

The Revolution in Tanner's Lane

Mark Rutherford

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THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE

"Per various casus, per tot discrimina rerum,
Tendimus in Latium; sedes ubi fata quietas
Ostendunt. Illic fas regna resurgere Trojae.
Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis."
- Virgil.

"By diuers casis, sere parrellis and sufferance
Unto Itail we ettill (aim) quhare destanye
Has schap (shaped) for vs ane rest and quiet harbrye
Predestinatis thare Troye sall ryse agane.
Be stout on prosper fortoun to remane."
- Gwain Douglas's translation.

CHAPTER I--THE WORLD OUTSIDE

The 20th April 1814, an almost cloudless, perfectly sunny day, saw all London astir. On that day Lewis the Eighteenth was to come from Hartwell in triumph, summoned by France to the throne of his ancestors. London had not enjoyed too much gaiety that year. It was the year of the great frost. Nothing like it had been known in the memory of man. In the West of England, where snow is rare, roads were impassable and mails could not be delivered. Four dead men were dug out of a deep drift about ten miles west of Exeter. Even at Plymouth, close to the soft south-western ocean, the average depth of the fall was twenty inches, and there was no other way of getting eastwards than by pack-horses. The Great North Road was completely blocked, and there was a barricade over it near Godmanchester of from six to ten feet high. The Oxford coach was buried. Some passengers inside were rescued with great difficulty, and their lives were barely saved. The Solway Firth at Workington resembled the Arctic Sea, and the Thames was so completely frozen over between Blackfriars and London Bridges that people were able, not only to walk across, but to erect booths on the ice. Coals, of course, rose to famine prices in London, as it was then dependent solely upon water-carriage for its supply. The Father of his people, the Prince Regent, was much moved by the general distress of "a large and meritorious class of industrious persons," as he called them, and issued a circular to all Lords Lieutenant ordering them to provide all practicable means of removing obstructions from the highways.

However, on this 20th April the London mob forgot the frost, forgot the quartern loaf and the national debt, and prepared for a holiday, inspired thereto, not so much by Lewis the Eighteenth as by the warmth and brilliant sky. There are two factors in all human bliss--an object and the subject. The object may be a trifle, but the condition of the subject is most important. Turn a man out with his digestion in perfect order, with the spring in the air and in his veins, and he will cheer anything, any Lewis, Lord Liverpool, dog, cat, or rat who may cross his path. Not that this is intended as a sufficient explanation of the Bourbon reception. Far from it; but it

does mitigate it a trifle. At eleven o'clock in the forenoon two troops of the Oxford Blues drew up at Kilburn turnpike to await the sacred arrival. The Prince Regent himself went as far as Stanmore to meet his August Brother. When the August Brother reached the village, the excited inhabitants thereof took the horses out of the carriage and drew him through the street. The Prince, standing at the door of the principal inn, was in readiness to salute him, and this he did by embracing him! There have been some remarkable embraces in history. Joseph fell on Israel's neck, and Israel said unto Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face:" Paul, after preaching at Ephesus, calling the elders of the Church to witness that, for the space of three years, he ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears, kneeled down and prayed, so that they all wept sore and fell on his neck: Romeo took a last embrace of Juliet in the vault, and sealed the doors of breath with a righteous kiss: Penelope embraced Ulysses, who was welcome to her as land is welcome to shipwrecked swimmers escaping from the grey seawater--there have, we say, been some remarkable embraces on this earth since time began, but none more remarkable than that on the steps of the Abercorn Arms. The Divine couple then drove in solemn procession to town. From the park corner for three-quarters of a mile or so was a line of private carriages, filled with most fashionable people, the ladies all standing on the seats. The French Royalist flag waved everywhere. All along the Kilburn Road, then thinly lined with houses, it was triumphant, and even the trees were decorated with it. Arriving by way of Cumberland Gate at Piccadilly, Lewis was escorted, amidst uproarious rejoicing, to Grillon's Hotel in Albemarle Street. There, in reply to an address from the Prince, he "ascribed, under Providence," to his Royal Highness and the British people his present blissful condition; and soon afterwards, being extremely tired, went to bed. This was on a Wednesday. The next day, Thursday, His Sacred Majesty, or Most Christian Majesty, as he was then called, was solemnly made a Knight of the Garter, the Bishops of Salisbury and Winchester assisting. On Friday he received the corporation of London, and on Saturday the 23rd he prepared to take his departure. There was a great crowd in the street when he came out of the hotel and immense applause; the mob crying out, "God bless your Majesty!" as if they owed him all they had, and even their lives. It was very touching, people thought at the time, and so it was. Is there anything more touching than the waste of human loyalty and love? As we read the history of the Highlands or a story of Jacobite loyalty such as that of Cooper's Admiral Bluewater, dear to boys, we sadden that destiny should decree that in a world in which piety is not too plentiful it should run so pitifully to waste, and that men and women should weep hot tears and break their hearts over bran-stuffing and wax.

Amidst the hooraying multitude that Saturday April morning was one man at least, Zachariah Coleman by name, who did not hooray, and did not lift his hat even when the Sacred Majesty appeared on the hotel steps. He was a smallish, thin-faced, lean creature in workman's clothes; his complexion was white, blanched by office air, and his hands were black with printer's ink.

"Off with your tile, you b---y Corsican!" exclaimed a roaring voice behind him. Zachariah turned round, and found the request came from a drayman weighing about eighteen stone; but the tile was not removed. In an instant it was sent flying to the other side of the road, where it was trodden on, picked up, and passed forward in the

air amidst laughter and jeers, till it was finally lost.

Zachariah was not pugnacious, and could not very well be so in the presence of his huge antagonist; but he was no coward, and not seeing for the moment that his hat had hopelessly gone, he turned round savagely, and laying hold of the drayman, said:

"You ruffian, give it me back; if I am a Corsican, are you an Englishman?"

"Take that for your b---y beaver," said the other, and dealt him a blow with the fist right in his face, which staggered and stupefied him, covering him with blood.

The bystanders, observing the disparity between the two men, instantly took Zachariah's side, and called out "Shame, shame!" Nor did they confine themselves to ejaculations, for a young fellow of about eight and twenty, well dressed, with a bottle-green coat of broadcloth, buttoned close, stepped up to the drayman.

"Knock my tile off, beer-barrel."

The drayman instantly responded by a clutch at it, but before he could touch it he had an awful cut across the lips, delivered with such scientific accuracy from the left shoulder that it was clear it came from a disciple of Jackson or Tom Cribb. The crowd now became intensely delighted and excited, and a cry of "A ring, a ring!" was raised. The drayman, blind with rage, let out with his right arm with force enough to fell an ox, but the stroke was most artistically parried, and the response was another fearful gash over the right eye. By this time the patriot had had enough, and declined to continue the contest. His foe, too, seemed to have no desire for any further display of his powers, and retired smilingly, edging his way to the pavement, where he found poor Zachariah almost helpless.

"Holloa, my republican friend, d---n it, that's a nasty lick you've got, and from one of the people too; that makes it harder to bear, eh? Never mind, he's worse off than you are."

Zachariah thanked him as well as he could for defending him.

"Not a word; haven't got a scratch myself. Come along with me;" and he dragged him along Piccadilly into a public-house in Swallow Street, where apparently he was well known. Water was called for; Zachariah was sponged, the wound strapped up, some brandy given him, and the stranger, ordering a hackney coach, told the driver to take the gentleman home.

"Wait a bit," he called, as the coach drove off. "You may feel faint; I'll go home with you," and in a moment he was by Zachariah's side. The coach found its way slowly through the streets to some lodgings in Clerkenwell. It was well the stranger did go, for his companion on arrival was hardly able to crawl upstairs to give a coherent account to his wife of what had happened.

Zachariah Coleman, working man, printer, was in April 1814 about thirty years old. He was employed in a jobbing office in the city, where he was compositor and pressman as well. He had been married in January 1814 to a woman a year younger than himself, who attended the

meeting-house at Hackney, whither he went on the Sunday. He was a Dissenter in religion, and a fierce Radical in politics, as many of the Dissenters in that day were. He was not a ranter or revivalist, but what was called a moderate Calvinist; that is to say, he held to Calvinism as his undoubted creed, but when it came to the push in actual practice he modified it. In this respect he was inconsistent; but who is there who is not? His theology probably had no more gaps in it than that of the latest and most enlightened preacher who denies miracles and affirms the Universal Benevolence. His present biographer, from intimate acquaintance with the class to which Zachariah belonged, takes this opportunity to protest against the general assumption that the Calvinists of that day, or of any day, arrived at their belief by putting out their eyes and accepting blindly the authority of St. Paul or anybody else. It may be questioned, indeed, whether any religious body has ever stood so distinctly upon the understanding and has used its intellect with such rigorous activity, as the Puritans, from whom Zachariah was a genuine descendant. Even if Calvinism had been carved on tables of stone and handed down from heaven by the Almighty Hand, it would not have lived if it had not have found to agree more or less with the facts, and it was because it was a deduction from what nobody can help seeing that it was so vital, the Epistle to the Romans serving as the inspired confirmation of an experience. Zachariah was a great reader of all kinds of books--a lover especially of Bunyan and Milton; as logical in his politics as in his religion; and he defended the execution of Charles the First on the ground that the people had just as much right to put a king to death as a judge had to order the execution of any other criminal.

The courtship between Zachariah and the lady who became his wife had been short, for there could be no mistake, as they had known one another so long. She was black-haired, with a perfectly oval face, always dressed with the most scrupulous neatness, and with a certain plain tightness which Zachariah admired. She had exquisitely white and perfect teeth, a pale, clear complexion, and the reputation of being a most sensible woman. She was not a beauty, but she was good-looking; the weak points in her face being her eyes, which were mere inexpressive optic organs, and her mouth, which, when shut, seemed too much shut, just as if it were compressed by an effort of the will or by a spring. These, however, Zachariah thought minor matters, if, indeed, he ever noticed them. "The great thing was, that she was"--sometimes this and sometimes that--and so it was settled. Unfortunately in marriage it is so difficult to be sure of what the great thing is, and what the little thing is, the little thing becoming so frightfully big afterwards! Theologically, Mrs. Zachariah was as strict as her husband, and more so, as far as outward observance went, for her strictness was not tempered by those secular interests which to him were so dear. She read little or nothing--nothing, indeed, on week-days, and even the Morning Chronicle, which Zachariah occasionally borrowed, was folded up when he had done with it and put under the tea-caddy till it was returned. On Sundays she took up a book in the afternoon, but she carefully prepared herself for the operation as though it were a sacramental service. When the dinner-things were washed up, when the hearth was swept and the kettle on the fire, having put on her best Sunday dress, it was her custom to go to the window, always to the window, never to the fire--where she would open Boston's Fourfold State and hold it up in front of her with both hands. This, however, did not last long, for on the arrival of the milkman the volume was replaced,

and it was necessary to make preparations for tea.

The hackney coach drove up to the house in Rosoman Street where Zachariah dwelt on the first floor. He was too weak to go upstairs by himself, and he and his friend therefore walked into the front room together. It was in complete order, although it was so early in the morning. Everything was dusted; even the lower fire-bar had not a speck of ashes on it, and on the hob already was a saucepan in which Mrs. Coleman proposed to cook the one o'clock dinner. On the

walls were portraits of Sir Francis Burdett, Major Cartwright, and the mezzotint engraving of Sadler's Bunyan. Two black silhouettes--one of Zachariah and the other of his wife--were suspended on each side of the mantelpiece.

Mrs. Coleman was busily engaged in the bedroom, but hearing the footsteps, she immediately entered. She was slightly taken aback at seeing Zachariah in such a plight, and uttered a little scream, but the bottle-green stranger, making her a profound bow, arrested her.

"Pardon me, my dear madam, there is nothing seriously the matter. Your husband has had the misfortune to be the victim of a most blackguardly assault; but I am sure that, under your care, he will be all right in a day or two; and, with your permission, I take my leave."

Mrs. Coleman was irritated. The first emotion was not sympathy. Absolutely the first was annoyance at being seen without proper notice by such a fine-looking gentleman. She had, however, no real cause for vexation under this head. She had tied a white handkerchief over her hair, fastening it under her chin, as her manner was when doing her morning's work, and she had on her white apron; but she was trim and faultless, and the white handkerchief did but set off her black hair and marble complexion. Her second emotion, too, was not sympathy. Zachariah was at home at the wrong time. Her ordinary household arrangements were upset. He might possibly be ill, and then there would be a mess and confusion. The thought of sickness was intolerable to her, because it "put everything out." Rising up at the back of these two emotions came, haltingly, a third when she looked her husband in the face. She could not help it, and she did really pity him.

"I am sure it is very kind of you," she replied.

Zachariah had as yet spoken no word, nor had she moved towards him. The stranger was departing.

