flower in his coat, a dozen little things which she could not define, made her feel uncouth and anxious, fascinated and frightened, all at once. Had he greeted her in the patronizing way in which he had talked to her of old, she would have been deeply wounded, but he asked her for the next dance more ceremoniously, she knew, than Horace would have asked Addie. Still, she trembled as they moved off. They had scarcely met since her note to him. Suppose he alluded to it, asked after her black eye, and inquired whether she had derived any benefit from the beefsteak? Nothing more natural, and yet if he did Lottie felt that she should *hate* him. "I know I should do something dreadful," she thought—"scratch his face, and then burst out crying, most likely. Oh, what would become of me? I should be ruined for life! I should have to shut myself up, never see any one again, and emigrate with Robin directly he was old enough."

Percival did not know his danger, but he escaped it. The fatal thoughts were in his mind while Lottie was planning her disgrace and exile, but he merely remarked that he liked the first waltz, and should they start at once or wait a moment till a couple or two dropped out?

"I don't know whether I *can* waltz," said Lottie doubtfully.

"Weren't you over tortured with dancing-lessons?"

"Oh yes. But I've never tried at a party. Suppose we go bumping up against everybody, like that fat man and the little lady in pink—the two who are just stopping?"

“I assure you,” said Percival gravely, “that I do not dance at all like that fat man. And if you dance like the lady in pink, I shall be more surprised than I have words to say. Now?”

Page 31

They were off. Percival knew that he waltzed well, and had an idea that Lottie would prove a good partner. Nor was he mistaken. She had been fairly taught, much against her will, had a good ear for time, and, thanks to many a race with Robin Wingfield, her energy was almost terrible. They spun swiftly and silently round, unwearied while other couples dropped out of the ranks to rest and talk. Percival was well pleased. It is true that he had memories of waltzes with Sissy Langton of more utter harmony, of sweeter grace, of delight more perfect, though far more fleeting. But Lottie, with her steady swiftness and her strong young life, had a charm of her own which he was not slow to recognize. She would hardly have thanked him for accurately classifying it, for as she danced she felt that she had discovered a new joy. Her old life slipped from her like a husk. Friendship with Cock Robin was an evident absurdity. It is true she was angry with herself that, after fighting so passionately for freedom, she should voluntarily bend her proud neck beneath the yoke. She foresaw that her mother and Addie would triumph; she felt that her bondage to Mrs. Grundy would often be irksome; but here was the first instalment of her wages in this long waltz with Percival. She fancied that the secret of her pleasure lay in the two words—"with Percival." In her ignorance she thought that she was tasting the honeyed fire of love, when in truth it was the sweetness of conscious success. Before the last notes of that enchanted music died away she had cast her girlish devotion, "half in a rapture and half in a rage," at her partner's feet, while he stood beside her calm and self-possessed. He would have been astounded, and perhaps almost disgusted, had he known what was passing through her mind.

Love at sixteen is generally only a desire to be in love, and seeks not so much a fit as a possible object. Probably Lottie's passion offered as many assurances of domestic bliss as could be desired at her age.

Percival was dark, foreign-looking and handsome: he had an interesting air of reserve, and no apparent need to practise small economies. His clothes fitted him extremely well, and at times he had a way of standing proudly aloof which was worthy of any hero of romance. No settled occupation would interfere with picnics and balls; and, to crown all, had he not said to her, "Those eyes of yours"? Were not these ample foundations for the happiness of thirty or forty years of marriage?

Percival, meanwhile, wanted to be kind to the childish, half-tamed Lottie, who had attracted his notice in the fields and trusted him with her generous message to Robin Wingfield. The girl fancied herself immensely improved by her white dress, but had Thorne been a painter he would have sketched her as a pale vision of Liberty, with loosely-knotted hair and dark eyes glowing under Robin's red cap. He was able coolly to determine the precise nature of his pleasure in her society, but he knew that it was a pleasure. And Lottie, when she fell asleep that night, clasped a card which was rendered priceless by the frequent recurrence of his initials.

Page 32

Her passion transformed her. Her vehement spirit remained, but everything else was changed. Her old dreams and longings were cast out by the new. She laughed with Mrs. Blake and Addie, but under the laughter she hid her love, and cherished it in fierce and solitary silence. Yet even to herself the transformation seemed so wonderful that she could hardly believe in it, and acted the rough girl now and then with the idea that otherwise they *must* think her a consummate actress morning, noon and night. For some months no great event marked the record of her unsuspected passion. It might, perhaps, have run its course, and died out harmlessly in due time, but for an unlucky afternoon, about a week before her birthday, when Percival uttered some thoughtless words which woke a tempest of doubt and fear in Lottie's heart. She did not question his love, but she caught a glimpse of his pride, and felt as if a gulf had opened between her and her dream of happiness.

Percival was calling at the house on the eventful day which was destined to influence Lottie's fate and his own. He was in a happy mood, well pleased with things in general, and, after his own fashion, inclined to be talkative. When visitors arrived and Addie exclaimed, "Mrs. Pickering and that boy of hers—oh bother!" she spoke the feelings of the whole party; and Percival from his place by the window looked across at Lottie and shrugged his shoulders expressively. Had there been time he would have tried to escape into the garden with his girl friend; but as that was impossible, he resigned himself to his fate and listened while Mrs. Pickering poured forth her rapture concerning her son's prospects to Mrs. Blake. An uncle who was the head of a great London firm had offered the young man a situation, with an implied promise of a share in the business later. "Such a subject for congratulation!" the good lady exclaimed, beaming on her son, who sat silently turning his hat in his hands and looking very pink. "Such an opening for William! Better than having a fortune left him, I call it, for it is such a thing to have an occupation. Every young man should be brought up to something, in my opinion."

Mrs. Blake, with a half glance at Addie and a thought of Horace, suggested that heirs to landed estates—

"Well, yes." Mrs. Pickering agreed with her. Country gentlemen often found so much to do in looking after their tenants and making improvements that she would not say anything about them. But young men with small incomes and no profession—she should be sorry if a son of hers—

"Like me, for instance," said Percival, looking up. "I've a small income and no profession."

Mrs. Pickering, somewhat confused, hastened to explain that she meant nothing personal.

“Of course not,” he said: “I know that. I only mentioned it because I think an illustration stamps a thing on people’s memories.”

“But, Percival,” Mrs. Blake interposed, “I must say that in this I agree with Mrs. Pickering. I do think it would be better if you had something to do—I do indeed.” She looked at him with an air of affectionate severity. “I speak as your friend, you know.” (Percival bowed his gratitude.) “I really think young people are happier when they have a settled occupation.”

Page 33

"I dare say that is true, as a rule," he said.

"But you don't think you would be?" questioned Lottie.

He turned to her with a smile: "Well, I doubt it. Of course I don't know how happy I might be if I had been brought up to a profession." He glanced through the open window at the warm loveliness of June. "At this moment, for instance, I might have been writing a sermon or cutting off a man's leg. But, somehow, I am very well satisfied as I am."

"Oh, if you mean to make fun of it—" Mrs. Blake began.

"But I don't," Percival said quickly. "I may laugh, but I'm in earnest too. I have plenty to eat and drink; I can pay my tailor and still have a little money in my pocket; I am my own master. Sometimes I ride—another man's horse: if not I walk, and am just as well content. I don't smoke—I don't bet—I have no expensive tastes. What could money do for me that I should spend the best years of my life in slaving for it?"

"That may be all very well for the present," said Mrs. Blake.

"Why not for the future too? Oh, I have my dream for the future too."

"And, pray, may one ask what it is?" said Mrs. Pickering, looking down on him from the height of William's prosperity.

"Certainly," he said. "Some day I shall leave England and travel leisurely about the Continent. I shall have a sky over my head compared with which this blue is misty and pale. I shall gain new ideas. I shall get grapes and figs and melons very cheap. There will be a little too much garlic in my daily life—even such a destiny as mine must have its drawbacks—but think of the wonderful scenery I shall see and the queer, beautiful out-of-the-way holes and corners I shall discover! And in years to come I shall rejoice, without envy, to hear that Mr. Blake has bought a large estate and gains prizes for fat cattle, while my friend here has been knighted on the occasion of some city demonstration."

Young Pickering, who had been listening open-mouthed to the other's fluent and tranquil speech, reddened at the allusion to himself and dropped his hat.

"At that rate you must never marry," said Mrs. Blake.

Percival thoughtfully stroked his lip: "You think I should not find a wife to share my enjoyment of a small income?"

"Marry a girl with lots of money, Mr. Thorne," said the future Sir William, feeling it incumbent on him to take part in the conversation.

“Not I.” Percival’s glance made the lad’s hot face yet hotter. “That’s the last thing I will do. If a man means to work, he may marry whom he will. But if he has made up his mind to be idle, he is a contemptible cur if he will let his wife keep him in his idleness.” He spoke very quietly in his soft voice, and leaned back in his chair.

“Well, then, you must never fall in love with an heiress,” said Mrs. Blake.

“Or you must work and win her,” Lottie suggested almost in a whisper.

Page 34

He smiled, but slightly shook his head with a look which she fancied meant "Too late." Mrs. Pickering began to tell the latest Fordborough scandal, and the talk drifted into another channel.

Lottie had listened as she always listened when Percival spoke, but she had not attached any peculiar meaning to his words. But an hour or so later, when he was gone and she was loitering in the garden just outside the window, Addie, who was within, made some remark in a laughing tone. Lottie did not catch the words, but Mrs. Blake's reply was distinct and not to be mistaken: "William Pickering, indeed! No: with your looks and your expectations you girls ought to marry really well." Lottie stood aghast. They would have money, then? She had never thought about money. She would be an heiress? And Percival would never marry an heiress—he could not: had he not said so? How gladly would she have given him every farthing she possessed! And was her fortune to be a barrier between them for ever? Every syllable that he had spoken was made clear by this revelation, and rose up before her eyes as a terrible word of doom. But she was not one to be easily dismayed, and her first cry was, "What shall I do?" Lottie's thoughts turned always to action, not to endurance, and she was resolved to break down the barrier, let the cost be what it might. Her talk with Godfrey Hammond gave a new interest to her romance and new strength to her determination. Since her hero was disinherited and poor, and she, though rich, would be poor in all she cared to have if she were parted from him, might she not tell him so when she saw him on her birthday? She thought it would be easier to speak on the one day when in girlish fashion she would be queen. She would not think of her own pride, because his pride was dear to her. She could not tell what she would say or do: she only knew that her birthday should decide her fate. And her heart was beating fast in hope and fear the night before when she banged the door after her and went off to bed, sublimely ready to renounce the world for Percival.

CHAPTER III.

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES—ALFRED THORNE'S IS TOLD BY THE WRITER.

Mr. Thorne of Brackenhill was a miserable man, who went through the world with a morbidly sensitive spot in his nature. A touch on it was torture, and unfortunately the circumstances of his daily life continually chafed it.

It was only a common form of selfishness carried to excess. "I don't want much," he would have said—truly enough, for Godfrey Thorne had never been grasping—"but let it be my own." He could not enjoy anything unless he knew that he might waste it if he liked. The highest good, fettered by any condition, was in his eyes no good at all. Brackenhill was dear to him because he could leave it to whom he would. He was seventy-six, and had spent his life in improving his estate, but he prized nothing about it so much as his right to give the result of his life's work to the first beggar he might

chance to meet. It would have made him still happier if he could have had the power of destroying Brackenhill utterly, of wiping it off the face of the earth, in case he could not find an heir who pleased him, for it troubled him to think that some man *must* have the land after him, whether he wished it or not.

Page 35

Godfrey Hammond had declared that no one could conceive the exquisite torments Mr. Thorne would endure if he owned an estate with a magnificent ruin on it, some unique and priceless relic of bygone days. "He should be able to see it from his window," said Hammond, "and it should be his, as far as law could make it, while he should be continually conscious that in the eyes of all cultivated men he was merely its guardian. People should write to the newspapers asserting boldly that the public had a right of free access to it, and old gentlemen with antiquarian tastes should find a little gap in a fence, and pen indignant appeals to the editor demanding to be immediately informed whether a monument of national, nay, of world-wide interest, ought not, for the sake of the public, to be more carefully protected from injury. Local archaeological societies should come and read papers in it. Clergymen, wishing to combine a little instruction with the pleasures of a school-feast, should arrive with van-loads of cheering boys and girls, a troop of ardent teachers, many calico flags and a brass band. Artists, keen-eyed and picturesque, each with his good-humored air of possessing the place so much more truly than any mere country gentleman ever could, should come to gaze and sketch. Meanwhile, Thorne should remark about twice a week that of course he could pull the whole thing down if he liked; to which every one should smile assent, recognizing an evident but utterly unimportant fact. And then," said Hammond solemnly, "when all the archaeologists were eating and drinking, enjoying their own theories and picking holes in their neighbors' discoveries, the bolt should fall in the shape of an announcement that Mr. Thorne had sold the stones as building materials, and that the workmen had already removed the most ancient and interesting part. After which he would go slowly to his grave, dying of his triumph and a broken heart."

It was all quite true, though Godfrey Hammond might have added that all the execrations of the antiquarians would hardly have added to the burden of shame and remorse of which Mr. Thorne would have felt the weight before the last cart carried away its load from the trampled sward; that he would have regretted his decision every hour of his life; and if by a miracle he could have found himself once more with the fatal deed undone, he would have rejoiced for a moment, suffered his old torment for a little while, and then proceeded to do it again.

For a great part of Mr. Thorne's life the boast of his power over Brackenhill had been on his lips more frequently than the twice a week of which Hammond talked. Of late years it had not been so. He had used his power to assure himself that he possessed it, and gradually awoke to the consciousness that he had lost it by thus using it.

Page 36

He had had three sons—Maurice, a fine, high-spirited young fellow; Alfred, good-looking and good-tempered, but indolent; James, a slim, sickly lad, who inherited from his mother a fatal tendency to decline. She died while he was a baby, and he was petted from that time forward. Godfrey Thorne was well satisfied with Maurice, but was always at war with his second son, who would not take orders and hold the family living. They argued the matter till it was too late for Alfred to go into the army, the only career for which he had expressed any desire; and then Mr. Thorne found himself face to face with a gentle and lazy resistance which threatened to be a match for his own hard obstinacy. Alfred didn't mind being a farmer. But his father was troubled about the necessary capital, and doubted his son's success: "You will go on after a fashion for a few years, and then all the money will have slipped through your fingers. You know nothing of farming."—"That's true," said Alfred.—"And you are much too lazy to learn."—"That's very likely," said the young man. So Mr. Thorne looked about him for some more eligible opening for his troublesome son; and Alfred meanwhile, with his handsome face and honest smile, was busy making love to Sarah Percival, the rector's daughter.

The little idyl was the talk of the villagers before it came to the squire's ears. When he questioned Alfred the young man confessed it readily enough. He loved Miss Percival, and she didn't mind waiting. Mr. Thorne was not altogether displeased, for, though his intercourse with the rector was rather stormy and uncertain, they happened to be on tolerable terms just then. Sarah was an only child, and would have a little money at Mr. Percival's death, and Alfred was much more submissive and anxious to please his father under these altered circumstances. The young people were not to consider themselves engaged, Miss Percival being only eighteen and Alfred one-and-twenty. But if they were of the same mind later, when the latter should be in a position to marry, it was understood that neither his father nor Mr. Percival would oppose it.

Unluckily, a parochial question arose near Christmas-time, and the squire and the clergyman took different views of it. Mr. Thorne went about the house with brows like a thunder-cloud, and never opened his lips to Alfred except to abuse the rector. "You'll have to choose between old Percival and me one of these days," he said more than once. "You'd better be making up your mind: it will save time." Alfred was silent. When the strife was at its height Maurice was drowned while skating.

Page 37

The poor fellow was hardly in his grave before the storm burst on Alfred's head. If Mr. Thorne had barely tolerated the idea of his son's marriage before, he found it utterly intolerable now; and the decree went forth that this boyish folly about Miss Percival must be forgotten. "I can do as I like with Brackenhill," said Mr. Thorne: "remember that." Alfred did remember it. He had heard it often enough, and his father's angry eyes gave it an added emphasis. "I can make an eldest son of James if I like, and I will if you defy me." But nothing could shake Alfred. He had given his word to Miss Percival, and they loved each other, and he meant to keep to it. "You don't believe me," his father thundered: "you think I may talk, but that I sha'n't do it. Take care!" There was no trace of any conflict on Alfred's face: he looked a little dull and heavy under the bitter storm, but that was all. "I can't help it, sir," he said, tracing the pattern of the carpet with the toe of his boot as he stood: "you will do as you please, I suppose."—"I suppose I shall," said Mr. Thorne.

So Alfred was disinherited. "As well for this as anything else," he said: "we couldn't have got on long." He had an allowance from his father, who declined to take any further interest in his plans. He went abroad for a couple of years—a test which Mr. Percival imposed upon him that nothing might be done in haste—and came back, faithful as he went, to ask for the consent which could no longer be denied. Mr. Percival had been presented to a living at some distance from Brackenhill, and, as there was a good deal of glebe-land attached to it, Alfred was able to try his hand at farming. He did so, with a little loss if no gain, and they made one household at the rectory.

He never seemed to regret Brackenhill. Sarah—dark, ardent, intense, a strange contrast to his own fair, handsome face and placid indolence—absorbed all his love. Her eager nature could not rouse him to battle with the world, but it woke a passionate devotion in his heart: they were everything to each other, and were content. When their boy was born the rector would have named him Godfrey: at any rate, he urged them to call him by one of the old family names which had been borne by bygone generations of Thornes. But the young husband was resolved that the child should be Percival, and Percival only. "Why prejudice his grandfather against him for a mere name?" the rector persisted. But Alfred shook his head. "Percival means all the happiness of my life," he said. So the child received his name, and the fact was announced to Mr. Thorne in a letter brief and to the point like a challenge.

Page 38

Communications with Brackenhill were few and far between. From the local papers Alfred heard of the rejoicings when James came of age, quickly followed by the announcement that he had gone abroad for the winter. Then he was at home again, and going to marry Miss Harriet Benham; whereat Alfred smiled a little. "The governor must have put his pride in his pocket: old Benham made his money out of composite candles, then retired, and has gas all over the house for fear they should be mentioned. Harry, as we used to call her, is the youngest of them—she must be eight or nine and twenty; fine girl, hunts—tried it on with poor Maurice ages ago. I should think she was about half as big again as Jim. Well, yes, perhaps I am exaggerating a little. How charmed my father must be!—only, of course, anything to please Jim, and it's a fine thing to have him married and settled."

Alfred read his father's feelings correctly enough, but Mr. Thorne was almost repaid for all he had endured when, in his turn, he was able to write and announce the birth of a boy for whom the bells had been set ringing as the heir of Brackenhill. Jim, with his sick fancies and querulous conceit, Mrs. James Thorne, with her coarsely-colored splendor and imperious ways, faded into the background now that Horace's little star had risen.

The rest may be briefly told. Horace had a little sister who died, and he himself could hardly remember his father. His time was divided between his mother's house at Brighton and Brackenhill. He grew slim and tall and handsome—a Thorne, and not a Benham, as his grandfather did not fail to note. He was delicate. "But he will outgrow that," said Mrs. Middleton, and loved him the better for the care she had to take of him. It was principally for his sake that she was there. She was a widow and had no children of her own, but when, at her brother's request, she came to Brackenhill to make more of a home for the school-boy, she brought with her a tiny girl, little Sissy Langton, a great-niece of her husband's.

Meanwhile, the other boy grew up in his quiet home, but death came there as well as to Brackenhill, and seemed to take the mainspring of the household in taking Sarah Thorne. Her father pined for her, and had no pleasure in life except in her child. Even when the old man was growing feeble, and it was manifest to all but the boy that he would not long be parted from his daughter, it was a sombre but not an unhappy home for the child. Something in the shadow which overhung it, in his grandfather's weakness and his father's silence, made him grave and reserved, but he always felt that he was loved. No playful home-name was ever bestowed on the little lad, but it did not matter, for when spoken by Alfred Thorne no name could be so tender as Percival.

Page 39

The rector's death when the boy was fifteen broke up the only real home he was destined to know, for Alfred was unable to settle down in any place for any length of time. While his wife and her father were alive their influence over him was supreme: he was like the needle drawn aside by a powerful attraction. But now that they were gone his thoughts oscillated a while, and then reverted to Brackenhill. For himself he was content—he had made his choice long ago—but little by little the idea grew up in his mind that Percival was wronged, for he, at least, was guiltless. He secretly regretted the defiant fashion in which his boy had been christened, and made a feeble attempt to prove that, after all, Percy was an old family name. He succeeded in establishing that a "P. Thorne" had once existed, who of course might have been Percy, as he might have been Peter or Paul; and he tried to call his son Percy in memory of this doubtful namesake. But the three syllables were as dear to the boy as the white flag to a Bourbon. They identified him with the mother he dimly remembered, and proclaimed to all the world (that is, to his grandfather) that for her sake he counted Brackenhill well lost. He triumphed, and his father was proud to be defeated. To this day he invariably writes himself "Percival Thorne."

Alfred, however, had his way on a more important point, and educated his son for no profession, because the head of the house needed none. Percival acquiesced willingly enough, without a thought of the implied protest. He was indolent, and had little or no ambition. Since daily bread—and, luckily, rather more than daily bread, for he was no ascetic—was secured to him, since books were many and the world was wide, he asked nothing better than to study them. He grew up grave, dreamy and somewhat solitary in his ways. He seemed to have inherited something of the rector's self-possessed and rather formal courtesy, and at twenty he looked older than his age, though his face was as smooth as a girl's.

He was not twenty-one, when his father died suddenly of fever. When the news reached Brackenhill the old squire was singularly affected by it. He had been accustomed to contrast Alfred's vigorous prime with his own advanced age, Percival's unbroken health with Horace's ailing boyhood, and to think mournfully of the probability that the old manor-house must go to a stranger unless he could humble himself to the son who had defied him. But, old as he was, he had outlived his son, and he was dismayed at his isolation. A whole generation was dead and gone, and the two lads, who were all that remained of the Thornes of Brackenhill, stood far away, as though he stretched his trembling hands to them across their fathers' graves. He expressly requested that Percival should come and see him, and the young man presented himself in his deep mourning. Sissy, just sixteen, looked upon him as a sombre hero of romance, and within two days of his coming Mrs. Middleton announced that her brother was "perfectly infatuated about that boy."

Page 40

The evening of his arrival he stood with his grandfather on the terrace looking at the wide prospect which lay at their feet—ample fields and meadows, and the silvery flash of water through the willows. Then he turned, folded his arms and coolly surveyed Brackenhill itself from end to end. Mr. Thorne watched him, expecting some word, but when none came, and Percival's eyes wandered upward to the soft evening sky, where a glimmering star hung like a lamp above the old gray manor-house, he said, with some amusement, "Well, and what is your opinion?"

Percival came down to earth with the greatest promptitude: "It's a beautiful place. I'm glad to see it. I like looking over old houses."

"Like looking over old houses? As if it were merely a show! Isn't Brackenhill more to you than any other old house?" demanded Mr. Thorne.

"Oh, well, perhaps," Percival allowed: "I have heard my father talk of it of course."

"Come, come! You are not such an outsider as all that," said his grandfather.

The young man smiled a little, but did not speak.

"You don't forget you are a Thorne, I hope?" the other went on. "There are none too many of us."

"No," said Percival. "I like the old house, and I can assure you, sir, that I am proud of both my names."

"Well, well! very good names. But shouldn't you call a man a lucky fellow if he owned a place like this?"

"My opinion wouldn't be half as well worth having as yours," was the reply. "What do you call yourself, sir?"

"Do you think I own this place?" Mr. Thorne inquired.

"Why, yes—I always supposed so. Don't you?"

"No, I don't!" The answer was almost a snarl. "I'm bailiff, overlooker, anything you like to call it. My master is at Oxford, at Christ Church. He won't read, and he can't row, so he is devoting his time to learning how to get rid of the money I am to save up for him. / own Brackenhill?" He faced abruptly round. "All that timber is mine, they say; and if I cut down a stick your aunt Middleton is at me: 'Think of Horace.' The place was mortgaged when I came into it. I pinched and saved—I freed it—for Horace. Why shouldn't I mortgage it again if I please—raise money and live royally till my time comes, eh? They'd all be at me, dinning 'Horace! Horace!' and my duty to those who come after me, into my ears. Look at the drawing-room furniture!"

"The prettiest old room I ever saw," said Percival.

"Ah! you're right there. But my sister doesn't think so. It's shabby, she would tell you. But does she ask me to furnish it for her? No, no, it isn't worth while: mine is such a short lease. When Horace marries and comes into his inheritance, of course it must be done up. It would be a pity to waste money about it now, especially as there's a bit of land lies between two farms of mine, and if I don't go spending a lot in follies, I can buy it. Think of that! I can buy it—*for Horace!*"

Page 41

Percival was guarded in his replies to this and similar outbursts; and Mrs. Middleton, seeing that he showed no disposition to toady his grandfather or to depreciate Horace, told Godfrey Hammond that, though her brother was so absurd about him, she thought he seemed a good sort of young man, after all. "Time will show," was the answer. Now, this was depressing, for Godfrey had established a reputation for great sagacity.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ABBEYS AND CASTLES.

It is a frequent reflection with the stranger in England that the beauty and interest of the country are private property, and that to get access to them a key is always needed. The key may be large or it may be small, but it must be something that will turn a lock. Of the things that charm an American observer in the land of parks and castles, I can think of very few that do not come under this definition of private property. When I have mentioned the hedgerows and the churches I have almost exhausted the list. You can enjoy a hedgerow from the public road, and I suppose that even if you are a Dissenter you may enjoy a Norman abbey from the street. If, therefore, one talks of anything beautiful in England, the presumption will be that it is private; and indeed such is my admiration of this delightful country that I feel inclined to say that if one talks of anything private, the presumption will be that it is beautiful. Here is something of a dilemma. If the observer permits himself to commemorate charming impressions, he is in danger of giving to the world the fruits of friendship and hospitality. If, on the other hand, he withholds his impression, he lets something admirable slip away without having marked its passage, without having done it proper honor. He ends by mingling discretion with enthusiasm, and he says to himself that it is not treating a country ill to talk of its treasures when the mention of each connotes, as the metaphysicians say, an act of private courtesy.

The impressions I have in mind in writing these lines were gathered in a part of England of which I had not before had even a traveller's glimpse; but as to which, after a day or two, I found myself quite ready to agree with a friend who lived there, and who knew and loved it well, when he said very frankly, "*I do* believe it is the loveliest corner of the world!" This was not a dictum to quarrel about, and while I was in the neighborhood I was quite of his mind. I felt that it would not take a great deal to make me care for it very much as he cared for it: I had a glimpse of the peculiar tenderness with which such a country may be loved. It is a capital example of the great characteristic of English scenery—of what I should call density of feature. There are no waste details; everything in the landscape is something particular—has a history, has played a part, has a value to the imagination. It is a country of hills and blue undulations, and,

Page 42

though none of the hills are high, all of them are interesting—interesting as such things are interesting in an old, small country, by a kind of exquisite modulation, something suggesting that outline and coloring have been retouched and refined, as it were, by the hand of Time. Independently of its castles and abbeys, the definite relics of the ages, such a landscape seems historic. It has human relations, and it is intimately conscious of them. That little speech about the loveliness of his county, or of his own part of his county, was made to me by my companion as we walked up the grassy slope of a hill, or “edge,” as it is called there, from the crests of which we seemed in an instant to look away over half of England. Certainly I should have grown fond of such a view as that. The “edge” plunged down suddenly, as if the corresponding slope on the other side had been excavated, and one might follow the long ridge for the space of an afternoon’s walk with this vast, charming prospect before one’s eyes. Looking across an English county into the next but one is a very pretty entertainment, the county seeming by no means so small as might be supposed. How can a county seem small in which, from such a vantage-point as the one I speak of, you see, as a darker patch across the lighter green, the twelve thousand acres of Lord So-and-So’s woods? Beyond these are blue undulations of varying tone, and then another bosky-looking spot, which you learn to be about the same amount of manorial umbrage belonging to Lord Some-One-Else. And to right and left of these, in shaded stretches, lie other estates of equal consequence. It was therefore not the smallness but the vastness of the country that struck me, and I was not at all in the mood of a certain American who once, in my hearing, burst out laughing at an English answer to my inquiry as to whether my interlocutor often saw Mr. B——. “Oh no,” the answer had been, “we never see him: he lives away off in the West.” It was the western part of his county our friend meant, and my American humorist found matter for infinite jest in his meaning. “I should as soon think,” he declared, “of saying my western hand and my eastern.”

I do not think, even, that my disposition to form a sentimental attachment for this delightful region—for its hillside prospect of old red farmhouses lighting up the dark-green bottoms, of gables and chimney-tops of great houses peeping above miles of woodland, and, in the vague places of the horizon, of far-away towns and sites that one had always heard of—was conditioned upon having “property” in the neighborhood, so that the little girls in the town should suddenly drop courtesies to me in the street; though that too would certainly have been pleasant. At the same time, having a little property would without doubt have made the sentiment stronger. People who wander about the world without money have their dreams—dreams of what they would buy if their pockets were lined. These dreams are very

Page 43

apt to have relation to a good estate in any neighborhood in which the wanderer happens to find himself. For myself, I have never been in a country so unattractive that it did not seem a peculiar felicity to be able to purchase the most considerable house it contained. In New England and other portions of the United States I have coveted the large mansion with Greek columns and a pediment of white-painted timber: in Italy I should have made proposals for the yellow-walled villa with statues on the roof. In England I have rarely gone so far as to fancy myself in treaty for the best house, but, short of this, I have never failed to feel that ideal comfort for the time would be to call one's self owner of what is denominated here a "good" place. Is it that English country life seems to possess such irresistible charms? I have not always thought so: I have sometimes suspected that it is dull; I have remembered that there is a whole literature devoted to exposing it (that of the English novel "of manners"), and that its recorded occupations and conversations occasionally strike one as lacking a certain desirable salt. But, for all that, when, in the region to which I allude, my companion spoke of this and that place being likely sooner or later to come to the hammer, it seemed as if nothing could be more delightful than to see the hammer fall upon an offer made by one's self. And this in spite of the fact that the owners of the places in question would part with them because they could no longer afford to keep them up. I found it interesting to learn, in so far as was possible, what sort of income was implied by the possession of country-seats such as are not in America a concomitant of even the largest fortunes; and if in these interrogations I sometimes heard of a very long rent-roll, on the other hand I was frequently surprised at the slenderness of the resources attributed to people living in the depths of an oak-studded park. Then, certainly, English country life seemed to me the most advantageous thing in the world: on these terms one would gladly put up with a little dulness. When I reflected that there were thousands of people dwelling in brownstone houses in numbered streets in New York who were at as great a cost to make a reputable appearance in those harsh conditions as some of the occupants of the grassy estates of which I had a glimpse, the privileges of the latter class appeared delightfully cheap.

There was one place in particular of which I said to myself that if I had the money to buy it, I would simply walk up to the owner and pour the sum in sovereigns into his hat. I saw this place, unfortunately, to small advantage: I saw it in the rain. But I am rather glad that fine weather did not meddle with the affair, for I think that in this case the irritation of envy would have been really too acute. It was a rainy Sunday, and the rain was serious. I had been in the house all day, for the weather can best be described by my saying that it had been deemed

Page 44

an exoneration from church-going. But in the afternoon, the prospective interval between lunch and tea assuming formidable proportions, my host took me out to walk, and in the course of our walk he led me into a park which he described as “the paradise of a small English country gentleman.” Well it might be: I have never seen such a collection of oaks. They were of high antiquity and magnificent girth and stature: they were strewn over the grassy levels in extraordinary profusion, and scattered upon and down the slopes in a fashion than which I have seen nothing more charming since I last looked at the chestnut trees on the banks of the Lake of Como. It appears that the place was not very vast, but I was unable to perceive its limits. Shortly before we turned into the park the rain had renewed itself, so that we were awkwardly wet and muddy; but, being near the house, my companion proposed to leave his card in a neighborly way. The house was most agreeable: it stood on a kind of terrace in the midst of a lawn and garden, and the terrace looked down on one of the handsomest rivers in England, and across to those blue undulations of which I have already spoken. On the terrace also was a piece of ornamental water, and there was a small iron paling to divide the lawn from the park. All this I beheld in the rain. My companion gave his card to the butler, with the observation that we were too much bespattered to come in; and we turned away to complete our circuit. As we turned away I became acutely conscious of what I should have been tempted to call the cruelty of this proceeding. My imagination gauged the whole position. It was a Sunday afternoon, and it was raining. The house was charming, the terrace delightful, the oaks magnificent, the view most interesting. But the whole thing was—not to repeat the epithet “dull,” of which just now I made too gross a use—the whole thing was quiet. In the house was a drawing-room, and in the drawing-room was—by which I meant *must be*—a lady, a charming English lady. There was, it seemed to me, no fatuity in believing that on this rainy Sunday afternoon it would not please her to be told that two gentlemen had walked across the country to her door only to go through the ceremony of leaving a card. Therefore, when, before we had gone many yards, I heard the butler hurrying after us, I felt how just my sentiment of the situation had been. Of course we went back, and I carried my muddy shoes into the drawing-room—just the drawing-room I had imagined—where I found—I will not say just the lady I had imagined, but—a lady even more charming. Indeed, there were two ladies, one of whom was staying in the house. In whatever company you find yourself in England, you may always be sure that some one present is “staying.” I seldom hear this participle now-a-days without remembering an observation made to me in France by a lady who had seen much of English manners: “Ah, that dreadful word *staying*! I think we are so

Page 45

happy in France not to be able to translate it—not to have any word that answers to it.” The large windows of the drawing-room I speak of looked away over the river to the blurred and blotted hills, where the rain was drizzling and drifting. It was very quiet: there was an air of leisure. If one wanted to do something here, there was evidently plenty of time—and indeed of every other appliance—to do it. The two ladies talked about “town:” that is what people talk about in the country. If I were disposed I might represent them as talking about it with a certain air of yearning. At all events, I asked myself how it was possible that one should live in this charming place and trouble one’s head about what was going on in London in July. Then we had excellent tea.

I have narrated this trifling incident because there seemed to be some connection between it and what I was going to say about the stranger’s sense of country life being the normal, natural, typical life of the English. In America, however comfortably people may live in the country, there is always, relatively speaking, an air of picnicking about their establishments. Their habitations, their arrangements, their appointments, are more or less provisional. They dine at different hours from their city hours; they wear different clothing; they spend all their time out of doors. The English, on the other hand, live according to the same system in Devonshire and in Mayfair—with the difference, perhaps, that in Devonshire, where they have people “staying” with them, the system is rather more rigidly applied. The picnicking, if picnicking there is to be, is done in town. They keep their best things in the country—their best books, their best furniture, their best pictures—and their footing in London is as provisional as ours is at our “summer retreats.” The English smile a good deal—or rather would smile a good deal if they had more observation of it—at the fashion in which we American burghers stow ourselves away for July and August in white wooden boarding-houses beside dusty, ill-made roads. But it is fair to say that these improvised homes are not immeasurably more barbaric than the human *entassement* that takes place in London “apartments” during the months of May and June. Whoever has had unhappy occasion to look for lodgings at this period, and to explore the mysteries of the little black houses in the West End which have a neatly-printed card suspended in the door-light, will admit that from the obligation to rough it our more luxurious kinsmen are not altogether exempt. We rough it, certainly, more than they do, but we rough it in the country, where Nature herself is rough, and they rough it in the heart of the largest and most splendid of cities. In England, in the country, Nature as well as civilization is smooth, and it seems perfectly consistent, even at midsummer, to dress for dinner; albeit that when so costumed you cannot conveniently lie on the grass. But in

Page 46

England you do not particularly expect to lie on the grass, especially in the evening. The aspect of the usual English country-houses sufficiently indicates the absence of that informal culture of the open air into which the American *villeggiatura* generally resolves itself; and one reason why I mentioned just now the excellent dwelling which I visited in the rain was that, as I approached it, it struck me as so good an example of all that, for American rural purposes, a house should not be. It was indeed built of stone, or of brick stuccoed over; which, as they say in England, is a “great pull.” But except that it was detached and gabled, it belonged quite to the class of city houses. Its walls were straight and bare, and its windows, though wide, were short. It might have been deposited in Belgravia without in the least seeming out of place: it conformed to the rigid London model. It had no external galleries, no breezy piazzas, no long windows opening upon them, no doors disposed for propagating draughts. But, indeed, I have never seen an English house furnished with what we call a piazza; and I must add that I have rarely known an English summer day on which it would have been convenient to sit in a propagated draught.