"Stop!" cried Zachariah, "you have not told me your name. I am too faint to say how much I owe you for your protection and kindness."

"Nonsense. My name is Maitland--Major Maitland, 1A Albany. Good-bye."

He was at the top of the stairs, when he turned round, and looking at Mrs. Coleman, observed musingly, "I think I'll send my doctor, and, if you will permit me, will call in a day or two."

She thanked him; he took her hand, politely pressed it to his lips, and rode off in the coach which had been waiting for him.

"What has happened, my dear? Tell me all about it," she inquired as she went back into the parlour, with just the least colour on her cheek, and perceptibly a little happier than she was five minutes before. She did nothing more than put her hand on his shoulder, but he brightened immediately. He told her the tale, and when it was over desired to lie down and to have some tea.

Emotion number two returned to Mrs. Coleman immediately. Tea at that time, the things having been all cleared away and washed up! She did not, however, like openly to object, but she did go so far as to suggest that perhaps cold water would be better, as there might be inflammation. Zachariah, although he was accustomed to give way, begged for tea; and it was made ready, but not with water boiled there. She would not again put the copper kettle on the fire, as it was just cleaned, but she asked to be allowed to use that which belonged to the neighbour downstairs who kept the shop. The tea-things were replaced when Zachariah had finished, and his wife returned to her duties, leaving him sitting in the straight-backed Windsor-chair, looking into the grate and feeling very miserable.

In the afternoon Rosoman Street was startled to see a grand carriage stop at Zachariah's door, and out stepped the grand doctor, who, after some little hesitation and inquiry, made his way upstairs. Having examined our friend, he pronounced him free from all mortal or even serious injury--it was a case of contusion and shaken nerves, which required a little alterative medicine, and on the day after tomorrow the patient, although bruised and sore in the mouth, might go back to work.

The next morning he was better, but nevertheless he was depressed. It was now three months since his wedding-day, and the pomp and beauty of the sunrise, gold and scarlet bars with intermediate lakes of softest blue, had been obscured by leaden clouds, which showed no break and let loose a cold drizzling rain. How was it? He often asked himself that question, but could obtain no satisfactory answer. Had anything changed? Was his wife anything which he did not know her to be three months ago? Certainly not. He could not accuse her of passing herself off upon him with false pretences. What she had always represented herself to be she was now. There she stood precisely as she stood twelve months ago, when he asked her to become his wife, and he thought when she said "yes" that no man was more blessed than he. It was, he feared, true he did not love her, nor she him; but why could not they have found that out before? What a cruel destiny was this which drew a veil before his eyes and led him blindfold over the precipice! He at first thought, when his joy began to ebb in February or March, that it would rise again, and that he would see matters in a different light; but the spring was here, and the tide had not turned. It never would turn now, and he became at last aware of the sad truth--the saddest a man can know--that he had missed the great delight of existence. His chance had come, and had gone. Henceforth all that was said and sung about love and home would find no echo in him. He was paralysed, dead in half of his soul, and would have to exist with the other half as well he could. He had done no wrong: he had done his best; he had not sold himself to the flesh or the devil, and, Calvinist as he was, he was tempted at times to question the justice of such a punishment. If he put his finger in the fire and got burnt, he was able to bow to the wisdom which taught him in that plain way that he was not to put his finger

in the fire. But wherein lay the beneficence of visiting a simple mistake--one which he could not avoid--with a curse worse than the Jewish curse of excommunication--"the anathema wherewith Joshua cursed Jericho; the curse which Elisha laid upon the children; all the curses which are written in the law. Cursed be he by day, and cursed be he by night: cursed be he in sleeping, and cursed be he in waking: cursed in going out, and cursed in coming in." Neither the wretched victim nor the world at large was any better for such a visitation, for it was neither remedial nor monitory. Ah, so it is! The murderer is hung at Newgate, and if he himself is not improved by the process, perhaps a few wicked people are frightened; but men and women are put to a worse death every day by slow strangulation which endures for a lifetime, and, as far as we can see, no lesson is learned by anybody, and no good is done.

Zachariah, however, did not give way to despair, for he was not a man to despair. His religion was a part of himself. He had immortality before him, in which he thanked God there was no marrying nor giving in marriage. This doctrine, however, did not live in him as the other dogmas of his creed, for it was not one in which his intellect had such a share. On the other hand, predestination was dear to him. God knew him as closely as He knew the angel next His throne, and had marked out his course with as much concern as that of the seraph. What God's purposes were he did not know. He took a sort of sullen pride in not knowing, and he marched along, footsore and wounded, in obedience to the orders of his great Chief. Only thirty years old, and only three months a husband, he had already learned renunciation. There was to be no joy in life? Then he would be satisfied if it were tolerable, and he strove to dismiss all his dreams and do his best with what lay before him. Oh my hero! Perhaps somewhere or other--let us hope it is true--a book is kept in which human worth is duly appraised, and in that book, if such a volume there be, we shall find that the divinest heroism is not that of the man who, holding life cheap, puts his back against a wall, and is shot by Government soldiers, assured that he will live ever afterwards as a martyr and saint: a diviner heroism is that of the poor printer, who, in dingy, smoky Rosoman Street, Clerkenwell, with forty years before him, determined to live through them, as far as he could, without a murmur, although there was to be no pleasure in them. A diviner heroism is this, but divinest of all, is that of him who can in these days do what Zachariah did, and without Zachariah's faith.

The next evening, just as Zachariah and his wife were sitting down to tea, there was a tap at the door, and in walked Major Maitland. He was now in full afternoon costume, and, if not dandyish, was undeniably well dressed. Making a profound bow to Mrs. Coleman, he advanced to the fireplace and instantly shook hands with Zachariah.

"Well, my republican, you are better, although the beery loyalist has left his mark upon you."

"Certainly, much better; but where I should have been, sir, if it had not been for you, I don't know."

"Ah, well; it was an absolute pleasure to me to teach the blackguard that cheering a Bourbon costs something. My God, though, a man must be a fool who has to be taught that! I wonder what it HAS cost us. Why, I see you've got my friend, Major Cartwright, up there."

Zachariah and his wife started a moment at what they considered the profane introduction of God's name; but it was not exactly swearing, and Major Maitland's relationship to them was remarkable. They were therefore silent.

"A true friend of the people," continued Maitland, "is Major Cartwright; but he does not go quite far enough to please me."

"As for the people so-called," quoth Zachariah, "I doubt whether they are worth saving. Look at the mob we saw the day before yesterday. I think not of the people. But there is a people, even in these days of Ahab, whose feet may yet be on the necks of their enemies."

"Why, you are an aristocrat," said Maitland, smiling; "only you want to abolish the present aristocracy and give us another. You must not judge us by what you saw in Piccadilly, and while you are still smarting from that smasher on your eye. London, I grant you, is not, and never was, a fair specimen. But, even in London, you must not be deceived. You don't know its real temper; and then, as to not being worth saving--why, the worse men are the more they want saving. However, we are both agreed about this--crew, Liverpool, the Prince Regent, and his friends." A strong word was about to escape before "crew," but the Major saw that he was in a house where it would be out of place. "I wish you'd join our Friends of the People. We want two or three determined fellows like you. We are all safe."

"What are the 'Friends of the People'?"

"Oh, it's a club of--a--good fellows who meet twice a week for a little talk about affairs. Come with me next Friday and see."

Zachariah hesitated a moment, and then consented.

"All right; I'll fetch you." He was going away, and picked up from the table a book he had brought with him.

"By the way, you will not be at work till to-morrow. I'll leave you this to amuse you. It has not been out long. Thirteen thousand copies were sold the first day. It is the Corsair--Byron's Corsair. My God, it IS poetry and no mistake! Not exactly, perhaps, in your line; but you are a man of sense, and if that doesn't make your heart leap in you I'm much mistaken. Lord Byron is a neighbour of mine in the Albany. I know him by sight. I've waited a whole livelong morning at my window to see him go out. So much the more fool you, you'll say. Ah, well, wait till you have read the Corsair."

The Major shook hands. Mrs. Coleman, who had been totally silent during the interview, excepting when she asked him if he would join in a cup of tea--an offer most gracefully declined--followed him to the top of the stairs. As before, he kissed her hand, made her a profound bow, and was off. When she came back into the room the faint flush on the cheek was repeated, and there was the same unusual little rippling overflow of kindness to her husband.

In the evening Zachariah took up the book. Byron was not, indeed, in his line. He took no interest in him, although, like every other Englishman, he had heard much about him. He had passed on his way to Albemarle Street the entrance to the Albany. Byron was lying there asleep, but Zachariah, although he knew he was within fifty yards of

him, felt no emotion whatever. This was remarkable, for Byron's influence, even in 1814, was singular, beyond that of all predecessors and successors, in the wideness of its range. He was read by everybody. Men and women who were accessible to no other poetry were accessible to his, and old sea-captains, merchants, tradesmen, clerks, tailors, milliners, as well as the best judges in the land repeated his verses by the page.

Mrs. Coleman, having cleared away the tea-things, sat knitting till half-past six. It was prayer-meeting night, and she never missed going. Zachariah generally accompanied her, but he was not quite presentable, and stayed at home. He went on with the Corsair, and as he read his heart warmed, and he unconsciously found himself declaiming several of the most glowing and eloquent lines aloud. He was by nature a poet; essentially so, for he loved everything which lifted him above what is commonplace. Isaiah, Milton, a storm, a revolution, a great passion--with these he was at home; and his education, mainly on the Old Testament, contributed greatly to the development both of the strength and weakness of his character. For such as he are weak as well as strong; weak in the absence of the innumerable little sympathies and worldlinesses which make life delightful, and but too apt to despise and tread upon those gentle flowers which are as really here as the sun and the stars, and are nearer to us. Zachariah found in the Corsair exactly what answered to his own inmost self, down to its very depths. The lofty style, the scorn of what is mean and base, the courage--root of all virtue--that dares and evermore dares in the very last extremity, the love of the illimitable, of freedom, and the cadences like the fall of waves on a sea-shore were attractive to him beyond measure. More than this, there was Love. His own love was a failure, and yet it was impossible for him to indulge for a moment his imagination elsewhere. The difference between him and his wife might have risen to absolute aversion, and yet no wandering fancy would ever have been encouraged towards any woman living. But when he came to Medora's song:

"Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before."

and more particularly the second verse:

"There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal--but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been."

love again asserted itself. It was not love for a person; perhaps it was hardly love so much as the capacity for love. Whatever it may be, henceforth this is what love will be in him, and it will be fully maintained, though it knows no actual object. It will manifest itself in suppressed force, seeking for exit in a thousand directions; sometimes grotesque perhaps, but always force. It will give energy to expression, vitality to his admiration of the beautiful, devotion to his worship, enthusiasm to his zeal for

freedom. More than this, it will NOT make his private life unbearable by contrast; rather the reverse. The vision of Medora will not intensify the shadow over Rosoman Street, Clerkenwell, but will soften it.

CHAPTER II--OUTSIDE PIKE STREET

On the Friday evening the Major called for Zachariah. He had not yet returned, but his wife was at home. The tea-things were ready, the kettle was on the hob, and she sat knitting at the window. Her visitor knocked at the door; she rose, and he entered. This time he was a little less formal, for after making his bow he shook her hand. She, too, was not quite so stiff, and begged him to be seated.

"Upon my word, madam," he began, "if I were as well looked after as Mr. Coleman, I doubt if I should be so anxious as he is to change the existing order of things. You would think there is some excuse for me if you were to see the misery and privation of my lodgings. Nobody cares a straw, and as for dust and dirt, they would drive you distracted."

Mrs. Zachariah smiled, and shifted one of her little white-stockinged feet over the other. She had on the neatest of sandals, with black ribbons, which crossed over the instep. It was one of Zachariah's weak points, she considered, that he did not seem to care sufficiently for cleanliness, and when he came in he would sometimes put his black hand, before he had washed, on the white tea-cloth, or on the back of a chair, and leave behind him a patch of printer's ink. It was bad enough to be obliged always to wipe the door-handles.

"I do my best; but as for dirt, you cannot be so badly off in the Albany as we are in Clerkenwell. Clerkenwell is very disagreeable, but we are obliged to live here."

"If Clerkenwell is so bad, all the more honour to you for your triumph."

"Oh, I don't know about honour; my husband says it is simply my nature."

"Nature! All the better. I could never live with anybody who was always trying and trying and struggling. I believe in Nature. Don't you?"

This was an abstract inquiry beyond Mrs. Zachariah's scope. "It is some people's nature to like to be tidy," she contented herself with observing; "and others do not care for it."

"Oh, perhaps it is because I am a soldier, and accustomed to order, that I care for it above everything."

Mrs. Zachariah started for a moment. She reflected. She had forgotten it--that she was talking to an officer in His Majesty's service.