It seems, however, grossly unthankful to say that English country-houses lack anything when one has received delightful impressions of what they possess. What is a draughty doorway to an old Norman portal, massively arched and quaintly sculptured, across whose hollow threshold the eye of fancy may see the ghosts of monks and the shadows of abbots pass noiselessly to and fro? What is a paltry piazza to a beautiful ambulatory of the thirteenth century—a long stone gallery or cloister repeated in two stories, with the interstices of its carven lattice now glazed, but with its long, low, narrow, charming vista still perfect and picturesque—with its flags worn away by monkish sandals, and with huge round-arched doorways opening from its inner side into great rooms roofed like cathedrals? What are the longest French windows, with the most patented latches, to narrow casements of almost defensive aspect set in embrasures three feet deep and ornamented with little grotesque mediaeval faces? To see one of these small monkish masks grinning at you while you dress and undress, or while you look up in the intervals of inspiration from your letter-writing, is a simple detail in the entertainment of living in an ancient priory. This entertainment is inexhaustible, for every step you take in such a house confronts you in one way or another with the remote past. You feast upon picturesqueness, you inhale history. Adjoining the house is a beautiful ruin, part of the walls and windows and bases of the piers of the magnificent church administered by your predecessor the abbot. These relics are very desultory, but they are still abundant, and they testify to the great scale and the stately beauty of the abbey. You may lie upon

Page 47

the grass at the base of an ivied fragment, measure the girth of the great stumps of the central columns, half smothered in soft creepers, and think how strange it is that in this quiet hollow, in the midst of lonely hills, so exquisite and elaborate a work of art should have arisen. It is but an hour's walk to another great ruin, which has held together more completely. There the central tower stands erect to half its altitude, and the round arches and massive pillars of the nave make a perfect vista on the unencumbered turf. You get an impression that when Catholic England was in her prime great abbeys were as thick as milestones. By native amateurs, even now, the region is called "wild," though to American eyes it seems thoroughly suburban in its smoothness and finish. There is a noiseless little railway running through the valley, and there is an ancient little town at the abbey gates—a town, indeed, with no great din of vehicles, but with goodly brick houses, with a dozen "publics," with tidy, whitewashed cottages, and with little girls, as I have said, bobbing courtesies in the street. But even now, if one had wound one's way into the valley by the railroad, it would be rather a surprise to find a small ornamental cathedral in a spot on the whole so natural and pastoral. How impressive then must the beautiful church have been in the days of its prosperity, when the pilgrim came down to it from the grassy hillside and its bells made the stillness sensible! The abbey was in those days a great affair: as my companion said, it sprawled all over the place. As you walk away from it you think you have got to the end of its traces, but you encounter them still in the shape of a rugged outhouse grand with an Early-English arch, or an ancient well hidden in a kind of sculptured cavern. It is noticeable that even if you are a traveller from a land where there are no Early-English—and indeed few Late-English—arches, and where the well-covers are, at their hoariest, of fresh-looking shingles, you grow used with little delay to all this antiquity. Anything very old seems extremely natural: there is nothing we accept so implicitly as the past. It is not too much to say that after spending twenty-four hours in a house that is six hundred years old, you seem yourself to have lived in it for six hundred years. You seem yourself to have hollowed the flags with your tread and to have polished the oak with your touch. You walk along the little stone gallery where the monks used to pace, looking out of the Gothic window-places at their beautiful church, and you pause at the big round, rugged doorway that admits you to what is now the drawing-room. The massive step by which you ascend to the threshold is a trifle crooked, as it should be: the lintels are cracked and worn by the myriad-fingered years. This strikes your casual glance. You look up and down the miniature cloister before you pass in: it seems wonderfully old and queer. Then you turn into

Page 48

the drawing-room, where you find modern conversation and late publications and the prospect of dinner. The new life and the old have melted together: there is no dividing-line. In the drawing-room wall is a queer funnel-shaped hole, with the broad end inward, like a small casemate. You ask a lady what it is, but she doesn't know. It is something of the monks: it is a mere detail. After dinner you are told that there is of course a ghost—a gray friar who is seen in the dusky hours at the end of passages. Sometimes the servants see him, and afterward go surreptitiously to sleep in the town. Then, when you take your chamber-candle and go wandering bedward by a short cut through empty rooms, you are conscious of a peculiar sensation which you hardly know whether to interpret as a desire to see the gray friar or as an apprehension that you will see him.

A friend of mine, an American, who knew this country, had told me not to fail, while I was in the neighborhood, to go to S——. “Edward I. and Elizabeth,” he said, “are still hanging about there.” Thus admonished, I made a point of going to S——, and I saw quite what my friend meant. Edward I. and Elizabeth, indeed, are still to be met almost anywhere in the county: as regards domestic architecture, few parts of England are still more vividly Old English. I have rarely had, for a couple of hours, the sensation of dropping back personally into the past in a higher degree than while I lay on the grass beside the well in the little sunny court of this small castle, and idly appreciated the still definite details of mediaeval life. The place is a capital example of what the French call a small *gentilhomme* of the thirteenth century. It has a good deep moat, now filled with wild verdure, and a curious gatehouse of a much later period—the period when the defensive attitude had been wellnigh abandoned. This gatehouse, which is not in the least in the style of the habitation, but gabled and heavily timbered, with quaint cross-beams protruding from surfaces of coarse white stucco, is a very picturesque anomaly in regard to the little gray fortress on the other side of the court. I call this a fortress, but it is a fortress which might easily have been taken, and it must have assumed its present shape at a time when people had ceased to peer through narrow slits at possible besiegers. There are slits in the outer walls for such peering, but they are noticeably broad and not particularly oblique, and might easily have been applied to the uses of a peaceful parley. This is part of the charm of the place: human life there must have lost an earlier grimness: it was lived in by people who were beginning to feel comfortable. They must have lived very much together: that is one of the most obvious reflections in the court of a mediaeval dwelling. The court was not always grassy and empty, as it is now, with only a couple of gentlemen in search of impressions lying at their length, one

Page 49

of whom has taken a wine-flask out of his pocket and has colored the clear water drawn for them out of the well in a couple of tumblers by a decent, rosy, smiling, talking old woman, who has come bustling out of the gatehouse, and who has a large, dropsical, innocent husband standing about on crutches in the sun and making no sign when you ask after his health. This poor man has reached that ultimate depth of human simplicity at which even a chance to talk about one's ailments is not appreciated. But the civil old woman talks for every one, even for an artist who has come out of one of the rooms, where I see him afterward reproducing its mouldering quaintness. The rooms are all unoccupied and in a state of extreme decay, though the castle is, as yet, far from being a ruin. From one of the windows I see a young lady sitting under a tree across a meadow, with her knees up, dipping something into her mouth. It is a camel's hair paint-brush: the young lady is sketching. These are the only besiegers to which the place is exposed now, and they can do no great harm, as I doubt whether the young lady's aim is very good. We wandered about the empty interior, thinking it a pity things should be falling so to pieces. There is a beautiful great hall—great, that is, for a small castle (it would be extremely handsome in a modern house)—with tall, ecclesiastical-looking windows, and a long staircase at one end climbing against the wall into a spacious bedroom. You may still apprehend very well the main lines of that simpler life; and it must be said that, simpler though it was, it was apparently by no means destitute of many of our own conveniences. The chamber at the top of the staircase ascending from the hall is charming still, with its irregular shape, its low-browed ceiling, its cupboards in the walls, and its deep bay window formed of a series of small lattices. You can fancy people stepping out from it upon the platform of the staircase, whose rugged wooden logs, by way of steps, and solid, deeply-guttered hand-rail, still remain. They looked down into the hall, where, I take it, there was always a certain congregation of retainers, much lounging and waiting and passing to and fro, with a door open into the court. The court, as I said just now, was not the grassy, aesthetic spot which you may find it at present of a summer's day: there were beasts tethered in it, and hustling men-at-arms, and the earth was trampled into puddles. But my lord or my lady, looking down from the chamber-door, could pick out the man wanted and bawl down an order, with a threat to fling something at his head if it were not instantly performed. The sight of the groups on the floor beneath, the calling up and down, the oaken tables spread, and the brazier in the middle,—all this seemed present again; and it was not difficult to pursue the historic vision through the rest of the building—through the portion which connected the great hall with the tower (here the confederate

Page 50

of the sketching young lady without had set up the peaceful three-legged engine of his craft); through the dusky, roughly circular rooms of the tower itself, and up the corkscrew staircase of the same to that most charming part of every old castle, where visions must leap away off the battlements to elude you—the sunny, breezy platform at the tower-top, the place where the castle-standard hung and the vigilant inmates surveyed the approaches. Here, always, you really overtake the impression of the place—here, in the sunny stillness, it seems to pause, panting a little, and give itself up.

It was not only at Stokesay—I have written the name at last, and I will not efface it—that I lingered a while on the quiet platform of the keep to enjoy the complete impression so overtaken. I spent such another half hour at Ludlow, which is a much grander and more famous monument. Ludlow, however, is a ruin—the most impressive and magnificent of ruins. The charming old town and the admirable castle form a capital object of pilgrimage. Ludlow is an excellent example of a small English provincial town that has not been soiled and disfigured by industry: I remember there no tall chimneys and smoke-streamers, with their attendant purlieus and slums. The little city is perched upon a hill near which the goodly Severn wanders, and it has a noticeable air of civic dignity. Its streets are wide and clean, empty and a little grass-grown, and bordered with spacious, soberly-ornamental brick houses, which look as if there had been more going on in them in the first decade of the century than there is in the present, but which can still, nevertheless, hold up their heads and keep their window-panes clear, their knockers brilliant and their doorsteps whitened. The place looks as if seventy years ago it had been the centre of a large provincial society, and as if that society had been very “good of its kind.” It must have transported itself to Ludlow for the season—in rumbling coaches and heavyish curricles—and there entertained itself in decent emulation of that metropolis which a choice of railway-lines had not as yet placed within its immediate reach. It had balls at the assembly-rooms; it had Mrs. Siddons to play; it had Catalani to sing. Miss Austin’s and Miss Edgeworth’s heroines might perfectly well have had their first love-affair there: a journey to Ludlow would certainly have been a great event to Fanny Price or Anne Eliot, to Helen or Belinda. It is a place on which a provincial “gentry” has left a sensible stamp. I have seldom seen so good a collection of houses of the period between the elder picturesqueness and the modern baldness. Such places, such houses, such relics and intimations, always carry me back to the near antiquity of that pre-Victorian England which it is still easy for a stranger to picture with a certain vividness, thanks to the partial survival of many of its characteristics. It is still easy for a stranger who has stayed a while

Page 51

in England to form an idea of the tone, the habits, the aspect of English social life before its classic insularity had begun to wane, as all observers agree that it did, about thirty years ago. It is true that the mental operation in this matter reduces itself to fancying some of the things which form what Mr. Matthew Arnold would call the peculiar “notes” of England infinitely exaggerated—the rigidly aristocratic constitution of society, for instance; the unaesthetic temper of the people; the private character of most kinds of comfort and entertainment. Let an old gentleman of conservative tastes, who can remember the century’s youth, talk to you at a club *temporis acti*—tell you wherein it is that from his own point of view London, as a residence for a gentleman, has done nothing but fall off for the last forty years. You will listen, of course, with an air of decent sympathy, but privately you will be saying to yourself how difficult a place of sojourn London must have been in those days for a stranger—how little cosmopolitan, how bound, in a thousand ways, with narrowness of custom. What is true of the metropolis at that time is of course doubly true of the provinces; and a genteel little city like the one I am speaking of must have been a kind of focus of insular propriety. Even then, however, the irritated alien would have had the magnificent ruins of the castle to dream himself back into good-humor in. They would effectually have transported him beyond all waning or waxing Philistinisms.

Ludlow Castle is an example of a great feudal fortress, as the little castellated manor I spoke of a while since is an example of a small one. The great courtyard at Ludlow is as large as the central square of a city, but now it is all vacant and grassy, and the day I was there a lonely old horse was tethered and browsing in the middle of it. The place is in extreme dilapidation, but here and there some of its more striking features have held well together, and you may get a very sufficient notion of the immense scale upon which things were ordered in the day of its strength. It must have been garrisoned with a small army, and the vast *enceinte* must have enclosed a stalwart little world. Such an impression of thickness and duskiness as one still gets from fragments of partition and chamber—such a sense of being well behind something, well out of the daylight and its dangers—of the comfort of the time having been security, and security incarceration! There are prisons within the prison—horrible unlighted caverns of dismal depth, with holes in the roof through which Heaven knows what odious refreshment was tossed down to the poor groping *detenu*. There is nothing, surely, that paints one side of the Middle Ages more vividly than this fact that fine people lived in the same house with their prisoners, and kept the key in their pocket. Fancy the young ladies of the family working tapestry in their “bower” with the knowledge that at the bottom of the corkscrew

Page 52

staircase one of their papa's enemies was sitting month after month in mouldy midnight! But Ludlow Castle has brighter associations than these, the chief of which I should have mentioned at the outset. It was for a long period the official residence of the governors—the "lords presidents" they were called—of the Marches of Wales, and it was in the days of its presidential splendor that Milton's *Comus* was acted in the great hall. Wandering about in shady corners of the ruin, it is the echo of that enchanting verse that we should try to catch, and not the faint groans of some encaverned malefactor. Other verse was also produced at Ludlow—verse, however, of a less sonorous quality. A portion of Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* was composed there. Let me add that the traveller who spends a morning at Ludlow will naturally have come thither from Shrewsbury, of which place I have left myself no space to speak, though it is worth, and well worth, an allusion. Shrewsbury is a museum of beautiful old gabled, cross-timbered house-fronts.

H. JAMES, JR.

LITTLE LIZAY.

Alston was a Virginia slave—a tall, well-built half-breed, in whom the white blood dominated the black. When about thirty-seven years of age he was sold to a Mississippi plantation, in the north-western part of the State and on the river. The farm was managed by an overseer, the master—Horton by name—being a practising physician in Memphis, Tenn. Alston had been on the plantation a few weeks when, toward the last of September, the cotton-picking season opened. The year had been, for the river-plantations, exceptionally favorable for cotton-growing. On the Horton place especially "the stand" had been pronounced perfect, there being scarcely a gap, scarcely a stalk missing from the mile-long rows of the broad fields. Then, the rainfall had not been so profuse as to develop foliage at the bolls' expense, as was too frequently the case on the river. Yet it had been plenteous enough to keep off the "rust," from which the dryer upland plantations were now suffering. Neither the "boll-worm" nor the dreaded "army-worm" had molested the river-fields; so the tall pyramidal plants were thickly set with "squares" and green egg-shaped bolls, smooth and shining as with varnish. On a single stalk might be seen all stages of development—from the ripe, brown boll, parted starlike, with the long white fleece depending, to the bean-sized embryo from which the crimson flower had but just fallen. Indeed, among the wide-open bolls there was an occasional flower, cream-hued or crimson according to its age, for the cotton-bloom at opening resembles in color the magnolia-blossom, but this changes quickly to a deep crimson.

Page 53

There was, then, the promise, almost the certainty, of a heavy crop on the Horton place. It was in view of this that the owner completed an arrangement, for months under consideration, in which he increased his working plantation-force by thirteen hands, of whom one was Alston. It was, too, in view of this promised heavy crop that the overseer, Mr. Buck, harangued the slaves at the opening of the picking-season. The burden of his harangue was, that no flagging would be tolerated in cotton-gathering during the season. The figures of the past year were on record, showing what each hand did each day. There was to be no falling behind these figures: indeed, they must be beaten, for the heavier bolling made the picking easier. Any one falling behind was to be cowhided. As for the new hands, they ought to lead the field, for they were all young, stout fellows.

As has been said, Alston was tall, strong, well-made. Working in tobacco, to whose culture he had been used, he could hold his hand with the best: how would it be in this new business of cotton-picking? He had a strong element of cheerful fidelity in his nature. The first day he worked steadily and as rapidly as he was able at the unfamiliar employment. When night came he reckoned he had done well. With a complacent feeling he stood waiting his turn as the great baskets, one after another, were swung on the steelyard and the weights announced. He found himself pitying some of the pickers as light weights were called, wondering if they had fallen behind last year's figures. When his basket was brought forward, it was by Big Sam, who with one hand swung it lightly to the scales; yet Alston's thought was, "How strong Big Sam is!" and never, "How light the basket!"

The weight was announced: Alston was almost stunned. He had strained every nerve, yet here he was behind the children-pickers, behind the gray old women stiff with rheumatism and broken with childbearing and with doing men's work.

"Sixty-three pounds!" the overseer said with a threatening tone. "Min' yer git a heap higher'n that ter-morrer, yer yaller raskel! Ef yer can't pick cotton, yer'll be sol' down in Louzany to a sugar-plantation, whar' niggers don't git nothin' ter eat 'cept cotton-seeds an' a few dreggy lasses."

Next to being sent to "the bad place" itself, the most terrible fate, to the negro's imagination, was to be sold to a sugar-planter.

"Here's Big Sam," the overseer continued, "nigh unto three hunderd; an' Little Lizay two hunderd an' fawty-seven.—That's the bigges' figger yer's ever struck yit, Lizay: shows what yer kin do. Min' yer come up ter it ter-morrer an' ev'ry other day."

"Days gits shawter 'bout Chrismus-time," Little Lizay ventured to suggest, "an' it gits col', an' my fingers ain't limber."

“Don’t give me none yer jaw. Reckon I knows ’nuff ter make ’lowances fer col’ an’ shawt days an’ scatterin’ bolls an’ sich like.”

Page 54

The next day, Alston, humiliated by his failure and by the brutal reprimand he had received, went to the cotton-field before any of the other hands—indeed, before it was fairly light. There he worked if ever a man did work. When the other negroes came on the field there were laughing, talking, singing, nodding and occasional napping in the shade of the cotton-stalks. But Alston took no part in any of these. He had no interest for anything apart from his work. At this all his faculties were engaged. His lithe body was seen swaying from side to side about the widespreading branches; he stood on tiptoe to reach the topmost bolls; he got on his knees to work the base-limbs, pressing down and away the long grass with his broad feet, tearing and holding back even with his teeth hindering tendrils of the passion-flower and morning-glory and other creepers which had escaped the devastating hoe when the crop was “laid by,” and had made good their hold on occasional stalks. Persistently he worked in this intent way all through the hot day, every muscle in action. He lingered at the work till after the last of the other pickers had with great baskets poised on head joined the long, weird procession, showing white in the dusk, that went winding through field and lane to the ginhouse. On he worked till the crescent moon came up and he could hardly discern fleece from leaf. At last, fearing that the basket-weighing might be ended before he could reach the ginhouse, a half mile distant, he emptied his pick-sack, belted at his waist, into the tall barrel-like basket, tramped the cotton with a few movements of his bare feet, and then kneeling got the basket to his shoulder: he was not used to the balancing on head which seemed natural as breathing to the old hands. With long strides he hurried to the ginhouse. He was not a minute too early. Almost the last basket had been weighed, emptied and stacked when he climbed the ladder-like steps to the scaffold where the cotton was sunned preparatory to its ginning. When he had pushed his way through the crowd of negroes hanging about the door of the ginhouse-loft he heard the overseer call, “Whar’s that yaller whelp, Als’on?”

“Here, sah,” Alston answered, hurrying forward to put his basket on the steelyard.

“Give me any mo’ yer jaw an’ I’ll lay yer out with the butt-en’ er this whip,” said Mr. Buck. Alston was wondering what he had said that was disrespectful, when the man added, “Won’t have none yer sahrin’ uv me. I’s yer moster, an’ that’s what yer’s got ter call me, I let yer know.”

Alston’s blood was up, but the slaves were used to self-repression. All that was endurable in their lives depended on patience and submission.

“Beg poddon, moster,” Alston said with well-assumed meekness. “In Ol’ Virginny we use ter say moster to jist our sho’-’nuff owners; but,” he added quickly, by way of mollifying the overseer, who could not fail to be stung by the covert jeer, “it’s a heap better ter say moster ter all the white folks, white trash an’ all: then yer’s sho’ ter be right.”

Page 55

At this speech there was in Mr. Buck's rear much grinning and eye-rolling.

But Mr. Buck was engaged with Alston's basket, which was now on the scales. "Sixty-seven poun's," the overseer called.

The slave's heart sank: only four pounds' gain after all his toil early and late! He was bitterly disappointed. He believed the overseer lied. Then his heart burned. Couldn't he leave his basket unemptied, and weigh it himself when the others were gone? No: the order of routine was peremptory. The baskets must be emptied and stacked on the scaffold outside the cotton-loft, so that there would be no chance the next morning for the negroes to take away cotton in their baskets to the fields. And what if he could reweigh his cotton, and prove Mr. Buck a liar? He would not dare breathe the discovery.

So Alston emptied out the cotton he had worked so hard to gather, listening moodily to the overseer's harsh threats: "Yer reckon I's goin' to stan' sich figgers? Sixty-seven poun's! fou' poun's 'head uv yistiddy. Yer ought ter be fawty ahead. I won't look at nothin' under a hunderd. Ef yer don't get it ter-morrer I'll tie yer up, sho's yer bawn, yer great merlatto dog! Yer's 'hin' the poo'es' gal in the fiel'."

"I never pick no cotton 'fo' yistiddy, an' its tolerbul unhandy. Rickon I kin do better when I gits my han' in. I use ter could wuck fus'-rate in tobaccy."

"Tobaccy won't save yer. We hain't got no use for niggers ef they can't come up ter the scratch on cotton. I's made a big crop, an' I ain't goin' ter let it rot in the fiel'. Yer ought ter pick three hunderd ev'ry day. I know'd a nigger onct, a heap littler than Little Lizay, that picked five hunderd ev'ry lick; an' I hearn tell uv a feller that went up ter seven hunderd. I ain't goin' ter take no mo' sixties from yer: a good hunderd or the cowhide. That's the talk!"

"I'll pick all I kin," said Alston: "I wuckt haud's I could ter-day."

"Ef yer don't hush yer lyin' mouth I'll cut yer heart out."

Alston went from the gin-loft, his blood tingling. On the sunning-scaffold he encountered Little Lizay. She had been listening—had heard all that had passed between the two men. She went down the scaffold-steps, and Alston came soon after. She waited for him, and they walked to the "quarter" together. "It's mighty haud, ain't it?" she said.

"I believe he tol' a lie 'bout my baskit. Anyhow, I wuckt haud's I could ter-day. I can't pick no hunderd poun's uv the flimpsy stuff. He'll have ter cowhide me: I don't kere."

But Alston did care keenly—not so much for the pain; he could bear worse misery than the brutal arm could inflict, though the rawhide cut like a dull knife; but it was the shame, the disgrace, of the thing. He was a stranger on the place—only a few weeks there—

and to be tied up and flogged in the midst of strange, unsympathizing negroes! it was such degradation to his manhood. Since he was a child he had not been struck. He had been rather a favorite with his master in Virginia, but this master had died in debt, leaving numerous heirs, and in the changes incident to a partition of the estate Alston was sold.

Page 56

Perceiving that he had Little Lizay's sympathy, Alston went on talking, telling her that he could stand a lashing coming from his own master, but that an overseer was only white trash, who never did "own a nigger," and never would be able to. If he had to be flogged, he wanted it to be by a gentleman.

"Never min'," said Little Lizay. "Maybe yer'll git mo' ter-morrer. When yer's pickin' yer mus' quit stoppin' ter pick out the leaves an' trash. I lets ev'rything go in that happens, green bolls an' all: they weighs heavy."

The following day, Alston, as before, went to the cotton-field early, but he found that Little Lizay had the start of him. She had already emptied her sack into her pick-basket. "The cotton we get now'll weigh heavy," she said: "it's got dew on it."

"That's so," Alston assented, "but yer mus'n't talk ter me, Lizay. I's got ter put all my min' ter my wuck: I can't foad ter talk."

"I can't nuther," said Lizay. "Wish I didn't pick so much cotton the fus' day: I's got ter keep on trottin' ter two hunderd an' fawty-seven."

She selected two rows beside Alston's. She wore a coarse dress of uncolored homespun cotton, of the plainest and scantiest make, low in the neck, short in the sleeves and skirt. Her feet and head were bare. A sack of like material with her dress was tied about the waist, apron-like. This was to receive immediately the pickings from the hand. When filled it was emptied in a pick-basket, holding with a little packing fifty or sixty pounds. This small basket was kept in the picker's vicinity, being moved forward whenever the sack was taken back for emptying. Besides this go-between pick-basket, there was at that end of the row nearest the ginhouse an immense basket, nearly as tall as a barrel, and of greater circumference, with a capacity for three hundred pounds.

Alston's pick-basket stood beside Little Lizay's, and between his row and hers. She was carrying two rows to his one, and he perceived, without looking and with a vague envy, that Lizay emptied three sacks at least to his one. Yet she did not seem to be working half as hard as he was. With light, graceful movements, now right, now left, she plucked the white tufts and the candelabra-like pendants stretched by the wind and the expanding lint till the dark seed could be discerned in clusters.

It was near nine o'clock when Alston emptied his first sack, some fifteen pounds, in the pick-basket, which Little Lizay had brought forward with her own. Soon after she went back to empty her sack. The baskets stood hazardously near Alston for Lizay's game, but with her back turned to him and the luxuriant cotton-stalks between she reckoned she might venture. One-third of her sack she threw into Alston's basket—about five pounds. And thus the poor soul did during the day, giving a third of her gatherings to

Alston. She would have given him more—the half, the whole, everything she owned—for she regarded him with a feeling that would have been called love in a fairer woman.

Page 57

Alston had been in Virginia something of a house-servant, doing occasional duty as coachman when the regular official was ill or was wanted elsewhere. He was also a good table-waiter, and had served in the dining-room when there were guests. So it came that though properly a field-hand, yet in manner and speech he showed to advantage beside the slaves who were exclusively field-hands. Little Lizay too occupied a halfway place between these and the better-spoken, gentler-mannered house-servants. In the winters, after Christmas, which usually terminated the picking-season, Lizay was called to the place of head assistant of the plantation seamstress. Indeed, she did little field-service except in times of special pressure and during the quarter of cotton-picking. She was so nimble-fingered and swift that she could not be spared from the field in picking-season, especially if, as was the case this year, there was a heavy crop. And occasionally in the winter, when there was unusual company at the Hortons' in the city, Little Lizay was sent for and had the advantage of a season in town. She felt her superiority to the average plantation-negro, and had not married, though not unsolicited. When, therefore, Alston came she at once recognized in him a companion, and she was not long in making over her favor to the distinguished-looking stranger. He was, as she, a half-breed, and Lizay liked her own color. Had Alston courted her favor, she might have yielded it less readily, but he did not take easily to his new companions. Some called him proud: others reckoned he had left a sweetheart, a wife perhaps, in Virginia. Little Lizay's evident preference laid her open to the rude jokes and sneers of the other negroes—in particular Big Sam, who was her suitor, and Edny Ann, who was fond of Alston. But Edny Ann did not care for Alston as Little Lizay did—could not, indeed. She was incapable of the devotion that Lizay felt. She would not have left her sleep and gone to the dew-wet field before daybreak for the sake of helping Alston: she would not have taken the risk of falling behind in her picking, and thus incurring a flogging, by dividing her gatherings with him. And if she had helped him at all, it would not have been delicately, as Lizay's help had been given. Edny Ann would have wanted Alston to know that she had helped him: Little Lizay wished to hide it from him, both because she feared he would decline her help, and because she wanted to spare him the humiliation.

When night came not only Alston lingered, picking by moonlight, but Little Lizay; and this gave rise to much laughing among the other pickers, and to many coarse jokes. But to one who knew her secret it would have seemed piteous—the girl's anxious face as the weighing proceeded, drawing on and on to Alston's basket and hers at the very end of the line. Would he have a hundred? would she fall behind? Would he be saved the flogging? would she have to suffer in his stead? She dreaded

Page 58

a flogging at the hands of that brutal overseer, and all her womanliness shrunk from the degradation of being stripped and flogged in Alston's presence, or even of having him know that she was to be cowhided. She bethought her of making an appeal to the overseer. She knew she had some power with him, for he had been enamored, in his brutish way, of her physical charms—her neat figure, her glossy, waving hair, and the small, shapely hand and foot.

Just before the weighing had reached Alston's basket and hers she stepped beside the overseer. "Please, Mos' Buck," she said in a low tone, "ef I falls 'hin' myse'f, an' don't git up to them fus' figgers, an' has to git cowhided—please, sah, don't let the black folks an' Als'on know 'bout it."

Mr. Buck took a hint from this request. He perceived that Lizay was interested in Alston, as he had already guessed from the jokes of the negroes, and that she was specially desirous to conceal her shame from the man to whom she had given her favor. Mr. Buck resented it that Lizay should rebuff him and encourage Alston; so he hoped that for this once, at any rate, she would fall behind: he had thought of a capital plan of revenging himself on her.

The next moment after her whispered appeal Lizay saw with intense interest Alston's basket brought forward for weighing. She glanced at him. His eyes were wide open, staring with eagerness, his head advanced, his whole attitude one of absorbed anxiety. By the position of the weight or pea on the steelyard she knew that it was put somewhere near the sixty notch. Up flew the end of the yard, and up flew Lizay's heart with it: out went the pea some ten teeth, yet up again went the impatient steel. Click! click! rattled the weight. Out and out another ten notches, then another and another—one hundred, one hundred and one, one hundred and two, one hundred and three—yet the yard still protested, still called for more. Out one tooth farther, and the steel lay along the horizon. Everybody listened.

"One hunderd an' fou'," Mr. Buck announced. "Thar' now, yer lazy dog! I know'd yer wasn't half wuckin'. Now see ter it yer come ter taw arter this: hunderd an' fou's yer notch."

It was a moment of supreme relief to Alston. He drew a long breath, and returned some smiles of congratulation from the negroes. Then he sighed: he felt hopeless of repeating the weight day after day. He had hardly stopped to breathe from day-dawn till moon-rise: he would not always have the friendly moonlight to help him. But now Little Lizay's basket was swinging. He listened to hear its weight with interest, but how unlike this was to the absorbed anxiety which she had felt for him!

“Two hunderd an’ ’leven—thutty-six poun’s behin’!” said Mr. Buck, smacking his lips as over some good thing. Now he should have vent for his spite against the girl. “Thutty-six lashes on yer bar’ back by yer sweet’art.” Mr. Buck said this with a dreadful snicker in Little Lizay’s face.

Page 59

The word ran like wildfire from mouth to mouth that Little Lizay, the famous picker, had fallen behind, and was to be flogged—by the overseer, some said—by Big Sam, others declared. But Edny Ann reckoned the cowhiding was to be done by Alston.

“An’ her dersarves it, kase her’s a big fool,” said Edny Ann, “hangin’ roun’ him, an’ patchin’ his cloze like her wus morred ter ‘im—an’ washin’ his shut an’ britches ev’ry Saddy night.”

All the hands were required to stop after the weighing and witness the floggings, as a warning to themselves and an enhancement of punishment to the convicts. There was but little shrinking from the sight. Human nature is everywhere much the same: cruel spectacles brutalize, whether in Spain or on a negro-plantation. But to-night there was a new sensation: the slaves were on the *qui vive* to see Little Lizay flogged, and to find out whose hand was to wield the whip.

“Now hurry up yere, yer lazy raskels! an’ git yer floggin’,” Mr. Buck said when the weighing was over.

From right and left and front and rear negroes came forward and stood, a motley group, before the one white man. It was a weird spectacle that did not seem to belong to our earth. Black faces, heads above heads, crowded at the doorway—some solemn and sympathetic, others grinning in anticipation of the show. Negroes were perched on the gin and in the corners of the loft where the cotton was heaped. Others lay at full length close to the field of action. In every direction the dusky figures dotted the cotton lying on every hand about the little cleared space where the flogging and weighing were done. In a close bunch stood the shrinking, cowering convicts, some with heads white as the cotton all about them. Mr. Buck, the most picturesque figure of the whole, was laying off his coat and baring his arm, standing under the solitary lamp depending from the rafters, whose faint light served to give to all the scene an indefinite supernatural aspect.

“Now, come out yere,” said Mr. Buck, moving from under the grease-lamp and calling for volunteers.

One by one the negroes came forward and bared themselves to the waist—children, strong men and old women. And then there was shrieking and wailing, begging and praying: it was like a leaf out of hell.

Little Lizay was among the first of the condemned to present herself, for she felt an intolerable suspense as to what awaited her. The vague terror in her face was discerned by the dim light.

As she stepped forward Mr. Buck called out, “Als’on!”

“Yes, moster,” Alston answered.

“What yer sneakin’ in that thar’ corner fer? Come up yere, you—” but his vile sentence shall not be finished here.

Alston came forward with a statuesque face.

“Take this rawhide,” was the order he received.

He put out his hand, and then, suddenly realizing the requisition that was to be made on him, realizing that he was to flog Little Lizay, his confidante and sympathizing friend, his hand dropped cold and limp.

Page 60

"Yerdar' ter dis'bey me?" Mr. Buck bellowed. "I'll brain yer: I'll—"

"I didn't go ter do it, moster," Alston said, reaching for the whip. "I'll whip her tell yer tells me ter stop."

"He didn't go ter do it, Mos' Buck," pleaded Little Lizay, frightened for Alston. "He'll whip me ef yer'll give 'im the whip.—I's ready, Als'on."

She crossed her arms over her bare bosom and shook her long hair forward: then dropped her face low and stood with her back partly turned to Alston, who now had the whip.

"Fire away!" said the overseer.

Alston was not a refined gentleman, whose youth had been hedged from the coarse and degrading, whose good instincts had been cherished, whose faculties had been harmoniously trained. He was not a hero: he was not prepared to espouse to the death Little Lizay's cause—to risk everything for the shrinking, helpless woman and for his own manhood—to die rather than strike her. He was only a slave, used from his cradle to the low and cruel and brutalizing. But he had the making of a man in him: his nature was one that could never become utterly base. But there was no help, no hope, for either of them in anything he could do. He might knock Mr. Buck senseless, sure of the sympathy of every slave on the plantation. There would be a brief triumph, but he and Little Lizay would have to pay for it: bloodhounds, scourgings, chains, cruelty that never slept and could never be placated, were sure as fate. Resistance was inevitable disaster.

Alston did not need to stand there undetermined while he went over this: it was familiar ground. Over and over again he had settled it: it was madness for the slave to oppose himself to the dominant white man.

So, after his first unreasoning recoil, his mind was decided to administer the flogging. Would it not be a mercy to Little Lizay for him to do this rather than that other hand, energized by hate, revenge and cruelty?

He raised his arm, with his heart beating hot and his manhood shrinking: he struck Little Lizay's bare shoulders. She had nerved herself, but the blow, after all, surprised her and made her start; and she had not quite recovered herself when the second blow fell, so that she winced again; but after that she stood like a statue.

"Harder!" cried Mr. Buck after the first few lashes. "None yer tomfool'ry 'bout me. She ain't no baby. Harder! I tell yer. Yer ain't draw'd no blood nary time. Ef yer don't min' me I'll knock yer down. Yer whips like yer wus 'feard yer'd hurt 'er. Yer ac' like yer never whipped no nigger sence yer wus bawn. Yer's got ter tiptoe ter it, an' fling yer

arm back at a better lick 'an that. Look yere: ef yer don't lick her harder I'll make Big Sam lick yer till yer see sights."

Page 61

At length the wretched work was ended, and the negroes made their way along the moonlighted lanes to their cabins. These were single rooms, built of unhewn logs, chinked and daubed with yellow mud. They had puncheon floors and chimneys built of sticks and clay. Of clay also were the all-important jambs, which served as depositories of perhaps every household article pertaining to the cabin except the bedding and the stools. There might have been found the household knife and spoon, the two or three family tin cups, the skillet, the pothooks, sundry gourd vessels, the wooden tray in which the “cawn” bread was mixed—pipe, tobacco and banjo.

On the Horton place the negroes cooked their own suppers after the day's work was over. So for an hour every evening “the quarter” had an animated aspect, for the cabins, standing five yards apart, faced each other in two long lines. In each was a glowing fire, on which logs and pine-knots and cypress-splints were laid with unsparing hand, for there was no limit to the fuel. These fires furnished the lights: candles and lamps were unknown at “the quarter.”

Of course the windowless cabins, with these roaring fires, were stifling in September; so the negroes sat in the doorways chatting and singing while the bacon was frying and the corn dough roasting in the ashes or the hoecake baking on the griddle. An occasional woman patched or washed some garment by the firelight, while others brought water in piggins from the spring at the foot of the hill on whose brow “the quarter” was located.

As Alston sat outside his door on a block, eating his supper by the light of the high-mounting flames of his cabin-fire, Little Lizay came out and sat on her doorsill. Her cabin stood opposite his. He recognized her, and when he had finished his supper he went over to her.

“I didn’t want ter strike yer, Lizay,” he said. “Do you feel haud agin me fer it?”

“No,” Lizay answered: “he made yer do it. Yer couldn’t he’p it. I reckon yer’ll have ter whip me agin ter-morrer night. I mos’ knows my baskit won’t weigh no two hunderd an’ fawty-seven poun’s. ’Tain’t fa’r ter ‘spec’ that much from me: it’s a heap more’n tother gals gits, an’ mos’ all uv um is heap bigger’n me. I’s small pertatoes.” She laughed a little at her jest.

“Yer’s some punkins,” said Alston, returning the joke. “I’d give a heap ef I could pick cotton like yer.”

“Yer’s improved a heap,” said Little Lizay. “Ef yer keeps on improvin’, mayby yer’ll git so yer kin he’p me arter ‘while.”

“Mayby so,” Alston answered.



"But yer wouldn't he'p me, I reckon. Reckon yer'd he'p Edny Ann: yer likes her better'n me."

"No, I don't."

"Reckon yer likes somebody in Virginny more'n yer likes anybody on this plantation."

"I's better 'quainted back thar'," said Alston apologetically.

"But thar' ain't no use hankerin' arter them yer's lef 'hin' yer: reckon yer won't never see um no mo'. Heap better git sati'fied yere. It's a long way back thar', ain't it?"

Page 62

"A mighty long way," said Alston; and then he was silent, his thoughts going back and back over the long way.

Lizay recalled him: "Was yer sorry yer had ter whip me?"

"I was mighty sorry, Little Lizay," he replied with a strong tone of tenderness that made her heart beat faster. "I would er knocked that white nigger down, but it wouldn't er he'ped nothin'. Things would er jus' been wusser."

"Yes," Lizay assented, "nothin' won't he'p us: ain't no use in nothin'."

"Reckon I'll go in an' go ter sleep," said Alston: "got ter git up early in the mawnin'."

He was up early the next morning, he and Little Lizay being again in the cotton-field before dawn. All through the day there was, as before, persistent devotion to the picking; then the holding on after dusk for one more pound; the same result at night—the man up to the required figure, the woman behind, this time forty-one pounds behind. Again she received a cowhiding at Alston's hands.

"What yer mean by this yere foolin'?" Mr. Buck demanded in a rage of Little Lizay. "Yer reckon I's gwine ter stan' this yere? Two hunderd an' fawty-seven 'gin two hunderd an' six! It's all laziness an' mulishness. I'll git yer outen that thar' notch, else I'll kill yer. Look yere: ter-morrer, ef yer don't come ter taw, I'll give yer twict es many licks es the poun's yer falls behin'."