"Have you seen much fighting, sir?"

"Oh, well, for the matter of that, have had my share. I was at Talavera, and suffer a good deal now in damp weather, from having slept so much in the open air."

"Dear me, that is very hard! My husband is rheumatic, and finds Tarver's embrocation do him more good than anything. Will you try it if I give you some?"

"With profound gratitude." Mrs. Coleman filled an empty bottle, took a piece of folded brown paper out of the fireplace cupboard, untied a coil of twine, made up a compact little parcel, and gave it to the Major.

"A thousand thanks. If faith now can really cure, I shall be well in a week."

Mrs. Zachariah smiled again.

"Are you Dissenters?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes. Independents."

"I am not surprised. Ever since Cromwell's days you have always been on the side of liberty; but are you strict--I don't know exactly what to call it--go to the prayer-meetings--and so on?"

"We are both members of the church, and Mr. Coleman is a deacon," replied Mrs. Zachariah, with a gravity not hitherto observable.

She looked out of the window, and saw him coming down the street. She placed the kettle nearer the fire, put the tea in the teapot, and sat down again. He came upstairs, went straight into his bedroom, cleaned himself as much as possible, changed his coat, and entered. The Major, being pressed, consented to take tea, and Mrs. Zachariah was a cheerful and even talkative hostess, to the surprise of at least one member of the company. She sat next to her husband, and the Major sat opposite. Three silver spoons and silver sugar-tongs had been put on the table. Ordinarily the spoons were pewter. Zachariah, fond of sugar, was in the habit of taking it with his fingers--a practice to which Mrs. Zachariah strongly objected, and with some reason. It was dirty, and as his hands were none of the whitest, the neighbouring lumps became soiled, and acquired a flavour which did not add to their sweetness. She had told him of it a score of times; but he did not amend, and seemed to think her particularity rather a vice than a virtue. So it is that, as love gilds all defects, lack of love sees nothing but defect in what is truly estimable. Notwithstanding the sugar-tongs, Zachariah--excusable, perhaps, this time, considering the warmth of the speech he was making against the late war--pushed them aside, and helped himself after the usual fashion. A cloud came over Mrs. Zachariah's face; she compressed her lips in downright anger, pushed the tongs towards him with a rattle, and trod on his foot at the same time. His oration came to an end; he looked round, became confused, and was suddenly silent; but the Major gallantly came to the rescue by jumping up to prevent Mrs. Zachariah from moving in order to put more water on the tea.

"Excuse me, pray;" but as he had risen somewhat suddenly to reach the kettle, he caught the table-cloth on his knee, and in a moment his cup and saucer and the plate were on the floor in twenty pieces, and the tea running all over the carpet. Zachariah looked at his wife, and expected to see her half frantic. But no; though it was her best china, she stopped the Major's apologies, and assured him, with something almost like laughter, that it was not of the slightest consequence. "Tea doesn't stain; I hope it has not gone on your coat;" and producing a duster from the cupboard, the evil, save the loss of the crockery, was remedied in a couple of minutes.

At half-past seven o'clock the Major and Zachariah departed. They walked across the top of Hatton Garden, and so onwards till they came to Red Lion Street. Entering a low passage at the side of a small public-house, they went up some stairs, and found themselves opposite a door which was locked. The Major gave three taps and then paused. A moment afterwards he tapped again twice; the lock was turned, and he was admitted. Zachariah found himself in a spacious kind of loft. There was a table running down the middle, and round it were seated about a dozen men, most of whom were smoking and drinking beer. They welcomed the Major with rappings, and he moved towards the empty chair at the head of the board.

"You're late, chairman," said one.

"Been to fetch a new comrade."

"Is that the cove? He looks all right. Here's your health, guv'nor, and d---n all tyrants." With that he took a pull at the beer.

"Swear him," said the Major.

A disagreeable-looking man with a big round nose, small red eyes, unshaven face, and slightly unsteady voice, rose, laid down his pipe, and beckoned to Zachariah, who advanced towards him.

The Secretary--for he it was--produced a memorandum-book, and began with a stutter:

"In the sacred name of--"

"Stop!" cried Zachariah, "I don't swear."

"That will do," shouted the Major across a hubbub which arose--"religious. I'll answer for him: let him sign; that's enough."

"You ARE answerable," growled the Secretary "if he's a d---d spy we'll have his blood, that's all, and yours too, Major." The Major took no notice, and Zachariah put his name in the book, the roll of the Red Lion Friends of the People.

"Business, Mr. Secretary--the last minutes."

The minutes were read, and an adjourned debate was then renewed on a motion to organise public meetings to petition in favour of Parliamentary Reform. The reader must understand that politics in those days were somewhat different from the politics of fifty or sixty years later. Bread was thirteence a quarter loaf; the

national debt, with a much smaller population, was what it is now; everything was taxed, and wages were very low. But what was most galling was the fact that the misery, the taxes, and the debt had been accumulated, not by the will of the people, but by a corrupt House of Commons, the property of borough-mongers, for the sake of supporting the Bourbons directly, but indirectly and chiefly the House of Hanover and the hated aristocracy. There was also a scandalous list of jobs and pensions. Years afterwards, when the Government was forced to look into abuses, the Reverend Thomas Thurlow, to take one example amongst others, was awarded, as compensation for the loss of his two offices, Patentee of Bankrupts and Keeper of Hanaper, the modest allowance annually until his death of 11,380 pounds 14s. 6d. The men and women of that time, although there were scarcely any newspapers, were not fools, and there was not a Nottingham weaver who put a morsel of bread in his hungry belly who did not know that two morsels might have gone there if there were no impost on foreign corn to maintain rents, and if there were no interest to pay on money borrowed to keep these sacred kings and lords safe in their palaces and parks. Opinion at the Red Lion Friends of the People Club was much divided. Some were for demonstrations and agitation, whilst others were for physical force. The discussion went on irregularly amidst much tumult.

"How long would they have waited over the water if they had done nothing but jaw? They met together and tore down the Bastille, and that's what we must do."

"That may be true," said a small white-faced man who neither smoked nor drank, "but what followed? You don't do anything really till you've reasoned it out."

"It's my belief, parson," retorted the other, "that you are in a d---d funk. This is not the place for Methodists."

"Order, order!" shouted the chairman.

"I am not a Methodist," quietly replied the other; "unless you mean by Methodist a man who fears God and loves his Saviour. I am not ashamed to own that, and I am none the worse for it as far as I know. As for being a coward, we shall see."

The Secretary meanwhile had gone on with his beer. Despite his notorious failing, he had been chosen for the post because in his sober moments he was quick with his pen. He was not a working man; nay, it was said he had been at Oxford. His present profession was that of attorney's clerk. He got up and began a harangue about Brutus.

"There's one way of dealing with tyrants--the old way, Mr. Chairman. Death to them all, say I; the short cut; none of your palaver; what's the use of palavering?"

He was a little shaky, took hold of the rail of his chair, and as he sat down broke his pipe.

Some slight applause followed; but the majority were either against him, or thought it better to be silent.

The discussion continued irregularly, and Zachariah noticed that

about half-a-dozen of those present took no part in it. At about ten o'clock the chairman declared the meeting at an end; and it was quite time he did so, for the smoke and the drink had done their work.

As Zachariah came out, a man stood by his side whom he had scarcely noticed during the evening. He was evidently a shoemaker. There was a smell of leather about him, and his hands and face were grimy. He had a slightly turned-up nose, smallish eyes, half hidden under very black eyebrows, and his lips were thin and straight. His voice was exceedingly high-pitched, and had something creaking in it like the sound of an ill-greased axle. He spoke with emphasis, but not quite like an Englishman, was fond of alliteration, and often, in the middle of a sentence, paused to search for a word which pleased him. Having found it, the remainder of the sentence was poised and cast from him like a dart. His style was a curious mixture of foreign imperfection and rhetoric--a rhetoric, however, by no means affected. It might have been so in another person, but it was not so in him.

"Going east?" said he.

"Yes."

"If you want company, I'll walk with you. What do you think of the Friends?"

Zachariah, it will be borne in mind, although he was a Democrat, had never really seen the world. He belonged to a religious sect. He believed in the people, it is true, but it was a people of Cromwellian Independents. He purposely avoided the company of men who used profane language, and never in his life entered a tavern. He did not know what the masses really were; for although he worked with his hands, printers were rather a superior set of fellows, and his was an old-established shop which took the best of its class. When brought actually into contact with swearers and drunkards as patriots and reformers he was more than a little shocked.

"Not much," quoth he.

"Not worse than our virtuous substitute for a sovereign?"

"No, certainly."

"You object to giving them votes, but is not the opinion of the silliest as good as that of Lord Sidmouth?"

"That's no reason for giving them votes."

"I should like to behold the experiment of a new form of misgovernment. If we are to be eternally enslaved to fools and swindlers, why not a change? We have had regal misrule and aristocratic swindling long enough."

"Seriously, my friend," he continued, "study that immortal charter, the Declaration of the Rights of Man."

He stopped in the street, and with an oratorical air repeated the well-known lines, "Men are born and always continue free, and equal in respect of their rights. . . . Every citizen has a right, either by himself or by his representative, to a free voice in determining

the necessity of public contributions, the appropriation of them, and their amount, mode of assessment, and duration." He knew them by heart. "It is the truth," he continued: "you must come to that, unless you believe in the Divine appointment of dynasties. There is no logical repose between Lord Liverpool and the Declaration. What is the real difference between him and you? None but a question of degree. He does not believe in absolute monarchy, and stays at this point. You go a little lower. You are both alike. How dare you say, 'My brother, I am more honest and more religious than you; pay me half-a-crown and I will spend it for your welfare'? You cannot tell me that. You know I should have a RIGHT to reject you. I refuse to be coerced. I prefer freedom to--felicity."

Zachariah was puzzled. He was not one of those persons who can see no escape from an argument and yet are not convinced; one of those happy creatures to whom the operations of the intellect are a joke--who, if they are shown that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, decline to disprove it, but act as if they were but one. To Zachariah the appeal "Where will you stop?" was generally successful. If his understanding told him he could not stop, he went on. And yet it so often happens that if we do go on we are dissatisfied; we cannot doubt each successive step, but we doubt the conclusion. We arrive serenely at the end, and lo! it is an absurdity which common sense, as we call it, demolishes with scoffs and laughter.

They had walked down to Holborn in order to avoid the rather dangerous quarter of Gray's Inn Lane. Presently they were overtaken by the Secretary, staggering under more liquor. He did not recognise them, and rolled on. The shoemaker instantly detached himself from Zachariah and followed the drunken official. He was about to turn into a public-house, when his friend came up to him softly, abstracted a book which was sticking out of his pocket, laid hold of him by the arm, and marched off with him across the street and through Great Turnstile.

Sunday came, and Zachariah and his wife attended the services at Pike Street Meeting-house, conducted by that worthy servant of God, the Reverend Thomas Bradshaw. He was at that time preaching a series of sermons on the Gospel Covenant, and he enlarged upon the distinction between those with whom the covenant was made and those with whom there was none, save of judgment. The poorest and the weakest, if they were sons of God, were more blessed than the strongest who were not. These were nothing: "they should go out like the smoke of a candle with an ill favour; whereas the weak and simple ones are upholden, and go from strength to strength, and increase with the increasings of God." Zachariah was rather confused by what had happened during the week, and his mind, especially during the long prayer, wandered a good deal much to his discomfort.

CHAPTER III--THE THEATRE

Major Maitland was very fond of the theatre, and as he had grown fond of Zachariah, and frequently called at his house, sometimes on business and sometimes for pleasure, he often asked his friend to

accompany him. But for a long time he held out. The theatre and dancing in 1814 were an abomination to the Independents. Since 1814 they have advanced, and consequently they not only go to plays and dance like other Christians, but the freer, less prejudiced, and more enlightened encourage the ballet, spend their holidays in Paris, and study French character there. Zachariah, however, had a side open to literature, and though he had never seen a play acted, he read plays. He read Shakespeare, and had often thought how wonderful one of his dramas must be on the stage. So it fell out that at last he yielded, and it was arranged that Mrs. and Mr. Coleman should go with the Major to Drury Lane to see the great Edmund Kean in "Othello." The day was fixed, and Mrs. Coleman was busy for a long time beforehand in furbishing up and altering her wedding-dress, so that she might make a decent figure. She was all excitement, and as happy as she could well be. For months Zachariah had not known her to be so communicative. She seemed to take an interest in politics; she discussed with him the report that Bonaparte was mad, and Zachariah, on his part, told her what had happened to him during the day, and what he had read in the newspapers. The Prince Regent had been to Oxford, and verses had been composed in his honour. Mr. Bosanquet had recited to the Prince an ode, or something of the kind, and had ventured, after dilating on the enormous services rendered by kings in general to the community during the last twenty years, to warn them:

"But ye yourselves must bow: your praise be given
To Him, the Lord of lords, your King in heaven."

And Mrs. Zachariah, with a smile and unwonted wit, wondered whether Mr. Bosanquet would not be prosecuted for such treasonable sentiments. Zachariah hardly knew what to make of his wife's gaiety, but he was glad. He thought that perhaps he was answerable for her silence and coldness, and he determined at all costs to try and amend, and, however weary he might be when he came home at night, that he would speak and get her to speak too.

The eventful evening arrived. Zachariah was to get away as early as he could; the Major was to call at about six. After Zachariah had washed and dressed, they were to take a hackney coach together. At the appointed hour the Major appeared, and found Mrs. Zachariah already in her best clothes and tea ready. She was charming--finished from the uttermost hair on her head to the sole of her slipper--and the dove-coloured, somewhat Quakerish tint of her wedding-gown suited her admirably. Quarter-past six came, but there was no Zachariah, and she thought she would make the tea, as he was never long over his meals. Half-past six, and he was not there. The two now sat down, and began to listen to every sound. The coach was ordered at a quarter to seven.

"What shall we do?" said the Major. "I cannot send you on and wait for him."

"No. How vexing it is! It is just like--" and she stopped.

"We must stay where we are, I suppose; it is rather a pity to miss being there when Kean first comes on."

She was in a fretful agony of impatience. She rose and looked out of the window, thought she heard somebody on the stairs, went outside on the landing, returned, walked up and down, and mentally cursed her husband, not profanely--she dared not do that--but with curses none the less intense. Poor man! he had been kept by a job he had to finish. She might have thought this possible, and, in fact, did think it possible; but it made no difference in the hatred which she permitted to rise against him. At last her animosity relaxed, and she began to regard him with more composure, and even with pleasure.

"Had you not better go and leave me here, so that we may follow? I do not know what has happened, and I am sure he would be so sorry if you were to be disappointed."

She turned her eyes anxiously towards the Major.

"That will never do. You know nothing about the theatre. No! no!"

She paused and stamped her little foot, and looked again out of the window.

The coachman knocked at the door, and when she went down asked her how long he had to wait.

She came back, and throwing herself on a chair, fairly gave way to her mortification, and cried out, "It is too bad--too bad!--it is, really."

"I'll tell you what," replied the Major. "Do you mind coming with me? We will leave one of the tickets which I have bought, and we can add a message that he is to follow, and that we will keep his place for him. Put on your bonnet at once, and I will scribble a line to him."

Mrs. Zachariah did not see any other course open; her wrath once more disappeared, and in another moment she was busy before the looking-glass. The note was written, and pinned to the ticket, both being stuck on the mantelpiece in a conspicuous place, so that Zachariah might see them directly he arrived. In exuberant spirits she added in her own hand, "Make as much haste as you can, my dear," and subscribed her initials. It was a tremendously hot afternoon and, what with the fire and the weather and the tea, the air was very oppressive. She threw the bottom sash open a little wider therefore, and the two rolled off to Drury Lane. As the door slammed behind them, the draught caught the ticket and note, and in a moment they were in the flames and consumed.

Ten minutes afterwards in came Zachariah. He had run all the way, and was dripping with perspiration. He rushed upstairs, but there was nobody. He stared round him, looked at the plates, saw that two had been there, rushed down again, and asked the woman in the shop:

"Has Mrs. Coleman left any message?"

"No. She went off with that gentleman that comes here now and then; but she never said nothing to me," and Zachariah thought he saw something like a grin on her face.

It may be as well to say that he never dreamed of any real injury

done to him by his wife, and, in truth, the Major was incapable of doing him any. He was gay, unorthodox, a man who went about in the world, romantic, republican, but he never would have condescended to seduce a woman, and least of all a woman belonging to a friend. He paid women whom he admired all kinds of attentions, but they were nothing more than the gallantry of the age. Although they were nothing, however, to him, they were a good deal more than nothing to Mrs. Zachariah. The symbolism of an act varies much, and what may be mere sport to one is sin in another. The Major's easy manners and very free courtesy were innocent so far as he was concerned; but when his rigid, religious companion in the hackney coach felt them sweet, and was better pleased with them than she had ever been with her husband's caresses, she sinned, and she knew that she sinned.

What curiously composite creatures we are! Zachariah for a moment was half pleased, for she had now clearly wronged him. The next moment, however, he was wretched. He took up the teapot; it was empty; the tea-caddy was locked up. It was a mere trifle, but, as he said to himself, the merest trifles are important if they are significant. He brooded, therefore, over the empty teapot and locked tea-caddy for fully five minutes. She had not only gone without him, but had forgotten him. At the end of the five minutes teapot and tea-caddy had swollen to enormous dimensions and had become the basis of large generalisations. "I would rather," he exclaimed, "be condemned to be led out and hung if I knew one human soul would love me for a week beforehand and honour me afterwards, than live half a century and be nothing to any living creature." Presently, however, it occurred to him that, although in the abstract this might be true yet at that particular moment he was a fool; and he made the best of his way to Drury Lane. He managed to find his way into the gallery just as Kean came on the stage in the second scene of the first act. Far down below him, through the misty air, he thought he could see his wife and the Major; but he was in an instant arrested by the play. It was all new to him; the huge building, the thousands of excited, eager faces, the lights, and the scenery. He had not listened, moreover, to a dozen sentences from the great actor before he had forgotten himself and was in Venice, absorbed in the fortunes of the Moor. What a blessing is this for which we have to thank the playwright and his interpreters, to be able to step out of the dingy, dreary London streets, with all their wretched corrosive cares, and at least for three hours to be swayed by nobler passions. For three hours the little petty self, with all its mean surroundings, withdraws: we breathe a different atmosphere, we are jealous, glad, weep, laugh with Shakespeare's jealousy, gladness, tears, and laughter! What priggishness, too, is that which objects to Shakespeare on a stage because no acting can realise the ideal formed by solitary reading! Are we really sure of it? Are we really sure that Garrick or Kean or Siddons, with all their genius and study, fall short of a lazy dream in an arm-chair! Kean had not only a thousand things to tell Zachariah--meanings in innumerable passages which had before been overlooked--but he gave the character of Othello such vivid distinctness that it might almost be called a creation. He was exactly the kind of actor, moreover, to impress him. He was great, grand, passionate, overwhelming with a like emotion the apprentice and the critic. Everybody after listening to a play or reading a book uses it when he comes to himself again to fill his own pitcher, and the Cyprus tragedy lent itself to Zachariah as an illustration of his own Clerkenwell sorrows and as a gospel for them, although his were so different from those of the Moor. Why did

he so easily suspect Desdemona? Is it not improbable that a man with any faith in woman, and such a woman, should proceed to murder on such evidence? If Othello had reflected for a moment, he would have seen that everything might have been explained. Why did he not question, sift, examine, before taking such tremendous revenge?--and for the moment the story seemed unnatural. But then he considered again that men and women, if they do not murder one another, do actually, in everyday life, for no reason whatever, come to wrong conclusions about each other; utterly and to the end of their lines misconstrue and lose each other. Nay, it seems to be a kind of luxury to them to believe that those who could and would love them are false to them. We make haste to doubt the divinest fidelity; we drive the dagger into each other, and we smother the Desdemona who would have been the light of life to us, not because of any deadly difference or grievous injury, but because we idly and wilfully reject.

The tale, evermore is:

"Of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe."

So said Zachariah to himself as he came out into Drury Lane and walked eastwards. His wife and the Major were back before him. The Major did not wait but returned at once to Albany Street, leaving Mrs. Coleman to sit up for her husband. He was not hurrying himself, and could not free himself from the crowd so easily as those who left from below. The consequence was that he was a full half-hour behind her, and she was not particularly pleased at having been kept so long out of her bed. When she let him in all that she said was, "Oh, here you are at last," and immediately retired. Strange to say, she forgot all about family worship--never before omitted, however late it might be. If she had taken the trouble to ask him whether he had seen her message and the ticket so much might have been cleared up. Of course he, too, ought to have spoken to her; it was the natural thing to do, and it was extraordinary that he did not. But he let her go; she knelt down by her bed, prayed her prayer to her God, and in five minutes was asleep. Zachariah ten minutes afterwards prayed his prayer to HIS God, and lay down, but not to sleep. No sooner was his head on his pillow than the play was before his eyes, and Othello, Desdemona, and Iago moved and spoke again for hours. Then came the thoughts with which he had left the theatre and the revulsion on reaching home. Burning with excitement at what was a discovery to him, he had entered his house with even an enthusiasm for his wife, and an impatient desire to try upon her the experiment which he thought would reveal so much to him and make him wealthy for ever. But when she met him he was struck dumb. He was shut up again in his old prison, and what was so hopeful three hours before was all vanity. So he struggled through the short night, and, as soon as he could, rose and went out. This was a frequent practice, and his wife was not surprised when she woke to find he had gone. She was in the best of spirits again, and when he returned, after offering him the usual morning greeting, she inquired at once in what part of the theatre he was, and why he had not used the ticket.

"We waited for you till the last moment; we should have been too late

if we had stayed an instant longer, and I made sure you would come directly."

"Ticket--what ticket? I saw no ticket?"

"We left it on the mantelpiece, and there was a message with it."

His face brightened, but he said nothing. A rush of blood rose to his head; he moved towards her and kissed her.

"What a wretch you must have thought me!" she said half laughingly, as she instantly smoothed her hair again, which he had ruffled. "But what has become of the ticket?"

"Fell in the fire most likely; the window was open when I came in, and the draught blew the picture over the mantelpiece nearly off its hook."

The breakfast was the happiest meal they had had for months. Zachariah did his best to overcome his natural indisposition to talk. Except when he was very much excited, he always found conversation with his wife too difficult on any save the most commonplace topics, although he was eloquent enough in company which suited him. She listened to him, recalling with great pleasure the events of the preceding evening. She was even affectionate--affectionate for her--and playfully patted his shoulder as he went out, warning him not to be so late again. What was the cause of her gaiety? Was she thinking improperly of the Major? No. If she had gone with Zachariah alone to the theatre would she have been so cheerful? No. Did she really think she loved her husband better? Yes. The human heart, even the heart of Mrs. Coleman, is beyond our analysis.

CHAPTER IV--A FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE

The Friends of the People continued their meetings, and Zachariah attended regularly, although, after about three months' experience, he began to doubt whether any advance was being made. The immediate subject of discussion now was a projected meeting in Spitalfields, and each branch of the Society was to organise its own contingent. All this was perfectly harmless. There was a good deal of wild talk occasionally; but it mostly came from Mr. Secretary, especially when he had had his beer. One evening he had taken more than enough, and was decidedly staggering as he walked down Lamb's Conduit Street homewards. Zachariah was at some distance, and in front of him, in close converse, were his shoemaking friend, the Major, and a third man whom he could not recognise. The Secretary swayed himself across Holborn and into Chancery Lane, the others following. Presently they came up to him, passed him, and turned off to the left, leaving him to continue his troubled voyage southwards. The night air, however, was a little too much for him, and when he got to Fleet Street he was under the necessity of supporting himself against a wall. He became more and more seditious as he became more and more muddled, so that at last he attracted the attention of a constable who laid hold of him and locked him up for the night. In the morning he was very much surprised to find himself in a cell, feeling very miserable, charged

with being drunk and disorderly, and, what was ten times worse, with uttering blasphemy against the Prince Regent. It may as well be mentioned here that the greatest precautions had been taken to prevent any knowledge by the authorities of the proceedings of the Friends of the People. The Habeas Corpus Act was not yet suspended, but the times were exceedingly dangerous. The Friends, therefore, never left in a body nor by the same door. Watch was always kept with the utmost strictness, not only on the stairs, but from a window which commanded the street. No written summons was ever sent to attend any meeting, ordinary or extraordinary. Mr. Secretary, therefore, was much disconcerted when he found that his pockets were emptied of all his official documents. He languished in his cell till about twelve o'clock, very sick and very anxious, when he was put into a cab, and, to his great surprise, instead of being taken to a police court, was carried to Whitehall. There he was introduced to an elderly gentleman, who sat at the head of a long table covered with green cloth. A younger man, apparently a clerk, sat at a smaller table by the fire and wrote, seeming to take no notice whatever of what was going on. Mr. Secretary expected to hear something about transportation, and to be denounced as an enemy of the human race; but he was pleasantly disappointed.

"Sorry to see a respectable person like you in such a position."

Mr. Secretary wondered how the gentleman knew he was respectable; but was silent. He was not now in an eloquent or seditious humour.

"You may imagine that we know you, or we should not have taken the trouble to bring you here. We should merely have had you committed for trial."

The Secretary thought of his empty pockets. In truth it was the Major who had emptied them before he crossed Holborn; but of course he suspected the constable.