Did this threat frighten Little Lizay out of her devotion?

"Two hunderd is 'nuff fer a little gal like yer," Alston said the next morning. "Save my life, I can't pick no more'n a hunderd an' a few poun's mo'. I wouldn't stan' ter be flogged ef I'd done my shar'."

"Got ter stan' it—can't he'p myse'f."

"I'd go ter town an' tell Mos' Hawton. I's tolerbul sho' he wouldn't 'low yer ter git twict es many licks, nohow. Mos' Hawton's tolerbul good ter his black folks, ain't he?"

"Yes, tolerbul—to the house-sarvants he's got in town; but he jist goes 'long mindin' his business thar', an' don't pay no 'tention sca'cely ter his plantation. He don't want us ter come 'plainin' ter him. He's mighty busy—gits a heap er practice, makes a heap er money. He went down the river onct, more'n a hunderd miles, ter cut somethin' off a man—I fawgits what 'twas—an' the man paid him hunderds an' hunderds an' hunderds—I fawgits how much 'twas."

Here Little Lizay found that Alston was no longer listening, but was absorbed with the cotton-picking.

That day, to save the pickers' time, their bacon and corn pones were brought out to the field by wagon in wooden trays and buckets. There were three cotton-baskets filled with corn dodgers. Alston and Little Lizay sat not far apart while eating their dinners.

"I reckon I's gittin' 'long tolerbul well ter-day," he said. "Dun know for sar-tin, but looks like the pickin' wus heap handier than at fus'. Look yere, Lizay: ef I know'd I'd git more'n a hunderd I'd he'p yer 'long: I'd give yer the balance. Couldn't stave off all the floggin', but I might save yer some licks."

Page 63

"Take kere yer ownse'f, Als'on. I don't min' the las' few licks: they don't never hut bad es the fus' ones." This was Little Lizay's answer, given with glowing cheek and eyes looking down. To her own heart she said, "I likes him better'n he likes me. Reckon he can't git over mou'nin' fer somebody in Virginny." She wondered if he had left a wife back there: she would test him. "Reckon yer'll hear from yer wife any mo', Als'on?" she said.

"Yes, reckon I will. She said she'd write me a letter. She didn't b'long ter my ol' moster: she b'longed ter Squire Minor. I tuck a wife off'en our plantation. She's goin' ter ax her moster ter sell her an' the childun to Mos' Hawton, and I's waitin' ter fin' out ef he'll sell 'um. I ain't goin' ter cou't no other gal tell I fin's out."

"Yer hopes he'll sell her, don't yer?" Little Lizay asked with an anxious heart.

"She was a mighty good wife," said Alston, without committing himself by a categorical answer. "Would seem like Ol' Virginny ter have her an' the childun, but they's better off thar'. They couldn't pick cotton, I reckon. Her moster an' mistiss thinks a heap uv her: she's one the cooks. I don't reckon they kin spaw her."

"Don't yer, sho' 'nuff?"

"No, I don't reckon they kin, 'cause one Mis' Minor's cooks is gittin' ol' an' can't see good —Aunt Juno. She wucks up flies an' sich into the cawn bread. They wants ter put my wife into her place, but they can't git shet with Aunt Juno: she's jis' boun' she'll do the white folks' cookin'. She says thar' ain't no use in bein' free ef she can't do what she pleases: they set her free Chrismus 'fo' las'. But law, Lizay! we mus' hurry up an' get ter pickin'."

That night Lizay had gained on her basket of the preceding day by five and a half pounds, and Alston had fallen behind his by four. But as he was still over a hundred he escaped a flogging. Mr. Buck, being unable to reckon exactly the number of lashes to which Little Lizay was entitled, gave the rawhide the benefit of any doubt and ordered Alston to administer seventy-five lashes.

The next day nothing noticeable occurred in the lives of these two slaves, except that Alston's basket fell yet behind: Mr. Buck acknowledged it was a "hunderd, but a mighty tight squeeze," while Little Lizay's had gained three pounds on the last weight.

"Yer saved six lashes ter-day, Little Lizay," Alston said. He was evidently glad for her, and her hungry heart was glad that he cared.

"An' yer didn't haudly git clear," she replied, adding to herself that to-morrow she must be more generous with her help to Alston.

Page 64

But on the morrow something occurred which dismayed the girl. She had shaken her sack over Alston's basket, designing to empty a third of its contents there, and then the remainder in her "pick." But the cotton was closely packed in the sack, and almost the whole of it tumbled in a compact mass into Alston's basket. He would not need so much help as this to ensure him, so she proceeded to transfer a portion of the heap to her basket. Suddenly she started as though shot. Some one was calling to her and making a terrible accusation. The some one was Edny Ann: "Yer's stealin' thar': I see'd yer do it—see'd yer takin' cotton outen Als'on's baskit. Ain't yer shame, yer yaller good-fer-nuffin'? I's gwine ter tell." This was the terrible accusation.

"Yer dun know nothin' 'tall 'bout it," said Little Lizay. "It's my cotton. I emptied it in Als'on's baskit when I didn't go ter do it. I ain't tuck a sol'tary lock er Als'on's cotton; an' I wouldn't, nuther, ter save my life."

"Reckon yer kin fool me?" demanded the triumphant Edny Ann. Then she called Alston with the O which Southerners inevitably prefix: "O Als'on! O Als'on! come yere! quick!"

"Don't, please don't, tell him," Little Lizay pleaded. "I'll give yer my new cal'ker dress ef yer won't tell nobody."

But Edny Ann went on calling: "O Als'on! O Als'on! come yere!"

Little Lizay pleaded in a frantic way for silence as she saw Alston coming with long strides up between the cotton-rows toward them.

"I wants yer ter ten' ter Lizay," said Edny Ann. "Her's been stealin' yer cotton: see'd 'er do it—see'd 'er take a heap er cotton outen yer baskit an' ram it into hern. Did so!"

Then you should have seen the man's face. Had it been white you could not have discerned any plainer the surprise, the disappointment, the grief. Lizay saw with an indefinable thrill the sadness in his eyes, heard the grief in his voice.

"I didn't reckon yer'd do sich a thing, Lizay," he said. "I know it's mighty haud on yer, gittin' cowed ev'ry night, but stealin' ain't goin' ter he'p it, Lizay."

"I never stole yer cotton, Als'on," Little Lizay said with a certain dignity, but with an unsteady voice.

"I see'd yer do it," Edny Ann interrupted.

"I emptied my sack in yer baskit when I didn't go ter do it," Little Lizay continued. "It wus my own cotton I wus takin' out yer baskit."

"Ef yer deny it, Lizay, yer'll make it wusser." Then Alston went up close to her, so that Edny Ann might not hear, and said something in a low tone.

Page 65

Lizay gave him a swift look of surprise: then her lip began to quiver; the quick tears came to her eyes; she put both hands to her face and cried hard, so that she could not have found voice if she had wished to tell Alston her story. He went back to his row, and left her there crying beside the pick-baskets. He returned almost immediately, shouldered his basket, and went away from her to another part of the field, leaving his row unfinished. He wondered how much cotton Lizay had taken from his basket—if its weight would be brought down below a hundred; and meditated what he should do in case he was called up to be flogged by the brutal overseer. Should he stand and take the lashing, trusting to Heaven to make it up to him some day? or should he knock the overseer senseless and make a strike for freedom? Where was freedom? Which was the way to the free North? In Virginia he would have known in what direction to set his face for Ohio, but here everything was new and strange.

However, he had no occasion for a desperate movement that night. His basket weighed one hundred and seven, while Little Lizay's had fallen lower than ever before. Alston thought it was because she had missed her chance of transferring the usual quantity of cotton from his basket.

The striking of Lizay had never seemed so abhorrent to him as on this night, now that there was estrangement between them. She was already humiliated in his sight, and to raise his hand against her was like striking a fallen foe. She would think that he was no longer sorry—that he was glad to repay the wrong she had done him.

In the mean time, Edny Ann had told the story of the theft to one and another, and Lizay found at night the “quarter” humming with it. Taunts and jeers met her on every hand. Stealing from white folks the negroes regarded as a very trifling matter, since they, the slaves, had earned everything there was: but to steal from “a po' nigger” was the meanest thing in their decalogue.

“Stealin' from her beau!” sneered one negro, commenting on Little Lizay's offence.

“An' her sweet'art!” said another.

“An' her 'tendin' like her lubbed 'im!”

“An' Als'on can't pick cotton fas', nohow, kase he ain't use ter cotton—neber see'd none till he come yere—an' her know'd he'd git a cowhidin'. It's meaner'n boneset tea,” said Edny Ann.

“A heap meaner,” assented Cat. “Sich puffawmance's wusser'n stealin' acawns from a blin' hog.”

Over and over Little Lizay said, “I never stole Als'on's cotton;” and then she would make her explanation, as she had made it to Edny Ann and Alston. Often she was tempted to



tell the whole story of how she had been all along helping Alston at her own cost, but many motives restrained her. She dreaded the jeers and jests to which the story would subject her, and everything was to be feared from Mr. Buck's retaliation should he learn that he had been tricked. Besides, she

Page 66

wished, if possible, to go on helping Alston. She doubted, too, if he would receive it well that she had been helping him. Might he not gravely resent it that through her action such a pitiable part in the drama had been forced on him? Then there was something sweet to Little Lizay in suffering all alone for Alston—in having this secret unshared: she respected herself more that she did not risk everything to vindicate herself, for this she could do: the steelyard to-morrow would demonstrate the truth of her story.

But the morrow came, and she went out to the field, her story untold, a marked woman. Yet she was not comfortless. The something that Alston had told her the previous day was making her heart sing. This is what he told her: “While yer wus stealin’ from me, Lizay, I wus he’pin’ yer. I put a ha’f er sack in yer basket ter-day, an’ a ha’f er sack yistiddy—kase I liked yer, Lizay.”

She took her rows beside Alston’s as usual, determined to watch for a chance to help him. But when he moved away from her and took another row, Lizay knew that the time had come. She couldn’t stand it to have him strain and tug and bend to his work as no other hand in the field did, only to be disappointed at night. She could never bear it that he should be flogged after all she had done to save him from the shame. She could never live through it—the cowniding of her hero by the detested overseer. Yes, the time had come: she must tell Alston.

She went over to where he had begun a new row. “Yer don’t b’lieve the tale I tole yistiddy, Als’on: yer’s feared I’ll steal yer cotton ter-day,” she said.

“I don’t wish no talk ’bout it, Lizay,” Alston said. His tone was half sad, half peremptory.

“Yer mustn’t feel haud agin me ef I tells you somethin’, Als’on. Yer’s been puttin’ cotton in my basket unbeknownst ter save me some lashes, an’ yer throw’d it up ter me yistiddy. Now, look yere, Als’on: I’s been he’pin’ yer all this week, ever since Mr. Buck said yer got ter git a hunderd. Ev’ry day I’s he’ped yer git up ter a hunderd.”

Alston had stopped picking, both his hands full of cotton, and stood staring in a bewildered way at the girl. “Lizay, is this a fac’?” he said at length.

“‘Tis so, Als’on; an’ ef yer don’t lemme he’p yer now yer’ll fall ‘hin’ an’ have ter git flogged.”

“An’ ef yer he’p me, yer’ll fall shawt an’ have ter git flogged. Oh, Lizay, thar’ never was nobody afo’ would er done this yer fer me,” Alston said, feeling that he would like to kiss the poor shoulders that had been scourged for him. Great tears gathered in his eyes, and he thought without speaking the thought, “My wife in Virginny wouldn’t er done it.”

“So yer mus’ lemme he’p yer ter-day,” said Little Lizay.

“I’ll die fus’,” he said in a savage tone.

“Oh, yer’ll git a whippin’, Als’on, sho’s yer bawn.”

“No: I won’t take a floggin’ from that brute.”

Page 67

"Oh, Als'on, yer jis' got ter: yer can't he'p the miserbulness. No use runnin' 'way: they'd ketch yer an' bring yer back. Thar's nigger-hunters an' blood-houn's all roun' this yer naberhood. Yer couldn't git 'way ter save yer life."

"Look yere, Lizay," Alston said with sudden inspiration: "le's go tell Mos' Hawton all 'bout it. Ef he's a genulman he'll 'ten' ter us. They won't miss us till night, an' 'fo' that time we'll be in Memphis. Yer knows the way, don't yer?"

"Yes," Lizay said; "an' I reckon that's the bes' thing we kin do—go tell moster an' mistis. But, law! I ought er go pull off this yere ole homespun dress an' put on my new cal'ker."

"I reckon we ain't got no time ter dress up," said Alston. "We mus' start quick: come 'long. Le's hide our baskits fus' whar' the cotton-stalks is thick."

This they did, and then started off at a brisk pace, their flight concealed by the tall cotton-plants. They reached Memphis about eleven o'clock, and found Dr. Horton at home, having just finished his lunch. They were admitted at once to the dining-room, where the doctor sat picking his teeth. He had never seen Alston, as the new negroes had been bought by an agent.

"Sarvant, moster!" Alston said humbly, but with dignity.

"Howdy, moster?" was Little Lizay's more familiar salutation.

"I's Als'on, one yer new boys from Ol' Virginny."

"You're a likely-lookin' fellow," said the doctor, who was given to dropping final consonants in his speech. "I reckon I'll hear a good report of you from Mr. Buck. You look like you could stan' up to work like a soldier. But what's brought you and Little Lizay to the city? Anything gone wrong?"

"Yes, moster," said Alston—"mighty wrong. Look yere, Mos' Hawton: when I come on yer plantation I made up my min' ter sarve yer faithful—ter wuck fer yer haud's I could —ter strike ev'ry lick I could fer yer. When I hoed cawn an' pulled fodder I went 'head er all the han's on yer plantation. But when I went ter pick cotton I wusn't use ter it. I wuckt haud's I could, 'fo' day an' arter dark. Mos' Hawton, I couldn't pick a poun' more'n I pick ter save my life. But I wus 'hin' all t'other han's. Then Mos' Buck wus goin' ter flog me ef I didn't git a hunderd: then Little Lizay, her he'ped me unbeknownst: ev'ry day she puts cotton in my basket ter fetch it ter a hunderd, an' that made her fall 'hin' las' year's pickin'; then ev'ry night she was stripped an' cowhided; but she kep' on he'pin' me, an' kep' on gettin' whipped. I dun know what she dun it fer: 'min's me uv the Laud on the cross."

Dr. Horton knew what she did it for. His knightliness was touched to the quick. The story made him wish as never before to be a better master than he had ever been to his

poor people. He asked many questions, and drew forth all the facts, Lizay telling how Alston was helping her while she was helping him. Dr. Horton saw that here was a romance in slave-life—that the man and woman were in love with each other.

Page 68

"Well, if you can't pick cotton," he said to Alston, "what can you do?"

"Mos' anything else, moster. I kin do ev'rything 'bout cawn; I kin split rails; I kin plough; I kin drive carriage."

"Could you run a cotton-gin?"

"Reckon so, moster: the black folks says it's tolerbul easy."

"Well, now, look here: you and Lizay get some dinner, an' then do you take a back-trot for the plantation. I'll sen' Buck a note: no, he can't more'n half read writin'. Well, do you tell him, Alston, to put you to ginnin' cotton: Little Sam mus' work with you a few days till you get the hang of the thing; an' then I want you to show that plantation what 'tis to serve master faithfully. You see, I believe in you, my man."

"Thanky, moster. I'll wuck fer yer haud's I kin. Please God, I'll sarve yer faithful."

"Of cou'se, Lizay, you'll go back to pickin' cotton, an' don't let me hear any mo' of you' nonsense—helpin' a strappin' fellow twice you' size. An' tell Buck I won't have him whippin' any my negroes ev'ry night in the week. Confound it! a mule couldn't stan' it. If I've got a negro that needs floggin' ev'ry night, I'll sell him or give 'im away, or turn 'im out to grass to shif' for himself. I'll be out there soon, an' 'ten' to things. If anybody needs a floggin', tell Buck to send 'im to me. Tell the folks to work like clever Christians, an' they shall have a fus'-rate Christmas—a heap of Christmas-gifts."

"Yes, moster."

"Do you an' Lizay want to get married right away, or wait till Christmas?"

Alston and Little Lizay looked at each other, smiling in an embarrassed way.

"But, moster," said Alston, "I's got a wife an' fou' childun in Ol' Virginny, an' I promused I'd wait an' wouldn't git morred ag'in tell she'd write ter me ef her moster'd sell her; an' I was goin' ter ax yer ter buy 'er."

"You needn't pester yourself about that. I got a letter for you the other day from her," the doctor said, fumbling in his pockets.

"Yer did, sah?" Alston said with interest.

"Yes: here it is. Can you read? or shall I read it to you?"

"Ef yer please, moster."

Then Dr. Horton read:

“MY DEAR B’LOVED HUSBUN’: Miss Marthy Jane takes my pen in han’ ter let yer know I’s well, an’ our childun’s well, an’ all the black folks is tolerbul well ’cept Juno: her’s got the polsy tolerbul bad. All the white folks ’bout yere is will ’cept mistis: her’s got the dumps. All the childun say, Howdy? the black folks all says, Howdy? an’ Pete says, Howdy? an’ Andy says, Howdy? an’ Viny says, Howdy? an’ Cinthy says, Howdy? an’ Tony Tucker says, Howdy? and Brudder Thomas Jeff’son Hollan’ says, Howdy? Last time I see’d Benj’mank Franklins Bedfud, he says, ‘Member, an’ don’t fawgit, the fus’ time yer writes, ter tell Als’on, Howdy?’

“Yer ’fectionate wife, CHLOE.”

Page 69

"P.S. Mistis says her can't spaw me, so 'tain't no use waitin' no longer fer me. 'Sides, I got 'gaged ter git morred: I wus morred Sundy 'fo' las' at quat'ly meetin'. Brudder Mad'son Mason puffawmed the solemn cer'mony, an' preached a beautiful discou'se. Me an' my secon' husbun' gits 'long fus'-rate. I fawgot ter tell yer who I got morred to. I got morred to Thomas Jeff'son Hollan'."

"So you're a free man," said Dr. Horton, folding the letter and handing it to Alston. "You an' Little Lizay can get married to-day, right now, if you wish to. Uncle Moses can marry you: he's a member of the Church in good an' regular standin': I don't know but he's an exhorter, or class-leader, or somethin'. What do you say? Shall I call him in an' have him tie you together?"

"Thanky, moster, ef Little Lizay's willin'.—Is yer, Lizay?"

"I reckon so," said Lizay, her heart beating in gladness. But she nevertheless glanced down at her coarse field-dress and thought with longing of the new calico in her cabin.

So Uncle Moses was called in, and Mrs. Horton and all the children and servants.

"Uncle Moses," said Dr. Horton, "did you ever marry anybody?"

"To be sho', Mos' Hawton. I's morred—Lemme see how many wives has I morred sence I fus' commenced?"

"Oh, I don't mean that;" and Dr. Horton proceeded to explain what he did mean.

"No," said Moses. "I never done any that business, but reckon I could: I's done things a heap hauder."

"Well, let me see you try your han' on this couple."

"Well," said Uncle Moses, "git me a book: got ter have a Bible, or hymn-book, or cat'chism, or somethin'."

The doctor gravely handed over a pocket edition of *Don Quixote*, which happened to lie in his reach.

Uncle Moses took it for a copy of the *Methodist Discipline*, and made pretence of seeking for the marriage ceremony. At length he appeared satisfied that he had the right page, and stood up facing the couple.

"Jine boff yer right han's," he solemnly commanded. Then, with his eyes on the book, he repeated the marriage service, with some remarkable emendations. "An' ef yer solemnly promus," he said in conclusion, "ter lub an' 'bey one 'nuther tell death pawts yer, please de Laud yer lib so long, I pernounces boff yer all man an' wife."



Then the mistress looked about and got together a basket of household articles for the new couple. Bearing this between them, Alston and Little Lizay went back to the plantation and to their unfinished rows of cotton, happy, poor souls! pathetic as it seems.

SARAH WINTER KELLOGG.

THE BASS OF THE POTOMAC.

Page 70

Some twenty-five years ago Mr. William Shriver, a primitive pisciculturist, took from the Youghiogheny River eleven black bass, and conveyed them in the tank of the tender of a locomotive to Cumberland, in the coal-region of Western Maryland. There he deposited them in the Potomac, with the injunction which forms the heraldic motto of the State of Maryland—*Crescite et multiplicamini*. The first part of this excellent precept they obeyed by proceeding to devour all the aboriginal fish in the river, and waxing extremely hearty upon the liberal diet. The second they performed with a diligence so commendable that the name of them in the river became as legion, and the original possessors of the waters were steadily extirpated or took despairingly to small rivulets, and led ever after a life of undeserved ignominy and obscurity. There were bass in the river from the Falls of the Potomac, near Georgetown, to a point as near its source as any self-respecting fish could approach without detriment to the buttons on his vest by reason of the shallowness of the water. They were in all its tributaries, and in fact monopolized its waters completely. Had the supply of small fish for food held out, it is impossible to say to what extent they would have increased. They might in their numerical enormity have rivalled the condition of that famous river, the Wabash, which in a certain season of excessive dryness became so low that a local journal of established veracity described the fish as having to stand upon their heads to breathe, and while in that constrained attitude being pulled by the inhabitants like radishes in a garden.

It has been contended by some ichthyologists that the black bass does not eat its own kind, but the spectacle which I recently beheld of a four-pounder, defunct and floating on the water, with the tail and half the body of a ten-ounce bass sticking out of his distended mouth, affords but inadequate confirmation of their views. I sat upon the bass in question, and rendered a verdict of “choked to death, and served him right.” He had swallowed the younger fish, who, for aught he knew to the contrary, or cared, might have been his own son; and his confidence in his capacity being ably supported by his appetite, he undertook a contract to which he was unequal in the matter of expansion. He couldn’t disgorge, being in the predicament of the boa-constrictor who swallows a hen head first, and finds her go against the grain when he would fain reconsider the subject. The head of the inside fish was partially digested, but that process had imparted no gratification to either party, and both were defunct, mutually immolated upon the altar of gluttony. It is not an uncommon thing to find them dead in that condition, for their appetites are ravenous, and lead them into indiscretions more or less serious in their consequences.

Page 71

There can be no doubt of their having regarded as a delicate attention the action some few years since of the Maryland Fish Commissioner in placing several thousand young California salmon in the river. Those salmon have never been seen or heard of since; but, although the bass for some time had a guilty look about them, it is hardly fair to let them remain under so grievous an imputation as is implied in the whole responsibility for the fate of the California emigrants. The fact is, that at Georgetown the Potomac River makes a very abrupt change in its grade, and the Great Falls, as they are called, are both picturesque and arduous of passage. The salmon, being of luxurious habit, betakes him each year to the seaside, and at the end of the season returns in a connubial frame of mind to the spot endeared to him by his early associations. It is quite possible that these particular salmon when on their way to the purlieus of marine fashion were somewhat discouraged at the jar and shock incident to their transit over the Falls. They may have concluded that the locality was unpropitious for the return trip, and then, consulting with salmon whose lines had been cast in more pleasant places, they may have ascended rivers of more conspicuous natural attractions and more agreeable to fish of cultivated habits.

The habits of the black bass may be described as generally bad. It is a fish devoid of any of the cardinal virtues. It is ever engaged in internecine war, and will any day forego a square meal for the sake of a fight. It gorges itself like a python, and when hooked is as game as a salmon, and quite as vigorous in proportion to size. In the Potomac it has been known to weigh as much as six pounds, but bass of that weight are very rare, from three to four pounds being the average of what are known as good fish. These afford excellent sport, and are taken with a variety of bait. The habitues of the river commonly employ live minnow, chub, catfish, suckers, sunfish—in fact, any fish under six inches in length. The bass has also a well-marked predilection for small frogs, or indeed for frogs of any dimensions. It sometimes rises well at a gaudy, substantial fly or a deft simulation of a healthy Kansas grasshopper; but fishermen have noticed that the largest fish despise flies, much as a person of a full roast-beef habit may be supposed to turn up his nose at a small mutton-chop. In other rivers they take the fly quite freely, but in the Potomac they have had that branch of their education greatly neglected. In the matter of vitality they are simply extraordinary: they cling to life with a tenacity that very few fish exhibit. In the spring or fall, when the water and the air are at a comparatively low temperature, a bass will live for eight or ten hours without water. The writer has brought fifty fish, weighing on an average two and three-quarter pounds, from Point of Rocks to Baltimore, a distance of seventy-two miles, and after

Page 72

they had been in the air six hours has placed them in a tub of water and found two-thirds of the number immediately “kick” and plunge with an amount of energy and ability that threw the water in all directions. These fish had been caught at various times during the day, and as each was taken from the hook a stout leather strap was forced through the floor of its mouth beneath its tongue, and the bunch of fish so secured allowed to trail overboard in the stream. They were thus dragged all day against a powerful current, but never showed any symptoms of “drowning.” In the evening they were strung upon a stout piece of clothes-line, and after lying for some time on the railway platform were transferred to the floor of the baggage-car, and so transported to the city. It is quite evident that we do not live in the fear of Mr. Bergh. But what is one to do? The fish is not to be discouraged except by the exhibition of great and brutal violence. In fact, bass will not be induced to decently deacease by any civilized process short of a powerful shock from a voltaic pile administered in the region of their *medulla oblongata*. Of course, one cannot be expected to carry about a voltaic pile and go hunting for the medullary recesses of a savage and turbulent fish. On the other hand, one may batter the protoplasm out of a refractory subject by the aid of a small rock, but it won’t improve the fish’s looks or cooking qualities. It may seem like high treason to mention, moreover, at a safe distance from Mr. Bergh, that euthanasia in animals designed for the table does not always improve their quality, and in fact that the linked misery long drawn out of a protracted dissolution imparts a certain tenderness and flavor to the flesh that it would not otherwise possess. Should that excellent and most estimable gentleman regard this statement with a sceptical eye, let it be here stated that the bass should be recently killed, split, crimped and broiled to a delicate brown, with a little good butter and a sprinkling of pepper, salt and chopped parsley. Should he pursue the subject upon this basis, he will not be the first gentleman who has surrendered his convictions and compounded a culinary felony upon favorable terms.

Below Harper’s Ferry there is one of the most picturesque reaches of the Potomac River. From the rugged heights that frown upon that historic and lovely spot, where the Shenandoah strikes away through the pass that leads to the broad and beautiful Valley of Virginia, and where John Brown’s memory struggles through battered ruins and the invading smoke of the unhallowed locomotive, the river chafes from side to side of the stern defile that hems it in and curbs its restless waters. Great walls of dark rocks, crested by serried ranks of solemn pines, stand guard above its fitful, surging flood, and against the dark blue calm and misty depth of its gorge the pale smoke rises in a quiet column above the mills and houses that nestle by the river’s bed. Huge boulders

Page 73

stem the current, and the rocks stand out in shelves and rugged ridges, around which the stream whirls swiftly and sweeps off into broad dark pools in whose green, mysterious depths there should be noble fish. Below, the river widens and has long placid reaches, but for the most part its banks are precipitous, and the deep water runs along the trunks and bares the roots of great trees whose branches stretch far out over its surface. Occasionally, the mountains recede and form a vast amphitheatre, clad in primeval forest, and there are islands on which vegetation runs riot in its unbridled luxury, and weaves festoons of gay creepers to conceal the gaunt skeletons of the endless piles of dead drift-wood. All is in the most glorious green—a very extravagance of fresh and brilliant color—relieved with the bright purples and tender leafing of the flowering shrubs and vines that intertwine among its heavy jungle. Upon the broad, flat rocks one may see dozens of stolid “sliders,” or mud-turtles, some of great size, basking in the sun like so many boarders at a country hotel. They crowd upon the rocks as thickly as they can, and blink there all day long unless disturbed by the approach of a boat, when they dive clumsily but quickly. Occasionally, one sees an otter, with seal-like head above the surface of the water, swimming swiftly from haunt to haunt in pursuit of the bass; and small coteries of summer ducks fly swiftly from sedge to sedge.

The acoustic properties of the river would make an architect die with envy. The light breeze bears one’s conversation audibly for half a mile; one hears the splash of a fish that jumps a thousand yards away; and the grim cliffs at the foot of which the canal winds in and out take up the profanity of the towpath and hurl it back and forth across the river as if it was great fun and all propriety. The stalwart exhortations and clean-cut phraseology of the mule-drivers and the notes of the bugles go ringing over to Virginia’s shore, and fill the air with cadences so sweet and musical that they sound like the pleasant laughter of good-humored Nature, instead of the well-punctuated and diligent ribaldry of the most profane class of humanity in existence. It is perfectly startling and frightful to hear an objurgation of the most utterly purposeless and ingeniously vile description transmitted half a mile with painful distinctness, and then seized by a virtuous and reproachful echo and indignantly repelled in disjointed fragments.

“Y’ll take care, sorr, an’ sit fair in the middle of the shkiff,” said Mr. McGrath as I got into his frail craft at five o’clock in the morning on the bank of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal near Point of Rocks. “It’s onconvenient to be outside of the boat whin we’re going through them locks. There were a gintleman done that last year, an’ he come near lavin’ a lot of orphans behind him.”

“How was that, McGrath?” said I.

“Begorra! the divil a child had he,” he replied.

Page 74

"But do you mean that he was drowned?" I asked.

"Faith, an' he was that, sorr—completely."

I promised Mr. McGrath that I would observe his instructions carefully, and that gentleman, after placing the rods, live-bait bucket, luncheon-basket and other articles on board, took his seat in the bow, and we proceeded. We had two boats for my companion and myself, and an experienced man in each. Mr. McGrath had fallen to my lot, and my companion had a darkey named Pete. We were to go up the canal some four miles, and then, launching the boats into the river, were to fish slowly down with the current. We had a horse and tow-rope, and a small boy, mounted on the animal, started off at a smart trot. It was quite exhilarating, and the boats dashed along merrily at a capital rate. A gray mist hung low on the river, and thin wraiths of it rose off the water of the canal and crept up the mountain-side, shrouding the black pines and hiding the summit from view. Beyond, the tops of the hills on the Virginia shore were beginning to blush as they caught the first rays of sunrise, and the fish-hawk's puny scream echoed from the islands in the stream. It was a lovely morning, and promised a day, as Mr. McGrath observed, on which some elegant fish should die. After a few delays at locks, in which canal-boats took precedence of us, we reached our point of transshipment, hauled the boats out on the bank, and our horse drew them sleigh-fashion across field and down to and out into the water.

I had a light split bamboo rod, a good silk line and a fair assortment of flies. Mr. McGrath had a common bamboo cane, a battered old reel, and the value of his outfit might be generously estimated at half a dollar. In his live-bait bucket were about a hundred fish, varying in length from two to six inches. He did not prepare to fish himself, but was watching me with the deepest attention. He held the boat across the stream toward the opposite shore, and by the time we dropped down on a large flat rock I was ready. I got out, and there being a pleasant air stirring, I made my casts with a great deal of ease and comfort. There was a deep hole below the rocks, bordered on both sides by a swift ripple—as pretty a spot as ever a fly was thrown over. I sped them over it in all directions, casting fifty and sixty feet of line, and admiring the soft flutter with which they dropped on the edge of the ripple or the open water. Mr. McGrath was surveying the operation critically, nodding his head in approval from side to side, and uttering short ejaculations of the most flattering nature. I kept whipping the stream assiduously, so satisfied with my work and the style of it as to feel confident that no well-regulated fish could resist it. But there was no appearance of a rise: not a sign appeared on the water to show even the approach of a speculative fish. I was about to note the fact to Mr. McGrath when that gentleman remarked, "Begorra! but it's illigant sport it'd be if the bass 'ud only bite at them things!"

Page 75

“Bite at them?” said I, turning round: “of course they’ll bite at them.”

“Sorra bit will they, sorr. It’s just wondherin’ they are if them things up above is good to ate, but they’re too lazy to step up an’ inquire. Augh, be me sowl! but it’s the thruth I tell you. Now, if it was a dacent throut that were there, he’d be afther acceptin’ yer invite in a minit; but them bass—begorra! they’re not amaynable to the fly at all.”

Now, if there is anything that I have been brought up to despise, it is fishing with “bait.” Fly-fishing I have learned to regard as the only legitimate method of taking any fish that any sportsman ought to fish for, and fishing with a worm and a cork I always looked upon as equal to shooting a partridge on the ground in May. I did not believe Mr. McGrath, and I told him, as I resumed my graceful occupation, that I didn’t think there were any fish there to catch. The idea of their rejecting flies served up as mine were was too preposterous.

“Well,” said he, “ye may be right, sorr: there may be none there at all; but I’ll thry them wid a bait, anyhow.”

In another minute Mr. McGrath was slashing about right and left a bait which to my disordered vision looked as big as a Yarmouth bloater. He threw it in every direction with great vigor and precision, and, as I could not help noticing, with very little splashing. I turned away with emotion, and continued my fly-fishing. Presently I heard an exclamation from Mr. McGrath, quickly succeeded by an ominous whirring of his reel.

“Luk at the vagabone, sorr! luk at him now! Run, ye divil ye! run!” he cried as he facilitated the departure of the line, which was going out at a famous rate. “Bedad! he’s a fine mikrophtheros! Whisht! he’s stopped.—Take that, ye spalpeen ye!”

As he said this he gave his rod a strong jerk, that brought the line up with a “zip” out of the water in a long ridge, and the old bamboo cane bent until it cracked. At the same moment, about a hundred and fifty feet away, a splendid fish leaped high and clear out of the water with the line dangling from his mouth. Mr. McGrath had struck him fairly, and away he went across stream as hard as he could tear.

“Take the rod, sorr, while I get the landing-net. Kape a tight line on him, sorr: niver let him deludher ye. It’s an illigant mikrophtheros he is, sure!”

He returned from the boat in a moment with the landing-net, but absolutely refused to take back his rod: “Sorra bit, sorr: bring him in. It’s great fun ye’ll have wid the vagabone in that current! No, sorr: bring him in yerself, sorr: ye’ll niver lay it at my door that the first fish hooked wasn’t brought in.”

Page 76

I didn't need any instructions, and as the fish ran for a rock some distance off, I brought him up sharply, and he jumped again as wickedly as he could full three feet out of the water, and came straight toward us with a rush. It was no use trying, I couldn't reel up quick enough, and he was under the eddy at our feet before I had one-third of the line in. Fortunately, he was securely hooked, and there was no drop out from the slacking of the line. He was in about twelve feet of water, and as I brought the line taut on him again he went off down stream as fast as ever. I had the current full against him this time, and I brought him steadily up through it, and held him well in hand. I swept him around in front of Mr. McGrath's landing-net, but he shied off so quickly that I thought he would break the line. Away down he went as stiffly and stubbornly as possible, and there he lodged, rubbing his nose against a rock and trying to get rid of the hook. Half a dozen times I dislodged him and brought him up, but he was so wild and strong I did not dare to force him in. At last he made a dash for the ripple, and I gave him a quick turn, and as he struck out of it Mr. McGrath had his landing-net under him in a twinkling, and he was out kicking on the rock. He weighed four pounds six ounces, and furnished conclusive evidence that a bass of that weight can give a great deal of very agreeable trouble before he will consent to leave his element.

"What was it," said I, "that you called him when you struck him just now?"

"What did I call him, sorr? A mikrophtheros, sorr."

"And for Goodness' sake, McGrath, what is a mikrophtheros?"

"Begorra! that's what it is," said Mr. McGrath, throwing the bass overboard to swim at the end of its leathern thong.

"Well!" said I in amazement. "I never heard such a name as that for a fish in all my life! —a mikrophtheros!"

"Divil a more or less!" said Mr. McGrath decidedly. "The Fish Commissioner wor up here last week, an' sez he to me, sez he, 'It's a mikrophtheros, so it is.'—'What's that?' sez I.—'That!' sez he; and he slaps him into an illigant glass bottle of sperrits, as I thought he was goin' to say to me, 'McGrath, have ye a mouth on ye?' an' I as dhry as if I'd et red herrin's for a week. 'Yis,' sez he to me, 'that's the right name of him;' and wid that he writes it on a tag, and he sends it off, this side up wid care, to the musayum. Sure I copied it: be me sowl, an' if ye doubt me word, here it is."

Mr. McGrath handed me a piece of paper torn off the margin of a newspaper, on which he had written legibly enough, "*Micropteros Floridanus*" I read it as gravely as I could, smiled feebly at my own ignorance, and returned it to him, saying, "Upon my word, McGrath, you are perfectly right. What a blessing it is to have had a classical education!"

“Sorra lie in it,” said he proudly as he replaced the slip in the crown of his hat; “an’ it’s meself that’s glad of it.”

Page 77

I can but throw myself upon the mercy of every respectable disciple of the art before whom this confession may come when I say that during this conversation I was employed in taking off my flies and in substituting therefor a strong bass-hook and a cork, after the effective fashion of Mr. McGrath. When this never-to-be-sufficiently-despised device was ready I took from the bucket a small and unhappy sunfish, immolated him upon my hook by passing it through his upper and lower lips, and cast him out upon the stream. The red top of the cork spun merrily down the current and out among the oily ripples of the deep water below, but Mr. McGrath could beat me completely in handling his. I noticed that I threw my fish so that it struck hard upon the water, “knocking the sowl out of it,” as he said, while he threw his hither and thither with the greatest ease, always taking care to do it with the least possible amount of violence, and keeping it alive as long as possible. However, it was not long before my cork disappeared with a peculiar style of departure abundantly indicative of the cause, to which I replied by a vigorous “strike.” My cork came up promptly, and with it my hook, bare. The sunfish had found a grave within the natural enemy of his species, and I had missed my fish.