"You must be aware that you have exposed yourself to heavy penalties. I prefer, however, to think of you as a well-meaning but misguided person. What good do you think you can do? I can assure you that the Government are fully aware of the distress which prevails, and will do all they can to alleviate it. If you have any grievances, why not seek their redress by legitimate and constitutional means?"

The Secretary was flattered. He had never been brought face to face with one of the governing classes before. He looked round; everything was so quiet, so pacific; there were no fetters nor thumbscrews; the sun was lighting up the park; children were playing in it, and the necessity for a revolution was not on that particular spot quite apparent.

A messenger now entered carrying some sandwiches and a little decanter of wine on a tray, covered with the whitest of cloths.

"It struck me," continued the official, taking a sandwich and pouring out a glass of wine, "when I heard of your arrest, that I should like myself to have a talk with you. We really are most loth to proceed to extremities. and you have, I understand, a wife and children. I need not tell you what we could do with you if we liked. Now, just consider, my friend. I don't want you to give up one single principle; but is it worth your while to be sent to jail and to have

your home broken up merely because you want to achieve your object in the wrong way, and in a foolish way? Keep your principles; we do not object; but don't go out into the road with them. And you, as an intelligent man, must see that you will not get what you desire by violence as soon as you will by lawful methods. Is the difference between us worth such a price as you will have to pay?"

The Secretary hesitated; he could not speak; he was very faint and nervous.

"Ah, you've had nothing to eat, I dare say."

The bell was rung, and was answered immediately.

"Bring some bread and cheese and beer."

The bread and cheese and beer were brought.

"Sit down there and have something; I will go on with my work, and we will finish our talk afterwards."

The Secretary could not eat much bread and cheese, but he drank the beer greedily.

When he had finished the clerk left the room. The Commissioner--for he was one of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury--followed him to the door, closed it, not without satisfying himself that the constable was at his post outside, returned to his seat, opened his drawer, saw that a pistol and five guineas were there, and then began:

"Now, look here, my dear sir, let me speak plainly with you and come to an understanding. We have made inquiries about you; we believe you to be a good sort of fellow, and we are not going to prosecute you. We do hope, however, that, should you hear anything which is--well--really treasonable, you will let us know. Treason, I am sure, is as dreadful to you as it is to me. The Government, as I said before, are most desirous of helping those who really deserve it; and to prove this, as I understand you are out of work, just accept that little trifle."

The guineas were handed to Mr. Secretary, who looked at them doubtfully. With the beer his conscience had returned, and he broke out:

"If you want me to be a d---d spy, d---d if I do!" The Commissioner was not in the least disconcerted. "Spy, my man!--who mentioned the word? The money was offered because you haven't got a sixpence. Haven't I told you you are not required to give up a single principle? Have I asked you to denounce a single companion? All I have requested you to do, as an honest citizen, is to give me a hint if you hear of anything which would be as perilous to you as to me."

The Secretary after his brief explosion felt flaccid. He was subject to violent oscillations, and he looked at the five guineas again. He was very weak--weak naturally, and weaker through a long course of alcohol. He was, therefore, prone to obscure, crooked, silly devices, at any rate when he was sober. Half drunk he was very bold; but when he had no liquor inside him he could NOT do what was

straight. He had not strength sufficient, if two courses were open, to cast aside the one for which there were the fewer and less conclusive reasons, and to take the proper path, as if no other were before him. A sane, strong person is not the prey of reasons: a person like Mr. Secretary can never free himself from them, and after he has arrived at some kind of determination is still uncertain and harks back. With the roar of the flames of the Cities of the Plain in his ears, he stops, and is half afraid that it was his duty after all to stay and try and put them out. The Secretary, therefore, pondered again. The money was given on no condition that was worth anything. For aught he knew, the Commissioner had his books and papers already. He could take the guineas and be just as free as he was before. He could even give a part of it to the funds of the Friends. There obtruded, moreover, visions of Newgate, and his hands slowly crept to the coins.

"I am a Radical, sir, and I don't mind who knows it."

"Nothing penal in that. Every man has a right to his own political creed."

The fingers crept closer and touched the gold.

"If I thought you wanted to bribe me, I'd rot before I had anything to do with you."

The Commissioner smiled. There was no necessity to say anything more, for the guineas were disappearing and finally, though slowly, chinked down into Mr. Secretary's pocket.

The Commissioner held out his hand.

The Secretary before he took it looked loftier than ever.

"I hope you understand me, sir, clearly."

"I DO understand you clearly."

The Secretary shook the hand; the Commissioner went with him to the door.

"Show this gentleman downstairs."

The constable, without a look of surprise, went downstairs, and Mr. Secretary found himself in the street.

Mr. Commissioner drank another glass of wine, and then pencilled something in a little memorandum book, which he put under the pistol. The drawer had two locks, and he carefully locked both with two little keys attached to a ribbon which he wore round his neck.

CHAPTER V--THE HORIZON WIDENS

Jean Caillaud, shoemaker, whom we have met before, commonly called John Kaylow, friend of the Major and member of the Society of the

Friends of the People, was by birth a Frenchman. He had originally come to this country in 1795, bringing with him a daughter, Pauline, about four or five years old. Why he came nobody knew, nor did anybody know who was the mother of the child. He soon obtained plenty of employment, for he was an admirable workman, and learned to speak English well. Pauline naturally spoke both English and French. Her education was accomplished with some difficulty, though it was not such a task as it might have been, because Jean's occupation kept him at home; his house being in one of the streets in that complication of little alleys and thoroughfares to most Londoners utterly unknown; within the sound of St. Bride's nevertheless, and lying about a hundred yards north of Fleet Street. If the explorer goes up a court nearly opposite Bouverie Street, he will emerge from a covered ditch into one that is opened, about six feet wide. Presently the ditch ends in another and wider ditch running east and west. The western one turns northward, and then westward again, roofs itself over, squeezes itself till it becomes little less than a rectangular pipe, and finally discharges itself under an oil and colourman's house in Fetter Lane. The eastern arm, strange to say, suddenly expands, and one side of it, for no earthly reason, is set back with an open space in front of it, partitioned by low palings. Immediately beyond, as if in a fit of sudden contrition for such extravagance, the passage or gutter contracts itself to its very narrowest and, diving under a printing-office shows itself in Shoe Lane. The houses in these trenches were not by any means of the worst kind. In the aforesaid expansion they were even genteel, or at any rate aspired to be so, and each had its own brass knocker and kept its front-door shut with decent sobriety and reticence. On the top floor of one of these tenements lodged Jean Caillaud and Pauline. They had three rooms between them; one was Jean's bedchamber, one Pauline's, and one was workroom and living-room, where Jean made ball-slippers and light goods--this being his branch of the trade--and Pauline helped him. The workroom faced the north, and was exactly on a level with an innumerable multitude of red chimney-pots pouring forth stinking smoke which, for the six winter months, generally darkened the air during the whole day. But occasionally Nature resumed her rights, and it was possible to feel that sky, stars, sun, and moon still existed, and were not blotted out by the obscurations of what is called civilised life. There came, occasionally, wild nights in October or November, with a gale from the south-west and then, when almost everybody had gone to bed and the fires were out, the clouds, illuminated by the moon, rushed across the heavens, and the Great Bear hung over the dismal waste of smutty tiles with the same solemnity with which it hangs over the mountains, the sea, or the desert. Early in the morning, too, in summer, between three and four o'clock in June, there were sights to be seen worth seeing. The distance was clear for miles, and the heights of Highgate were visible, proclaiming the gospel of a beyond and beyond even to Kent's Court, and that its immediate surroundings were mercifully not infinite. The light made even the nearest bit of soot-grimed, twisted, rotten brickwork beautiful, and occasionally, but at very rare intervals, the odour of London was vanquished, and a genuine breath from the Brixton fields was able to find its way uncontaminated across the river. Jean and Pauline were, on the whole, fond of the court. They often thought they would prefer the country, and talked about it; but it is very much to be doubted, if they had been placed in Devonshire, whether they would not have turned back uneasily after a time to their garret. They both liked the excitement of the city, and the feeling that they were so near to

everything that was stirring in men's minds. The long stretch of lonely sea-shore is all very well, very beautiful, and, maybe, very instructive to many people; but to most persons half-an-hour's rational conversation is much more profitable. Pauline was not a particularly beautiful girl. Her hair was black, and, although there was a great deal of it, it was coarse and untidy. Her complexion was sallow--not as clear as it might be--and underneath the cheek-bones there were slight depressions. She had grown up without an attachment, so far as her father knew, and indeed so far as she knew. She had one redeeming virtue--redeeming especially to Jean, who was with her alone so much. She had an intellect, and it was one which sought for constant expression; consequently she was never dull. If she was dull, she was ill. She had none of that horrible mental constriction which makes some English women so insupportably tedious. The last thing she read, the last thing she thought, came out with vivacity and force, and she did not need the stimulus of a great excitement to reveal what was in her. Living as she did at work side by side with her father all day, she knew all his thoughts and read all his books. Neither of them ever went to church. They were not atheists, nor had they entirely pushed aside the religious questions which torment men's minds. They believed in what they called a Supreme Being, whom they thought to be just and good; but they went no further. They were revolutionary, and when Jean joined the Friends of the People, he and the Major and one other man became a kind of interior secret committee, which really directed the affairs of the branch. Companions they had none, except the Major and one or two compatriots; but they were drawn to Zachariah, and Zachariah was drawn to them, very soon after he became a member of the Society. The first time he went to Kent's Court with Jean was one night after a meeting. The two walked home together, and Zachariah turned in for an hour, as it was but ten o'clock. There had been a grand thanksgiving at St. Paul's that day. The Prince Regent had returned thanks to Almighty God for the restoration of peace. The Houses of Parliament were there, with the Foreign Ambassadors, the City Corporation, the Duke of Wellington, Field-Marshal Blucher, peeresses, and society generally. The Royal Dukes, Sussex, Kent, York, and Gloucester, were each drawn by six horses and escorted by a separate party of the Guards. It took eight horses to drag the Prince himself to divine service, and he, too, was encompassed by soldiers. Arrived at the cathedral, he was marshalled to a kind of pew surmounted by a lofty crimson-and-gold canopy. There he sat alone, worshipped his Creator, and listened to a sermon by the Bishop of Chester. Neither Jean nor Pauline troubled themselves to go out, and indeed it would not have been of much use if they had tried; for it was by no means certain that Almighty God, who had been so kind as to get rid of Napoleon, would not permit a row in the streets. Consequently, every avenue which led to the line of the procession was strictly blocked. They heard the music from a distance, and although they both hated Bonaparte, it had not a pleasant sound in their ears. It was the sound of triumph over Frenchmen, and, furthermore, with all their dislike to the tyrant, they were proud of his genius.

Walking towards Clerkenwell that evening, the streets being clear, save for a number of drunken men and women, who were testifying to the orthodoxy of their religious and political faith by rolling about the kennel in various stages of intoxication, Jean pressed Zachariah to go upstairs with him. Pauline had prepared supper for herself and her father, and a very frugal meal it was, for neither of them could

drink beer nor spirits, and they could not afford wine. Pauline and Zachariah were duly introduced, and Zachariah looked around him. The room was not dirty, but it was extremely unlike his own. Shoe-making implements and unfinished jobs lay here and there without being "put away." An old sofa served as a seat, and on it were a pair of lasts, a bit of a French newspaper, and a plateful of small onions and lettuce, which could not find a place on the little table.

Zachariah, upstairs in Rosoman Street, had often felt just as if he were in his Sunday clothes and new boots. He never could make out what was the reason for it. There are some houses in which we are always uncomfortable. Our freedom is fettered, and we can no more take our ease in them than in a glass and china shop. We breathe with a sense of oppression, and the surroundings are like repellant chevaux de frise. Zachariah had no such feelings here. There was disorder, it is true; but, on the other hand, there was no polished tea-caddy to stare at him and claim equal rights against him, defying him to disturb it. He was asked to sit upon the sofa, and in so doing upset the plateful of salad upon the floor. Pauline smiled, was down upon her knees in an instant, before he could prevent her, picked up the vegetables and put them back again. To tell the truth, they were rather dirty; and she, therefore, washed them in a hand-basin. Zachariah asked her if she had been out that day.

"I?--to go with the Lord Mayor and bless the good God for giving us back Louis Bourbon? No Mr. Coleman; if the good God did give us Louis back again, I wouldn't bless Him for it, and I don't think He had much to do with it. So there were two reasons why I didn't go."

Zachariah was a little puzzled, a little shocked, and a little out of his element.

"I thought you might have gone to see the procession and hear the music."

"I hate processions. Whenever I see one, and am squeezed and trampled on just because those fine people may ride by, I am humiliated and miserable. As for the music, I hate that too. It is all alike, and might as well be done by machinery. Come, you are eating nothing. What conspiracy have you and my father hatched to-night?"