“Divvle a wondher!” said Mr. McGrath in reply to a remark to that effect—“being, sorr, that ye’re not familiar wid their ways. Ye see, sorr, he comes up an’ he nips that fish be the tail, an’ away wid him to a convanient spot for to turn him an’ swallow him head first, by rason of his sthickles an’ fins all p’intin’ the other way. Whin he takes it, sorr, jist let him run away wid it as far as he likes, but the minit he turns to swallow it, an’ says to himself, ‘What an illigant breakfast this is, to be sure!’ that minit slap the hook into his jaw, an’ hould on to him for dear life.”

These excellent instructions I obeyed with no little difficulty. My cork came up in the back water under the rock on which I stood, and there, almost at my very feet, it disappeared. I could not believe that a bass had taken it, but all doubt on the subject was dispelled by the shrill whirl of my reel as the fine silk line spun out at a tremendous rate. The fish had darted across the current, and only stopped after he had taken out over two hundred feet of line.

“Now, sorr, jist make a remark to him,” whispered Mr. McGrath; and I struck as hard as I could. “Illigant, begorra!” said he as the fish, maddened and frightened, leaped out of the water. “Look at him looking for a dentist, bedad!”

It was peculiarly delightful to feel that fish pull—to get a firm hand on him, and have him charge off with an impetuosity that involved more line or broken tackle—to feel that vigorous, oscillating pull of his, and to note the ease and strength with which he swam against the powerful current or dashed across the boiling eddy below.

Page 78

It did not last long, however: he soon spent himself, and Mr. McGrath received him with a graceful swoop of his landing-net and secured him. Four more soon followed, all large fish—two to the credit of Mr. McGrath and two to myself. When caught they are of a dark olive-green on the back and sides, the fins quite black at the ends, and the under side white. They change color rapidly, and as their vitality decreases become paler and paler, turning when dead to a very light olive-green. The mouth in general form resembles that of the salmon family, but the size is much larger in proportion to the weight of the fish, and the arrangement of the teeth is different. With its great strength and its “game” qualities it is not surprising that it should afford a good deal of what is known as “sport.”

An attribute of man which is equivalent to a strong natural instinct is his disposition to “do murder.” This may account for his love of “sport,” or it may only be an hereditary trait derived from the period when he had not yet concerned himself with agriculture, but slew wild beasts and used his implements of stone to crack their bones and get the marrow out. The instinct to slay birds, beasts and fishes is certainly strong within us, whatever be its remote origin, and it is very little affected by what we are pleased to call our civilization. Indeed, it is hardly to be believed that one of the primitive lords of creation, stalking about in the condition of gorgeous irresponsibility incident to the Stone Period, would have lowered himself to the level of the kid-gloved example of the present stage of evolution who fishes in Maine. It cannot be supposed that the pre-historic gentleman would have disgraced himself by catching fish he could not use. He never caught ten times as many of the *Salmo fontinalis* as he and all his friends could eat, and then threw the rest away to rot. This kind of thing has prevailed to a great extent, but natural causes have nearly brought it to an end. The wholesale slaughter of the fish has reduced their numbers, and a surfeit of indecent sport can no longer be indulged in. Such fishermen should be confined by law to a large aquarium, in which the fish they most affected could be taught to undergo catching and re-catching until the gentlemen had had enough. The fish might grow to like it eventually, and submit as a purely business matter to being caught regularly for a daily consideration in chopped liver and real flies. But how our ancestor, just alluded to, would despise the sport of this progressive age! With his primitive but natural acceptance of Nature’s law of supply and demand, what would he think of the gentlemen who killed fish to rot in the sun or drove a few thousand buffaloes over a precipice—all for sport? It is probably the propensity to “do murder” which accounts for these things, for “sport,” within decent and proper limits, is a good thing, and has been favored by the best of men in all ages—-fishing

Page 79

particularly, because it predisposes to pleasant contemplation, to equity of criticism in the consideration of most matters of life, and to no little self-benignancy. No one knew this better (although Shakespeare himself was a poacher) than Christopher North, and where more fitly could the brightest pages of the *Noctes Ambrosianae* have been conceived or inspired than when their author was, rod in hand, on the banks of a brawling Highland trout-stream?

The fish had ceased to bite where we were, and at Mr. McGrath's suggestion we dropped down the stream to where my friend and his darkey were. His experience with the flies had been similar to mine, but he had too much regard for his fine fly-rod, he said, to use it for "slinging round a bait as big as a herring." He had taken it to pieces and put it away. He was sitting with his elbows on his knees and a brier-root pipe in his mouth, content in every feature, a perfect picture of Placidity on a Boulder.

"Given up fishing?" I asked.

"Not much," he replied: "I've caught nine beauties. Pete does all the work, and I catch the fish."

Sure enough, he had Pete, who was one of the best fishermen on the river, fishing away as hard as he could. Whenever Pete hooked a fish my friend would lay down his pipe and play the fish into the landing-net. "It's beastly sport," he said: "if I wasn't so confoundedly lazy I couldn't stand it at all.—Hello, Pete! got him?"

"Yes, sah—got him shuah;" and Pete handed him the rod as the line spun out. We watched the short struggle, and started down stream, leaving him to his laziness just as he was settling back in the boat for a nap and telling Pete not to wake him up unless the next was a big one.

By noon we had thirty-two fish—a very fair and satisfactory experience. We were about to change our position when we were detained by a tremendous shouting from the other boat, about half a mile above us.

"What's the matter with them, McGrath?" said I.

"Bedad, sorr! I think it must be that bucket there in the bow," he replied, pointing to the article, which contained our luncheon.

I was quite satisfied that it was, and there being a cool spring about forty feet above us on the bank on the Virginia side, we disembarked. In the excitement of fishing I had not thought of luncheon, but now I found I had a startling appetite. So had my friend and his assiduous darkey when they came in and reported twenty fish.

“Yes,” he said, “I know we ought to have a good many more, but Pete is so lazy. It was all I could possibly do to catch those myself.”

Page 80

With a flat rock for a table, the grass to sit upon, and the bubbling music of the little stream that flowed from the spring as an accompaniment, the ham and bread and butter, the pickles and the hard-boiled eggs, and even the pie with its mysterious leather crust and its doubtful inside of dried peaches, tasted wonderfully well. We did not venture out upon the river again until three o'clock, our worthy guides agreeing that the fish do not bite well between noon and that hour, and both of us being disposed to rest a little. My friend stretched himself on the thick grass, and when his pipe was exhausted went fast asleep, and snored with great precision and power to a mild sternutatory accompaniment by Mr. McGrath and Pete. I employed myself in bringing up my largest bass from the boat to sit for his picture in a little basin in the rock under the spring. After he had floundered himself into a comparatively rational and quiet condition, much after the fashion of a gentleman reluctant to have his portrait taken under the auspices of the police, I succeeded in committing him to paper. He was a handsome fish, and eminently deserving of the distinction thus conferred upon him.

Sleeping in the grass on a summer afternoon is a bucolic luxury I never fully appreciated. When I stirred up my friend he was red, perspirational and full of lively entomological suspicions. He slapped the legs of his pantaloons vigorously in spots, moved his arms uneasily, took off his shirt-collar and implored me to look down his back.

"There's nothing there," I reported. "I know how it is myself: a fellow always feels that way when he goes to sleep in the grass."

"Any woodticks here?" he asked.

"Begorra! plenty," said Mr. McGrath, sitting up. "They et a child," he added with perfect seriousness of manner, "down here below last summer." McGrath's eyes twinkled when my friend began to talk of peeling off and jumping into the river after a general search. He was finally reassured, and we started out. We had even better sport than in the morning, and accumulated a splendid string of fish each. On the way down we passed two boats in which were some gentlemen, evidently foreigners, engaged in throwing flies with apparently the same results that we had attained in the morning.

"Do you know who those people are?" I asked McGrath.

"I dunno, sorr," said he, "but I think they are from one of the legations at Washington. They come up for a day's fishin' all along of the illigant fishin' a party from the same place had one day last week I suppose;" and he smiled.

"How was that, McGrath?"

Page 81

"It wor last week, sorr; and I wor up the river be meself, an' I had thirty illigant fish thrailin' undher the boat comin' down. It wor just where they are I seen two boats full of gintlemen, an' I dhropped alongside. They wor swells, sure. They had patint rods, an' patint reels, an' patint flies, an' patint boots, an' patint coats, an' patint hats, an' the devil knows what. Bedad! they wor so fine that sez I to meself, sez I, 'Bedad! if I wor a bass I'd say, "Gintlemen, don't go to no throuble on my account: I'll git into the boat this minit."—'Been fishin', me man?' sez one of them to me. 'Sorra much, yer honor,' sez I. —'It's very strange, you know,' sez he, 'that they don't bite at all to-day. You haven't caught any, have you?'—'Well, sorr,' sez I, 'I did dhrop on a few little ones as I come down.'—'Oh, did you, really?' sez another one, puttin' a glass in his eye and standin' up excited like. 'Why, my good man,' sez he, 'be good enough to 'old them up, you know. We'd like so much to see them!'—Wid that, sorr, I up wid the sthring as high as I could lift it, an' it weighin' nigh onto a hundred pound. Well, they were that wild they didn't know what to make of it. One of them sez, sez he, 'The beggar's been a hauling of a net, he has.'—'Divvle a bit more than yerself,' sez I. 'There's me impliments, an', what's more, if ye wor to stay here till next week the sorra fish can ye ketch, because, bedad! ye dunno how.' Wid that they put their heads together, and swore it ud disgrace them to go home to Washington without a fish, you know; an' how much would I take for the lot? Sez I, 'I have twenty-five more down here in a creel in the river: that's fifty-five,' sez I. 'Ye can have the lot for twinty dollars.'—'It's a go,' sez he; an' ever since that there's letters comin' up from Washington askin' if the wather is in good ordher, and what is the accommodations? Bedad! I'm wondherin' if them as we passed wouldn't be likin' a dozen or two on the same terms?"

Nothing finishes up a day's bass-fishing better than a good hot supper of broiled bass, country sausage, fried ham and eggs, and coffee. The cooking can generally be managed, and the appetite is guaranteed. *Experto crede.*

W. MACKAY LAFFAN.

THE CHRYSALIS OF A BOOKWORM.

I read, O friend, no pages of old lore,
Which I loved well, and yet the winged days,
That softly passed as wind through green spring ways
And left a perfume, swift fly as of yore,
Though in clear Plato's stream I look no more,
Neither with Moschus sing Sicilian lays.
Nor with bold Dante wander in amaze,
Nor see our Will the Golden Age restore.
I read a book to which old books are new,
And new books old. A living book is mine—
In age, two years: in it I read no lies—

In it to myriad truths I find the clew—
A tender, little child; but I divine
Thoughts high as Dante's in its clear blue eyes.

Page 82

MAURICE F. EGAN.

A LAW UNTO HERSELF.

CHAPTER X.

Miss Fleming arrived that evening while Jane was on the water. She was in the habit of coming out to the Hemlock Farm for a day's holiday, and went directly to her own room as though she were at home. When she stepped presently out on the porch, where the gentlemen had gone to smoke, a soft black silk showing every line of her supple figure, glimpses of the rounded arms revealed with every movement of the loose sleeves, one or two thick green leaves in her light hair—ugly, quiet, friendly—they all felt more at home than they had done before. There was a pitcher of punch by the captain's elbow: she tasted it, threw in a dash of liquor, poured him out a glass and sat down beside him, and he felt that a gap was comfortably filled.

"You have turned your back on Philadelphia, they tell me, Miss Fleming," complained Judge Rhodes. "New York sucks in all the young blood of the country—the talent and energy."

"Oh, I came simply to sell my wares. New York is my market, but Philadelphia will always be home to me," in her peculiar pathetic voice. "I left good friends there," with one of her bewildering glances straight into the judge's beady eyes, at which his flabby face was suffused with heat.

"You do not forget your friends, that's certain," he said, lowering his voice. "That was a delicate compliment, sending my portrait back to the Exhibition. I felt it very much, I assure you."

Cornelia bowed silently. Neither she nor the judge said anything about the round-numbered cheque which he had sent her for it. In the moonlight they preferred to let the affair stand on a sentimental basis.

Mr. Van Ness meanwhile eyed Miss Fleming's pose and rounded figure with a watery gleam of complacency.

"An exceptional woman," was his verdict. He turned the conversation to art, and asked innumerable questions with a profound humility. Cornelia replied eagerly, until the fact crept out from the judge that there was not an aesthetic dogma nor a gallery in the world with which he was not familiar. Then to pottery, in which field his modesty was as profound, until the judge pushed him, as it were, to a corner, when he acknowledged himself the possessor of a few "nice bits."

"I have some old Etruscan pieces which I should like you to see, Miss Fleming," with his mild, deprecating cough, "and a bit of Capo di Monte, and the only real specimen of Henri Deux in the country."

"I must see them," emphatically. "Where are your cabinets?"

"Oh, nowhere," with a shrug. "My poor little specimens have never been unpacked since I returned to this country. They are boxed up in a friend's cellar."

"God bless me, Cornelia!" cried the captain in a muffled tone, "how could Mr. Van Ness spend his time koo-tooing to cracked pots? He has, as I may say, the future of Pennsylvania in his hand. When I think what he is doing for the friendless children—thousands of'em—" The punch had heated the captain's zeal to the point where words failed him.

Page 83

After that the friendless children swept lighter subjects out of sight. Mr. Van Ness, whose humility in this light rose to saintly heights, had all the statistics of the Bureaux of Charity at his tongue's end. He had studied the Dangerous Classes in every obscure corner of the world. He could give you the *status quo* of any given tribe in India just as easily as the time-table on the new railway in Egypt. No wonder that he could tell you in a breath the percentage of orphans, deserted minors, children of vicious parents, in his own State, and the amount *per capita* required to civilize and Christianize them. As he talked of this matter his eyes became suffused with tears. The great Home for these helpless wards of the State he described at length, from its situation on a high table-land of the Alleghanies and the dimensions of the immense buildings down to the employments of the children and the capacity of the laundry—a perfect Arcadia with all the modern improvements, where Crime was to be transformed wholesale into Virtue.

“Where is this institution?” asked Miss Fleming. “It is strange I never heard of it.”

“Oh, it is not built as yet: we have not raised the funds,” Mr. Van Ness replied with a smothered sigh.

The judge patted one foot and looked at him compassionately. It was a devilishly queer ambition to be the savior of those dirty little wretches in the back alleys. But if a man had given himself up, body and soul, to such a pursuit, it was hard measure that he must be thwarted in it.

Miss Fleming also bent soft sympathetic eyes on her new friend. The Home was not built, eh? Not a brick laid? She wondered whether that box with the priceless treasures existed in his friend's cellar or in his brain: she wondered whether he had not seen those pictures of the old masters in photographs, or whether he had travelled in Japan and the obscure corners of the earth in the flesh or in books. There was more than the wonted necessity upon her to establish sympathetic relations with this new man: she had never seen a finer presence: the beard and brow quite lifted his masculinity into aesthetic regions; she caught glimpses, too, of an unfamiliar mongrel species of intellect with which she would relish Platonic relations. Yet with this glow upon her she regarded the reformer's noble face and benignant blond beard doubtfully, thinking how she used to stick pins in brilliant bubbles when she was a child, and nothing would be left but a patch of dirty water.

“Jane is out on the river, as usual?” she asked presently.

“Yes,” said her father: “Mr. Neckart is with her. Neither of them will ever stay under a roof if they can help it. They ought to have a dash of Indian blood in their veins to account for such vagabondizing.”

“Is Bruce Neckart here?” with a change in her tone which made the captain look up at her involuntarily.

“Yes.”

Page 84

"I thought he was in Washington: I did not expect to meet him."

The judge puffed uneasily at his cigar. He was a family man, with a stout wife and married son. He did not meet Miss Fleming once a year, but he felt a vague jealousy of Neckart.

"By the way, you must be old acquaintances?" he said abruptly. "Both from Delaware? Kent county?"

"Oh yes," with a shrill womanish laugh, very different from her usual sweet boyish ha! ha! "Many's the day we rowed on the bay or dredged for oysters together, dirty and ragged and happy. There is not very much difference in our ages," seeing his look of surprise. "I look younger than I am, and Bruce has grown old fast. At least, so I hear. I have not seen him for years."

She was silent after that, and preoccupied as her admirers had never seen her, and presently, hearing Jane's and Neckart's steps on the path, she rose hastily and bade them good-night. They each shook hands with her, that being one of the sacred rites in the Platonic friendships so much in vogue now-a-days among clever men and women. Mr. Van Ness offered his hand last, and Cornelia smiled cordially as she took it. But it was clammy and soft. She rubbed her fingers with a shudder of disgust as she hurried up to her own room. There she walked straight to her glass and turned up the lamp beside it, looking long and fixedly at her face. She knew with exactness the extent of its ugliness and its power.

"It is too late now even if it ever could have been," she said quietly, and put out the light. Then she went to the window. Mr. Neckart had left Jane inside, and, not joining the other men, turned back to the garden. She saw the bulky dark figure as it passed under her window.

She stretched out her hands as if for a caress, with the palms pressed close. "Oh, Bruce!" she said under her breath. "Bruce!"

After he had passed out of sight she stood thinking over all the men who had made a comrade of her since she saw him last—how they had handled her fingers and looked into her eyes; how her every thought and fancy had grown common and unclean through much usage; how she had dragged out whatever maidenly feeling she had in the old times, and made capital of it to bring these companions to her who were neither lovers nor friends.

"When I could not have the food which I wanted. I took the husks which the swine did eat," she said, leaving the window, with a short laugh. "Well, I could not die of starvation."

CHAPTER XI.

When Jane woke the next morning a bluebird was singing outside of the window: she tried to mimic him before she was out of bed, and sang scraps of songs to herself as she dressed. The captain heard her in his room below, but pretended to be asleep when she came down as usual to lay out his clothes, for, although she insisted that her father should have Dave as a valet, she left him but little to do.

Page 85

Watching her from under the covers, the captain saw that she had left off the black snood and tied her hair with a band of rose-colored ribbon. Her lips were ruddy and her eyes alight: once or twice she laughed to herself.

"What high day or holiday is it, Jane?"

"Oh, every day is a high day now!" running to kiss him. "I was just thinking how comfortable money is, and how glad I am that we have it," glancing about delighted at his luxurious toilet appointments before the low wood-fire. Then she spread out his dressing-gown and velvet smoking-cap, and eyed with her head on one side the fine shirt and its costly studs.

"Do you remember the rag-carpet in your room which we thought such a triumph? and the old tin shaving-cup? Now, my lord, look out upon your estate!" opening the window. "Your musicians have come to waken you, and your servitors stand without," as Buff tapped at the door with hot water.

"He is as comfortable as a baby wrapped in lamb's wool," she thought as she ran down the stairs. "And this air is so pure and the sun so bright! Oh, he must grow strong here! Anybody would be cured here—anybody!"

The captain followed her to the barnyard. It was one of her inexorable prescriptions for him that he should drink a glass of warm milk-punch before breakfast, and smell the cow's breath during the operation. She was milking the white cow herself, while the pseudo sempstress, Nichols, waited with the goblet, and the bandy-legged shoemaker, Twiss, stood on guard, eyeing Brindle's horns suspiciously.

"Now the glass! These are the strippings. Oh you'll soon learn, Betty! You'll make butter as well as you used to make dresses badly."

The little widow and Twiss laughed, as they always did at Jane's weak jokes, and took the punch to the captain. She was the finest wit of her day in their eyes. The hostler's boy ran down from the stable to speak to her. She thought he had as innocent a face as she had ever seen. No doubt he would have gone to perdition if Neckart had not rescued him. She stopped to talk to him with beaming eyes, and meeting Betty's toddling baby took it up and tossed it in the air, and then walked on, carrying the soft little thing in her arms. The farm was like the Happy Valley this morning! God was so good to her! She could warm and comfort all these people. Then she turned into the woods and sat down on a fallen log. It was the place where they had stopped to rest yesterday, Neckart lying at her feet. There was the imprint still in the dead moss where his arm had lain. She looked guiltily about, and then laid her hand in the broken moss with a quick passionate touch. The baby caught her chin in its fingers. She hugged it to her breast, and kissed it again and again. From the hemlock overhead a tanager suddenly flashed up into the air with a shrill peal of song. Jane looked up, her face and

throat dyed crimson. Did he know? She glanced down at the grass, at the friendly trees all alive with rustling and chirping. The sky overhead was so deep and warm a blue to-day. It seemed as if they all knew that he loved her.

Page 86

The captain found Mr. Neckart standing on the stoop listening to some sound that came up from the woods.

"It is Jane singing," he said. "You would not hear her once in a year. Hereditary gift! In the old Swedish annals we read of the remarkable voices of the Svens."

"I never heard her sing before." Yet he had known at once that it was she. It was the most joyous of songs, but there was a foreboding pathos in the voice which moved him as no other sound had ever done.

"You are not going before breakfast?" cried the captain.

"Yes, and I shall not be able to come again for a long time. Say to Miss Swendon—But no. I will go and bid her good-bye."

He met her as she was crossing the plank thrown across the brook, and they stopped by the little hand-rail, not looking directly at each other: "I came to bid you good-morning."

"Do you take the early train, then?"

"Yes." He did not mean to tell her that he would not come again. The more ordinary their parting the sooner she would forget it and him. He had thought the matter out during the night, and being a man who was apt to under-rate himself, was convinced that the feeling which she had betrayed was but that transient flush of preference which any very young and innocent girl is apt to give to the first man of whom she makes a companion.

"There is nothing in me likely to win enduring love from her. A more intellectual woman, indeed—" He had gone over the argument again and again. When he was out of sight her fancy would soon turn to this new lover, so much better suited to her in every respect. For himself—But he had no right, to think of himself. He struck that thought down fiercely again as they stood together on the bridge. No more right than he would have, were he dead, to drag down this young creature into his grave.

He patted the child on the head as it clung to her dress, and talked of the chance of more rain with perfect correctness and civility; and when Jane managed to raise her eyes to his face she found it grave and preoccupied, as it usually was over the morning papers. He saw Van Ness coming smiling to meet her.

"It is time for me to go," he said, his eyes passing slowly over her: then with a hasty bow, not touching her hand, he struck through the woods to the station, thinking as he went how she was standing then on the bridge in the sunshine, with the man whom she would marry beside her. She looked after him, her eyes full of still, deep content. He loved her. She had forgotten everything else.

“A perfect morning, Miss Swendon,” said Mr. Van Ness, stroking his magnificent golden beard. “You see just this deep azure sky above the Sandwich Islands. Now, I remember watching such a dawn on Mauna Loa. Ah-h, *you* would have appreciated that. Our friend has gone, eh? Most active, energetic man! I heard him tell your father he should not return soon again.”

Page 87

"Not return?" stopping in her slow walk.

"No. It really must be impossible for an editor to spare time often for visits to even such an Arcadia as this. No stock market or political news in Arcadia, eh?" with a benevolent gurgle of a laugh. "Business! business! Miss Swendon. Ah, how it engrosses the majority of men!" shaking his head ponderously.

She said nothing. It was as if she had been suddenly wakened out of a dream in the crowd of a dusty market-place. He had gone back to the world, to his real business and his real trouble. She, with her love and her intended cure for him, was a silly fool wandering in a fantastic Arcadia.

Miss Fleming was walking up and down on the porch as they came up, more carefully dressed than usual. The captain had just told her that Neckart had gone.

"Ah? I'm very sorry," carelessly. "I should have been glad to see him again. Though no doubt he has forgotten me."

She went forward to meet Jane with a smile, but a withered gray look under her eyes. "I have been making a tour of your principality," she said as they went in to breakfast. "I see you have brought out a colony of Philadelphia paupers. Twiss, and Betty, and the rest."

"They were not paupers," said Jane, taking her place behind the urn. "Did you see into what a great boy Top has grown? And Peter?" It gave her a warm glow at heart to remember these people just now. At least, there her care had not been fantastic or thrown away.

"I hardly expected you to take up the role of guardian angel. It requires study, after all, to play it successfully," pursued Cornelia with an amiable smile, cutting her butter viciously.—"Very young girls are apt to be impetuous in their charities, and damage more than they help," turning to the judge. "These poor people, for instance. Betty had her kinsfolk about her in Philadelphia, her church and her gossips. She complained bitterly to me this morning that she 'had no company here but the cows: Miss Swendon might as well have whisked her off into a haythen desert.'"

"She complained to you!" cried the captain. "Why, the trouble and money which Jane has given to that woman and her family! They were starving, I assure you!"

Jane listened at first with her usual quiet good-humor. Miss Fleming's waspish temper generally amused her, as it would have done a man (if he was not her husband). But she began to grow anxious.

"You really think Betty is not contented here?" her hand a little unsteady as she poured the cream into the cups.



“Contented? She seems miserable enough. Home is home, you know, if it is only a cellar and starvation. But perhaps”—with a shrug—“that class of Irish are never happy without a grievance. Now, Twiss, it appears to me, has just ground for complaint.—A shoemaker,” turning to the judge a face beaming with fun, “whom this young lady has transported and set down in charge of gardens and hot-houses. He does not know a hoe from a mower, and he is too old to learn. He had a good trade: now he has nothing.”

Page 88

"But he could not live by his trade," cried Jane.

"Well, cobbling is looking up now. In any case, you have pauperized him."

"That's bad—bad! Now, in Virginia we used to feed everybody who came along!" said the judge, shaking his head. "But I've learned wisdom in the cities. Every bit of bread given to a beggar degrades human nature and rots society to the core."

"But suppose he is starving?" urged the captain. "The Good Samaritan wasn't afraid of pauperizing that poor devil on the road."

"Let him starve. He will have preserved his self-respect. The Good Samaritan knew nothing of political economy, sir."

Jane left her breakfast untasted. She understood nothing about political economy, but she saw that she had done irreparable injury to these people whom she had tried to serve—God knew with what anxiety and tenderness of heart. In one case, at least, there had been no mistake.

"Did you see Phil?" she said, turning with brightening countenance to Miss Fleming. "We intend to have Phil educated. He is such a keen-witted little fellow."

Miss Fleming laughed outright now: "Mr. Neckart's protege? Yes, I saw him. He has been stealing tobacco and money from Dave, it appears, ever since he came, and was found out this morning. There was a horrible row in the stable as I passed."

"Of course he stole!" said the judge triumphantly. "I tell you, the more efforts you make to reform the dangerous classes the more hardened you will grow. It's hopeless—hopeless!"

Her other listeners each promptly presented their theory. Like all intelligent Americans, they were provided with theories on every social problem, and were ready to hang it on an individual stable-boy or any other nail of a fact which might offer. Jane alone sat silent. She did not hear when her father spoke to her once or twice.

"You are disappointed," Mr. Van Ness's soft soothing voice murmured in her ear. "I know how these baffled efforts chill the heart. I will explain to you the machinery which I propose to bring to bear on these classes."

"I don't know anything about machinery or classes. Twiss and Betty were friends of mine, and I tried to help them, and have failed."

Miss Fleming, who was watching her furtively, saw her dull eyes raised presently and rest on the captain, who with a red face and bursts of laughter was telling one of his interminable stories.



"This girl," Cornelia said to herself, "has everything which I have not—beauty, wealth, Bruce Neckart's love. Yet she looks at that weak old man as if he were all that was left her in the world." She had put Jane before on the general basis of antipathy which she had to everything in the world that was not masculine, but the feeling had kindled since last night into active dislike.

Page 89

When breakfast was over and their guests had gone to their rooms to make ready to meet the train, Jane decoyed the captain away to Bruno's kennel, where he was tied during Mr. Van Ness's stay. Once out of sight she retied his cravat, arranged his white hair to her liking, stroked his sunken cheeks. Here was something actual and real. She knew now that she had never had anything that was truly her own but the kind foolish face looking down on her. She never would have anything more. Only an hour ago life had opened for her wide and fair as the dawn: now it had narrowed to this old hand in hers, to his breath, that came and went—O God, how feebly!

"You are looking stronger to-day, father. You are gaining every day. Oh that is quite certain! Very soon we shall have you as well and strong as you were at forty."

What if she had not had money this last year? He never could have lived through it. God had been kind to her—kind! She pressed his hand to her breast with a quick glance out to the bright sky. The Captain saw her chin quivering. His own thoughts ran partly in the same line as hers.

"Oh, I'm gaining, no doubt of it. Though I never could have pulled through this year if we had had to live in the old way. God bless Will Laidley for leaving the money as he did!"

"It was not his to leave otherwise!" she cried indignantly.

"Tut, tut, Jane! Of course it was his. By every law. He could have flung it away where he chose; and he had a perfect right to do it."

It was not God who had been kind to her, then: it was only that she had stolen the money?

"Come, Jenny: we must go back to the house."

"In a moment, father. Go on: I will follow you."

She walked up and down the tan-bark path for a while. She was sure of nothing. Wherever she had done what seemed to her right and natural, she was barred and checked by the world's laws and experience. She had brought these starving wretches out of a hell upon earth into this paradise, and even they laughed at her want of wisdom: the very money which was her own in the sight of God, and which had lengthened her father's life, ought to be given back to-day to the poor, its rightful owners. If there was any other cause for her to fight blindly against the narrow matter-of-fact routine which ruled her life, she did not name it even to herself.

Looking toward the house, she saw her father escorting their guests to the gate, where the carriage waited, David resplendent on the box. The captain walked with a feeble kind of swagger: his voice came back to her in weak gusts of laughter. She laid her



hand on a tree, glancing about her with a firm sense of possession. "The property is mine," she said, "and I'll keep it as long as he lives, if all the paupers in the United States were starving at the gates!"

CHAPTER XII.

Page 90

Mr. Van Ness returned to the Hemlock Farm at stated periods during the summer. He had, to be plain, sat down before Jane's heart to besiege it with the same ponderous benign calm with which he ate an egg or talked of death. There was a bronze image of Buddha in the hall at the Farm, the gaze of the god fixed with ineffable content, as it had been for ages, on his own stomach.

Jane went up to it one day after an hour's talk with Mr. Van Ness. "This creature maddens me," she said. "I always want to break it into pieces to see it alter."

Little Mr. Waring, who had come with Van Ness, hurried up as a connoisseur in bronzes, adjusting his eye-glasses. "Why, it is faultless, Miss Swendon!" he cried.

"That is precisely what makes it intolerable."

Much of Jane's large, easy good-humor was gone by this time. She had grown thin, was eager, restless, uncertain of what she ought or ought not to do, even in trifles.

Mr. Waring and Judge Rhodes were both at the Farm now. They ran over to New York every week or two. Phil Waring was not a marrying man, but it was part of his duty as a leader in society to be intimate with every important heiress or beauty in the two cities. Out of sincere compassion to Jane's stupendous ignorance he would sit for hours stroking his moustache, his elbows on his knees, his feet on a rung of the chair, dribbling information as to the nice effects in the Water-Color Exhibition, or miraculous "finds" of Spode or Wedgwood in old junk-shops, or the most authentic information as to why the Palfreys had no cards to Mrs. Livingstone's kettledrums, while Jane listened with a quizzical gleam in her eyes, as she did to the little bantam hen outside cackling and strutting over its new egg.

"We must have you in society this winter," he urged. "It is a duty you owe in your position. You have no choice about it."

"You are right, Mr. Waring," called the captain from the corner where he sat with Judge Rhodes. "The child must have friends in her own class." He dropped his voice again: "The truth is, Rhodes, she has no ties like other girls. Her dog and two or three old women and some children—that is all she knows of life. It's enough while she has me. But I shall not be here long, now. Not many months."

The eyes of the two men met.

"Does she know?" asked the judge after a while.

"No." The captain's gaunt features worked: he trotted his foot to some tune, looking down from the window and whistling under his breath. "It was for this I sent for you," he added presently. "If I could only see her settled, married, before I go! She is no more fit to be left alone in the world than Bruno."

Page 91

The judge shook his head in gloomy assent. His own opinion was that Jane would follow her own instincts in a dog-like fashion if her father was out of the way, and God only knew where they would lead her! He had brought his own girls, Rose and Netty, with him to visit her, in order that she might have a domestic feminine influence upon her. They found, accidentally, that she did not know a word of any catechism, and, terrified, loaned her religious novels to convert her: she took them graciously, but never cut the leaves. There were to them even more heathenish indications in her hoopless straight skirts: the good little creatures zealously cut and trimmed a dress for her from the very last patterns. She put it on, and straightway went through bog and brake with Bruno for mushrooms, coming back with it in tatters. They chattered in their thin falsetto voices the last Culpepper gossip into her patient ear—the story of Rosey’s balls at Old Point, and Netty’s lovers, all of whom were “splendid matches until impohverished by the war.” She listened to their chirping with amused eyes, tapping them, when they were through, approvingly on the head as though they were clever canaries. The girls told their father that they “feared her principles leaned toward infidelity, and that it was never safe to be intimate with these original women,” and had gone home the next day, not waiting for the judge. They washed their hands of her, and gloved them again, but he still felt responsible for her. After he left the captain he went to her, fatherly interest radiant in every feature: “Mr. Waring is right, Jane. It is high time that you were taking your part in society. Your father wishes it.”

“I will do whatever he wishes,” quietly.—“You did not know us when we lived in the old house in Southwark, Mr. Waring. We invented our patents then. Sometimes we could afford to go to the gallery at the theatre when the play was good. Father and the newsboys would lead the clapping. And we went once a year in our patched shoes a-fishing for a holiday. Those were good times.”

“Perfect child of Nature!” telegraphed Mr. Waring uneasily to the judge. “How Mrs. Wilde will rejoice in you, Miss Swendon! Nature is her specialty. She is coming to call this morning.—Miss Swendon,” turning anxiously to the judge, “can have no better sponsor in society than Mrs. Wilde. She only can give the accolade to all aspirants. No amount of money will force an entrance at her doors. There must be blood—blood. ‘Swendon?’ she said when I spoke to her about this call. ‘The Swedish Svens? I remember. Queen Christina’s gallant lieutenant was her great-grandfather. Good stock. None better. The girl must belong to our circle.’ So, now it is all settled!” rubbing his hands and smiling.

“Jane is careless,” said the captain eagerly. “People of the best fashion have called, and she has not even left cards. Her dress too—Now a Paris gown, fringes and—”

Page 92

The three men looked at her at that with a sudden imbecile despair, at which she laughed and went out.

The captain found her presently down by the boat in which she had heard Neckart's story. She bailed it out and cleaned it carefully every day, but she had never gone on the river in it since that night.

"Father," stepping ashore, "what have I done that I must be turned into another woman?"

"Now, Jenny, making models and crabbing were well enough for you as a child. But, as Waring justly observes, the society to which you belong is inexorable in its rules for a woman."

She flung out her arms impatiently, and then clasped them above her head. It seemed as if a thousand fine clammy webs were being spun about her.

"If you had any especial talent, as Waring says—if you were artistic or musical, or concerned in some asylum-work—you could take your own path, independent of society. But—" looking down at her anxiously.

"I understand. I don't know what I was made for."

It was the first time in her life that she had been driven in to consider herself. She stood grave and intent, saying nothing for some time. Every other woman had some definite aim. The whole world was marching by, keeping step to a neat, orderly little tune. They made calls, they gave alms, they dressed, all of the same fashion.

"Why not be like other people?" her father was saying, making a burden to her thought.

"I don't know why," drearily.

"What would you have, Jenny?" taking her hand in his.

"Father, I never loved but one or two people in the world. You and Bruno and—not many others. I can do nothing outside of them."

"Nonsense! You cannot be a law to yourself, child. God knows I want to see you happy!" his voice breaking. "But," straightening his eye-glasses, "Waring says, very justly, you are out of the groove which all other girls are in." He stopped inquiringly, but she did not answer. She was a strongly-built woman in mind and body, and just then she felt her strength. The blood rushed in a swift current through her veins. Why should she be hampered with these thousand meaningless, sham duties? She was fit for but one purpose—to serve two men whom she loved. Her father was ill, and he

pushed her from him into Society; and Bruce Neckart was alone, and with a worse fate than death creeping on him, and he—

“Why does not Mr. Neckart come to us?” she asked abruptly. “It is months since I have seen him.”

“His health is failing. There is some trouble of the brain threatened. I hear that he is going to give up the paper, and is settling up his business to go to Europe.” Her question startled him: he watched her with a new keen suspicion.

“If this must come on him, why should he not come here to bear it? I can nurse you both. Surely, that is as good work as returning calls or learning to dress in Parisian style,” with a short laugh.

Page 93

The captain's face gathered intelligence as he listened. He knew her secret now. For a moment he felt a wrench of pity for her. But love, with the captain, had been a sentimental fever ending in a cold ague: he had experienced light heats and chills of it many a time since. This wild fancy of the girl's would speedily burn itself out if judiciously damped. He would at once take the matter in hand.

"Neckart," he said deliberately, eying her to gauge the effect of his words, "is a man of sense and knowledge of the world. He knows his condition, and in the little time left to him he attends to his business and important political affairs, instead of nursing a romantic friendship which cannot serve him, and would only compromise you."

"Compromise me? I don't understand you, father."

"A woman could not render such service as you offer except to her betrothed lover or husband."

"Why, he would understand."

"But Society, child—"

"Oh, Society!" with a laugh. "But you do not remember!" claspng her hands on his shoulder. "If this thing comes upon him—he has looked forward to it all his life—he has nobody. He is quite alone."

"At least," impatiently, "you will not be involved. I did not understand before why Bruce had deserted us lately. I see now that he has acted very properly. It was not his fault nor yours—this flirtation—preference—or whatever you may choose to call it. But Bruce knows the world, and knows just how long-lived such fancies are, and he intends that it shall be no hinderance to your marriage—making an excellent match."

"I marry? Make an excellent match?"

"Yes. Certainly. What else should you do? Don't look in that way, my darling. It frightens me. I'm not strong. It is not death that is coming to you, but a good husband. You need not turn so white."

"And Mr. Neckart planned this for *me*?"