"Conspiracy!" said Jean. "Who are the conspirators? Not we. The conspirators are those thieves who have been to St. Paul's."

"To give thanks," said Pauline. "If I were up there in the sky, shouldn't I laugh at them. How comical it is! Did they give thanks for Austerlitz or Jena?"

"That's about the worst of it," replied Jean. "It is one vast plot to make the people believe lies. I shouldn't so much mind their robbing the country of its money to keep themselves comfortable, but what is the meaning of their Te Deums? I tell you again,"--and he repeated the words with much emphasis--"it is a vast plot to make men believe a lie. I abhor them for that ten times more than for taking my money to replace Louis."

"Oh," resumed Pauline, "IF I were only up in the sky for an hour, I would have thundered and lightened on them just as they got to the top of Ludgate Hill, and scattered a score or so of them. I wonder

if they would have thanked Providence for their escape? O father, such a joke! The Major told me the other day of an old gentleman he knew who was riding along in his carriage. A fireball fell and killed the coachman. The old gentleman, talking about it afterwards, said that "PROVIDENTIALLY it struck the box-seat."

Zachariah, although a firm believer in his faith, and not a coward, was tempted to be silent. He was heavy and slow in action, and this kind of company was strange to him. Furthermore, Pauline was not an open enemy, and notwithstanding her little blasphemies, she was attractive. But then he remembered with shame that he was ordered to testify to the truth wherever he might be, and unable to find anything of his own by which he could express himself, a text of the Bible came into his mind, and, half to himself, he repeated it aloud:

"I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things."

"What is that?" said Jean. "Repeat it."

Zachariah slowly repeated it. He had intended to add to it something which might satisfy his conscience and rebuke Pauline, but he could not.

"Whence is that?" said Jean.

"From the Bible; give me one and I will show it to you."

There was no English Bible in the house. It was a book not much used; but Pauline presently produced a French version, and Jean read the passage--"Qui forme la lumiere, et qui cree les tenebres; qui fait la paix, et qui cree l'adversite; c'est moi, l'Eternel, qui fais toutes les choses la."

Pauline bent over her father and read it again.

"Qui cree l'adversite," she said. "Do you believe that?"

"If it is there I do," said Zachariah.

"Well, I don't."

"What's adversity to hell fire? If He made hell-fire, why not adversity? Besides, if He did not, who did?"

"Don't know a bit, and don't mean to bother myself about it."

"Right!" broke in Jean--"right, my child; bother--that is a good word. Don't bother yourself about anything when--bothering will not benefit. There is so much in the world which will--bear a botheration out of which some profit will arise. Now, then, clear the room, and let Zachariah see your art."

The plates and dishes were all put in a heap and the table pushed aside. Pauline retired for a few moments, and presently came back in a short dress of black velvet, which reached about half-way down from the knee to the ankle. It was trimmed with red; she had stuck a red artificial flower in her hair, and had on a pair of red stockings with dancing slippers, probably of her own make. Over her shoulders

was a light gauzy shawl. Her father took his station in a corner, and motioned to Zachariah to compress himself into another. By dint of some little management and piling up the chairs an unoccupied space of about twelve feet square was obtained. Pauline began dancing, her father accompanying her with an oboe. It was a very curious performance. It was nothing like ordinary opera-dancing, and equally unlike any movement ever seen at a ball. It was a series of graceful evolutions with the shawl which was flung, now on one shoulder and now on the other, each movement exquisitely resolving itself, with the most perfect ease, into the one following, and designed apparently to show the capacity of a beautiful figure for poetic expression. Wave fell into wave along every line of her body, and occasionally a posture was arrested, to pass away in an instant into some new combination. There was no definite character in the dance beyond mere beauty. It was melody for melody's sake. A remarkable change, too, came over the face of the performer. She looked serious; but it was not a seriousness produced by any strain. It was rather the calm which is found on the face of the statue of a goddess. In none of her attitudes was there a trace of coquettishness, although some were most attractive. One in particular was so. She held a corner of the shawl high above her with her right hand, and her right foot was advanced so as to show her whole frame extended excepting the neck; the head being bent downward and sideways.

Suddenly Jean ceased; Pauline threw the shawl over both her shoulders, made a profound curtsy, and retired; but in five minutes she was back again in her ordinary clothes. Zachariah was in sore confusion. He had never seen anything of the kind before.

He had been brought up in a school which would have considered such an exhibition as the work of the devil. He was distressed too to find that the old Adam was still so strong within him that he detected a secret pleasure in what he had seen. He would have liked to have got up and denounced Jean and Pauline, but somehow he could not. His great great grandfather would have done it, beyond a doubt, but Zachariah sat still.

"Did you ever perform in public?" he asked.

"No. I was taught when I was very young; but I have never danced except to please father and his friends."

This was a relief, and some kind of an excuse. He felt not quite such a reprobate; but again he reflected that when he was looking at her he did not know that she was not in a theatre every night in the week. He expected that Jean would offer some further explanation of the unusual accomplishment which his daughter had acquired; but he was silent, and Zachariah rose to depart, for it was eleven o'clock. Jean apparently was a little restless at the absence of approval on Zachariah's part, and at last he said abruptly:

"What do you think of her?"

Zachariah hesitated, and Pauline came to the rescue. "Father, what a shame! Don't put him in such an awkward position."

"It was very wonderful," stammered Zachariah, "but we are not used to that kind of thing."

"Who are the 'we'?" said Pauline. "Ah, of course you are Puritans. I am a--what do you call it?--a daughter, no, that isn't it--a child of the devil. I won't have that though. My father isn't the devil. Even YOU wouldn't say that, Mr. Coleman. Ah, I have no business to joke, you look so solemn; you think my tricks are satanic; but what was it in your book, 'C'est moi, l'Eternel, qui fais toutes les choses la'?" and as Zachariah advanced to the doors he made him a bow with a grace which no lady of quality could have surpassed.

He walked home with many unusual thoughts. It was the first time he had ever been in the company of a woman of any liveliness of temperament, and with an intellect which was on equal terms with that of a man. In his own Calvinistic Dissenting society the pious women who were members of the church took little or no interest in the mental life of their husband. They read no books, knew nothing of politics, were astonishingly ignorant, and lived in their household duties. To be with a woman who could stand up against him was a new experience. Here was a girl to whom every thought her father possessed was familiar!

But there was another experience. From his youth upwards he had been trained with every weapon in the chapel armoury, and yet he now found himself as powerless as the merest novice to prevent the very sinful occupation of dwelling upon every attitude of Pauline, and outlining every one of her limbs. Do what he might, her image was for ever before his eyes, and reconstructed itself after every attempt to abolish it, just as a reflected image in a pool slowly but inevitably gathers itself together again after each disturbance of the water. When he got home, he found, to his surprise, that his wife was still sitting up. She had been to the weekly prayer-meeting, and was not in a very pleasant temper. She was not spiteful, but unusually frigid. She felt herself to be better than her husband, and she asked him if he could not arrange in future that his political meetings might not interfere with his religious duties.

"Your absence, too, was noticed, and Mrs. Carver asked me how it was that Mr. Coleman could let me go home alone. She offered to tell Mr. Carver to come home with me; but I refused."

Delightfully generous of Mrs. Carver! That was the sort of kindness for which she and many of her Pike Street friends were so distinguished; and Mrs. Coleman not only felt it deeply, but was glad of the opportunity of letting Mr. Coleman know how good the Carvers were.

It was late, but Mrs. Coleman produced the Bible. Zachariah opened it rather mechanically. They were going regularly through it at family worship, and had got into Numbers. The portion for that evening was part of the 26th chapter: "And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites," &c., &c. Zachariah, having read about a dozen verses, knelt down and prayed; but, alas, even in his prayer he saw Pauline's red stockings.

The next morning his wife was more pleasant, and even talkative--talkative, that is to say, for her. Something had struck her.

"My dear," quoth she, as they sat at breakfast, "what a pity it is that the Major is not a converted character!"

Zachariah could not but think so too.

"I have been wondering if we could get him to attend our chapel. Who knows?--some word might go to his heart which might be as the seed sown on good ground."

"Have you tried to convert him yourself?"

"Oh no, Zachariah! I don't think that would be quite proper."

She screwed up her lips a little, and then, looking down at her knees very demurely, smoothed her apron.

"Why not, my dear? Surely it is our duty to testify to the belief that is in us. Poor Christiana, left alone, says, as you will remember, 'O neighbour, knew you but as much as I do, I doubt not but that you would go with me.'"

"Ah, yes, that was all very well then." She again smoothed her apron. "Besides, you know," she added suddenly, "there were no public means of grace in the City of Destruction. Have YOU said anything to the Major?"

"No."

She did not push her advantage, and the unpleasant fact again stood before Zachariah's eyes, as it had stood a hundred times before them lately, that when he had been with sinners he had been just what they were, barring the use of profane language. What had he done for his master with the Major, with Jean, and with Pauline?--and the awful figure of the Crucified seemed to rise before him and rebuke him. He was wretched: he had resolved over and over again to break out against those who belonged to the world, to abjure them and all their works. Somehow or other, though, he had not done it.

"Suppose," said Mrs. Zachariah, "we were to ask the Major here on Sunday afternoon to tea, and to chapel afterwards."

"Certainly." He was rather pleased with the proposition. He would be able to bear witness in this way at any rate to the truth.

"Perhaps we might at the same time ask Jean Caillaud, his friend. Would to God"--his wife started--"would to God," he exclaimed fervently, "that these men could be brought into the Church of Christ!"

"To be sure. Ask Mr. Caillaud, then, too."

"If we do, we must ask his daughter also; he would not go out without her."

"I was not aware he had a daughter. You never told me anything about her."

"I never saw her till the other evening."

"I don't know anything of her. She is a foreigner too. I hope she is a respectable young person."

"I know very little; but she is more English than foreign. Jean has been here a good many years, and she came over when she was quite young. I think she must come."

"Very well." And so it was settled.

Zachariah that night vowed to his Redeemer that, come what might, he would never again give Him occasion to look at him with averted face and ask if he was ashamed of Him. The text ran in his ears:

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

CHAPTER VI--TEA A LA MODE

Sunday afternoon came. It was the strangest party. Pauline, on being introduced to Mrs. Coleman, made a profound curtsy, which Mrs. Coleman returned by an inclination of her head, as if she consented to recognise Pauline, but to go no further. Tea was served early, as chapel began at half-past six. Mrs. Coleman, although it was Sunday, was very busy. She had made hot buttered toast, and she had bought some muffins, but had appeased her conscience by telling the boy that she would not pay for them till Monday. The milk was always obtained on the same terms. She also purchased some water-cresses; but the water-cress man demanded prompt cash settlement, and she was in a strait. At last the desire for the water-cresses prevailed, and she said:

"How much?"

"Three-halfpence."

"Now, mind I give you twopence for yourself--mind I give it you. I do not approve of buying and selling on Sunday. We will settle about the other ha'porth another time."

"All right, ma'am; if you like it that way, it's no odds to me;" and Mrs. Coleman went her way upstairs really believing that she had prevented the commission of a crime.

Let those of us cast the stone who can take oath that in their own morality there is no casuistry. Probably ours is worse than hers, because hers was traditional and ours is self-manufactured.

Everything being at last in order, Mrs. Coleman, looking rather warm, but still very neat and very charming, sat at the head of the table, with her back to the fireplace; the Major was on her right, Jean on her left, Pauline next to him, and opposite to her Zachariah. Zachariah and his wife believed in asking a blessing on their food; but, curiously enough, in 1814, even amongst the strictest sort, it

had come to be the custom not to ask it at breakfast or tea, but only at dinner; although breakfast and tea in those days certainly needed a blessing as much as dinner, for they were substantial meals. An exception was made in favour of public tea-meetings. At a public tea-meeting a blessing was always asked and a hymn was always sung.

For some time nothing remarkable was said. The weather was very hot, and Mrs. Coleman complained. It had been necessary to keep up a fire for the sake of the kettle. The Major promptly responded to her confession of faintness by opening the window wider, by getting a shawl to put over the back of her chair; and these little attentions she rewarded by smiles and particular watchfulness over his plate and cup. At last he and Jean fell to talking about the jubilee which was to take place on the first of the next month to celebrate the centenary of the "accession of the illustrious family of Brunswick to the throne"--so ran the public notice. There was to be a grand display in the parks, a sham naval action on the Serpentine, and a balloon ascent.

"Are you going, Caillaud?" said the Major. "It will be a holiday."

"We," cried Pauline--"we! I should think not. WE go to rejoice over your House of Brunswick; and it is to be the anniversary of your battle of the Nile too! WE go! No, no."