"N-no. I can't say 'planned,' to be accurate. But he agreed in our plan. Why, Bruce has common sense. He knows it is the way of the world that a woman should marry, and he will be much happier to know that you are the wife of a good man—good and good-looking too. Much more presentable than Bruce, poor fellow!"

The captain watched her closely as he gave this home-thrust. How a woman could turn from that magnificent, devout reformer to any lean, irascible politician! Her foot was on



the edge of the little skiff. She pushed it into the water. While he sat in the boat there that night, with the moonlight white about them, while he told her that he loved her, he had been planning this good match for her! There was no such thing as love, then, in the world? Or truth? But there was Society and common sense and the inexorable rules of propriety. Bruce Neckart represented to her Strength itself, and he submitted to these rules cheerfully. He was happy to think of her as the wife of a good, presentable man!

Page 94

When she had thought of him as going alone with his terrible burden away from her into the wilderness, true to her until the last breath of reason was gone, there had been a thrill of delight in the intolerable pain. But planning, like finical little Waring, that she should fall snugly into a fashionable set, Parisian gowns, a suitable marriage!

Jane had not the womanish faculty of thinning every fact or thought that came to her into tears or talk. Neckart had gone out of her life. She accepted the fact at once, without argument. What the loss imported to her would assuredly be known only to her own narrow, one-sided mind, and the God who had given it to her.

"Shall we go to the house, father? Can't you laugh again, and look like yourself? Why, I will give myself up, body and soul, to Society or Philanthropy—anything you choose—rather than see you so shaken." She hung on his arm as they went up the path, talking incessantly, and laughing more, as even the captain felt, than the jokes would warrant. The moment was favorable for introducing the subject he had at heart.

"The last train brought out a dozen men to consult Mr. Van Ness," he began—"deputations from church and charitable organizations. 'Pon my soul, I don't know what Christianity in this country would do without that man!"

"It would wear a very different face," absently.

"I went with Rhodes to a great revival-meeting in town one night lately, and Van Ness, of course, was called up on the platform. Rhodes thought he looked like one of the apostles in modern dress; and all the ladies near me said that his face beamed with heavenly light. It would have made anybody devout to look at him. Are you listening?" glancing at her abstracted face. "You certainly think him remarkably handsome? As to his nose, now?"

"I don't suppose anybody could find fault with his nose," smiling.

"Nor with his manner?"

"Nor with his manner."

"And yet you are not friends, eh?" holding his breath for her answer.

"No," carelessly. "Mr. Van Ness and I could not be friends."

"Why? why?"

"How could I tell?" with a shrug, and looking at Bruno, who was fighting a cat just then without cause.

The captain looked and sighed. It was of no use, he thought, to try to account for the prejudices or likings of any of the lower animals.

Mr. Waring met them at the moment in an anxious flutter: "Mrs. Wilde is here. She is coming down the path."

Mrs. Wilde was a small, plump old lady with a sober, tranquil face framed in soft puffs of white hair; her dress never rustled or brought itself into any notice; her language never fell uneasily out of its quiet gait; when she spoke to you, you felt that something genuine and happy dominated you for the moment.

"I followed Mr. Waring here," holding out her hand. "One makes acquaintance so much more quickly out of doors. I must begin ours by asking for your arm, Miss Swendon. I am fat and scant o' breath, and apt to forget it."

Page 95

Jane drew the puffy hand eagerly through her arm. She would have liked to say outright how welcome the motherly presence and the honest voice were to her just then.

Mrs. Wilde dismissed the captain and Mr. Waring, and the two women sat down in the arbor, and at once were at ease and at home with each other. Bruno came up, eyed and smelled the new-comer, and snuggled down on her skirts to go to sleep.

"He vouches for me," she said nodding. "You must take me at his valuation."

"He makes no mistakes."

"Nor do you, I suspect. That reminds me, Miss Swendon. I brought a friend with me, and now that I have seen you I mean to bespeak your good-will for her. She needs just such healthy influence as yours would be."

"Is she ill?"

"Only in mind. One of those morbid women who must make a drama out of their lives, and prefer to make it a tragedy. A Madame Trebizoff, an English-woman who married a Russian prince. She is a widow now, with large means—came to New York a few months ago, and has had much court paid to her. But her nature makes her always a very lonely woman." She spoke hastily as the trailing of heavy skirts approached on the grass. "Here she is, poor thing! Be good to her," she whispered before presenting her in form. Madame Trebizoff was draped in black, with a good deal of lace about her head and an artificial yellow rose at her throat. Jane went up to her with outstretched hand, but when the sallow face turned full on her she stopped short, looked at it a moment, and then bowed without a word.

"It is the materialized spirit!" But she did not speak, for in a moment she remembered that she had once taken the bread from the wretched woman's mouth. She would not do it again.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Van Ness came beaming down through the lilacs to the arbor, and was received with much reverence by Mrs. Wilde. She was a devout woman, and Pliny Van Ness's name was in all the churches. They all sauntered back to luncheon presently, Mrs. Wilde and Jane going before, while Mr. Van Ness and the Russian princess walked more slowly through the woods, the foreigner talking with animation and many gestures of American trees, while the reformer listened benignly, ineffable calm in his smiling eyes.

"You followed me here purposely, Charlotte?" he said gently as she dilated eloquently on our autumnal foliage.

"No. I did not know that you were in New York. But I meant to call upon you soon. I have had no money from you since last August."

"Somebody, apparently, has filled my place as your banker," his placid eye sweeping over the costly dress and be-diamonded fingers.

"What is that to you?" with a sudden shrill passion. "Once you would have cared, Pliny. But that was years ago."

"Yes. Many years ago," buttoning his glove carefully. "A Russian princess, eh?" after a short pause. "You are playing higher than ordinary, Charlotte. You'll find it dangerous. I should advise you to keep to begging letters or the role of medium or literary tramp."

Page 96

"One class is as ready to be humbugged as the other. Who knows that better than you?"

"In the religious and charitable work to which I have given up my life," deliberately measuring his words, "there are few impostors to be met. We usually detect fraud, with God's help, and do not suffer from it, therefore."

She stopped short, looking at him with blank amazement. Then walked on with a shrug: "Absolutely! He expects me to believe in him! He believes in himself! Can imposture go further than that?"

Mrs. Wilde, in the distance, caught sight of the two figures as they passed through a belt of sunlight, and smiled contentedly.

"I am so glad to bring poor madame under direct religious influence! Mr. Van Ness is speaking to her with great earnestness, I perceive."

The Princess Trebizoff scanned the great reformer as they walked, appraising him, from the measured solemn step to his calm humility of eye. She would have relished a passionate scene with him. After terrapin and champagne, there was nothing she relished so much as emotion and tears. But they had played up to each other so often! The tragedy in their relation had grown terribly stale! You could not, she felt, make Hamlet's inky cloak out of dyed cotton. But he would serve as audience.

"I'm growing very tired of good society," talking rapidly as usual. "Now, you always enjoyed a dead level, Pliny."

"Yes. There's no Bohemian blood in my veins. I was designed for respectability."

"So? I mean Ted shall be respectable," with sudden earnestness. "He is in a Presbyterian college. I should be glad if he'd go into the ministry. Yes, I should. Provided he had a call from God. I'll have no sham professions from Ted," her black eyes sparkling. "You did not ask for the boy. In your weighty affairs doubtless you forgot there was such a human being."

"No, indeed. In what institution have you placed Thaddeus?"

"No matter. He's out of your influence, thank God! He never heard your name. But as for me, I think I'll drop this princess business soon," meditatively. "I began down town," with a fresh burst of vivacity. "On the boarding-house keepers. Last December."

"You are Madame Varens! Is it possible?" turning to look at her. "The papers were filled with your exploits last winter."

“Precisely!” She had a joyous girlish laugh, infectious enough to draw a smile from Van Ness.

“You are really very clever, Charlotte,” admiringly.

“I made a tour in the West just before that,” excitedly, patting her hands together.
“Agent for Orphans’ Homes in the Gulf States. I wrote a letter of introduction from one or two bishops to the clergymen in their dioceses: that started me, and the clergy and press passed me through. What a mill of tea-drinkings and church-gossip I went through! But it was better fun than this.”

Page 97

Looking up, she happened to catch the cold, furtive glance with which he had listened, and kept her eye fixed on him curiously.

“Do you hate me so much as *that*?” she said with a long breath. “Well,” frankly, “it must be intolerable to carry such a millstone about your neck as I am to you. You know I could pull you down any minute I chose,” tossing her head and laughing maliciously. “No matter how high you had climbed. I often wonder, Pliny, why you do not rid yourself of me. It could be easily done.”

The usually suave tone was harsh and hoarse as he began to speak. He coughed, and carefully modulated his voice before he said politely, “Yes. But it would involve exposure unless carefully managed. That is certain damnation. There is a chance of safety for the present in trusting to you. You were always good-natured, Charlotte. And,” turning his watery eye full on her, “you loved me once.”

“Possibly,” coolly. “But last year’s loves are as tedious reading as last year’s newspapers. Better trust my good-nature. You show your shrewdness in that. I don’t interfere with people. The world uses me very well. It’s a hogshead that gives the best of wine—if you know how to tap it.”

“You’ve tapped it with a will. You go through life perpetually drunk,” he thought as she ran lightly before him up the steps. He habitually made such complacent moral reflections upon his companions to himself, and took spiritual comfort in them.

The hall was wide and sunny, made homelike by low seats and growing plants: it was occupied by half a dozen committee-men, who were waiting impatiently to see Mr. Van Ness. The princess seated herself, attentive, her head on one side like some bright-eyed tropical bird.

Van Ness, without even a glance toward her, took up his business of Christian financier. “Do not go, I beg,” as the captain opened the inner door for Rhodes and the ladies to retire. “Our affairs are conducted in the eyes of the public. Sound integrity has no secrets to keep. That is our pride.—Ah, gentlemen?”

The captain was glad to stay. Surely, Jane would be impressed with the vast influence of this good man. Van Ness did not look at her once. But he saw nobody but her, and spoke directly to her ear.

Asylums, workingmen’s homes, hospitals, in all of which he was a director, were brought up and dismissed with a few hopeful, earnest words. The vast system of organized charities through which the kindly wealthy class touch the poor beneath them was opened. Mrs. Wilde, a manager in many of them, joined in the discussion.

“What a useless creature I am!” thought Jane. “But the money,” doggedly, “is mine, and I choose to give it to father if the whole world go hungry.” She turned, however, from one representative of these asylums to the other with a baited look. Was it this one or that whom she had robbed?

“Now, as to Temperance City—*our* city?” demanded a puffy little man importantly. “You are the fountain-head of information there. We look to you, Mr. Van Ness.”

Page 98

"You shall have the annual report next week.—Temperance City," turning to Rhodes, his balmy gaze aimed straight over her head, "is a scheme to protect people of small means in the churches, especially women, from wrecking their little all in unwise investments. It is a town on the line of the Pacific Railroad. Lots are only sold to colonists who are tee-totallers and members of some church. The stock is owned largely by the same class."

"Oh, almost altogether!" cried the little man enthusiastically. "Mr. Van Ness's name, as you will understand, gives it authority among all religious people. We distribute prospectuses at camp-meetings and at all sectarian seaside resorts. Shares go off this summer like hot cakes. There's nothing like religion, sir, to back up business enterprise. There's Stokes, for instance. His shoes are sold from New Jersey to Oregon on the strength of the hymns he has written."

"Yes," said the judge solemnly. "We used to keep religion too much in the chimney-corner—spoke of it with bated breath. But it's in trade now, sir. We hear every day of our Christian shoe-makers and railway kings and statesmen. The world moves!"

"Moves? Oh there's no lever like religion!" gasped the little man. "No advertisement to equal it. And a good man ought to succeed! Are the swindlers to take all the fat of the land? Does not the good Book say, 'To the laborers belong the spoils'?"

"But this is so charming to me!" cried the princess. "We foreigners have so few opportunities of looking into the workings of your politics and trade!"

Van Ness bowed respectfully.

"And the State Home for destitute children?" asked a raw-boned Scotch-Irishman. "We're interested in that here in New York. We've subscribed largely, as you're aware, Mr. Van Ness. May I ask when you wull begin the buildin'?"

"In the spring, I trust. If enough funds are collected."

"And hoo air the funds invested in the mean while?"

"Oh, in corner-lots in Temperance City."

The committee-men had hurried away to catch the next train: lunch was over, and Mr. Van Ness stood apart on the lawn under the drooping branches of a willow, when the princess tripped lightly out to him.

"You have an object in coming here? You had an object in bringing those men to-day and opening out your affairs. What is it?"

He regarded her composedly for a moment without answering: "You always erred, Charlotte, in ascribing your own skill in intrigue to me. It was a flattering mistake. What I am to others I am to myself."

She laughed, a merry, hearty laugh: "Yes, Pliny, because you are not satisfied with cheating the world and the God that made you into the belief that you are a Christian, but you parade in your godliness before yourself. There is not a spot within you sound enough for your real soul to lodge in. It is all like that," setting her foot viciously on a fallen apple. "Rotten to the core!"

Page 99

A shadow of disgust passed over his handsome face. Van Ness had a fastidious taste. Her melodramatic poses had been familiar to him for years: they always had annoyed and bored him.

"What is it that brings you here? A woman?"

He hesitated a moment: "Yes."

"This yellow-haired girl? You mean to marry her?"

"I may marry her," cautiously.

Their eyes met. "I did not think you would push me so far," she said thoughtfully.

"It is to your interest not to interfere. You are mad, Charlotte. But you never lose sight of the dirty dollar in your madness."

"That is for Ted's sake," quietly. "I dislike that girl. She's so damnably clean! She's of the sort that would walk straight on and trample me under foot like a slug if she knew what I was. I owe her an old grudge, too. But that's nothing," laughing good-humoredly. "It was the most ridiculous scene! But it lost me a year's income. She nearly recognized me to-day. On the whole, I'll not interfere. Marry her. She deserves just such a punishment. By the way, there is my card. You can send the back payments that are due, to-morrow."

Van Ness received the card and command with a smile and bow, meant for the bystanders: "Of course, Charlotte, you understand that these payments must soon stop. I shall rid myself of any legal claims you have upon me before marrying another woman."

"Oh, I've no doubt you'll walk strictly according to law! You will not run the risk of a lawsuit, much less prosecution, even for Miss Swendon. You will have no trouble in gaining your freedom from me," shrilly.

"None whatever," stripping the leaves from a willow wand. She left him without a word, going to the house.

Mrs. Wilde had just summoned her carriage. "Where is the princess?" looking lazily around.

"Is Madame Trebizoff a guest in your house?" asked Jane suddenly.

"Yes."

"I will call her. I have something to say to her."

She went to meet her with the grave motherly firmness with which she would have gone to give a scolding to black Buff or a lazy chambermaid. The princess, crossing the grass, slender, dark, sparkling, had no doubt of her own smouldering passionate hate against her. It was the proper thing for Hagar to hate Sarah. Life was thin and insipid without great remorse, revenges, loves. The poor little creature was always aiming at them, and falling short. She was wondering now why Jane wore no jewelry. "Not an earring! Not a hoop on her finger! If I had her money!" glancing down at the blaze of rubies on her breast.

They met under a clump of lilacs.

"Stop one moment," said Jane, looking down at her not unkindly. "You must not let this go too far, you know."

"What do you mean?" The princess fixed her eye upon her, with a somewhat snaky light in it. Indeed, when she assumed that attitude toward Van Ness or any other man she could frighten and hold him at bay as if she had been a cobra about to strike. But the lithe dark body, the vivid color, the beady eye only reminded Jane oddly of a darting little lizard, and tempted her to laugh.

Page 100

"No. You really must keep within bounds. Because I have my eye upon you. I can't let you cheat that good soul, who brought you here, to her damage."

The princess gasped and whitened as though a cold calm hand was laid on her miserable sham of a body.

"Do you know who I am?" stiffening herself into her idea of regal bearing.

"Not exactly. It does not matter in the least, either. I took your means of earning a living from you once, you told me, and I don't wish to do it again. I will not interfere as long as you hurt nobody."

The princess stared at her and burst into an hysteric laugh: "I believe, in my soul, you mean just what you say! You are the shrewdest or stupidest woman I ever saw! Do you sympathize with me? Do you feel for me?" tragically, "or are you trying to worm my secret from me?"

"Neither one nor the other," coolly. "I know your secret. You are no spirit and no princess. I shall pity you perhaps when you go to some honest work. Why," with sudden interest, "I can find steady work for you at once. A staymaker in the village told me the other day—"

"I make stays!"

They both laughed. Jane's chief thought probably was how bony and sickly this poor woman was: her own solid white limbs seemed selfish to her for the instant. She took the twitching, ringed fingers in her hand.

"Play out your own play," she said good-humoredly. "You will not hurt anybody very seriously, I fancy."

They walked in silence to the house.

The princess bent forward in the carriage-window as they drove away to look back at her. "I wish my son knew such women as that!" she cried.

"Son?" said the startled Mrs. Wilde. "You have not spoken before to me of your son, madame."

"I have always kept him under tutors—at Leipsic."

She leaned back as they drove through the sunshine, her filmy handkerchief to her painted eyes, seeing nothing but an ugly, honest-faced boy hard at work in a bare Presbyterian chapel. He would never know nor guess the life of shame which his mother led! Her tears were real now.

She even had wild, visionary thoughts of a confession, of staymaking, of so many dollars a week regularly. But she remembered the time when some fussy, good women had put her in charge of a fashionable Kindergarten. There was a fat salary! The house was luxurious: the teachers did the work. But one night she had broken the finical apparatus to pieces, left a heap of bonbons for the children, scrawled a verse of good-bye with chalk on the blackboard, and taken to the road again without a penny.

REBECCA HARDING DAVIS.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

Page 101

It is twenty years since the death of Alfred de Musset, a poet whose popularity and influence, both in his own country and out of it, can be compared only to Byron's. Not that the Frenchman is known in England as the Englishman is known in France, but the latter country may be called the open side of the Channel, and in establishing a comparison between the relative fame and familiarity of foreign names and ideas there and on the isolated side, it is proportion rather than quantity which must be kept in view. While Byron is out of fashion in his own country, the rage for Musset, which for a long time made him appear not so much the favorite modern poet of France as the only one, has subsided into a steady admiration and affection, a permanent preference. New editions of his works, both cheaper and more costly, are being constantly issued, portraits of him are multiplied, his pieces are regularly performed at the Theatre Francais, his verses are on every one's lips, his tomb is heaped with flowers on All Souls' Day. Until after his death it would have been easy to count those who knew even his name in this country and England: as usual in such matters, we preceded the English in our acquaintance with him. The freedom with which Owen Meredith and Mr. Swinburne helped themselves from his poems proves how unfamiliar the general public was with him ten years ago, but his distinction is now so well recognized in that island, so remote from external impressions, that some knowledge of his life and writings formed part of the French course last year in the higher local examinations of Cambridge University.

Alfred de Musset belongs to the class of poets whose inner history excites most curiosity, because his readers feel that there lies the spring of his power, the secret of his charm, as well as the key to the riddles and inconsistencies which his writings present: they are so imbued with the essence of a common humanity that the heart that beats, the tears which start, the blood which courses through them, keep time with our own. The desire to penetrate still further into the intimacy to which they admit us is quite distinct from the vulgar inquisitiveness which pursues celebrity, or merely notoriety, into privacy. His biography has lately been published by one who recognizes the true nature of this curiosity: Paul de Musset has reserved the right of telling his brother's story, regarding it, he says, "not only as a duty I owe to the man I loved best, and whose most intimate and confidential friend I was, but as a necessary complement to the perfect understanding of his works, for his work was himself."

Page 102

The way in which this task has been performed is not entirely satisfactory, and many passionate admirers of the poet, the order of readers to whom it is dedicated, will feel disappointment and a regretful sense of its failing to fulfil what it undertook, increased by the conviction that, having been undertaken by the hand best fitted for it by natural propriety, it cannot be done again. The book bears the relation to what one desired and expected that a bare diary does to the journal, or memoranda to the lecture. It is a collection of notes on the life of Alfred de Musset, rather than a full memoir. This inadequacy arises principally from the biographer himself. Paul de Musset, the poet's elder and only brother, is a man of taste and cultivation, a judge of art, literature, music and the drama, a person of charming manners and conversation, dignified, kindly, courteous, easy: he was until middle age a busy, working man, whose leisure moments were occupied with writings that have found little favor, except the *Femmes de la Regence* and the pretty child's story of *M. le Vent et Mme. la Pluie*, which latter has been translated. He was the devoted, unselfish friend and mentor of Alfred, to whose juniority and genius he extended an indulgence of which he needed no share for himself: in fact, he was the elder brother of the Prodigal in everything but want of generosity. A more amiable portrait cannot be imagined than the one to be drawn of him from the history of his intercourse with his brother and from Alfred's own letters and verses to him. This, however, was not the person to give us such an account and analysis of the life and character of Alfred de Musset as the subject called for: he has neither the necessary impartiality nor ability. He is now seventy years old, and although, like his brother, he has the gift of appearing a decade less than his age, he is forced to remember that the time must come when he will no longer be here to defend his brother's memory, which has suffered more than one cruel attack. Having once had to silence calumny under cover of fiction, he naturally wished to put his name beyond the reach of being further traduced. Whatever the shortcomings of the performance, it could not fail to be interesting. It is written in an easy, well-bred style, like the author's way of talking—not without a sense of humor, with touching pride in his brother's endowments, and tenderness toward faults which he does not deny. In place of comprehensive views and sound judgment of Alfred de Musset's genius and career, we have the knowledge of absolute intimacy and sympathy, candor, a hoard of reminiscences and details which could be gained from no other source, and, more than all, that certainty as to events and motives which can exist only where there has been a lifelong daily association without disguise or distrust.

Page 103

The family of Musset is old and gentle, and was adorned in early centuries by soldiers of mark and statesmen of good counsel—the sort of lineage which should bequeath high and honorable ideas, an inheritance of which neither Paul nor Alfred de Musset nor their immediate forbears were unworthy. A disposition to letters and poetry appears among their ancestry on both sides, beginning in the twelfth century with Colin de Musset, a sort of troubadour, a friend of Thibaut, count of Champagne, while the poet's paternal grandmother bore the name of Du Bellay, so illustrious in the annals of French literature. Alfred de Musset's parents were remarkable for goodness of heart and high principle: both possessed an ideality which showed itself with them in elevation of moral sentiments, and which passed into the imaginative qualities of their sons. From remoter relatives on both sides came a legacy of wit, promptness and point in retort, gayety and good spirits. Alfred de Musset was born on the 11th of December, 1810, in the old quarter of Paris, on the left bank of the Seine. The stories of his childhood—which are pretty, like all true stories about children—show a sensitive, affectionate, vivacious, impetuous, perverse nature, precocious observation and intelligence. He was one of those beautiful, captivating children whom nobody can forbear to spoil, and who, with the innocent cunning of their age, reckon on the effect of their own charms. He was not four years old when he first fell in love, as such mere babies, both girls and boys, occasionally do: these infantine passions exhibit most of the phenomena of maturer ones, and show how intense and absorbing a passion may be which belongs exclusively to the region of sentiment and imagination. Alfred de Musset's first love was his cousin, a young girl nearly grown up when he first saw her: he left his playthings to listen to her account of a journey she had made from Belgium, then the seat of war, and from that day, whenever she came to the house, insisted on her telling him stories, which she did with the patience and invention of Scheherazade. At last he asked her to marry him, and, as she did not refuse, considered her his betrothed wife. After some time she returned to her home in Liege: there were tears on both sides—on his genuine and excessive grief. “Do not forget me,” said Clelia.—“Forget you! Don't you know that your name is cut upon my heart with a pen-knife?” He set himself to learn to read and write with incredible application, that he might be able to correspond with his beloved. His attachment did not abate with absence, so that when Clelia really married, the whole family thought it necessary to keep it a secret from her little lover, and he remained in ignorance of it for years, although he betrayed extraordinary suspicion and misgiving on the subject. He was a schoolboy of eight or nine before he learned the truth, and was at first extremely agitated: he asked tremblingly if Clelia had been

Page 104

making fun of him, and being assured that she had not, but that they had not allowed her to wait for him, and that she loved him like an elder sister, he grew calm and said, "I will be satisfied with that." The cousins seldom met in after-life, but preserved a tender affection for each other, which served to avert a lawsuit and rupture that threatened to grow out of a business disagreement between the two branches of the family. In 1852, Clelia came to Paris to be present at Alfred's reception by the French Academy. He had great confidence in her taste and judgment, and the last time they met he said to her, "If there should ever be a handsome edition of my works, I will have a copy bound for you in white vellum with a gold band, as an emblem of our friendship."

His first literary passion was the *Arabian Nights*, which filled the imagination of both brothers with magical lamps, wishing-carpet and secret caverns for nearly a twelvemonth, during which they were incessantly trying to carry out their fancies by constructing enchanted towers and palaces with the furniture of their apartment. The Eastern stories were superseded by tales of chivalry: Paul lit upon the *Four Sons of Aymon* in his grandfather's library, and a new world opened before him in which he hastened to lose himself, taking his younger brother by the hand. The children devoured *Jerusalem Delivered*, *Orlando Furioso*, *Amadis de Gaule*, and all the poems, tales and traditions of knighthood on which they could lay hands. Their games now were of nothing but tilts and jousts, single combats, adventures and deeds of arms: the paladins were their imaginary playfellows. A little comrade, who charged with an extraordinary rush in the excitement of the tournament, generally represented Roland: Alfred, being the youngest and smallest of the three, was allowed to bear the enchanted lance, the first touch of which unseated the boldest rider and bravest champion—a pretty device of the elder brother's, in which one hardly knows whether to be most charmed with the poetic fancy or the protecting affection which it displayed. The delightful infatuation lasted for several years, undergoing some gradual modifications. Until he was nine, Alfred had been chiefly taught at home by a tutor, but at that age he was sent to school, where the first term dispelled his belief in the marvellous. His brother was by this time at boarding-school, and they met only on Sunday, when they renewed their knightly sports, but with diminished ardor. One day Alfred asked Paul seriously what he thought of magic, and Paul confessed his scepticism. The loss of this dear delusion was a painful shock to Alfred, as it is to many children. Who cannot remember the change which came over the world when he first learned that Krissinkle *alias* Santa Claus did not fill the Christmas stocking—that the fairies had not made the greener ring in the grass, where he had firmly believed he might have seen them

Page 105

dancing in the moonlight if he could only have sat up late enough? The Musset children fell back upon the mysterious machinery of old romance—trap-doors, secret staircases, *etc.*—and began tapping and sounding the walls for private passages and hidden doorways; but in vain. It was at this stage of the fever that *Don Quixote* was given to them; and it is a singular illustration both of the genius of the book and the intelligence of the little readers that it put their giants, dwarfs and knights to flight. During the following summer they passed a few weeks at the manor-house of Cogners with an uncle, the marquis de Musset, the head of the family: to their great joy, the room assigned them had underneath the great canopied bedstead a trap leading into a small chamber built in the thickness of the floor between the two stories of the old feudal building. Alfred could not sleep for excitement, and wakened his brother at daybreak to help him explore: they found the secret chamber full of dust and cobwebs, and returned to their own room with the sense that their dreams had been realized a little too late. On looking about them they saw that the tapestry on their walls represented scenes from *Don Quixote*: they burst out laughing, and the days of chivalry were over.

Alfred de Musset was nine years old, as we have said, when he began to attend the College Henri IV. (now Corneille), on entering which he took his place in the sixth form, among boys for the most part of twelve or upward. He was sent to school on the first day with a deep scalloped collar and his long light curls falling upon his shoulders, and being greeted with jeers and yells by his schoolmates, went home in tears, and the curls were cut off forthwith. He was an ambitious rather than an assiduous scholar, and kept his place on the bench of honor by his facility in learning more than by his industry; but it was a source of keen mortification to him if he fell behindhand. His talents soon attracted the attention of the masters and the envy of the pupils, the latter of whom were irritated and humiliated by seeing the little curly-pate, the youngest of them all, always at the head of the class. The laziest and dullest formed a league against him: every day, when school broke up, he was assaulted with a brutality equal to that of an English public school, but which certainly would not have been roused against him there by the same cause. He had to run amuck through the courtyard to the gate, where a servant was waiting for him, often reaching it with torn clothes and a bloody face. This persecution was stopped by his old playfellow, Orlando Furioso, who was two years his senior: he threw himself into the crowd one day and dealt his redoubtable blows with so much energy that he scattered the bullies once for all. Among their schoolmates was the promising duke of Orleans, who was then duc de Chartres, his father, afterward King Louis Philippe, bearing at that time the former title. He took

Page 106

a strong fancy to Alfred de Musset, which he showed by writing him a profusion of notes during recitation, most of them invitations to dinner at Neuilly, where he occasionally went with other school-fellows of the young prince. For a time after leaving school De Chartres—as he was called by his young friends—kept up a lively correspondence with Alfred, and when their boyish intimacy naturally expired the recollection of it remained fresh and lively in the prince's mind, as was afterward proved.

De Musset left college at the age of sixteen, having taken a prize in philosophy for a Latin metaphysical essay. His disposition to inquire and speculate had already manifested itself by uneasy questions in the classes of logic and moral philosophy; and although few will agree with his brother that his writings show unusual aptitude and profound knowledge in these sciences, or that, as he says, “the thinker was always on a level with the poet,” nobody can deny the constant questioning of the Sphinx, the eager, restless pursuit of truth, which pervades his pages. He pushed his search through a long course of reading,—Descartes, Spinoza, Cabanis, Maine de Biran—only to fall back upon an innate faith in God which never forsook him, although it was strangely disconnected with his mode of life.

I have lingered over the early years of Alfred de Musset because the childhood of a poet is the mirror wherein the image of his future is seen, and because there is something peculiarly touching in this season of innocence and unconsciousness of self in the history of men whose after lives have been torn to pieces by the storms of vicissitude and passion. So far, he had not begun to rhyme—an unusual case, as boys who can make two lines jingle, whether they be poets or not, generally scribble plentifully before leaving school. At the age of fourteen he wrote some verses to his mother on her birthday, but it is fair to suppose that they gave no hint of talent, as they have not been preserved: it was only from his temperament that his destiny might be guessed. The impressions of his infancy were singularly vivid and deep, and acted directly upon his imagination: they are reflected in his works in pictures and descriptions full of grace or power. The ardent Bonapartism of his family, particularly of his mother, whom he loved and revered, took form from his recollections in the magnificent opening of the *Confession d'un Enfant du Siecle*, which has the double character of a prose poem and a kindling oration, while by the volume and sonorous beauty of the phrase it reminds one of a grand musical composition. When he was between seven and eight years old his family passed the summer at an old country-place to which belonged a farm, and he and his brother found inexhaustible amusement among the tenants and their occupations. He never saw it again, but it is reproduced with perfect fidelity in the tale of *Margot*. The chivalric mania left, as Paul de Musset observes,

Page 107

a love of the romantic and fantastic, a tendency to look upon life as a novel, an enjoyment of what was unexpected and unlikely, a disposition to trust to chance and the course of events. The motto of the Mussets was a condensed expression of the gallant love-making, Launcelot side of knightly existence—*Courtoisie, Bonne Aventure aux Preux* ("Courtesy, Good Luck to the Paladin;" or, to translate the latter clause more freely, yet more faithfully to the spirit of the original, "None but the Brave Deserve the Fair"). It came from two estates—*Courtoisie*, which passed out of the family in the last century, and *Bonne Aventure*, a property on the Loire, which was not part of Alfred's patrimony. The fairies who endowed him at his christening with so many gifts and graces must have meant to complete his outfit when they presented him with such a device, which might have been invented for him at nineteen. On leaving college he continued his education by studying languages, drawing, and music to please himself, and attempting several professions to satisfy the reasonable expectations of his father. He found law dry, medicine disgusting, and, discouraged by these failures, he fell into low spirits, to which he was always prone even at the height of his youthful joyousness—declared to his brother that he was and ever should be good for nothing, that he never should be able to practise a profession, and never could resign himself to being *any particular kind of man*. His talent for drawing led him to work in a painter's studio and in the galleries of the Louvre with some success, and for a time he was in high spirits at the idea of having found his calling, and pursued it while attending lectures and classes on other subjects. This uncertainty lasted a couple of years, during which he began to venture a little into society, of which, like most lively, versatile young people, he was extravagantly fond. His Muse was still dormant, but his love for poetry was strongly developed; a volume of Andre Chenier was always in his pocket, and he delighted to read it under the trees in the avenues of the Bois on his daily walk out of Paris to the suburb of Auteuil, where his family lived at that time. Under this influence he wrote a poem, which he afterward destroyed, excepting a few good descriptive lines which he introduced into one of later date. Meanwhile, he had been presented to the once famous Cenacle, the nucleus of the romantic school, then in the pride and flush of youth and rapidly increasing popularity; its head-quarters were at the house of Victor Hugo *facile princeps ordinis* even among its chiefs. There he met Alfred de Vigny, Merimee, Sainte-Beuve and others, whose talents differed essentially in kind and degree, but who were temporarily drawn together by similarity of literary principles and tastes. Their meetings were entirely taken up with intellectual discussions, or the reading of a new production, or in walks which have been commemorated by Merimee and Sainte-Beuve, when they carried their romanticism to the towers of Notre Dame to see the sun set or the moon rise over Paris.

Page 108

Stimulated by this companionship, Alfred de Musset began to compose. His first attempt at publication was anonymous, a ballad called "A Dream," which, through the good offices of a friend, was accepted by *Le Provincial*, a tri-weekly newspaper of Dijon: it did not pass unnoticed, but excited a controversy in print between the two editors, to the extreme delight of the young poet, who always fondly cherished the number of the paper in which it appeared. At length, one morning he woke up Sainte-Beuve with the laughing declaration that he too was a poet, and in support of his assertion recited some of his verses to that keenly attentive and appreciative ear. Sainte-Beuve at once announced that there was "a boy full of genius among them," and as long as he lived, whatever Paul de Musset's fraternal sensitiveness may find to complain of, he never retracted or qualified that first judgment. The *Contes d'Italie et d'Espagne* followed fast, and were recited to an enthusiastic audience, who were the more lenient to the exaggerations and affectations of which, as in most youthful poetry, there were plenty, since these bore the stamp of their own mint.

Alfred de Musset's first steps in life were made at the same time with his first essays in poetry. He was so handsome, high-spirited and gay that women did not wait to hear that he was a genius to smile upon him. His brother, who is tall, calls him of medium height, five feet four inches (about five feet nine, English measure), slender, well-made and of good carriage: his eyes were blue and full of fire; his nose was aquiline, like the portraits of Vandyke; his profile was slightly equine in type: the chief beauty of his face was his forehead, round which clustered the many-shaded masses of his fair hair, which never turned gray: the countenance was mobile, animated and sensitive; the predominating expression was pride. Paul relates without reserve how one married woman encouraged his brother and trifled with him, using his devotion to screen a real intrigue which she was carrying on, and that another, who was lying in wait for him, undertook his consolation. One morning Alfred made his appearance in spurs, with his hat very much on one side and a huge bunch of hair on the other, by which signs his brother understood that his vanity was satisfied. He was just eighteen. That a man of respectable life and notions like Paul de Musset should take these adventures as a matter of course makes it difficult for an American to find the point of view whence to judge a society so abominably corrupt. Thus at the age of a college-boy in this country he was started on the career which was destined to lead to so much unhappiness, and in the end to his destruction. Dissipation of every sort followed, debts, from which he was never free, and the habit of drinking, which proved fatal at last. To the advice and warnings of his brother he only replied that he wished to know everything by experience,

Page 109

not by hearsay—that he felt within him two men, one an actor, the other a spectator, and if the former did a foolish thing the latter profited by it. On this pernicious reasoning he pursued for three years a dissolute mode of life, which, thanks to the remarkable strength and elasticity of his constitution, did not prevent his carrying on his studies and going with great zest into society, where he became more and more welcome, besides writing occasionally. He translated De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, introducing some reveries of his own, but the work attracted no attention. During this period his father, naturally anxious about his son's unprofitable courses, one morning informed him that he had obtained a clerkship for him in an office connected with the military commissariat. Alfred did not venture to demur, but the confinement and routine of an office were intolerable, and he resolved to conquer his liberty by every effort of which he was capable. He offered his manuscripts for publication to M. Canel, the devoted editor of the romantic party: they fell short by five hundred lines of the number of pages requisite for a volume of the usual octavo bulk. He obtained a holiday, which he spent with a favorite uncle who lived in the provinces, and came back in three weeks with the poem of "Mardoche." He persuaded his father to give a literary party, to which his friends of the Cenacle were invited, and repeated his latest compositions to them, including "Mardoche." Here we have another example of manners startling to our notions: the keynote of these verses was rank libertinism, yet in his mother's drawing-room and apparently in the presence of his father, a dignified, reputable man, venerated by his children, this young rake declaimed stanzas more licentious than any in Byron's *Don Juan*. But it caused no scandal: the friends were rapturous, and predicted the infallible success of the poems, in which they were justified by the event. "Rarely," says Paul de Musset, "has so small a quantity of paper made so much noise." There was an uproar among the newspapers, some applauding with all their might, others denouncing the exaggeration of the romantic tendency: the romanticists themselves were disconcerted to find the "Ballade a la Lune," which they had taken as a good joke, turned into a joke against themselves. At all events, the young man was launched, and his vocation was thenceforth decided. In reading these first productions of Alfred de Musset's without the prejudice or partiality of faction, it cannot be denied that if not sufficient in themselves to ensure his immortality, they contain lines of finished beauty as perfect as the author ever produced—ample guarantee of what might be expected from the development of his genius.

Page 110

He now began to be tired of sowing wild oats, and became less irregular in his mode of life. A lively, pretty little comedy called *Une Nuit Venitienne*, which he wrote at the request of the director of the Odeon, for some inexplicable cause fell flat, which, besides turning him aside from writing for the stage during a number of years, discouraged him altogether for some time. Before he entirely recovered from the check he lost his father, who died suddenly of cholera in 1832. The shock left him sobered and calm, anxious to fulfil his duties toward his mother and young sister, whose means, it was feared, would be greatly diminished by the loss of M. de Musset's salary. Alfred resolved to publish another volume of poetry, and, if this did not succeed to a degree to warrant his considering literature a means of support, to get a commission in the army. He set himself industriously to work, and inspiration soon rewarded the effort: in six months his second volume appeared, comprising "Le Saule," "Voeux Steriles," "La Coupe et les Levres," "A quoi revent les jeunes filles," "Namouna," and several shorter pieces. Among those enumerated there are splendid passages, second in beauty and force to but a few of his later poems, the sublime "Nuits," "Souvenir," and the incomparable opening of "Rolla." Again he convoked the friends who three years before had greeted the *Contes d'Espagne* with acclamation, but, to the unutterable surprise and disappointment of both brothers, there was not a word of sympathy or applause: Merimee alone expressed his approbation, and assured the young poet that he had made immense progress. Perhaps the others took in bad part their former disciple's recantation of romanticism, which he makes in the dedication of "La Coupe et les Levres" after the following formula:

For my part, I hate those snivellers in boats,
Those lovers of waterfalls, moonshine and lakes,
That breed without name, which with journals and notes,
Tears and verses, floods every step that it takes:
Nature no doubt but gives back what you lend her;
After all, it may be that they do comprehend her,
But them I do certainly not comprehend.

The chill of this introduction was not carried off by the public reception of the *Spectacle dans un Fauteuil* (as the new collection was entitled), which remained almost unnoticed for some weeks, until Sainte-Beuve in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of January 15, 1833, published a review of this and the earlier poems, indicating their beauty and originality, the promise of the one and progress of the other, with his infallible discernment and discrimination. A few critics followed his lead, others differed, and discussions began again which could not but spread the young man's fame. The *Revue des Deux Mondes* was now open to him, and henceforth, with a few exceptions, whatever he wrote appeared in that periodical. He made his entry with the

Page 111

drama of *Andrea del Sarto*, which is rife with tense and tragic situations and deeply-moving scenes. The affairs of the family turned out much better than had been expected, but Alfred de Musset continued to work with application and ardor. His fine critical faculty kept his vagaries within bounds: he knew better than anybody “how much good sense it requires to do without common sense”—a dictum of his own. Like every true artist, he took his subjects wherever he found them: the dripping raindrops and tolling of the convent-bell suggested one of Chopin’s most enchanting *Preludes*; the accidental attitudes of women and children in the street have given painters and sculptors their finest groups; so a bunch of fresh roses which De Musset’s mother put upon his table one morning during his days of extravagant dissipation, saying, “All this for fourpence,” gave him a happy idea for unravelling the perplexity of Valentin in *Les Deux Maitresses*; and his unconscious exclamation, “Si je vous le disais pourtant que je vous aime,” which caused a passer-by in the street to laugh at him, furnished the opening of the *Stances a Ninon*, like Dante’s

Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore.

These fortunate dispositions were interrupted by a meeting which affected his character and genius more than any other event in his life. It is curious that Madame Sand and De Musset originally avoided making each other’s acquaintance. She fancied that she should not like him, and he, although greatly struck by the genius of her first novel, *Indiana*, disliked her overloaded style of writing, and struck out in pencil a quantity of superfluous adjectives and other parts of speech in a copy which unluckily fell into her hands. Their first encounter was followed by a sudden, almost instantaneous, mutual passion—on his part the first and strongest if not the only one, of his life. The first season of this intimacy was like a long summer holiday. “It seemed,” writes the biographer, “as if a partnership in which existence was so gay, to which each brought such contributions of talent, wit, grace, youth, and good-humor, could never be dissolved. It seemed as if such happy people should find nothing better to do than remain in a home which they had made so attractive for themselves and their friends.... I never saw such a happy company, nor one which cared so little about the rest of the world. Conversation never flagged: they passed their time in talking, drawing, and making music. A childish glee reigned supreme. They invented all sorts of amusements, not because they were bored, but because they were overflowing with spirits.” But Paris became too narrow for them, and they fled—first to Fontainebleau, then to Italy. Musset’s mother was deeply opposed to the latter project, foreseeing misfortune with the prescience of affection, and he promised not to go without her consent, although his heart was set upon it. The most incredible story in the biography is that Madame Sand actually surprised Madame de Musset into an interview, and, by appeals, eloquence, persuasion and vows, obtained her sorrowful acquiescence.

Page 112

The lamentable story of that Italian journey has been told too often and by too many people to need repetition here. No doubt Paul de Musset has told it as fairly as could be expected from his brother's side: probably the circumstances occurred much as he sets them down. But he could not make due allowance for the effect which Alfred's dissolute habits had produced upon his character: he was but twenty-three, and had run the round of vice; he had already depicted the moral result of such courses in his terrible allegory of "La Coupe et les Levres:" the idea recurs throughout his works, conspicuously in the *Confession d'un Enfant du Siecle*, which is Madame Sand's best apology. But if his excesses had destroyed his ingenuousness, she destroyed his faith in human nature, and on her will ever rest the brand he set in the burning words of the "Nuit d'Octobre."

He returned to Paris shattered in mind and body, and shut himself up in his room for months, unable to endure contact with the outer world, or even that of the loving home circle which environed him with anxious tenderness. He could not read or write: a favorite piece of music from his young sister's piano, a game of chess with his mother in the evening, were his only recreations—his only excitement the letters which still came from Venice, for which he looked with a sick longing, at which one cannot wonder on reading them and remembering what a companionship it was that he had lost. Urged by his brother and his friend M. Buloz, the director of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, to try the efficacy of work, he completed his play of *On ne badine pas avec l'Amour*, already sketched, in which, of all his dramatic writings, the cry of the heart is most thrilling. Aided by this effort, he made a journey to Baden in September, five months after his miserable return to Paris. The change of air and scene restored him, and his votive offering for the success of his pilgrimage was the charming poem called "Une Bonne Fortune." Although he had determined not to see Madame Sand again, their connection was renewed, in spite of himself, when she came back from Italy: it lasted for a short period, full of angry and melancholy scenes, quarrels and reconciliations. Then he broke loose for ever, and went back to the world and his work.

This episode, of which I have briefly given the outline, was the principal event of Alfred de Musset's life, the one which marked and colored it most deeply, which brought his genius to perfection by a cruel and fiery torture, and left a lasting imprint upon his writings. Although he never produced anything finer than certain passages of "Rolla," which was published in 1833, yet previous to that—or more accurately to 1835, when he began to write again—he had composed no long poem of equal merit throughout, none in which the flight was sustained from first to last. The magnificent series of the "Nights" of May, December, August and October, the "Letter

Page 113

to Lamartine," "Stanzas on the Death of Malibran," "Hope in God," and a number of others of not less melody and vigor, but less exalted and serious in tone; several plays, among them *Lorenzaccio*, which missed only by a very little being a fine tragedy; the greater part of his prose tales and criticisms, including *Le Fils de Titien*, the most charming of his stories, and the *Confession d'un Enfant du Siecle*, which shows as much genius as any of his poems,—belong to the period from 1835 to 1840, his apogee. Of the last work, notwithstanding its unmistakable personal revelations—which, if they do not tell the author's story, at least reflect his state of mind—Paul de Musset says, what everybody who has read his brother's writings carefully will feel to be true, that neither in the hero nor any other single personage must we look for Alfred's entire individuality. In the complexity of his character and emotions, and the contradictions which they united, are to be found the eidolon of every young man in his collection, even "the two heroes of *Les Caprices de Marianne*, Octave and Coelio," says Paul, "although they are the antipodes of one another." Neither is it as easy as it would seem on the surface to trace the thread of any one incident of his life through his writings. Although containing some irreconcilable passages, the four "Nights" appeared to have been born of the same impulse and to exact the same dedication: it is undeniably a shock to have their inconsistencies explained by hearing that while the "Nuits de Mai," "d'Aout" and "d'Octobre" refer to his passion for Madame Sand, the "Nuit de Decembre" and "Lettre a Lamartine," which naturally belong to this series, were dictated by another attachment and another disappointment. I will not stop to moralize upon this: the story of De Musset's life is really only the story of his loves. His brother says that he was always in love with somebody: it was a necessity of his nature and his genius. Before he was twenty-seven, six different love-affairs are enumerated, without taking into account numerous affairs of gallantry; nor was the sixth the last. The "Nuit d'Octobre" was written two years and a half after his return from Italy, and its terrible malediction is the outbreak of the rankling memory of his wrong and suffering. It was psychologically in order that while his love (which does not die in an hour, like trust and respect) survived, it should surround its object with lingering tenderness, but that as it slowly expired indignation, scorn and the sense of injury should increase: this is their final utterance, followed by pardon, a vow of forgetfulness and farewell, but not a final farewell. That was spoken years afterward, in 1841, when, once again seeing by chance the forest of Fontainebleau, and about the same time casually encountering Madame Sand, he poured forth his "Souvenir," a poem of matchless sweetness and beauty, vibrating with feeling and most musical in expression—an exquisite combination of lyric and elegy. In this he calls her

Page 114

Ma seule amie a jamais la plus chere.

Ten years after this, in one of the last strains of his unstrung harp, a fragment called "Souvenir des Alpes," the sad chord is touched once more: up to the end it answered faintly to certain notes. Long after their rupture and separation he said that he would have given ten years of his life to marry her had she been free; and it is deplorable that the most fervent and lasting affection of which he was capable should have been thrown back upon him in such sort.

Of marriage there were several schemes at different times: they fell through because he was averse to them himself, except one to which he much inclined, the young lady being pretty, intelligent, charming and the daughter of an old friend; but on the first advances it turned out that she was engaged to another man. His biographer regrets this deeply, convinced that such an alliance would have been his brother's salvation; but even if he could have been more constant to his wife than to his mistresses, the habit of intemperance was too confirmed to admit much hope of domestic happiness. The same may be opined in regard to the vague hopes which were destroyed by the death of the young duke of Orleans. When Louis Philippe came to the throne, De Musset made no attempt to approach the royal family on the pretext of the old school-friendship: it was the duke himself who renewed it in 1836 on accidentally seeing some unpublished verses of the poet's on the king's escape from an attempt at assassination. Louis Philippe himself did not like the sonnet, considering the use of the poetic *thou* too familiar a form of address: he did not know who was the author; and when Alfred was presented to him at a court-ball took him for a cousin who was inspector of the royal forests at Joinville, and continued to greet him, under this mistake, with a few gracious words two or three times a year during the rest of his reign, while the poet's name was on the lips and in the heart of every one else. The duke's favor and friendliness ended only with his sad and sudden death.

Paul de Musset tells us that the years 1837 and 1838 were the happiest in his brother's life. The love-trouble which had wrung from him the "Nuit de Decembre" was a disappointment, but not a deception, and the parting had caused equal sorrow on both sides, but no bitterness. After no long interval appeared "a very young and very pretty person whom he met frequently in society, of an enthusiastic, passionate nature, independent in her position, and who bought the poet's books." An acquaintance, a friendship, a correspondence, a serious passion followed, and became a relation which lasted two years "without quarrel, storm, coolness or subject of umbrage or jealousy—two years of love without a cloud, of true happiness." Why did it not last for ever? The biographer does not give the answer. It is hinted in a letter to Alfred's friend, the duchesse de Castries,

Page 115

dated September, 1840, in his *OEuvres posthumes*: “I have told you how about a year ago an absurd passion, totally useless and somewhat ridiculous, made me break with all my habits. I forsook all my surroundings, my friends of both sexes, the current in which I was living, and one of the prettiest women in Paris. I did not succeed in my foolish dream, you must understand; and now I find myself cured, it is true, but high and dry like a fish in a grain-field.” This is probably the clue, and the foolish dream was for a woman to whom his brother refers as having repelled Alfred’s homage with harshness, and having called forth from him some short and extremely bitter verses beginning “Oui, femme,” and another called “Adieu!” in which there prevails a tone of quiet but deep feeling. This is a sad story: he apparently united the volatility and vagrancy of fancy, the inconstancy of light shallow natures, with the ardor and intensity of passion and the capacity for suffering which belong to strong and steadfast ones. There was a childlike quality in his disposition, which showed itself in a sort of simplicity and spontaneousness in the midst of a corrupt existence, and still more in the uncontrollable, absorbing violence of his emotions: they swept over him, momentarily devastating his present and blotting out the horizon, but unlike the tempests of childhood their ravages did not disappear when the clouds dispersed and the torrents subsided. The life of debauchery which had preceded his journey to Italy was replaced, for some years, by a less excessive degree of dissipation, during which he lived with a fast set, who, however, were men of talent and accomplishments, the foremost among them being Prince Belgiojoso. The influence of the two fortunate years, 1837-38, not only the happiest but the most fertile of his short career, seems to have weakened these associations and led him into calmer paths. He had formed several friendships with women of a sort which both parties may regard with pride, in particular with the Princess Belgiojoso, one of the most striking and original figures of our monotonous time, and Madame Maxime Jaubert, a clever, attractive young woman with a delightful house, whom he called his *Marraine* because she had given him a nickname. These women, and others—but these two above the rest—were sincerely and loyally attached to him with a disinterested regard which did not spare advice, nor even rebuke, or relax under his loss of health and brilliancy or neglect of their kindness, which nevertheless he felt and valued. His purest source of pleasure was in the talent of others, which gave him a generous and sympathetic enjoyment. The appearance of Pauline Garcia—now Madame Viardot—and Rachel, who came out almost simultaneously at the age of seventeen, added delight to the two happy years. He has left notices of the first performances of these artistes, the former in opera, the latter on the stage (for he was musical himself and a *connoisseur*)

Page 116

which are excellent criticisms, and have even more interest than when they appeared, now that the career of one has long been closed and that of the other long completed. His relations with Rachel lasted for many years, interrupted by the gusts and blasts which the contact of two such natures inevitably begets. She constantly urged him to write a play for her, and in the year after her *debut* he wrote a fragment of a drama on the story of Fredegonde, which she learned by heart and occasionally recited in private; but there were endless delays and difficulties on both sides, and the rest was not written. After various episodes and passages between them, De Musset was dining with her one evening when she had become a great lady and queen of the theatre, and her other guests were all rich men of fashion. One of them admired an extremely beautiful and costly ring which she wore. It was first passed round the table from hand to hand, and then she said they might bid for it. One immediately offered five hundred francs, another fifteen, and the ring went up at once to three thousand: "And you, my poet, why do not you bid? What will you give?" "I will give you my heart," he replied. "The ring is yours," cried Rachel, taking it off and throwing it into his plate. After dinner De Musset tried to restore it to her, but she refused to take it back: he urged and insisted, when she, suddenly falling on her knee with that sovereign charm of seduction for which she was as renowned as for her tragic power, entreated him to keep it as a pledge for the piece he was to write for her. The poet took the ring, and went home excited and wrought up to the resolve that nothing should interfere with the completion of his task. But it was the old story again—whims and postponements on Rachel's part, possibly temper and pique on his—until six months afterward, at the end of an angry conversation, he silently replaced the ring on her hand, and she did not resist. Four years later the compact was renewed, and although by this time De Musset had to all intents and purposes ceased to write, he struck off the first act of a play called *Faustina*, the scene of which was laid in Venice in the fourteenth century; but he put off finishing it, and finally let it drop altogether.

In December, 1840, Alfred de Musset was thirty years old, and on his birthday he had one of those reckonings with himself, which the most deliberately careless and volatile men cannot escape. At twenty-one he had held a similar settlement: he was then uncertain of his genius, dissatisfied with his way of life and with the use he made of his time: the result was his adoption of a more serious line of study and conduct, which had led him, in spite of interruptions and aberrations, to the brilliant display of his beautiful and splendid talents, the full exercise of his wonderful powers. Now another review of his past and survey of his future left him in a mood of discontent and depression. He felt

Page 117

that he could not always go on being a boy. The year behind him had been almost sterile, and marked by the loss of many of what he called his illusions. He had been implored and urged to write by his friends and editors, had made and broken promises without number to the latter, and had become involved in money difficulties to a degree which kept him in constant anxiety and torment. Yet he steadily rejected all his brother's affectionate advice and importunities to shake off the deepening lethargy. He would not write poetry because the Muse did not come of her free will, and he would never do her violence. He had forsworn prose, because he said everybody wrote that, and many so ill that he would not swell the number of magazine story-writers, who, he foresaw, were to lower the standard of fiction and style. In short, he always had an excuse for doing nothing, and although he hated above all things to leave Paris, and seldom accepted the invitations of his friends in the country, he now repeatedly rushed out of town to escape the visits of editors, who had become no better than duns in his eyes. When at home he shut himself in his room for days together in so gloomy a frame of mind that even his brother did not venture to break in upon him: he even made a furtive attempt at suicide one night when his despondency reached its lowest depth; it was foiled by the accident of Paul's having unloaded the pistols and locked up the powder and balls some time before. He grew morbidly irritable, and resented Paul's remonstrances, which, we may be sure, were made with all the tact and consideration of natural delicacy and unselfish affection, generally by laughing at the poor poet, which was the most effectual way of restoring his courage and good-humor. One morning he emerged from his seclusion, and with vindictive desperation threw before his brother a quantity of manuscripts, saying, "You *would* have prose: there it is for you." It was the introduction to a sort of romance called *Le Poete dechu*, a wretched story of a young man of many gifts who finds himself under the necessity of writing for the support of his orphan sisters, and it described with harrowing eloquence the vain efforts of his exhausted brain. The extracts in the biography are painfully affecting and powerful, but the work was never finished or published. Such a state of things could not go on indefinitely, and De Musset fell dangerously ill of congestion of the lungs, brought on by reckless imprudence when already far from well: the attack was accompanied by so much fever and delirium that it was at first mistaken for brain fever. This illness redoubled the tenderness and devotion of his family and friends: his Marraine and Princess Belgiojoso took turns by his bedside, magnetizing the unruly patient into quiescence; but the person who exercised the greatest influence over him was a poor Sister of Charity, Soeur Marcelline, who was engaged to assist in nursing him. The

Page 118

untiring care, self-abnegation, angelic sweetness and serenity of this humble woman gained the attachment of the whole family, and established an ascendancy over Alfred's impressionable imagination. She did not confine her office to her patient's physical welfare, but strove earnestly to minister to him spiritually. His long convalescence "was like a second birth. He did not seem more than seventeen: he had the joyousness of a child, the fancies of a page, like Cherubino in the *Marriage of Figaro*. All the difficulties and subjects of despair which preceded his malady had vanished in a rose-colored distance. He passed his days in reading interminable books—*Clarissa Harlowe*, which he already knew, the *Memorial of St. Helena*, and all the memoirs relating to the Empire. In the evening we all gathered about his writing-table to draw and chat, while Soeur Marcelline sat by knitting in bright worsteds. Auguste Barre, our neighbor, came to work at an album of caricatures in the style of Toeppfer's, and we all amused ourselves with the comic illustrations: Alfred and Barre had the pencil, the rest of us composed a text as absurd as the drawings. Who will give us back those delicious evenings of laughter, jest and chat, when without stirring from home or depending on anything from without our whole household was so happy?" Alas! they were not of long duration. By and by Sister Marcelline went away, leaving her patient a pen on which she had embroidered, "Remember your promises." He was afflicted by her departure, and wrote some lines to her, who, as he said, did not know what poetry meant, but he could never be induced to show them, although he repeated them to Paul and their friend Alfred Tattet, who between them contrived to note down the four following verses:

Poor girl! thou art no longer fair.
By watching Death with patient care
Thou pale as he art grown:
By tending upon human pain
Thy hand is worn as coarse in grain
As horny Labor's own.

But weariness and courage meek
Illuminate thy pallid cheek
Beside the dying bed:
To the poor suffering mortal's clutch
Thy hard hand hath a gentle touch,
With tears and warm blood fed.

* * * * *

Tread to the end thy lonely road,
All for thy task and toward thy God,
Thy footsteps day by day.
That evil must exist, we prate,



And wisely leave it to its fate,
And pass another way;

But thy pure conscience owns it not,
Though ceaseless warfare is thy lot
Against disease and woe;
No ills for thee have power to sting,
Nor to thy lip a murmur bring,

Save those that others know.

De Musset held in peculiar sacredness and reverence whatever was connected with this good woman and his feeling for her: seventeen years after this illness the embroidered pen and a piece of her knitting were buried with him by almost his last request.

Page 119

Seventeen years! a large bit of any one's life—more than a third of Alfred de Musset's own term—yet there is hardly anything to say about it. The "Souvenir," which was written about six months after his recovery, is the last poem in which all his strength, beauty and pathos find expression: he never wrote again in this vein: it was the last echo of his youth. He composed less and less frequently, and though what he wrote was redolent of sentiment, wit, grace and elegance, and some of the short occasional verses have a consummate charm of finish, the soul seems gone out of his poetry. His brother mentions a number of compositions begun, but thrown aside; there were projects of travel never carried out; he gradually gave up the society of even his oldest friends: everything indicated a rapid decline of the active faculties. Unhappily, that of suffering seemed only to increase—no longer the sharp anguish of unspent force which had wrung from him the passionate cries and plaintive murmurs of former years, but the dull numbness of hopelessness. His existence was monotonous, and the few occurrences which varied it were of a sad or unpleasant nature. His sister married and left Paris, and his mother subsequently went to live with her in the country, thus breaking up their family circle; Paul de Musset was absent from France for considerable spaces of time, so that for the first time Alfred de Musset was compelled to live alone. Friends scattered, some died: the Orleans family, for whom he had a real affection, was driven from France; he fancied that his genius was unappreciated—a notion which, strangely enough, his brother shared—and although he was the last man to rage or mope over misapprehension, the idea certainly added to his gloom. Through the good graces of the duke of Orleans he had been appointed librarian of the Home Office, a post of which he was instantly deprived on the change of government; but a few years later he was unexpectedly given a similar one in the Department of Public Education. In 1852 he was elected to the French Academy, that honor so limited by the small number of members, so ridiculed by unsuccessful aspirants, yet without which no French author feels his career to be complete. His plays were being performed with great favor, his poems and tales were becoming more and more popular, his verses were set to music, his stories were illustrated: but all this brought no cheer or consolation to the sick spirit. He lived more and more alone: the Theatre Francais, a silent game of chess at his cafe, the deadly absinthe, were his only sources of excitement. It is a comfort to learn that the last ray of pleasure which penetrated his moral dungeon, reviving for an instant the generous glow of enthusiasm, was the appearance of Ristori: inspired by her, he began a poetical address which he never finished, nor even wrote down, but a fragment of it was preserved orally by one or two who heard it:

For Pauline and Rachel I sang of hope,
And over Malibran a tear I shed;
But, thanks to thee, I see the mighty scope
Of strength and genius wed.



Page 120

Ah keep them long! The heart which breathes the prayer
When genius calls has ever made reply,
Bear smiling home to Italy the fair,
A flower from our sky.

* * * * *

They tell me that in spite of grief and wrong,
And pride bent earthward by a tyrant's heel,
A noble race, though crushed and conquered long,
Has not yet learned to kneel.

Rome's godlike dwellers of a bygone age,
The marble, porphyry, alabaster forms,
Still live: at night, to speech upon the stage,
An ancient statue warms.

* * * * *

What was the cause of De Musset's unhappiness and impotence? His brother tries to account for them by an enumeration of the distresses and annoyances mentioned above, and others of the same order; but when one remembers how the poet's great sorrows, his father's death and the betrayal of his affection by the first woman he really loved, had given him his finest conceptions in verse and prose, it is impossible to accept so insufficient an explanation. Nor can we allow that De Musset sank into a condition of puerile impatience and senile querulousness. Judged by our standard, all the Latin races lack manhood, as we may possibly do by theirs: De Musset was only as much more sensitive than the rest of his countrymen as those of the poetic temperament are usually found to be in all countries. Nor had he seen his talent slowly expire: the spring did not run dry by degrees: it suddenly sank into the ground. He had made a fearful mistake at the outset, which he discovered too late if at all. Considering what life is sure to bring to every one in the way of trial and sorrow, it is not worth while to go in search of emotions and experience which are certain to find us out; nor is it in the slums of life that its meaning is to be sought. He had foretold his own end in the prophetic warning of his Muse:

Quand les dieux irrités m'ôteront ton génie,
Si je tombe des cieux que me répondras-tu?

His light was not lost in a storm-cloud nor eclipse, but in the awful Radnorok, the Goetterdaemmerung, when sun and stars fall from a blank heaven. His health and habits constantly grew worse—he had organic disease of the heart—but his existence dragged on until May 1st, 1857, when an acute attack carried him off after a few days' illness. He died in his brother's arms, and his last words were, "Sleep! at last I shall

sleep.” He had killed himself physically and intellectually as surely as the wages of sin are death.

But let not this be the last word on one so beloved as a poet and a man. Mental qualities alone never endear their possessor to every being that comes into contact with him, and Alfred de Musset was idolized by people who could not even read. There was not a generous or amiable quality in which he was wanting: he had an inextinguishable ardor for genius and greatness in every form; he was tender-hearted to excess, could not endure the sight of suffering, and delighted in giving pleasure; his sympathy was ready and entire, his loyalty of the truest metal. “He never abused anybody,” says his brother, “nor sacrificed an absent person for the sake of a good story.” He loved animals and children, and they loved him in return.



Page 121

He can never cease to be the poet of the many, for he has melody, sentiment, passion, all that charms the popular ear and heart—a personality which is the expression of human nature in a language which, as he himself says, few speak, but all understand. He can never cease to be the poet of the few, because, while his poems are a very concentration and elixir of the most intense and profound feelings of which we are all capable, they give words to the more exquisite and intimate emotions peculiar to those of a keener and more refined susceptibility, of a more exalted and aerial range. Sainte-Beuve says somewhere, though not in his final verdict on De Musset, that his chief merit is having restored to French literature the wit which had been driven out of it by the sentimentalists. His wit is indeed delightful and irresistible, but it is not his magic key to souls. In other countries every generation has its own poet: younger ears are deaf to the music which so long charmed ours; but De Musset will be the poet of each new generation for a certain season—the sweetest of all, because, as has been well said, he is the poet of youth. And if doubt breathes through some of his grandest strophes, Faith finds her first and last profession in the lines—

Une immense esperance a traverse la terre;
Malgre nous vers le ciel il faut lever les yeux.

SARAH B. WISTER.

THE BEE.

What time I paced, at pleasant morn,
A deep and dewy wood,
I heard a mellow hunting-horn
Make dim report of Dian's lustihood
Far down a heavenly hollow.
Mine ear, though fain, had pain to follow:
Tara! it twang'd, *tara-tara!* it blew,
Yet wavered oft, and flew
Most ficklewise about, or here, or there,
A music now from earth and now from air.
But on a sudden, lo!
I marked a blossom shiver to and fro
With dainty inward storm; and there within
A down-drawn trump of yellow jessamine
A bee
Thrust up its sad-gold body lustily,
All in a honey madness hotly bound
On blissful burglary.
A cunning sound
In that wing-music held me: down I lay



In amber shades of many a golden spray,
Where looping low with languid arms the Vine
In wreaths of ravishment did overtwine
Her kneeling Live-Oak, thousand-fold to plight
Herself unto her own true stalwart knight.

As some dim blur of distant music nears
The long-desiring sense, and slowly clears
To forms of time and apprehensive tune,
So, as I lay, full soon
Interpretation throve: the bee's fanfare,
Through sequent films of discourse vague as air,
Passed to plain words, while, fanning faint perfume,
The bee o'erhung a rich unrifled bloom:
"O Earth, fair lordly Blossom, soft a-shine

Page 122

Upon the star-pranked universal vine,
Hast naught for me?
To thee
Come I, a poet, hereward haply blown,
From out another worldflower lately flown.
Wilt ask, *What profit e'er a poet brings?*
He beareth starry stuff about his wings
To pollen thee and sting thee fertile: nay,
If still thou narrow thy contracted way,
—Worldflower, if thou refuse me—
—Worldflower, if thou abuse me,
And hoist thy stamen's spear-point high
To wound my wing and mar mine eye—
Natheless I'll drive me to thy deepest sweet,
Yea, richlier shall that pain the pollen beat
From me to thee, for oft these pollens be
Fine dust from wars that poets wage for thee.
But, O beloved Earthbloom soft a-shine
Upon the universal jessamine,
Prithee abuse me not,
Prithee refuse me not;
Yield, yield the heartsome honey love to me
Hid in thy nectary!"
And as I sank into a suaver dream
The pleading bee-song's burthen sole did seem,
"Hast ne'er a honey-drop of love for me
In thy huge nectary?"

SIDNEY LANIER.

"OUR JOOK."

"Koenigin," said I, as I poked the fire, "what do you think of the people in the house?"

On second thoughts it was not "Koenigin" that I said, for it was only that night that she received the title. It is of no consequence what I did call her, however, for from that time she was never anything but Koenigin to me.

We began to "talk things over," as we had a way of doing; and very good fun it was and quite harmless, provided the ventilator was not open. That had happened once or

twice, and got us into quite serious scrapes. People have such an utterly irrational objection to your amusing yourself in the most innocent way at what they consider their expense.

Koenigin and I had come to the boarding-house that very day. We were by ourselves, for our male protectors were off “a-hunting the wild deer and following the roe”—or its Florida equivalent, whatever that may be—and we did not fancy staying at a hotel under the circumstances. Now, we had taken our observations, and were prepared to pronounce our opinions on our fellow-boarders. One after another was canvassed and dismissed. Mr. A. had eccentric table-manners; Miss B. wriggled and squirmed when she talked; Mrs. C. was much too lavish of inappropriate epithets; Mr. X.’s conversation, on the contrary, was quite bald and bare from the utter lack of those parts of speech; Miss Y. had a nice face, and Mrs. Z. a pretty hand.

Just here Koenigin suddenly burst out laughing. “Really,” she said, “we go about the world criticising people as if we were King Solomon and the queen of Sheba.”

“‘Die Koenigin von Seba,’” said I. “That, I suppose, is you and our motto should be, ‘Wir sind das Volk und die Weisheit stirbt mit uns.’”

I was not at all sure of the accuracy of my translation, but its appropriateness was unquestionable.

Page 123

"What do you think of the Englishman, Koenigin?" I asked, giving the fire another poke, not from shamefacedness, but because it really needed it, for the evening was damp and chilly.

"I like him," said Koenigin decidedly.

Koenigin and I were always prepared with decided opinions, whether we knew anything about the subject in hand or not.

"He has a fine head," Koenigin went on, "quite a ducal contour, according to our republican ideas of what a duke ought to be. I like the steady intense light of his eyes under those straight dark brows, and that little frown only increases the effect. Then his laugh is so frank and boyish. Yes, I like him very much."

"He has a nice gentlemanly voice," I suggested—"rather on the 'gobble-gobble' order, but that is the fault of his English birth."

This is enough of that conversation, for, after all, neither of us is the heroine of this tale. It is well that this should be distinctly understood at the start. Somehow, "the Jook" (as we generally called him, in memory of Jeames Yellowplush) and I became very intimate after that, but it was never anything more than a sort of *camaraderie*. Koenigin knew all about it, and she pronounced it the most remarkable instance of a purely intellectual flirtation which she had ever seen; which was all quite correct, except for the term "flirtation," of which it never had a spice.

One of the Jook's most striking peculiarities, though by no means an uncommon one among his countrymen, was a profound distrust of new acquaintances and an utter incapacity of falling into the free and easy ways which prevail more strongly perhaps in Florida than in any other part of America. There really was some excuse for him, though, for, not to put it too strongly, society is a little mixed in Florida, and it is hard for a foreigner to discriminate closely enough to avoid being drawn into unpleasant complications if he relaxes in the slightest degree his rules of reserve. Besides which, the Jook was a man of the most morbid and ultra refinement. "Refinement" was the word he preferred, but I should have called it an absurd squeamishness. He could make no allowance for personal or local peculiarities, and eccentricities in our neighbors which delighted Koenigin and me and sent us into fits of laughter excited in his mind only the most profound disgust. Therefore, partly in the fear of having his sensibilities unpleasantly jarred upon, partly from the fear of making objectionable acquaintances whom he might afterward be unable to shake off, and partly from an inherent and ineradicable shyness, he went about clad in a mantle of gloomy reserve, speaking to no one, looking at no one—"grand, gloomy and peculiar." It was currently reported that previous to our arrival he had never spoken to a creature in the boarding-house, though he had been an inmate of it for six weeks. For the rest, he was clever and intelligent,

with frank, honest, boyish ways, which I liked, even though they were sometimes rather exasperating.

Page 124

It was not quite pleasant, for instance, to hear him speak of Americans in the frank and unconstrained manner which he adopted when talking to us. We could hardly wonder at it when we looked at the promiscuous crowd which formed his idea of American society. Refined and well-bred people there certainly were, but these were precisely the ones who never forced themselves upon his notice, leaving him to be struck and stunned by fast and hoydenish young ladies, ungrammatical and ill-bred old ones, and men of all shades of boorishness and swagger, such as make themselves conspicuous in every crowd. Unluckily, both Koenigin and I have English blood in our veins, and the Jook could not be convinced that we did not eagerly snatch at the chance thus presented of claiming the title of British subjects. It is quite hopeless to attempt to convince Englishmen that any American would not be British if he could. Pride in American citizenship is an idea utterly monstrous and inconceivable to them, and they can look on the profession of it in no other light than that of a laudable attempt at making the best of a bad case. Therefore, the Jook persisted in ignoring our protestations of patriotic ardor, and in paying us the delicate compliment of considering us English and expressing his views on America with a beautiful frankness which kept us in a frame of mind verging on delirium.

What was to be done with such a man? Clearly, but one thing, and I sighed for one of our American belles who should come and see and conquer this impracticable Englishman. At present, things seemed quite hopeless. There was no one within reach who would have the slightest chance of success in such an undertaking. Though outsiders gave me the credit of his subjugation, I knew quite well that there not only was not, but never could be, the necessary tinge of sentimentality in our intercourse. We were much too free and easy for that, and we laughed and talked, rambled and boated together, "like two babes in the woods," as Koenigin was fond of remarking.

It was in Florida that all this took place—in shabby, fascinating Jacksonville, where one meets everybody and does nothing in particular except lounge about and be happy. So the Jook and I lounged and were happy with a placid, unexciting sort of happiness, until the day when Kitty Grey descended upon us with the suddenness of a meteor, and very like one in her bewildering brightness.

Kitty was by no means pretty, but, though women recognized this fact, the man who could be convinced of it remains yet to be discovered. You might force them to confess that Kitty's nose was flat, her eyes not well shaped, her teeth crooked, her mouth slightly awry, but it always came back to the same point: "Curious that with all these defects she should still be so exquisitely pretty!"

Page 125

Really, I did not so much wonder at it myself sometimes when I saw Kitty's pale cheeks flush with that delicious pink, her wide hazel eyes deepen and glow, her little face light up with elfish mirth, and her round, childish figure poise itself in some coquettish attitude. Then she had such absurd little hands, with short fingers and babyish dimples, such tiny feet, and such a wealth of crinkled dark-brown hair—such bewitching little helpless ways, too, a fashion of throwing herself appealingly on your compassion which no man on earth could resist! At bottom she was a self-reliant, independent little soul, but no mortal man ever found that out: Kitty was far too wise.

Of course, as soon as I saw Kitty I thought of the Jook. Would he or wouldn't he? On the whole, I was rather afraid he wouldn't, for Kitty's laugh sometimes rang out a little too loud, and Kitty's spirits sometimes got the better of her and set her frisking like a kitten, and I was afraid the modest sense of propriety which was one of the Jook's strong points would not survive it. However, I concluded to risk it, but just here a sudden and unforeseen obstacle checked my triumphant course.

"Mr. Warriner," I said sweetly (I was always horribly afraid I should call him Mr. Jook, but I never did), "I want to introduce you to my friend, Miss Grey."

The Jook looked at me with his most placid smile, and replied blandly, "Thank you very much, but *I'd rather not*."

Did any one ever hear of such a man? I understood his reasons well enough, though he did not take the trouble to explain them: it was only exclusiveness gone mad. And he prided himself upon his race and breeding, and considered our American men boors!

After that I nearly gave up his case as hopeless, and devoted myself to Kitty, whom I really believe the Jook did not know by sight after having been for nearly a week in the same house with her.

Kitty once or twice mildly insinuated her desire to know him. "He has such a nice face," she said plaintively, "and such lovely little curly brown whiskers! He is the only man in the house worth looking at, but if I happen to come up when he is talking to you, he instantly disappears. He must think me *very* ugly."

It was really very embarrassing to me, for of course I could not tell her that the Jook had declined the honor of an introduction. I knew, as well as if she had told me so, that Kitty in her secret heart accused me of a mean and selfish desire to keep him all to myself, but I was obliged meekly to endure the obloquy, undeserved as it was. Koenigin used to go into fits of laughter at my dilemma, and just at this period my admiration of the Jook went down to the lowest ebb. "He is a selfish, conceited creature!" I exclaimed in my wrath. "I really believe he thinks that bewitching little Kitty would fall in love with him forthwith if he submitted to an introduction. Oh, I *do* wish he knew what we thought of him! *Why* doesn't he listen outside of ventilators?"

Page 126

"My dear," said Koenigin, still laughing, though sympathetic, "it strikes me that we began by making rather a demi-god of the man, and are ending by stripping him of even the good qualities which he probably does possess."

Well! things went on in this exasperating way for a week or so longer. Of course I washed my hands of the Jook, for I was too much exasperated to be even civil to him. Kitty was as bright and good-natured as ever, ready to enjoy all the little pleasures that came in her way, though now and then I fancied that I detected a stealthy, wistful look at the Jook's impassive face.