"What's your objection to the House of Brunswick? And as for the battle of the Nile, you are no friend to Napoleon." So replied the Major, who always took a pleasure in exciting Pauline.

"The House of Brunswick! Why should we thank God for them; thank God for the stupidest race that ever sat upon a throne; thank God for stupidity--and in a king, Major? God, the Maker of the sun and stars--to call upon the nation to bless Him for your Prince Regent. As for the Nile, I am, as you say, no friend to Napoleon, but I am French. It is horrible to me to think--I saw him the other day--that your Brunswick Prince is in London and Napoleon is in Elba."

"God, after all," said the Major, laughing, "is not so hostile to stupidity, then; as you suppose."

"Ah! don't plague me, Major; that's what you are always trying to do. I'm not going to thank the Supreme for the Brunswicks. I don't believe He wanted them here."

Pauline's religion was full of the most lamentable inconsistencies, which the Major was very fond of exposing, but without much effect, and her faith was restored after every assault with wonderful celerity. By way of excuse for her we may be permitted to say that a perfectly consistent, unassailable creed, in which conclusion follows from premiss in unimpeachable order, is impossible. We cannot construct such a creed about any man or woman we know, and least of all about the universe. We acknowledge opposites which we have no power to bring together; and Pauline, although she knew nothing of philosophy, may not have been completely wrong with her Supreme who hated the Brunswicks and nevertheless sanctioned Carlton House.

Pauline surprised Mrs. Zachariah considerably. A woman, and more particularly a young woman, even supposing her to be quite orthodox, who behaved in that style amongst the members of Pike Street, would

have been like a wild seagull in a farmyard of peaceful, clucking, brown-speckled fowls. All the chapel maidens and matrons, of course, were serious; but their seriousness was decent and in order. Mrs. Coleman was therefore scandalised, nervous, and dumb. Jean, as his manner was when his daughter expressed herself strongly, was also silent. His love for her was a consuming, hungry fire. It utterly extinguished all trace, not merely of selfishness, but of self, in him, and he was perfectly content, when Pauline spoke well, to remain quiet, and not allow a word of his to disturb the effect which he thought she ought to produce.

The Major, as a man of the world, thought the conversation was becoming a little too metaphysical, and asked Mrs. Coleman gaily if she would like to see the fete.

"Really, I hardly know what to say. I suppose"--and this was said with a peculiar acidity--"there is nothing wrong in it? Zachariah, my dear, would you like to go?"

Zachariah did not reply. His thoughts were elsewhere. But at last the spirit moved in him:

"Miss Pauline, your Supreme Being won't help you very far. There is no light save in God's Holy Word. God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. That is the explanation; that is the gospel. God allows all this wickedness that His own glory may be manifested thereby, and His own love in sending Jesus Christ to save us: that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Do you ask me why does God wink at the crimes of kings and murderers? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom He had called? Miss Pauline, the mere light of human reason will never save you or give you peace. Unless you believe God's Word you are lost; lost here and hereafter; lost HERE even, for until you believe it you wander in a fog of ever deepening confusion. All is dark and inexplicable."

Being very much excited, he used largely the words of St. Paul, and not his own. How clear it all seemed to him, how indisputable! Childish association and years of unquestioning repetition gave an absolute certainty to what was almost unmeaning to other people.

Mrs. Zachariah, although she had expressed a strong desire for the Major's conversion, and was the only other representative of the chapel present, was very fidgety and uncomfortable during this speech. She had an exquisite art, which she sometimes practised, of dropping her husband, or rather bringing him down. So, when there was a pause, everybody being moved at least by his earnestness, she said:

"My dear, will you take any more tea?"

He was looking on the table-cloth, with his head on his hands, and did not answer.

"Major Maitland, may I give you some more tea?"

"No, thank you." The Major too was impressed--more impressed than the lady who sat next to him, and she felt rebuffed and annoyed. To Pauline, Zachariah had spoken Hebrew; but his passion was human, and her heart leapt out to meet him, although she knew not what answer to make. Her father was in the same position; but the Major's case was a little different. He had certainly at some time or other read the Epistle to the Romans, and some expressions were not entirely unfamiliar to him.

"Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction!--a strong and noble phrase. Who are your vessels of wrath, Coleman?"

Caillaud and Pauline saw a little light, but it was speedily eclipsed again.

"The unregenerate."

"Who are they?"

"Those whom God has not called."

"Castlereagh, Liverpool, Sidmouth, and the rest of the gang, for example?"

Zachariah felt that the moment had come.

"Yes, yes; but not only they. More than they. God help me if I deny the Cross of Christ--all of us into whose hearts God's grace has not been poured--we, you, all of us, if we have not been born of the Spirit and redeemed by the sacrifice of His Son."

Zachariah put in the "us" and the "we," it will be observed. It was a concession to blunt the sharpness of that dreadful dividing-line.

"We? Not yourself, Caillaud, and Pauline?"

He could not face the question. Something within him said that he ought to have gone further; that he ought to have singled out the Major, Caillaud, and Pauline; held them fast, looked straight into their eyes, and told them each one there and then that they were in the bonds of iniquity, sold unto Satan, and in danger of hell-fire. But, alas! he was at least a century and a half too late. He struggled, wrestled, self against self, and failed, not through want of courage, but because he wanted a deeper conviction. The system was still the same, even to its smallest details, but the application had become difficult. The application, indeed, was a good deal left to the sinner himself. That was the difference. Phrases had been invented or discovered which served to express modern hesitation to bring the accepted doctrine into actual, direct, week-day practice. It was in that way that it was gradually bled into impotence. One of these phrases came into his mind. It was from his favourite author:

"Who art thou that judgest?' It is not for me, Major Maitland."

Ah, but, Zachariah, do you not remember that Paul is not speaking of those who deny the Lord, but of the weak in faith; of differences in

eating and drinking, and the observation of days? Whether he remembered it or not, he could say no more. Caillaud, the Major, Pauline, condemned to the everlasting consequences of the wrath of the Almighty! He could not pronounce such a sentence, and yet his conscience whispered that just for want of the last nail in a sure place what he had built would come tumbling to the ground. During the conversation the time had stolen away, and, to their horror, Zachariah and his wife discovered that it was a quarter-past six. He hastily informed his guests that he had hoped they would attend him to his chapel. Would they go? The Major consented. He had nothing particular on hand, but Caillaud and Pauline refused. Zachariah was particularly urgent that these two should accompany him, but they were steadfast, for all set religious performances were hateful to them.

"No, Coleman, no more; I know what it all means."

"And I," added Pauline, "cannot sit still with so many respectable people; I never could. I have been to church, and always felt impelled to do something peculiar in it which would have made them turn me out. I cannot, too, endure preaching. I cannot tolerate that man up in the pulpit looking down over all the people--so wise and so self-satisfied. I want to pull him out and say, 'Here, you, sir, come here and let me see if you can tell me two or three things I want to know.' Then, Mr. Coleman, I am never well in a great building, especially in a church; I have such a weight upon my head as if the roof were resting on it."

He looked mournfully at her, but there was no time to remonstrate. Mrs. Zachariah was ready, in her Sunday best of sober bluish cloud-colour. Although it was her Sunday best, there was not a single thread of finery on it, and there was not a single crease nor spot. She bade Caillaud and Pauline good-bye with much cheerfulness, and tripped downstairs. The Major had preceded her, but Zachariah lingered for a moment with the other two.

"Come, my dear, make haste, we shall be so late."

"Go on with the Major; I shall catch you in a moment; I walk faster than you. I must close the window a trifle, and take two or three of the coals off the fire."

Caillaud and Pauline lingered too. The three were infinitely nearer to one another than they knew. Zachariah thought he was so far, and yet he was so close. The man rose up behind the Calvinist, and reached out arms to touch and embrace his friends.

"Good-bye, Caillaud; good-bye, Pauline! May God in His mercy bless and save you. God bless you!"

Caillaud looked steadfastly at him for a moment. and then, in his half-forgotten French fashion, threw his arms round his neck, and the two remained for a moment locked together, Pauline standing by herself apart. She came forward, took Zachariah's hand, when it was free, in both her own, held her head back a little, as if for clearness of survey, and said slowly, "God bless you, Mr. Coleman." She then went downstairs. Her father followed her, and Zachariah went after his wife and the Major, whom, however, he did not overtake till he reached the chapel door, where they were both waiting for

him.

CHAPTER VII--JEPHTHAH

The Reverend Thomas Bradshaw, of Pike Street Meeting-House, was not a descendant from Bradshaw the regicide, but claimed that he belonged to the same family. He was in 1814 about fifty years old, and minister of one of the most important churches in the eastern part of London. He was tall and spare, and showed his height in the pulpit, for he always spoke without a note, and used a small Bible, which he held close to his eyes. He was a good classical scholar, and he understood Hebrew, too, as well as few men in that day understood it. He had a commanding figure, ruled his church like a despot; had a crowded congregation, of which the larger portion was masculine; and believed in predestination and the final perseverance of the saints. He was rather unequal in his discourses, for he had a tendency to moodiness, and, at times, even to hypochondria. When this temper was upon him he was combative or melancholy; and sometimes, to the disgust of many who came from all parts of London to listen to him, he did not preach in the proper sense of the word, but read a chapter, made a comment or two upon it, caused a hymn to be sung, and then dismissed his congregation with the briefest of prayers. Although he took no active part in politics, he was republican through and through, and never hesitated for a moment in those degenerate days to say what he thought about any scandal. In this respect he differed from his fellow-ministers, who, under the pretence of increasing zeal for religion, had daily fewer and fewer points of contact with the world outside. Mr. Bradshaw had been married when he was about thirty; but his wife died in giving birth to a daughter, who also died,--and for twenty years he had been a widower, with no thought of changing his condition. He was understood to have peculiar opinions about second marriages, although he kept them very much to himself. One thing, however, was known, that for a twelvemonth after the death of his wife he was away from England, and that he came back an altered man to his people in Bedfordshire, where at that time he was settled. His discourses were remarkably strong, and of a kind seldom, or indeed never, heard now. They taxed the whole mental powers of his audience, and were utterly unlike the simple stuff which became fashionable with the Evangelistic movement. Many of them, taken down by some of his hearers, survive in manuscript to the present day. They will not, as a rule, bear printing, because the assumption on which they rest is not now assumed; but if it be granted, they are unanswerable; and it is curious that even now and then, although they are never for a moment anything else than a strict deduction from what we in the latter half of the century consider unproven or even false, they express themselves in the same terms as the newest philosophy. Occasionally too, more particularly when he sets himself the task of getting into the interior of a Bible character, he is intensely dramatic, and what are shadows to the careless reader become living human beings, with the reddest of blood visible under their skin.

On this particular evening Mr. Bradshaw took the story of Jephthah's daughter: --"The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah." Here is an abstract of his discourse. "It WAS the Spirit of the Lord,

notwithstanding what happened. I beg you also to note that there is a mistranslation in our version. The Hebrew has it, 'Then it shall be, that WHOSOEVER'--not WHATSOEVER--'cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer HIM'--not IT--'up for a burnt-offering.' Nevertheless I believe my text--it WAS the Spirit of the Lord. This Hebrew soldier was the son of a harlot. He was driven by his brethren out of his father's house. Ammon made war upon Israel, and in their distress the elders of Israel went to fetch Jephthah. Mark, my friends, God's election. The children of the lawful wife are passed by, and the child of the harlot is chosen. Jephthah forgets his grievances and becomes captain of the host. Ammon is over against them. Jephthah's rash vow--this is sometimes called. I say it is not a rash vow. It may be rash to those who have never been brought to extremity by the children of Ammon--to those who have not cared whether Ammon or Christ wins. Men and women sitting here in comfortable pews"--this was said with a kind of snarl--"may talk of Jephthah's rash vow. God be with them, what do they know of the struggles of such a soul? It does not say so directly in the Bible, but we are led to infer it, that Jephthah was successful because of his vow. 'The Lord delivered them into his hands.' He would not have done it if He had been displeased with the 'rash vow'" (another snarl). "He smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minnith. Ah, but what follows? The Omnipotent and Omniscient might have ordered it, surely, that a slave might have met Jephthah. Why, in His mercy, did He not do it? Who are we that we should question what He did? But if we may not inquire too closely into His designs, it is permitted us, my friends, when His reason accords with ours, to try and show it. Jephthah had played for a great stake. Ought the Almighty--let us speak it with reverence--to have let him off with an ox, or even with a serf? I say that if we are to conquer Ammon we must pay for it, and we ought to pay for it. Yes, and perhaps God wanted the girl--who can tell? Jephthah comes back in triumph. Let me read the passage to you: --'Behold his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: AND SHE WAS HIS ONLY CHILD: BESIDE HER HE HAD NEITHER SON NOR DAUGHTER. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.' Now, you read poetry, I dare say--what you call poetry. I say in all of it--all, at least, I have seen--nothing comes up to that. 'SHE WAS HIS ONLY CHILD: BESIDE HER HE HAD NEITHER SON NOR DAUGHTER.'"--(Mr. Bradshaw's voice broke a little as he went over the words again with great deliberation and infinite pathos.)--"The inspired writer leaves the fact just as it stands, and is content. Inspiration itself can do nothing to make it more touching than it is in its own bare nakedness. There is no thought in Jephthah of recantation, nor in the maiden of revolt, but nevertheless he has his own sorrow. HE IS BROUGHT VERY LOW. God does not rebuke him for his grief. He knows well enough, my dear friends, the nature which He took upon Himself--nay, are we not the breath of His nostrils, created in His image? He does not anywhere, therefore, I say, forbid that we should even break our hearts over those we love and lose. She asks for two months by herself upon the mountains before her death. What a time for him! At the end of the two months God held him still to his vow; he did not shrink; she submitted, and was slain. But you will want me to tell you in conclusion where the gospel is in all this. Gospel! I say that the blessed gospel is in the Old Testament as well as in the New. I say