It was lovely that day, but fearfully hot. The sun showered down its burning rays upon the white Florida sands, the sky was one arch of cloudless blue, and the water-oaks swung their moss-wreaths languidly over the deserted streets. We had been dreaming and drowsing away the morning, Koenigin, Kitty and I, in the jelly-fish-like state into which one naturally falls in Florida.

Suddenly Kitty sprang to her feet. "I can't stand this any longer," she said: "I shall turn into an oyster if I vegetate here. Please, do you see any shells sprouting on my back yet?"

"What do you want to do?" I asked drowsily. "You can't walk in this heat, and if you go on the river the sun will take the skin off your face, and where are you then, Miss Kitty?"

"I can't help that," retorted Kitty in a tone of desperation. "I don't exactly know where I shall go, but I think in pursuit of some yellow jessamine."

I sat straight up and gazed at her: "Are you mad, Kitty? Has the heat addled your brain already? You would have to walk at least a mile before you could find any; and what's the good of it, after all? It would all be withered before you could get home."

"Can't help that," repeated Kitty: "I shall have had it, at all events. Any way, I'm going, and you two can finish your dreams in peace."

It was useless to argue with Kitty when she was in that mood, so I contented myself with giving her directions for reaching the nearest copse where she would be likely to find the fragrant beauty.

Two hours later Koenigin sat at the window gazing down the long sandy street. Suddenly her face changed, an expression of interest and surprise came into her dreamy eyes: she put up her glass, and then broke into a laugh. "Come and look at this," she exclaimed; and I came.

What I saw was only Kitty and the Jook, but Kitty and the Jook walking side by side in the most amicable manner—Kitty sparkling, bewitching, helpless, appealing by turns or altogether as only she could be; the Jook watching her with an expression of

amusement and delight on his handsome face. And both were laden with great wreaths and trails of yellow jessamine, golden chalices of fragrance, drooping sprays of green glistening leaves, until they looked like walking bowers.

“How on earth—” I exclaimed, and could get no further: my feelings choked me.

Page 127

Kitty came in radiant and smiling as the morning, bearing her treasures. Of course we both pounced upon her: "Kitty, where did you meet the Jook? How did it happen? What did you do?"

"Cows!" said Kitty solemnly, with grave lips and twinkling eyes.

"Cows? Cows in Florida? Kitty, *what* do you mean?"

"A cow ran at me, and I was frightened and ran at Mr. Warriner. He drove the cow off. That's all. Then he walked home with me. Any harm in that?"

"Now, Kitty, the idea! A Florida cow run at you? If you had said a pig, there might be some sense in it, for the pigs here do have some life about them; but a cow! Why, the creatures have not strength enough to stand up: they are all starving by inches."

"Can't help that," said Kitty. "Must have thought I was good to eat, then, I suppose. I thought she was going to toss me, but I don't think it would be much more agreeable to be eaten. Mr. Warriner is my preserver, anyhow, and I shall treat him 'as *sich*.'"

Kitty looked so mischievous and so mutinous that there was evidently no use in trying to get anything more out of her, and after standing there a few minutes fingering her blossoms and smiling to herself, she danced off to dress for tea.

"Selfish little thing, not to offer us one of those lovely sprays!" I exclaimed, but Koenigin laughed: "My dear, they are hallowed. Our touch would profane them."

Koenigin always saw further than I did, and I gasped: "Koenigin! you don't think—"

"Oh no, dear, not yet. Kitty is piqued, and wants to fascinate the Jook a little—just a little as yet, but she may burn her fingers before she gets through. Looks are contagious, and—did you see her face?"

Such a brilliant little figure as slipped softly into the dining-room that evening, all wreathed and twisted and garlanded about with the shining green vines, gemmed with their golden stars. Head and throat and waist and round white arms were all twined with them, and blossoming sprays and knots of the delicately carved blossoms drooped or clung here and there amid her floating hair and gauzy black drapery. How did the child ever make them stick? How had she managed to decorate herself so elaborately in the short time that had elapsed since her return? But Kitty had ways of doing things unknown to duller mortals.

Not a word had Kitty for me that evening, but for her father such clinging, coaxing, wheedling ways, and for the Jook such coy, sparkling, artfully-accidental glances, such shy turns of the little head, such dainty capricious airs, that it was delicious to watch her. Koenigin and I sat in a dark corner for the express purpose of admiring her delicate

little manoeuvres. As for her father, good stolid man! he was well used to Kitty's freaks, and went on reading his newspaper in such a matter-of-fact way that she might as well have wheedled the Pyramid of Cheops. The Jook,

Page 128

however, was all that could be desired. The shyest of men—shy and proud as only an Englishman can be—he could not make up his mind to walk directly up to Kitty, as an American would do, as all the young Americans in the room would have done if Kitty had let them. But Kitty, flighty little butterfly as she seemed, had stores of tact and finesse in that little brain of hers, and the power of developing a fine reserve which had already wilted more than one of the young men of the house. For Kitty was none of your arrant and promiscuous flirts who count “all fish that come to their net.” She was choice and dainty in her flirtations, but, possibly, none the less dangerous for that.

The Jook hovered about the room from chair to sofa, from sofa to window-seat, finding himself at each remove one degree nearer to Kitty.

“He is like a tame canary-bird,” whispered Koenigin. “Let it alone and it will come up to you after a while, but speak to it and you frighten it off at once.”

And when at length he reached Kitty’s side, how beautiful was the look of slight surprise, not *too* strongly marked, and the half-shy pleasure in the eyes which she raised to him; and then the coy little gesture with which she swept aside her draperies and made room for him. Half the power of Kitty’s witcheries lay in her frank, childish manner, just dashed with womanly reserve.

Well! the Jook was thoroughly in the vortex now: there was no doubt about that. Kitty might laugh as loud as she pleased, and he only looked charmed. Kitty might frisk like a will-o’-the wisp, and he only admired her innocent vivacity. Even the bits of slang and the Americanisms which occasionally slipped from her only struck him as original and piquant. How would it all end? That neither Koenigin nor I could divine, for Kitty was not one to wear her heart upon her sleeve. It was very little that we saw of Kitty in these days, for she was always wandering off somewhere, boating on the broad placid river or lounging about “Greenleaf’s” or driving—always with the Jook for cavalier, and, if the excursions were long, with her father to play propriety. When she did come into our room, she was not our own Kitty, with her childish airs and merry laughter. This was a brilliant and volatile little woman of the world, who rattled on in the most amusing manner about everything—except the Jook. About him her lips never opened, and the most distant allusion to him on our part was sufficient to send her fluttering off on some pressing and suddenly remembered errand. Yet this reserve hardly seemed like the shyness of conscious but unacknowledged love. On the contrary, we both fancied—Koenigin and I—that Kitty began to look worried, and somehow, in watching her and the Jook, we began to be conscious that a sort of constraint had crept into her manner toward him. It could be no doubt of his feelings that caused it, for no woman could desire a bolder or more ardent lover than he had developed into, infected, no doubt, by the American atmosphere. Sometimes, too, we caught shy, wistful glances at the Jook from Kitty’s eyes, hastily averted with an almost guilty look if he turned toward her.

Page 129

"What can it mean, Koenigin?" I said. "She looks as if she wanted to confess some sin, and was afraid to."

"Some childish peccadillo," said Koenigin. "In spite of all her woman-of-the-world-ishness the child has a morbidly sensitive conscience, and is troubled about some nonsense that nobody else would think of twice."

"Can it be that she has only been flirting, and is frightened to find how desperately in earnest he is?"

"Possibly," replied Koenigin. "But I fancy that she is too well used to that phase of affairs to let it worry her. Wait a while and we shall see."

We couldn't make anything of it, but even the Jook became worried at last by Kitty's queer behavior, and I suppose he thought he had better settle the matter. For one evening, when I was keeping my room with a headache, I was awakened from a light sleep by a sound of voices on the piazza outside of my window. It was some time before I was sufficiently wide awake to realize that the speakers were Kitty and the Jook, and when I did I was in a dilemma. To let them know that I was there would be to overwhelm them both with confusion and interrupt their conversation at a most interesting point, for the Jook had evidently just made his declaration. It was impossible for me to leave the room, for I was by no means in a costume to make my appearance in the public halls. On the whole, I concluded that the best thing I could do would be to keep still and never, by word or look, to let either of them know of my most involuntary eavesdropping.

Kitty was speaking when I heard them first, talking in a broken, hesitating voice, which was very queer from our bright, fluent little Kitty: "Mr. Warriner, you don't know what a humbug you make me feel when you talk of 'my innocence' and 'unconsciousness' and 'lack of vanity,' and all the rest of it. I have been feeling more and more what a vain, deceitful, hypocritical little wretch I am ever since I knew you. I have been expecting you to find me out every day, and I almost hoped you would."

"What *do* you mean, Miss Grey?" asked the Jook in tones of utter amazement, as well he might.

"Oh dear! how shall I tell you?" sighed poor Kitty; and I could *feel* her blushes burning through her words. Then, with a sudden rush: "Can't you see? I feel as if I had *stolen* your love, for it was all gained under false pretences. You never would have cared for me if you had known what a miserable hypocrite I really was. Why, that very first day I wasn't afraid of the cow—she didn't even look at me—but I saw you coming, and—and—Helen wouldn't introduce you to me—and it just struck me it would be a good chance, and so I rushed up to you and—Oh! what will you think of me?"

“Think?” said the Jook: “why, I think that while ninety-nine women out of a hundred are hypocrites, not one in a thousand has the courage to atone for it by an avowal like yours. Not that it was exactly hypocrisy, either.”

Page 130

The poor blundering Jook! Always saying the most maddening things under the firm conviction that it was the most delicate compliment.

Kitty was too much in earnest to mind it now, though. "Do you know," she went on, "that from the very first day I came into the house I was determined to captivate you?—that every word and every look was directed to that end? I have been nothing but an actress all through. I have done it before, hundreds and hundreds of times, but I never felt the shame of it until now—because—because—"

"Because you never loved any one before? Is that it, Kitty?" said the Jook tenderly.

"Oh, I don't know," said Kitty desperately. "How can I tell? But it's all Helen's fault. If she had introduced you to me in a rational way, I should never have gone on so. But she wouldn't, and I was piqued—"

"I must exonerate Miss Helen," interrupted the Jook. "She wanted to introduce me, and I declined. I am sure I don't know why—English reserve, I suppose. I had not seen you then, you know, and some of the people here are such a queer lot that I rather dreaded new acquaintances."

"Not Helen's fault?" wailed Kitty. "Oh, this is stolen—oh, poor Helen!"

Naturally, the Jook was utterly bewildered, but as for me I sprang up into a sitting posture, for the meaning of Kitty's behavior had just flashed upon me. Absolutely, the poor little goose thought that in accepting the Jook, as she was evidently dying to do, she would be robbing me of my lover. And she never guessed at my own little romance, tucked away safely in the most secret corner of my heart, which put any man save one quite out of the question for me. If I had stopped to think, I suppose I should not have done what I did, but in my surprise the words came out before I thought: "Good gracious, Kitty my dear! do take the Jook if you want him! I don't."

I could not help laughing when I realized what I had done. A little shriek from Kitty and a very British exclamation from the Jook, a slight scuffle of chairs and a sense, rather than sound, of confusion, announced the effect of my words.

I waited for their reply, but dead silence prevailed, so I was obliged to speak again. "You needn't be alarmed," I said, peering cautiously through the chinks in the blinds, for I had approached the window by this time. "I didn't mean to listen, but I couldn't get out of the way, and I never intended to let you or any one else know that I had heard your conversation. I'm awfully sorry that I have disturbed you, but, as I am in for it now, I might as well go on."

There I stopped, for I didn't exactly know what to say, and I hoped that one of them would "give me a lead." I could just catch a glimpse of their faces in the moonlight. The

Jook was staring straight at the window-shutter behind which I lurked, and the wrath and disgust expressed in his handsome features set me off into a silent chuckle. I was sorry for Kitty, though. Her face drooped as if it were weighed down by its own blushes, and the long lashes quivered upon the hot cheeks.

Page 131

“Ah, really, Miss Helen,” spoke the Jook at last, “this is a most unexpected pleasure. Ah, really, you know, I mean—”

It was not very lucid, but it was all I needed, and I replied suavely, “Oh yes, I understand. You never asked me, and never had the faintest idea of doing so. Otherwise, we should not have been such good friends. All I want is to enforce the fact on Kitty’s mind.—And now, Kitty, my dear, if you are quite satisfied on this point, I will dress and go down stairs.—Don’t disturb yourselves, pray!” for both of them showed signs of moving. “You can finish your conversation to much better advantage where you are, and this little excitement has quite cured my headache.”

I wonder how in the world they ever took up the dropped stitches in that conversation? They did it somehow, though, for when they reappeared Kitty was the prettiest possible picture of shy, blushing, shamefaced happiness, while the Jook was fairly beaming with pride and delight. It was a case of true love at last: there was no doubt about that—such love as few would have believed that a flighty little creature like Kitty was capable of feeling. It was wonderful to see how quickly all her little wiles and coquetries fell off under its influence, just as the rosy, fluttering leaves of the spring fall off when the fruit pushes its way. I don’t believe it had ever struck her before that there was anything degrading in this playing fast and loose with men’s hearts which had been her favorite pastime, or in beguiling them by feigning a passion of which she had never felt one thrill. It was not until Love the magician had touched her heart that the honest and loyal little Kitty that lay at the bottom of all her whims and follies was developed. The very sense of unworthiness which she felt in view of the Jook’s straightforward and manly ardor was the surest guarantee for the perfection of her cure.

A truce to moralizing. Kitty does not need it, nor the Jook either. If he is not proud of the bright little American bride he is to take back with him to the “tight little isle” of our forefathers, why, appearances are “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

HENRIETTA H. HOLDICH.

COMMUNISM IN THE UNITED STATES.

Nowhere in the history of the world have we any example of successful communism. The ancient Cretan and Lacedemonian experiments, the efforts of the Essenes and early Christians, the modified communities of St. Anthony and several orders of monks, the schemes of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, together with all the experiments of modern times, have proved essential failures. Setting out with ideas of perfection in the social state, and undertaking nothing less than the entire abolition of the miseries of the world, the communists of all times have lived in a condition the least ideal that can be imagined. The usual course of socialistic communities has been

Page 132

to start out with a great flourish, to quarrel and divide after a few months, and then to decrease and degenerate until a final dispersion by general consent ended the attempt. During the short existence of nearly all such communities the members have lived in want of the ordinary comforts of life, in dispute about their respective rights and duties, at law with retiring members, and battling with the wilds and malarias of the countries in which alone anything like practical communism has been usually possible. The most successful (so far as any of these attempts can be called successful) have been those communities which have been founded on a religion and which have consisted entirely of members of one faith. But all political communism has utterly failed, and the name is little more than a synonym for the most egregious blunders, excesses and crimes of which visionary and impractical people can be guilty.

The United States seem ill suited for the spread of communistic ideas, notwithstanding they contain almost the only socialistic communities to be found anywhere. Though the people are free to live in common if they desire, and although land and every facility are offered on easy terms for the realization of communism—which is not the case in Europe (and which is, therefore, the reason why the New World is chosen for communistic experiments)—yet there is felt no need of communism here. There are neither the political nor the social inducements for it which exist in Europe, and all efforts to excite an enthusiasm on the subject have invariably failed. Almost the only agitators are foreigners, and nearly all the existing communities are composed of foreigners. Of these, two only are political, the Icarian and the Cedar Vale, while the rest are religious.

The Icarian Community in Adams county, Iowa, about two miles from Corning, a station on the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, is the result of an effort to realize the communistic theory of M. Cabet, a French writer and politician of some note. It is perhaps the most just and practical of all communistic systems; for the reader will remember that social systems are as numerous in France as religious systems are in this country, and take much the same place in the passions and bigotries of the people of France, where there is but one religion, as our various sects do here, where there are so many. The system of M. Cabet differs from the others in much the same manner as our religious sects differ from one another; which is not of much importance to the outside world, as they all contain the one principle of a community of goods. M. Cabet first promulgated his system in the shape of a romance entitled *A Voyage to Icaria*, in which he represented the community at work under the most favorable circumstances and in a high degree of prosperity. According to his system, all goods are to be held in common, and all the people are to have an equal voice in the disposal of them. Each is to contribute of labor and capital all that he can for the common good, and to get all that he needs from the common fund. "From each according to his ability—to each according to his wants," is the formula of principles. The practical working of the community will further illustrate the system.

Page 133

In 1848, M. Cabet, with some three thousand of his followers, sailed from France for New Orleans, intending to take up land in Texas or Arkansas on which to establish a community, having the promise that he would soon be followed by ten thousand more of his disciples. After spending several months in reconnoitring, during which half of his followers got discontented and left him, he settled with about fifteen hundred at Nauvoo, Illinois, where they bought out the property of the Mormons, who had recently been driven from that place. There they commenced operations, establishing a saw- and grist-mill, and carrying on farming and several branches of domestic manufacturing. In a little while they sent out a branch colony to Icaria, in Adams county, Iowa, where they purchased, or entered under the Homestead Act, four thousand acres of land. In this place likewise they built a mill and went to farming and carrying on the more simple trades. In a little while, however, a quarrel arose in the principal community at Nauvoo in regard to the use and abuse of power, when, after a rage of passion not unlike that which they had exhibited in the Revolution of 1848 in France, M. Cabet, with a large minority, seceded and went to St. Louis, where they expected to form another and more perfect community. They never formed this community, however, and were soon dispersed. The community at Nauvoo, being now harassed with debts and with lawsuits growing out of the withdrawal of M. Cabet and his party, repaired to their branch colony at Icaria, where they have been ever since. Here they had likewise frequent disputes and withdrawals, often giving rise to lawsuits and a loss of property, until in 1866, when the writer first visited them, they were reduced to thirty-five members. Since that time they have picked up a few members, mostly old companions who had left them for individual life, until now they have about sixty in all. They own at present about two thousand acres of land, of which three hundred and fifty are under cultivation. They have good stock, consisting of about one hundred and twenty head of cattle, five hundred sheep, two hundred and fifty hogs and thirty horses. They still have their saw- and grist-mill, now run by steam, but give most of their time to farming. They preserve the family relation, and observe the strictest rules of chastity. Each family lives in a separate house, but they all eat at a common table. By an economic division of labor one man cooks for all these persons, another bakes, another attends to the dairy, another makes the shoes, another the clothes; and in general one man manages some special work for the whole. No one has any money or need of any. All purchases are made from the common purse, and each gets what he needs. The government is a pure democracy. The officers are chosen once a year by universal (male) suffrage, and consist of a president, secretary (and treasurer), director of agriculture and director of industry. They have no religion, but, like most of the European communists, are free-thinkers. They are highly moral, however, and much esteemed by their neighbors. Some of them are quite learned, and all of them may be pronounced decidedly heroic for the terrible privations they have undergone in order to realize their political principles, to which they are as strongly and sincerely devoted as any Christian to his religion.

Page 134

Such is a sketch of the most perfect system and most successful experiment of political communism in the United States—not very encouraging, it will be confessed. The other example of political communism is the Cedar Vale Community in Howard county, Kansas, which needs only to be mentioned here, as it has as yet no history. It was commenced in 1871, and is composed of Russian materialists and American spiritualists. They have a community of goods like the Icarians, and in general their principles are the same. They had only about a dozen members at last accounts. Another and similar community was established in 1874 in Chesterfield county, Virginia, called the “Social Freedom Community,” its principles being enunciated as a “unity of interest and political, religious and social freedom;” but we cannot discover whether it is yet in existence, as at last accounts it had only two full members and eight probationers. It will be seen from these examples that the prospects of political communism are far from promising. Its principal power has always been as a sentiment, and it can be dreaded only as an appeal to the destitute and lawless to rise in acts of violence. It has been powerful in France in revolutions, riots and mobs, and in this country in aiding the late strikers in their work of destruction.

The other existing communities are founded on some religious basis, being efforts on the part of their founders to secure their religious rights or to live with those of the same faith in closer relations. And although their measures have been similar in many respects to those of the political communists, they have resorted to them not on account of any political principles, but because they believed them to be commanded by Scripture or to grow out of some peculiarity of religious faith or duty. Most of them have been formed after the model of the society of the apostles, who had their goods in common, and because of their example. None, so far as we know, have ever proposed to establish communities by force or to have the whole people embraced in them. Held together by their peculiar religious principles, they have been far more successful (especially when under some shrewd leader whom they believed to have a spiritual authority) than when actuated purely by reason.

Perhaps the most successful of these religious communities is that of the “True Inspirationists,” known as the Amana Community, in Iowa, seventy-eight miles west of Iowa City, on the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. These are all Germans, who came to this country in 1842, and settled at first near Buffalo, New York, on a tract of land called Ebenezer, from which they are sometimes known as “Ebenezers.” This tract comprised five thousand acres of land, including what is now a part of the city of Buffalo. In 1855 they moved to their present locality in Iowa. They pretend to be under direct inspiration, receiving from God the model and general orders for the direction

Page 135

of their community. The present head, both spiritual and temporal, is a woman, a sort of sibyl who negotiates the inspirations. Their business affairs are managed by thirteen trustees, chosen annually by the male members, who also choose the president. They are very religious, though having but little outward form. There are fourteen hundred and fifty members, who live in seven different towns or villages, which are all known by the name of Amana—East Amana, West Amana, *etc.* They have their property for the most part in common. Each family has a house, to which food is daily distributed. The work is done by a prudent division of labor, as in the Icarian community. But instead of providing clothing and incidentals, the community makes to each person an allowance for this purpose—to the men of from forty to one hundred dollars a year, to the women from twenty-five to thirty dollars, and to the children from five to ten dollars. There are public stores in the community at which the members can get all they need besides food, and at which also strangers can deal. They dress very plainly, use simple food, and are quite industrious. They aim to keep the men and women apart as much as possible. They sit apart at the tables and in church, and when divine service is dismissed the men remain in their ranks until the women get out of church and nearly home. In their games and amusements they keep apart, as well as in all combinations whether for business or pleasure. The boys play with boys and the girls with girls. They marry at twenty-four. They own at present twenty-five thousand acres of land, a considerable part of which is under cultivation. They have, in round numbers, three thousand sheep, fifteen hundred head of cattle, two hundred horses and twenty-five hundred hogs. Besides farming, they carry on two woollen-mills, four saw-mills, two grist-mills and a tannery. They are almost entirely self-supporting in the arts, working up their own products and living off the result. In medicine they are homoeopaths.

The “Rappists” or Harmony Society at Economy, Pennsylvania, is composed of about one hundred members, being all that remain of a colony of six hundred who came from Germany in 1803. They were called Separatists or “Come-outers” in their own country, and much persecuted on account of their nonconformity with the established Church. They landed in Baltimore, and some of them who never found their way into the community, or who subsequently withdrew, settled in Maryland and Pennsylvania, where they are still known as a religious sect. Those who remained together purchased five thousand acres of land north of Pittsburg, in the valley of the Conoquennessing. In 1814 they moved to Posey county, Indiana, in the Wabash Valley, where they purchased thirty thousand acres of land, and in 1824 they moved back again to their present locality in Pennsylvania. In 1831 a dissension arose among them, and a division was effected by one Bernard Mueller—or “Count Maximilian” as he called himself—who went off with one-third of the members and a large share of the property, and founded a new community at Phillips, ten miles off, on eight hundred acres of land, which, however, soon disbanded on account of internal quarrels.

Page 136

The peculiarity of this community is that there is no intercourse between the sexes of any kind. In 1807 they gave up marriage. The husbands parted from their wives, and have henceforth lived with them only as sisters. They claim to have authority for this in the words of the apostle: "This I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none," etc. They teach that Adam in his perfect state was bi-sexual and had no need of a female, being in this respect like God; that subsequently, when he fell, the female part (rib, etc.) was separated from him and made into another person, and that when they become perfect through their religion the bi-sexual nature of the soul is restored. Christ, they claim, was also of this dual nature, and therefore never married. They believe that the world will soon come to an end, and that it is their duty to help it along by having no children, and so putting an end to the race as well as the planet.

Their property is all held in common and managed by a council of seven, from whom the trustees are chosen. From four to eight live in each house, men and women together, who regard each other as of the same sex, and are never watched. Each household cooks for itself, although there is a general bakery, from which bread is taken around to the houses as they have need. The members are fond of music and flowers, but they discard dancing. Though Germans, they have ceased to use tobacco; which loss, it is said, the men feel more heavily than that of the wives. They make considerable wine and beer, which they drink in moderation. They are said to be worth from two millions to three millions of dollars, and speculate in mines, oil-wells, saw-mills, etc., doing very little hard work, and hiring laborers from without to take their places in all drudgery. They are engaged principally in farming and the common trades, and supply nearly everything for themselves. They are nearly all aged, none of them being under forty except some adopted children. All are Germans and use the German language.

The Shakers are the oldest society of communists in the United States. The parent society at Mount Lebanon, New York, was established in 1792, being the outgrowth of a religious revival in which there were violent hysterical manifestations or "shakes," from which they took their name. In this revival one Ann Lee, known among them as "Mother Ann," was prominent. This woman, of English birth, emigrated to Niskayuna, New York, about seven miles north-west of Albany, where she pretended to speak from inspiration and work miracles, so that the people soon came to regard her as being another revelation of Christ and as having his authority. Being persecuted by the outside world, her followers, after her death, formed a community in which to live and enjoy their religion alone and: undisturbed. Their principles may be summed up as special revelation, spiritualism,

Page 137

celibacy, oral confession, community, non-resistance, peace, the gift of healing, miracles, physical health and separation from the world. Like the Rappists, they neither marry nor have any substitute for marriage, receiving all their children by adoption. They live in large families or communes, consisting of eighty or ninety members, in one big house, men and women together. Each brother is assigned to a sister, who mends his clothes, looks after his washing, tells him when he needs a new garment, reproves him when not orderly, and has a spiritual oversight over him generally. Though living in the same house, the sexes eat, labor and work apart. They keep apart and in separate ranks in their worship. They do not shake hands with the opposite sex, and there is rarely any scandal or gossip among them, so far as the outside world can learn. There are two orders, known as the Novitiate and the Church order, the latter having intercourse only with their own members in a sort of monkish seclusion, while the others treat with the outside world. The head of a Shaker society is a "ministry," consisting of from three to four persons, male and female. The society is divided into families, as stated above, each family having two elders, one male and one female. In their worship they are drawn up in ranks and go through various gyrations, consisting of processions and dances, during which they continually hold out their hands as if to receive something. The Shakers are industrious, hard-working, economical and cleanly. They dress uniformly. Their houses are all alike. They say "yea" and "nay," although not "thee" and "thou," and call persons by their first names. They confine themselves chiefly to the useful, and use no ornaments. There are at present eighteen societies of Shakers in the United States, scattered throughout seven States. They number in all two thousand four hundred and fifteen persons, and own one hundred thousand acres of land. Their industries are similar to those of the Rappists and True Inspirationists, and are somewhat famed for the excellence of their products. The Shakers are nearly all Americans, like the Oneidans, next mentioned, and unlike all other communistic societies in the United States.

The Perfectionists of Oneida and Wallingford are perhaps the most singular of all communists. They were founded by John Humphrey Noyes, who organized a community at Putney, Vermont, in 1846. In 1848 this was consolidated with others at Oneida in Madison county, New York. In 1849 a branch community was started at Brooklyn, New York, and in 1850 one at Wallingford, Connecticut, all of which have since broken up or been merged in the two communities of Oneida and Wallingford. Their principles are perfectionism, communism and free love. By "perfection" they mean freedom from sin, which they all claim to have, or to seek as practically attainable. They claim, in explaining their sense of this term, that as a man

Page 138

who does not drink is free from intemperance, and one who does not swear is free from profanity, so one who does not sin at all is free from sin, or morally perfect. Their communism is like that of the Icarians, so far as property is concerned, this being owned equally by all for the benefit of all as they severally have need; which state they claim is the state of man after the resurrection. But they have a community not only of goods, but also of wives; or, rather, they have no wives at all, but all women belong to all men, and all men to all women; which they assert to be the state of Nature, and therefore the most perfect state. They call it complex marriage instead of simple, and it is both polygamy and polyandry at the same time. They are enemies of all exclusiveness or selfishness, and hold that there should be no exclusiveness in money or in women or children. Their idea is to be in the most literal sense no respecters of persons. All women and children are the same to all men, and *vice versa*. A man never knows his own children, and the mothers, instead of raising their children themselves, give them over to a common nursery, somewhat after the suggestion of Plato in his *Republic*. If any two persons are suspected of forming special attachments, and so of violating the principle of equal and universal love, or of using their sexual freedom too liberally, they are put under discipline. They are very religious, their religion, however, consisting only in keeping free from sin. They have no sermons, ceremonies, sacraments or religious manifestations whatever. There are no public prayers, and no loud prayers at all. Their method of discipline is called "criticism," and consists in bringing the offender into the presence of a committee of men and women, who each pass their criticisms on him and allow him to confess or criticise himself. The least sign of worldliness or evidence of impropriety is enough to subject one to this ordeal. They are very careful about whom they admit to their community, as there are numerous rakes and idlers who make application on the supposition that it is a harem or Turkish paradise. None are admitted who are not imbued with their doctrine of perfection, and who do not show evidences of it in their lives. In a business point of view, they are comparatively successful, the original members having contributed over one hundred thousand dollars' worth of property, which has not depreciated. They engage in farming, wine-raising and various industries, and are known in the general markets for their products.

The Separatists at Zoar, Ohio, about halfway between Cleveland and Pittsburg, are a body of Germans who fled from Wuertemberg in 1817 to escape religious persecution. They are mystics, followers of Jacob Boehm, Gerhard, Terstegen, Jung Stilling and others of that class, and considerably above the average of communists in intellect and culture. They were aided to emigrate to this country by some English

Page 139

Quakers, with whom there is a resemblance in some of their tenets. They purchased fifty-six hundred acres of land in Ohio, but did not at first intend to form a community, having been driven to that resort subsequently in order to the better realization of their religious principles. They now own over seven thousand acres of land in Ohio, besides some in Iowa. They have a woollen-factory, two flour-mills, a saw-mill, a planing-mill, a machine-shop, a tannery and a dye-house; also a hotel and store for the accommodation of their neighbors. They are industrious, simple in their dress and food, and very economical. They use neither tobacco nor pork, and are homoeopathists in medicine. In religion they are orthodox, with the usual latitude of mystics. They have no ceremonies, say "thou" and "thee," take off their hats and bow to nobody except God, refuse to fight or go to law, and settle their disputes by arbitration. At first they prohibited marriage and had their women in common, like the Perfectionists. In 1828, however, they commenced to break their rules and take wives. Now they observe the marriage state. Their officers are elected by the whole society, the women voting as well as the men.

The Bethel and Aurora communities—the former in Shelby county, Missouri, forty-eight miles from Hannibal, and the latter in Oregon, twenty-nine miles south of Portland, on the Oregon and California Railroad—were founded in 1848 by Dr. Kiel, a Prussian mystic, who practised medicine a while in New York and Pittsburg, and subsequently formed a religious sect of which these communists are members. He was subsequently joined by some of "Count Maximilian's" people, who had left Rapp's colony at Economy, which this closely resembles except as to celibacy. He first founded the colony in Missouri, where he took up two thousand five hundred and sixty acres of land, and established the usual trades needed by farmers. In 1847 there were the inevitable quarrel and division. In 1855 he set out to establish a similar community on the Pacific coast. The first settlement was made at Shoalwater Bay, Washington Territory, which was, however, subsequently abandoned for the present one at Aurora. There are now about four hundred members at Aurora, who own eighteen thousand acres of land, and have the usual shops and occupations of communists mentioned above, carrying on a considerable trade with their neighbors. The members of both communities are all either Germans or Pennsylvania Dutch, and thrive by the industry and economy peculiar to those people. Their government is parental, intended to be like God's. Kiel is the temporal and spiritual head. Their religion consists in practical benevolence, the forms of worship being Lutheran. They are thought to be exceedingly wealthy, but if their property were divided among them there would be less than three thousand dollars to each family, which, though more than the property of most other communities would average, is but small savings for twenty years. They preserve the usual family relations.

Page 140

The Bishop Hill Community, in Henry county, Illinois, was formed by a party of Swedes who came to this country in 1846 under Eric Janson, who had been their religious leader in the Old World, where they were greatly persecuted on account of their peculiar religious views. They suffered great hardships in effecting a first settlement, some of them going off, in the interest of the community, to dig gold in California, and others taking to stock-raising and speculating. In this they were quite successful, so that jobs and speculations became the peculiar work of this community. They took various public and private contracts; among others, one to grade a large portion of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad and to build some of its bridges. In 1859 they owned ten thousand acres of good land, and had the finest cattle in the State. In 1859, however, the young people became discontented and wished to dissolve the community. They divided the property in 1860, when one faction continued the community with its share. In 1861 this party also broke up, separating into three divisions. In 1862 these again divided the property after numerous lawsuits. A small fraction, I believe, still continues a community on the ruins. In this community the families lived separately, but ate all together. They had no president or single head, the business being transacted by a board of trustees. Their religion was their principal concern.

Such are the strictly communistic societies in the United States. It will be seen that they are each of such very peculiar views that they are specially fitted by their very oddity for a life in common, and specially disqualified from the same cause to extend or embrace others; for while their community of oddity makes them, by a necessarily strong sympathy, fit associates to be together, it separates them by an impassable gulf from the appreciation and sympathy of the rest of mankind, who are interested only in the ordinary common-sense concerns of life.

Besides these, there are several other colonies which, though not communistic, have grown out of an attempt to solve some of the questions raised by socialism. They are for the most part co-operative. The following are the principal: The Anaheim colony in California, thirty-six miles from Los Angeles, which was formed by a large number of Germans in 1857, who banded together and purchased a large tract of land, on which they successfully cultivate the vine in large quantities. The property is held and worked all together, but the interests are separate, and will be divided in due time. Vineland, New Jersey, on the railroad between Philadelphia and Cape May, is another. It was purchased and laid out by Charles K. Landis in 1861 as a private speculation, and to draw the overcrowded population of Philadelphia into the country, where the people could all have comfortable homes and support themselves by their own labor. Some fifty thousand acres of land were purchased, and sold

Page 141

at a low rate and on long time to actual settlers and improvers. As a result, some twelve thousand people have been drawn thither, who cultivate all this tract and work numerous industries besides. No liquors are allowed to be sold in the place, so that the population is exceptionally moral as well as industrious, and offers a model example of low rates and good government. A successful colony exists also at Prairie Home in Franklin county, Kansas, which was founded by a Frenchman, Monsieur E.V. Boissiere. It is designed to be an association and co-operation based on attractive industry; a large number of persons contributing their capital and labor under stringent laws, the proceeds to be divided among them whenever a majority shall so desire. I might mention other associations of this kind, which are, in fact, however, only a variety of partnership or corporation.

It strikes me, however, that this is the only practical remedy for the evils which are aimed at by the communists, as far as they are remedial by social means. If a number of working people, with the capital which their small savings will amount to (which is always large enough for any ordinary business if there be any considerable number of them), can be induced to organize themselves under competent leaders, and work for a few years together as faithfully as they ordinarily do for employers, they might realize considerable results, and get the advantage of their own work instead of enriching capitalists. But the difficulty is, that this class have not, as a rule, learned either to manage great enterprises or to submit to those who are wisest among them, but break up in disorder and divisions when their individual preferences are crossed. The first lesson that a man must learn who proposes to do anything in common with others (and the more so if there be many of them) is to submit and forbear. With a little schooling our people ought, to a greater extent than at present, to be able to co-operate in large numbers in firms and corporations where the members and stockholders shall themselves do all the work and receive all the profits, and so avoid the two extremes of making profits for capitalists and paying their earnings to officers and directors.

AUSTIN BIERBOWER.

OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.

NOTES FROM MOSCOW.

JUNE 1 (May 20, Russian style), 1877.

This diversity in the matter of dates is unpleasantly perplexing at times. With every sensation of interest and pleasure I set myself about the task of describing, I must at once begin to reckon. Twelve days' difference! Yes, I have already grasped that fact, but then in which direction must the deduction begin?—backward or forward? Such is

the question that instantly arises, and if we are at the fag end of one month and the beginning of another, the amount of reckoning involved seems somewhat inadequate to the occasion. The Russian clergy, it is said—those, at any rate, of the lowest class, designated as “white priests,” many of them peasants by birth and marvellously illiterate—have ever been averse to any change being made in the calendar, in order that their seasons of fasting and feasting may not be disturbed.

Page 142

Apropos of priests and priesthood. Whilst quietly at work yesterday morning my attention was suddenly called off, first by a hurried exclamation, and then the inharmonious—ah, how utterly discordant!—ding-donging of church-bells. “Listen!” fell upon my ear: “one of the secular priests belonging to St. Gregory’s church died two days ago, and is to be buried this morning. They are still saying masses over his body, the church is packed, and it is a sight such as you may possibly not have an opportunity of again witnessing.” In half an hour we were within the church-walls. The place was already thronged, and the air close almost to suffocation. Never can one forget that peculiar heat, the sort of indescribable vapor, that arose, and the perspiration that streamed down the faces of all present, each of whom, from the oldest to the youngest, carried a lighted candle. After many vigorous efforts, and occasional collisions with the flaring tapers, the wax or tallow dropping at intervals upon our cloaks, we found ourselves at last in the centre of the edifice, immediately behind a dozen or more officiating priests clad in magnificent robes, before whom lay their late confrere reposing in his coffin, and dressed, according to custom, in his ecclesiastical robes. Tall lighted candles draped with crape surrounded him, and the solemn chant had been going on around him ever since life had become extinct. The dead in Russia are never left alone or in the dark. Relays of singing priests take the places of those who are weary, and friends keep watch in an adjoining room. The Russian temperament inclines to the strongest manifestation of the inmost feelings, and the method here of mourning for the dead is exceptionally demonstrative. The corpse of the old priest lay surrounded by what was of bright colors or purest white, the coffin being of the last-mentioned hue. Black was utterly proscribed. The face and hands were half buried in a lacy texture, whilst on the brow was placed a label, “fillet-fashion,” on which was written “The Thrice Holy,” or *Trisagion*—“O Holy God! O Holy Mighty! O Holy Immortal! have mercy upon us!”

Chant after chant ascended for the repose of his soul. The deacon’s deep bass voice rose ever and anon in leading fashion, the other voices following suit. There was of course no instrumental music. This Russian singing is curiously unique—of a character wholly different from any heard elsewhere. It is weird in the extreme, and, if the expression be permissible, gypsy-like. The deacons’ voices are of wonderful capability, the popular belief being that they are specially chosen on account of this peculiar power. At last there came a pause. Not only the priests’ and deacons’ voices, but those of the chanting men and boys—alike unsurpliced and uncassocked, lacking, therefore, much of the attraction offered by a service in the Western Catholic Church—had all at once ceased to be heard. All were now pressing forward to kiss

Page 143

the dead priest—his fellow-priests first, and then, duly in order, all his relations and friends. “The last kiss” it is termed—a practice, it would seem, derived from the heathen custom, of which we find such frequent mention. None, if possible, omit the performance of this duty, all seeking to obtain the blessing or benefit, supposed to be thereby conferred. Some, however, are obliged to content themselves with merely kissing the corners of the coffin.

Many of the numerous *stichera*, as they are termed—poetically-worded prose effusions—made use of in the course of the service are curiously quaint. I quote two or three, of which I have since procured a translation: “Come, my brethren, let us give our last kiss, our last farewell, to our deceased brother. He hath now forsaken his kindred and approacheth the grave, no longer mindful of vanity or the cares of the world. Where are now his kindred and friends? Behold, we are now separated! Approach! embrace him who lately was one of yourselves.”—“Where now is the graceful form? Where is youth? Where is the brightness of the eye? where the beauty of the complexion? Closed are the eyes, the feet bound, the hands at rest: extinct is the sense of hearing, and the tongue locked up in silence.”

The words succeeding these are supposed to emanate from the lips of the dead, lying mute before the eyes of all present: “Brethren, friends, kinsmen and acquaintance, view me here lying speechless, breathless, and lament. But yesterday we conversed together. Come near, all who are bound to me by affection, and with a last embrace pronounce the last farewell. No longer shall I sojourn among you, no longer bear part in your discourse. Pray earnestly that I be received into the Light of life.”

The absolution having been pronounced by the priest, a paper is placed in the dead man’s hand—“The Prayer, Hope and Confession of a faithful Christian soul.” This is accompanied by another prayer containing the written words of absolution. This custom has given rise to the belief in the minds of many foreigners that such missives are presented in the light of passports to a better world; but the idea seems to be as erroneous as it is absurd. Moreover, I believe that, strictly speaking, the custom is one of national origin, and that the Church has had nothing to do with its adoption.

All the lighted tapers having been taken away by one of the attendants, the coffin with its gilded ornaments was removed slowly from its resting-place, and placed upon an enormous open bier or hearse, extensively mounted and heavily ornamented with white watered silk, purple and gilt draperies, a gilt crown surmounting all. The base of the ponderous vehicle was alone permitted to boast a fringe of deep black cloth—as if, however, for the sole purpose of hiding the wheels. The six horses, three abreast, were also enveloped in black cloth drapery touching the ground on either

Page 144

side. Right and left of the coffin itself, and mounted therefore considerably aloft, stood two yellow *stoicharioned* (or robed) deacons, wearing the *epimanikia* and *orarion*—the former being a portion of the priestly dress used for covering the arms, and signifying the thongs with which the hands of Christ were bound; the latter a stole worn over the left shoulder. The head of each deacon was adorned with long waving hair, and each carried a censer in his hand. They faced each other, keeping watch together over the dead. A procession of priests, duly robed, began to move, preceded by censer-bearers and singing men and boys.

The point whence the procession started—Mala Greuzin, situated at the extreme east end of Moscow—lay several miles away from the cemetery for which they were all *en route*; and this veritably ancient Asiatic city had to be traversed at an angle in this solemn fashion, seventy or eighty carriages following. From the beginning to the end of the prescribed route Muscovites lined the road on either side, and it is fair to add that I never beheld more respect shown even to royalty itself. All was quietness, the general expression of sympathy and respect being permitted to find vent only in excessive gesticulation and genuflection. Not a head remained covered, not a single person by whom the procession passed permitted it to do so without crossing himself several times from forehead to chest and from shoulder to shoulder.

At the first church which the procession reached, the bells of which had begun to toll—clash rather—long before it came in sight, the entire party halted. A bell was rung by one of those in advance, and then all waited. The priests and their various acolytes clustered reverently by the hearse, the followers and spectators standing at a respectful distance, but nevertheless taking part in the service. After first incensing the hearse, themselves and all around, further prayers were said and chanted: then a signal was given and all moved on again, only, however, to again pause on the route, for at every church we passed—and we must have encountered at least thirty or forty, if not more, seeing that such sacred edifices rise upon one's view in Moscow at wellnigh every three or four minutes' space—the ceremony was repeated. No sooner had one set of bells ceased to sound in our ears than another took its place, and again all halted, and then again all marched onward. Every window as the cortege passed along was thrown open, and figures bent forward ever and anon, enacting their wonted part in the pageant. And the pageant, be it remembered, was, after all, only one of frequent occurrence.

Page 145

Only the week before I had had the privilege of watching this identical old priest baptize the child of one of the most ancient nobles here, the ceremony being performed not in a church, but at the nobleman's house. One godfather and one godmother are all that are required, the latter of whom holds the infant. On the godmother also a large share of duty devolves, there being certain gifts which she is bound by national custom to offer for acceptance on the occasion. Often, therefore, the duty of selecting a female sponsor becomes a somewhat invidious one. A handsome dress to the mother, no matter in what rank of life; a delicate lace cap to the main object of the occasion; a lace chemise for the same highly-honored small individual; and an elaborate silk pocket handkerchief to the officiating priest,—these, when of the best quality, and they are invariably so, mount up somewhat as regards price, seeing that everything is marvellously dear here in the matter of dress. The godfather, standing immediately in front of the large font brought specially for the purpose from the adjacent church, and at the right hand of his fellow-sponsor, simply presents a small golden cross, to be worn, it is supposed, ever afterward. Immediately behind the font, and facing the entire audience—for a large circle of friends had been invited to witness the ceremony—was placed the “holy picture” of the household, without which in Russia no homestead, whether belonging to rich or poor, is considered complete, and before which a lighted oil lamp ever stands burning—a “picture of God,” as the Russian children are taught from their earliest years to call it. Before this the priests bowed on entering.

The mode of baptism was immersion, after several exorcisms had been read and the priest had thrice blown in the infant's face, signing him, also thrice, on the forehead and breast. Three tall lighted candles were affixed to the font, and others were held by the god-parents, except when they marched round the font in procession three times during “the chrism,” when the candles were laid down. The chrism consists in anointing the infant's forehead, breast, shoulders and middle of the back with holy oil, after which comes the service, when the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, hands and feet are again anointed, but this time with the holy unction prepared once a year, on Monday in Holy Week, within the walls of the Kremlin, and consecrated by the metropolitan in the cathedral of the Annunciation on Holy Thursday. Then comes the concluding act, when the priest cuts off a small portion of the child's hair in four different places on the crown of the head, encloses it in a morsel of wax and throws it into the font, as a sort of first-fruits of that which has been consecrated.

S.E.

A DAY AT THE PARIS CONSERVATOIRE.

Page 146

It was ten o'clock in the morning when we drove up to the door of the world-famous institution, but, early as it was, an animated throng already filled the wide marble-paved entrance-hall—former pupils in elegant attire; girl aspirants for future honors, accompanied by the inevitable mamma with the invariable little hand-bag; young men and old; celebrated dramatists and well-known actors, visitors, critics, *etc.*—all passing to and fro or engaged in conversation while awaiting the hour for taking their seats. Passing through these, we ascend a narrow staircase that gives one good hopes of a martyr's death should the theatre chance to catch fire, and we instal ourselves in a narrow and by no means comfortable box in the dress-circle. The theatre of the Conservatoire, though not very large, is very elegantly and artistically decorated in the Pompeian style, the stage being set with a single "box scene," as it is technically called, which is never changed, as plays are never acted there. Here take place the far-famed concerts du Conservatoire, for which tickets are as hard to obtain as are invitations to the entertainments of a duchess, all the seats being owned by private individuals. But what we are now here to witness is the competition in dramatic declamation, tragic and comic. The jury occupy a box in the centre of the dress-circle and opposite to the stage. This terrifying tribunal is enough to try the nerves of the stoutest aspirant for dramatic honors, comprising as it does among its members such powers in the land as Legouve, Camilla-Doucet, Alexandre Dumas, the directors of the Comedie Francaise and the Odeon, and the great actors Got and Delaunay. An elderly gentleman comes forward on the stage and reads from a printed paper the name of each competitor and those of his or her assistants, and that of the play from which the scene that is to be represented is chosen. Each pupil selects a scene, and the persons who in French technical parlance are to "give the reply" (*i.e.* to take the other characters in the scene) are chosen from among the ranks of the pupil's fellow-competitors. Lots are drawn to decide the place that each one is to occupy on the programme, the first place and the last being considered the least desirable. Printed bills are distributed among the audience giving a list of the competitors, with the names of the plays from which they have chosen scenes, and (horrible innovation for the lady pupils!) the age of each one as well.

The competition is opened by M. Levanz, a young man of thirty, who took a second prize last year, and who has chosen the closet-scene from *Hamlet* (the translation of the elder Dumas) as his *cheval de bataille*. He has a marked Germanic countenance, decidedly the reverse of handsome, yet mobile and expressive: his voice is good, his figure tall and manly. He has evidently seen Rossi in *Hamlet*, and models his conception of the character on that grand impersonation. Next comes M. Bregaint in

Page 147

a scene from *Andromaque*: he is so bad, so very bad, that the audience are moved to sudden outbursts of hilarity by his grand tragic points. He is succeeded by a boy of sixteen, tall and graceful, with a fine tragic face of the heroic Kemble mould, and great blue-gray eyes that dilate or contract beneath the impulses of the moment—a born actor from head to foot. He fairly thrills the audience in the great scene of the duke de Nemours from *Louis XI*. This youth, M. Guitry, is undoubtedly, if his life be spared, the coming tragedian of the French stage. Then we have the first one of the lady competitors, Mademoiselle Edet, a tall, awkward girl of eighteen, with a flat face and Chinese-like features, dressed up in a gown of cream-yellow foulard trimmed with wide fringe and made with a loose jacket, whereon the fringes wave wildly in the air as she flings her arms around in the tragic love-making of *Phedre*. Two or three others of moderate merit succeed, and then comes Mademoiselle Jullien, who gives the great scene of Roxane in *Bajazet* with so much intelligence of intonation and grace of gesture that the audience are moved to sudden applause. She is rather too short and of too delicate a physique for tragedy, but her face is expressive, her eyes fine, and there are intellect and talent in every tone and movement. She is nearly twenty-nine years of age, so has not much time to waste if she is to make her mark in her profession. Last on the list of tragic aspirants comes a gentleman of thirty-one, M. Aubert, who goes through a scene from *Hamlet* in a very tolerable manner. He was in the army, was doing well and was rising in grade when, seized by the theatrical mania, he relinquished his profession and turned his attention to the stage. Thus far, he has proved, practically speaking, a failure: he has won no prizes, and no manager will engage him. This is his last chance, as his age will prevent him, by the rules of the Conservatoire, from taking part in any future competition.

The tragedy concours ended, a recess of an hour is proclaimed, and there is a rush to the refreshment-tables and a great consumption of sandwiches and cakes, of coffee and water (known as “mazagran”) and of *vin ordinaire*. Under that vestibule pass and repass the literary luminaries of modern France. Here is Henri de Bornier, the author of *La Fille de Roland*, a quiet, earnest-looking gentleman, with clear luminous eyes and the smallest hands imaginable. Here comes Francisque Sarcey, the greatest dramatic critic of France and one of the most noted of her Republican journalists, broad-shouldered, black-eyed and stalwart-looking. Yonder stand a group of Academicians—Legouvé, Doucet, Dumas—in earnest conversation with Edouard Thierry, the librarian of the Arsenal. The handsome, delicate, aristocratic-looking gentleman who joins the group is M. Perrin, the director of the Comedie Francaise, the most accomplished and intelligent theatrical

Page 148

manager in France. There is an elderly, reserved-looking gentleman beside him who looks like a solemn *savant* out on a holiday. It takes more than one glance for us to recognize in him the most accomplished light comedian of our day, that embodiment of grace, vivacity, sparkling wit and unfading youth, who is known to the boards of the Comedie Francaise by the name of Delaunay. There are other minor luminaries, too numerous to mention.

We go up stairs and resume our seats, and the competition of comedy is begun. Scene succeeds to scene and competitor to competitor: the day wears on, and flitting clouds from time to time obscure the dome, bringing out the glare of the footlights that have been burning all day in a singularly effective manner. Of the nineteen competitors, the deepest impression is made by M. Barral, who plays a scene from *L'Avare* magnificently; by Mademoiselle Carriere, who reveals herself as a sparkling and intelligent soubrette; and by Mademoiselle Sisos, a genuine *comedienne*, only sixteen years of age and as pretty as a peach. It is six o'clock when the last competitor has said his say, and then the jury retire to deliberate respecting the awards. What a flutter there must be among the young things whose future destiny is now swaying in the balance, for success means fortune, and failure a disheartening postponement, and to the elder ones downright and disastrous ruin of all their hopes! Half an hour passes, and then, after what seems a weary period of suspense, the box-door is thrown open and the jury resume their seats. Ambroise Thomas, the president of the Conservatoire, strikes his bell and a dead silence ensues. In a full sonorous voice he begins: "Concours of tragedy, men's class. No prizes.—Usher, summon M. Guitry." The gifted boy comes forward to the footlights. "M. Guitry, the jury have awarded to you a *premier accessit*." He bows and retires amid the hearty applause of the audience. "Women's class.—Usher, call Mademoiselle Jullien." She comes out pale and agitated, the slight form quivering like a wind-swept flower in her robes of creamy cashmere. Is it the Odeon that awaits her—the second prize? for in her modesty she had only hoped for a *premier accessit*. "Mademoiselle Jullien, the jury have awarded to you the first prize." The first prize! Those words mean to her an assured career, a brilliant future, the doors of the Comedie Francaise flung wide open to receive her. She falters, trembles, bows profoundly, and goes off in a very passion of hysterical weeping. Then come the comedy awards. M. Barral gets a first prize, as is his just due, as does also Mademoiselle Carriere. "Usher, call Mademoiselle Sisos." She comes forward, her great brown eyes dilated with excitement, her cheeks burning like two red roses, a mass of faded white roses clinging amid the rumpled gold of her hair—a very bewitching picture of childish grace and beauty. "Mademoiselle

Page 149

Sisos, the jury have awarded to you a second prize.” She laughs and blushes, and brings her hands together with a childlike gesture of delight. “Oh, merci!” she cries, and drops a courtesy, and then away she goes—happy little creature, thus consecrated artiste at sixteen! The other awards are given, the jury leave their box, and the audience disperse. The friends of the competitors crowd around the stage-door, and each of the successful ones is seized by the hand and congratulated and embraced, the youthful Guitry being especially surrounded. Two or three more years of study will land this gifted boy on the boards of the Comedie Francaise. The queen of the day, Mademoiselle Jullien, has stolen away overcome by excess of emotion, which, though joyful, is still exhausting to her delicate frame. Finally, everybody retires, the doors are closed, and the long, exciting *seance* has come to an end at last.

L.H.H.

BRIGHAM YOUNG AND MORMONISM.

Brigham Young’s career is a valuable commentary on that of Mohammed, and will hereafter be a standard citation with explorers of the natural history of religions. It might be more proper to go back of Young, and adhere to Joe Smith as the figure-head of the Mormon dispensation. How Smith would have turned out had he lived, and whether he would have made as much of Utah as the man upon whose shoulders his mantle fell, is not easy to say; but his was a less robust character, the enthusiast in him too far obscuring the organizer and commander. The Church is the thing to look at, rather than its leaders, when we consider duration—the soil rather than the plough. Why has Mohammed’s creation lasted longer and spread wider than that of Charlemagne or Tamerlane? And is Smith’s to have the like fortune, or to die out like those of Muenster and Joanna Southcote?

The Mormon “revelation” has been before the world more than forty years. In twenty-two years from his first vision Mohammed had reduced all Arabia under his religious and political sway. Young’s dominions have not expanded territorially. His faith cannot be said to exist outside of Utah. His converts are compelled to go thither for the exercise of their religion. Salt Lake City is not a Mecca, the goal of a passing pilgrimage, but the one and only possible abiding-place of those who profess its creed. A system thus localized is in danger of being stifled. Especially is this the case when its seat is exposed to invasion by a swelling current of non-sympathizers or open enemies. These may be repelled or prevented from improving their foothold by the firmness, unity and numerical predominance of the invaded. So it has happened at Salt Lake. The Mormons hold all the serviceable soil, and it is difficult for the “Gentiles” to effect a lodgment. Until they do, they must occupy, even in their own eyes, somewhat the position of adventurers. They cannot hope to secure the respect of the industrious

sectaries who own and till the soil, and who are taught to count them aliens and persecutors. Irrigation is here the only means of successful agriculture. It involves great outlay of capital and labor, and creates great fixedness of tenure. Newcomers are thus additionally discouraged.

Page 150

Thus entrenched in a well-provisioned citadel, welcoming all the new levies it can win, and amply able to provide for them, Mormonism bids fair to make a prolonged stand. To emerge from a defensive position and strike for unlimited sway is what it cannot, to judge by all precedents, expect. It will be compelled, in fact, to lighten itself of some dead weights in order to maintain its actual situation. Polygamy must go, and the absolute power of the priesthood be modified. With some such adaptations it may continue a reality for generations to come. And time is a great sanctifier. A creed that lives for one or two centuries is by so much the more likely to live longer. Youth is the critical period with religions, as with animals and plants and nations. Through that period Mormonism is passing with flattering success. That such a lusty juvenile will, by favor of the mellowing effect imposed on all creeds by early years of toil, trouble and experience, reach a middle age of presentable decency, is not a more unlikely supposition than the worthy Vermont clergyman would have pronounced, half a century ago, the idea that his *jeu d'esprit* would become the Bible of sixty thousand industrious, well-ordered English-speaking people in the heart of the American continent.

E.C.B.

THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA.

According to a report sent to our Commissioner of Education at Washington four years ago, there were then in India one thousand girls' schools supported by the government and some five hundred missionary schools devoted to female education. Besides these, there has sprung up during the last few years a new field for the women-educators in that country. This is the teaching of women in their homes. It is called *zenana-work*. The *zenana* is the women's apartment in the house—the *harem* of the Turks. Women have been sent from England and from America for this special object, and their labors are meeting with encouraging success. They are constantly gaining admission to new families, which from caste or other causes are opposed to sending their young women to the regular schools. Some of the *zenana*-teachers are regularly-educated physicians.

For the government schools each province has a director of public instruction, with inspectors of divisions and subdivisions. These directors are "gentlemen of high qualification and well paid." It is a notable fact that in one of the provinces the office of director is filled by a Christian woman—a foreigner no doubt, though the report does not say.

At Dehra, at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains, there is a high school for girls organized on the plan of the Mount Holyoke Seminary. Here English is spoken, and the pupils are carried through a course of training that may justly be termed *high*. One of the pupils of this school has lately been appointed by the government to go to England and qualify herself as a physician, under a contract to return and serve the government

by taking charge of a hospital and college for training young women as midwives and nurses.

Page 151

Of course, in a country containing a population of over one hundred and fifty-one millions, one thousand public schools for girls, supplemented as these are by missionary schools of many denominations, are inadequate to meet the needs of the people. There is an increasing demand in all the provinces for schools and colleges; and the native young men especially are eagerly seeking the educational advantages of the colleges and universities, because they know that these are a sure road to preferment. "The government takes care to give employment to those who wish it."

The difficulties in the way of female education in India are well expressed in a late letter from one of the most distinguished native reformers, Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen of Calcutta. "No words of mine," he says, "would convey to you an adequate idea of the great obstacles which the social and religious condition of the Hindoo community presents in the way of female education and advancement. In a country where superstition and caste prejudices prevail to an alarming extent, where widows are cruelly persecuted and prevented from remarrying, where high-caste Hindoos are allowed to marry as many wives as they like without undertaking the responsibility of protecting them, and where little girls marry at a most tender age and sacrifice all prospects of healthy physical and mental development, it will take centuries before any solid and extensive reform is achieved."

Until recently, scarcely one woman in ten thousand learned to read or acquired any of the accomplishments common to women of Christian countries. Occasionally, women of vicious lives in cities, having leisure, became quite learned, and this made learning a shame for women of irreproachable reputation. Moreover, Hindoo husbands declared, and believed, that if you taught a woman to read she would be sure in time to have illicit relations with some one. Ignorance was innocence, the safeguard of both rank and chastity.

The missionaries, who were the first to attempt the amelioration of the people, had to commence with the lowest castes or classes, those having nothing to lose; and even then the teachers had to pay the girls a small copper coin daily for attending school. Even the government schools in some places pay the girls for attending, but they are much more popular than the missionary schools, because, according to the Rev. Joseph Warren in the report mentioned, the parents are not afraid that their girls will become Christians by attending them; and he adds that the government teachers and books are "all positively heathen or quite destitute of all religion." In some parts of the country the government schools secure the attendance of high-caste girls by allowing them to be placed behind a curtain, and thus screened from the eyes of the male teacher or inspector, as all the women of such classes are screened from male visitors. Even the physician sees only a hand protruded from under a curtain, and by the touch of this, with a few unsatisfactory answers to his questions, he is supposed to be able to know what the malady is, and how to prescribe for it.

Page 152

M.H.

LITERATURE OF THE DAY.

Birds and Poets: with other Papers. By John Burroughs. New York: Hurd & Houghton.

A duodecimo that discourses on equal terms of Emerson and the chickadee, and unites Carlyle and the author's cow with a cement or filling-in indescribable in variety and in the comminution of materials, need not be held to strict account in the matter of neatness or accuracy of title. The closing article, headed "The Flight of the Eagle," is the most remarkable of the collection. Who would suspect, under such a heading, an elaborate eulogy of Walt Whitman? The writer is obviously more at home among the song-birds than among the Raptore, unless he be the discoverer of some new species of eagle characterized by traits very unlike those of other members of the genus. It were to be wished that he had left out the disquisition on Whitman, for it is a jarring chord in his little orchestra of lyric and ornithologic song. He might have kept it by him till the longer growing of his critical beard, and then, if still a devotee at that singular shrine, have expanded it into a volume or two explanatory of the imagination, animus and metre of his favorite bard.

The feathered warblers have always been popular with the featherless, who are indebted to them for no end of similes and suggestions. What would poetry be without the skylark, the nightingale, the dove and the eagle? It is far yet from having exhausted them. It cannot be said to have approached them in the right way—on the most eloquent and interesting side. It forgets that each species of bird stands by itself, and has its special life and history as truly as man. We counted thirty-nine kinds in a grove the centre whereof was our delightful abode for two-thirds of the past summer, each endowed with its separate outfit of language, ways and means of living, tastes and political and social notions. In each, moreover, individualism showed itself—if not to our apprehension as articulately, yet as indubitably, as among the race which considers them to have been all created for its amusement and advantage. It does not take long, superficial as is our acquaintance with their vernacular and the workings of their little brains, to single out particular specimens, and perceive that no two "birds of a feather" are exactly alike. A particular robin will rule the roost, and assert successfully for his mate the choice of resting-places above competing redbreasts. It is a particular catbird, identified, it may be, by a missing feather in his tail, that heads the foray on our strawberries and cherries. We recognize afar off either of the pair of "flickers," or yellow-shafted woodpeckers, which have set up their penates in the heart of the left-hand garden gatepost. The wren whose modest tabernacle occupies the top of the porch pilaster we have little difficulty in "spotting" when we meet her in a joint

Page 153

stroll along the lawn-fence. Her ways are not as the ways of other wrens. She has a somewhat different style of diving into the ivy and exploring the syringa. A new generation of doves has grown up since the lilacs were in bloom, and nothing is easier than to distinguish the old and young of the two or three separate families till all leave the grass and the gravel together and hie to the stubble-fields beyond our ken. Of the one mocking bird who made night hideous by his masterly imitations of the screaming of a wheel-barrow (regreased at an early period in self-defence) and the wheezy bark of Beppo, the superannuated St. Bernard, there could of course be no doubt. There was none of his kind to compare him with—not even a mate, for “sexual selection” could not possibly operate in face of so inharmonious a love-song. His isolation had its parallel in the one white guinea-fowl that haunted the shrubbery like a ghost, much more silent and placid than it would have been in society, and its antitype in the hennery, where individuality of course ran riot among the Brahmas, Dominicas and Hamburgs—hens that would and would not lay, that would and would not set, that would and would not scratch up seeds, and presented generally as great a variety of vagaries as of feathers. So, when we turned our back at last on lovely Boscobel, itself shut out, as the common phrase goes, “from the world” by serried ramparts of maple, elm, acacia and catalpa, we knew well that that enceinte of leafage enclosed many little worlds of its own—winged microcosms, epicycles of the grand cycle of dateless life which man in his humility assumes to be merely a subsidiary appendage of his own orbit.

Birds should be studied seriously. The naturalists will tell us more about them, and interest us more, than the poets. Mr. Bryant makes fun of the bobolink, and turns into an aimless whistle the solemn oration on domestic matters uttered by that small but energetic American to his mate. The waterfowl he treats more gravely and respectfully, but he still makes it only a part of the landscape and the theme, without ascribing any intelligent purpose to its flight. The bird, proceeding steadily and calmly to its business, may well have confounded its versifier with his fellow the fowler, and looked upon him, too, as regretting only that it was out of gunshot. Audubon or Wilson would have noted more sensibly the floating figure, far above “falling dew,” and the earth-bound mortal who was evidently afraid of rheumatics and calculating whether he could walk home before dark. The bird, they would have been perfectly aware, was neither “wandering” nor “lost,” and no more in need of the special interposition of a protecting Providence than they or Mr. Bryant. They would infer its motives, its point of departure and its destination, the character of the friends it left behind or sought—whether it was carrying out a plan of the day or bound on an expedition covering half the year. Its species would have

Page 154

been plain to them at half a glance, and its scientific name would have replaced the vague designation of "waterfowl." Its life, habits and habitat winter and summer, would have unrolled before them, and the dogs-eared and rain-stained note-book sprung open for a new entry. The poet, on the other hand, got happily home without injury to his health (for he is still hale half a century after the fact), lit the gas, nibbled the quill pen of the day, and sent down to us what must be confessed a pleasanter memorandum than we should have had from the forest-students. These, brave and ardent fellows! have long been asleep beneath the birds.

Mr. Burroughs is half poet, half naturalist in his way of looking at Nature, and steers clear of the poetic vagueness in regard to species. A passing description of the brown thrush as "skulking" among the bushes hits that bird to the life. Some remarks on page 119 would seem to be applied by a slip of the pen to the crow blackbird, instead of the cowbird, which has always enjoyed the distinction of being the only American species that disposes of its offspring after the fashion of the cuckoo and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The chapter on Emerson contains some acute remarks, but the warmest tribute to Emerson is the book itself, in which that writer's influence is everywhere patent both in style and thought. Mr. Burroughs has a happy facility of expression, and could well afford by this time to discard the Emersonian props and stand on his own merits.

The Life of Edgar Allan Poe. By W.F. Gill. Illustrated. New York: Dillingham.

Griswold's memoir of Poe has been actually beneficial to the reputation of its subject, contrary to its obvious design. It has caused a thorough sifting of all accessible records of the poet's short and dreary life, and elicited many reminiscences from men of mark who were in one way or another personally associated with him. We know now, more certainly than we might have done but for Griswold's effort to prove the opposite, that Poe was not expelled in disgrace from the University of Virginia, but bore himself well there as a student and a man; that he deliberately went to work and procured his being dropped from the rolls of West Point by building up with venial faults the requisite sum of "demerits," after having repeatedly and in vain sought permission to withdraw from the control of a system of discipline so unsuited to his temperament; that, so far from being intemperate, a single glass of wine sufficed to bring on something like insanity; that, instead of neglecting his family, he devoted himself to them with a very rare exclusiveness, and wore down his health by watching at the bedside of his sick wife; that he was as faithful to his business as to his domestic obligations; and that, wholly disqualified for battling with the world, he managed to keep his necessarily troubled life at least unstained. We know, moreover, that he did not appoint Griswold his literary executor, and that

Page 155

the document used by the latter as a means of deriving from that assumed office an opportunity of vindictive defamation was drawn up after the poet's death by Griswold himself. To the controversy thus excited we are indebted for the illumination of one or two poems relinquished by the critics as hopelessly, if not intentionally, obscure.

Ulalume, for example, held by some to be a mere experiment on the jingling capacity of words and the taste of readers for grappling with insoluble puzzles, is pronounced by one familiar with his most intimate feelings at the time of its composition a sublimated but distinct reflex of them and of the circumstances which gave them color.

Could Poe's pen have cleared itself from the morbid influences which fixed it in a peculiar path, we might have missed some of his finest and most subtle poems and some prose efforts which we could better spare. But his wonderful powers of analysis would have been serviceable upon a broader and more practical field. He had an insight into the laws of language and of rhythm equalled by no one else in our day. What is most mysterious in the forms and relations of matter had a special charm for him. None could trace it more acutely; and his powers, matured by more and healthier years and applied in their favorite direction, were quite equal to results like those attained by his predecessor Goethe, the savant of poets. He died a few years older than Burns and Byron, but more of a boy than either. The man Poe we never saw. The best of him was to come, and it never came. Poe had, however, what he is not always credited with—the sincerity and earnestness of maturity. He was anything but a mere propounder of riddles. Had he lived to our day, his office would have been to aid science, so wonderfully advanced in the intervening third of a century, in solving some of its own. And in addition to that possible work we should have been none the poorer in the treasures of poetry he actually gave us.

Olivia Raleigh. By W.W. Follett Synge. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co.

In the few choice words of introduction to the American reprint Mrs. Annis Lee Wister admirably characterizes this charming novel. It is indeed like a "clear, pure breath of English air:" from the first page to the last it is redolent of the health of an "incense-breathing morn." There are no dark scenes here, leaving on the reader a feeling of degradation that such things can be—no impossible villain weaving a web of intricate or purposeless villainy—but all is fresh and genuine, and we close the volume with a sense of gratitude that such a story is possible.

Page 156

Even if this be not in itself a recommendation sufficient to enlist the interest of novel-readers, *Olivia Raleigh* is something more: it is a work of art: there is in it nothing crude or hasty or ill-digested. Around the four or five prominent characters all the interest centres, and the attention is not distracted by any wearisome episodes that have nothing to do with the main story. The characters are admirably thought out, and reveal themselves more by their actions than by any microscopical analysis of motives. They pass before us like veritable human beings, and what they are we learn from what they do. The transformation of one of the characters from a gay, debonnair bachelor past middle age into a penurious miser of the Blueberry-Jones type is bold, and in less skilful hands would be a blemish, but Mr. Syngé has amply justified it, and admirably uses it to cement the structure of his plot. There is no weakness in any chapter, and as we read so secure do we feel in the author's strength that, had he chosen to end the story in sorrow and not in joy, we should submit as though to an inflexible decree of Fate.

Les Koumiassine. Par Henry Greville. Paris: Plon.

It is always interesting to watch the course of French fiction, because while the novel is in all countries at the present time the favorite form of expression of those writers who eschew scientific work on the one side and stand aloof from poetry on the other, in France, which is noticeably the country where theories are put into practice as well as invented, all sorts of literary methods have their clever defenders, who furnish examples of what they preach. Since Balzac and George Sand died, the post of leading novelist has been vacant, although there has been no lack of writers of the second or third, and especially of still lower, rank. Octave Feuillet still produces occasionally a clever piece of workmanship; Cherbuliez at intervals writes a novel which proves how lamentable a thing is the possession of brilliancy alone apart from the seriousness of character, or of some sides of character, which must exist alongside of even high intellectual qualities in order that the man may make a lasting impression on his time. Great gifts frittered away on meaningless trifles are as disappointing as possible, and are the more disappointing in proportion to the greatness of the gifts; so that the decadence of Cherbuliez—or, if this is too severe, his lack of improvement after his brilliant beginning—is a very melancholy thing. Zola is among the younger men, the head of a number of enthusiasts who revel in the exact study of social ordure, and who threaten to destroy fiction by ridding it of what makes its life—imagination, that is—and substituting for it scientific fact. Theuriet is an amiable but by no means a powerful writer, who so far has contented himself with following different models without striking out any special path of his own.

Page 157

Henry Greville is a new author, who has reached by no means the highest, yet a very respectable, place—such as would be a source of gratification to most people. The name signed to her novels is the *nom-de-plume* of a lady who, as is also apparent from her work, has lived long enough in Russia to become familiar with the people and their ways. *Les Koumiassine* is a story of Russian life, treating of a rich family whose name gives the title to the novel. The family is one of great wealth, and consists of the Count Koumiassine and his wife, their two children—one a boy of nine or ten, the other a girl half a dozen years older—and a niece of about seventeen. The plot concerns itself with the efforts of the countess to give her niece, whom she values much less than her daughter, a suitable husband. The poor girl is bullied and badgered after the most approved methods of domestic tyranny, and her high-spirited struggle against adverse circumstances makes the book as readable as one could wish. After all, the family is a microcosm, and furnishes frequent opportunity for the practice of good or bad qualities; and the cleverest novel-writers have chosen just this subject which seems so bald to the romantic writer. The contest in this case is a long one, and is hotly contested, and the imperiousness of the countess and the graceful courage of the girl are excellently well described. The other characters too are clearly put before the reader, so that those who exercise care in their choice of French novels may take up this one with the certainty that they will be entertained, and, what is rarer, innocently entertained. For in a large pile of French novels it would be hard to find so pretty a story so well told as is the intimacy between the two young girls, the cousins, who in their different ways circumvent Fate in the person of the countess. Their amiability and jollity and loyalty to each other give the book an air of attractive truthfulness and refinement which well replaces the priggishness generally to be found in innocuous French fiction. More than this, the plot is intelligently handled, and no person is introduced who is not carefully studied. In this respect of careful execution the author resembles Tourgueneff, whose friend and disciple she is. Like him, and like those who have been affected by his influence, she gives attention to the minor characters and comparatively insignificant incidents, so that the book makes a really lifelike impression. This is not a story of great passion, but it deals very cleverly with the less open waters of domestic strife. While what it shows of human nature in general is the most important thing, what is shown of Russian life is of great interest. The position of the countess, and the habit of her mind with its over-bearing self-will and ingenious self-approval, are studies possible, of course, anywhere, but pretty sure to be found especially in a land like Russia, where the habit of command was until recently so strongly fostered by the existence of serfdom. The condition of those who are exposed to this aggressive imperiousness is clearly illustrated in the numerous dependants who make their appearance in this story. But it is the countess who is the best drawn and most impressive personage. She is really lifelike, and yet not a commonplace figure.

Page 158

Books Received.

Disease of the Mind: Notes on the Early Management, European and American Progress, Modern Methods, *etc.*, in the Treatment of Insanity, with especial reference to the needs of Massachusetts and the United States. By Charles F. Folsom, M.D. Boston: A. Williams & Co.

Cicero's Tusculan Disputations; also Treatises on The Nature of the Gods, and on The Commonwealth. Literally translated by C.D. Yonge. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Shakespeare: The Man and the Book. Being a collection of Occasional Papers on the Bard and his Writings. Part I. By C.M. Ingleby, M.A. London: Truebner & Co.

Shakespeare's Comedy of a Midsummer Night's Dream. Edited with Notes by William J. Rolfe, A.M. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Four Irrepressibles; or, The Tribe of Benjamin: Their Summer with Aunt Agnes, what they Did, and what they Undid. Boston: Loring.

The Magnetism of Iron Vessels, with a Short Treatise on Terrestrial Magnetism. By Fairman Rogers. New York: D. Van Nostrand.

Virgin Soil. By Ivan Tourgueneff. From the French by T.S. Perry. (Leisure-Hour Series.) New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Personal Appearance and the Culture of Beauty. By T.S. Sozinsky, M.D., Ph.D. Philadelphia: Allen, Lane & Scott.

An English Commentary on the Tragedies of Euripides. By Charles Anthon, LL.D. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Strength of Men and Stability of Nations. By P.A. Chadbourne, D.D., LL.D. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Eighth Annual Report of the State Board of Health of Massachusetts. Boston: Albert J. Wright. State Printer.

The Antelope and Deer of America. By John Dean Caton, LL.D. New York: Hurd & Houghton.

G.T.T.; or, The Wonderful Adventures of a Pullman. By Edward E. Hale. Boston: Roberts Brothers.

Until the Day Break. By Mrs. J.M.D. Bartlett ("Birch Arnold"). Philadelphia: Porter & Coates.

Other People's Children. By the author of "Helen's Babies." New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Poet and Merchant. By B. Auerbach. (Leisure-Hour Series.) New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Mental Education. By J. Edward Cranage, M.A., Ph.D. London: Bemrose & Sons.

Beautiful Edith, the Child-Woman. (Loring's Tales of the Day.) Boston: Loring.

Aliunde; or, Love Ventures of Tom, Dick and Harry. New York: Charles P. Somerby.

Ideals made Real: A Romance. By George L. Raymond. New York: Hurd & Houghton.

Lola. By A. Griffiths. (Leisure-Hour Series.) New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Kilmeny: A Novel. By William Black. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Winstowe: A Novel. By Mrs. Leith-Adams. New York: Harper & Brothers.