that the Word of God is one, and that His message is here this night for you and me, as distinctly as it is at the end of the sacred volume. Observe, as I have told you before, that Jephthah is the son of the harlot. He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy. He calls them His people who are not His people; and He calls her beloved which was not beloved. God at any rate is no stickler for hereditary rights. Moreover, it does not follow because you, my hearers, have God-fearing parents, that God has elected you. He may have chosen, instead of you, instead of me, the wretchedest creature outside, whose rags we will not touch. But to what did God elect Jephthah? To a respectable, easy, decent existence, with money at interest, regular meals, sleep after them, and unbroken rest at night? He elected him to that tremendous oath and that tremendous penalty. He elected him to the agony he endured while she was away upon the hills! That is God's election; an election to the cross and to the cry, 'Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani.' 'Yes,' you will say, 'but He elected him to the victory over Ammon.' Doubtless He did; but what cared Jephthah for his victory over Ammon when she came to meet him, or, indeed, for the rest of his life? What is a victory, what are triumphal arches and the praise of all creation to a lonely man? Be sure, if God elects you, He elects you to suffering. Whom He loveth He chasteneth, and His stripes are not play-work. Ammon will not be conquered unless your heart be well nigh broken. I tell you, too, as Christ's minister, that you are not to direct your course according to your own desires. You are not to say, 'I will give up this and that so that I may be saved.' Did not St. Paul wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren? If God should command you to go down to the bottomless pit in fulfilment of His blessed designs, it is your place to go. Out with self--I was about to say this damned self; and if Israel calls, if Christ calls, take not a sheep or ox--that is easy enough--but take your choicest possession, take your own heart, your own blood, your very self, to the altar."

During the sermon the Major was much excited. Apart altogether from the effect of the actual words spoken, Mr. Bradshaw had a singular and contagious power over men. The three, Mrs. Coleman, the Major, and Zachariah, came out together. Mrs. Zachariah stayed behind in the lobby for some female friend to whom she wished to speak about a Sunday-school tea-meeting which was to take place that week. The other two stood aside, ill at ease, amongst the crowd pressing out into the street. Presently Mrs. Coleman found her friend, whom she at once informed that Major Maitland and her husband were waiting for her, and that therefore she had not a moment to spare. That little triumph accomplished, she had nothing of importance to say about the tea-meeting, and rejoined her party with great good-humour. She walked between the Major and Zachariah, and at once asked the Major how he "enjoyed the service." The phrase was very unpleasant to Zachariah, but he was silent.

"Well, ma'am," said the Major, "Mr. Bradshaw is a very remarkable man. It is a long time since any speaker stirred me as he did. He is a born orator, if ever there was one."

"I could have wished," said Zachariah, "as you are not often in chapel, that his sermon had been founded on some passage in the New Testament which would have given him the opportunity of more simply expounding the gospel of Christ."

"He could not have been better, I should think. He went to my heart,

though it is rather a difficult passage in the case of a man about town like me; and I tell you what, Coleman, he made me determine I would read the Bible again. What a story that is!"

"Major, I thank God if you will read it; and not for the stories in it, save as all are part of one story--the story of God's redeeming mercy."

The Major made no reply, for the word was unwinged.

Mrs. Zachariah was silent, but when they came to their door both she and her husband pressed him to come in. He refused, however; he would stroll homeward, he said, and have a smoke as he went.

"He touched me, Coleman, he did. I thought, between you and me"--and he spoke softly--"I had not now got such a tender place; I thought it was all healed over long ago. I cannot come in. You'll excuse me. Yes, I'll just wander back to Piccadilly. I could not talk."

They parted, and Zachariah and his wife went upstairs. Their supper was soon ready.

"Jane," he said slowly, "I did not receive much assistance from you in my endeavours to bring our friends to a knowledge of the truth. I thought that, as you desired the attempt, you would have helped me a little."

"There is a reason for everything; and, what is more, I do not consider it right to take upon myself what belongs to a minister. It may do more harm than good."

"Take upon yourself what belongs to a minister! My dear Jane, is nobody but a minister to bear witness for the Master?"

"Of course I did not mean to say that; you know I did not. Why do you catch at my words? Perhaps, if you had not been quite so forward, Mr. Caillaud and his daughter might have gone to chapel."

After supper, and when he was alone, Zachariah sat for some time without moving. He presently rose and opened the Bible again, which lay on the table--the Bible which belonged to his father--and turned to the fly-leaf on which was written the family history. There was the record of his father's marriage, dated on the day of the event. There was the record of his own birth. There was the record of his mother's death, still in his father's writing, but in an altered hand, the letters not so distinct, and the strokes crooked and formed with difficulty. There was the record of Zachariah's own marriage. A cloud of shapeless, inarticulate sentiment obscured the man's eyes and brain. He could not define what he felt, but he did feel. He could not bear it, and he shut the book, opening it again at the twenty-second Psalm--the one which the disciples of Jesus called to mind on the night of the crucifixion. It was one which Mr. Bradshaw often read, and Zachariah had noted in it a few corrections made in the translation:

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. . . . Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. . . . Be Thou not far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste Thee to help me.

. . . Save me from the lion's mouth: and from the horns of the wild oxen Thou hast answered me."

"From the horns of the wild oxen"--that correction had often been precious to Zachariah. When at the point of being pinned to the ground--so he understood it--help had arisen; risen up from the earth, and might again arise. It was upon the first part of the text he dwelt now. It came upon him with fearful distinctness that he was alone--that he could never hope for sympathy from his wife as long as he lived. Mr. Bradshaw's words that evening recurred to him. God's purpose in choosing to smite Jephthah in that way was partly intelligible, and, after all, Jephthah was elected to redeem his country too. But what could be God's purpose in electing one of his servants to indifference and absence of affection where he had a right to expect it? Could anybody be better for not being loved? Even Zachariah could not think it possible. But Mr. Bradshaw's words again recurred. Who was he that he should question God's designs? It might be part of the Divine design that he, Zachariah Coleman, should not be made better by anything. It might be part of that design, part of a fulfilment of a plan devised by the Infinite One, that he should be broken, nay, perhaps not saved. Mr. Bradshaw's doctrine that night was nothing new. Zachariah had believed from his childhood, or had thought he believed, that the potter had power over the clay--of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour; and that the thing formed unto dishonour could not reply and say to him that formed it: "Why hast thou made me thus?" Nevertheless, to believe it generally was one thing; to believe it as a truth for him was another. Darkness, the darkness as of the crucifixion night, seemed over and around him. Poor wretch! he thought he was struggling with his weakness; but he was in reality struggling against his own strength. WHY had God so decreed? Do what he could, that fatal WHY, the protest of his reason, asserted itself; and yet he cursed himself for permitting it, believing it to be a sin. He walked about his room for some relief. He looked out of the window. It was getting late; the sky was clearing, as it does in London at that hour, and he saw the stars. There was nothing to help him there. They mocked him rather with their imperturbable, obstinate stillness. At last he turned round, fell upon his knees, and poured out himself before his Maker, entreating Him for light. He rose from the ground, looked again out of the window, and the first flush of the morning was just visible. Light was coming to the world in obedience to the Divine command, but not to him. He was exhausted, and crept into his bedroom, undressing without candle, and without a sound. For a few minutes he thought he should never sleep again, save in his grave; but an unseen Hand presently touched him, and he knew nothing till he was awakened by the broad day streaming over him.

CHAPTER VIII--UNCONVENTIONAL JUSTICE

In December, 1814, a steamboat was set in motion on the Limehouse Canal, the Lord Mayor and other distinguished persons being on board. In the same month Joanna Southcott died. She had announced that on the 19th October she was to be delivered of the Prince of Peace, although she was then sixty years old. Thousands of persons believed

her, and a cradle was made. The Prince of Peace did not arrive, and in a little more than two months poor Joanna had departed, the cause of her departure having being certified as dropsy. Death did not diminish the number of her disciples, for they took refuge in the hope of her resurrection. "The arm of the Lord is not shortened," they truly affirmed; and even to this day there are people who are waiting for the fulfilment of Joanna's prophecies and the appearance of the "second Shiloh." Zachariah had been frequently twitted in joke by his profane companions in the printing-office upon his supposed belief in the delusion. It was their delight to assume that all the "pious ones," as they called them, were alike; and on the morning of the 30th of December, the day after Joanna expired, they were more than usually tormenting. Zachariah did not remonstrate. In his conscientious eagerness to bear witness for his Master, he had often tried his hand upon his mates; but he had never had the smallest success, and had now desisted. Moreover, his thoughts were that morning with his comrades, the Friends of the People. He hummed to himself the lines from Lara:

"Within that land was many a malcontent,
Who cursed the tyranny to which he bent;
That soil full many a wringing despot saw,
Who worked his wantonness in form of law:
Long war without and frequent broil within
Had made a path for blood and giant sin."

The last meeting had been unusually exciting. Differences of opinion had arisen as to future procedure, many of the members, the Secretary included, advocating action; but what they understood by it is very difficult to say. A special call had been made for that night, and Zachariah was in a difficulty. His native sternness and detestation of kings and their ministers would have led him almost to any length; but he had a sober head on his shoulders. So had the Major, and so had Caillaud. Consequently they held back, and insisted, before stirring a step towards actual revolution, that there should be some fair chance of support and success. The Major in particular warned them of the necessity of drill; and plainly told them also that, not only were the middle classes all against them, but their own class was hostile. This was perfectly true, although it was a truth so unpleasant that he had to endure some very strong language, and even hints of treason. No wonder: for it is undoubtedly very bitter to be obliged to believe that the men whom we want to help do not themselves wish to be helped. To work hard for those who will thank us, to head a majority against oppressors, is a brave thing; but far more honour is due to the Maitlands, Caillauds, Colemans, and others of that stamp who strove for thirty years from the outbreak of the French revolution onwards, not merely to rend the chains of the prisoners, but had to achieve the more difficult task of convincing them that they would be happier if they were free. These heroes are forgotten, or nearly so. Who remembers the poor creatures who met in the early mornings on the Lancashire moors or were shot by the yeomanry? They sleep in graves over which stands no tombstone, or probably their bodies have been carted away to make room for a railway which has been driven through their resting-place. They saw the truth before those whom the world delights to honour as its political redeemers; but they have perished utterly from our recollection, and will never be mentioned in history. Will there

ever be a great Day of Assize when a just judgment shall be pronounced; when all the impostors who have been crowned for what they did not deserve will be stripped, and the Divine word will be heard calling upon the faithful to inherit the kingdom,--who, when "I was an hungered gave me meat, when I was thirsty gave me drink; when I was a stranger took me in; when I was naked visited me; when I was in prison came unto me?" Never! It was a dream of an enthusiastic Galilean youth, and let us not desire that it may ever come true. Let us rather gladly consent to be crushed into indistinguishable dust, with no hope of record: rejoicing only if some infinitesimal portion of the good work may be achieved by our obliteration, and content to be remembered only in that anthem which in the future it will be ordained shall be sung in our religious services in honour of all holy apostles and martyrs who have left no name.

The night before the special meeting a gentleman in a blue cloak, and with a cigar in his mouth, sauntered past the entrance to Carter's Rents, where Mr. Secretary lived. It was getting late, but he was evidently not in a hurry, and seemed to enjoy the coolness of the air, for presently he turned and walked past the entrance again. He took out his watch--it was a quarter to eleven o'clock--and he cursed Mr. Secretary and the beer-shops which had probably detained him. A constable came by, but never showed himself in the least degree inquisitive; although it was odd that anybody should select Carter's Rents for a stroll. Presently Mr. Secretary came in sight, a trifle, but not much, the worse for liquor. It was odd, also, that he took no notice of the blue cloak and cigar, but went straight to his own lodging. The other, after a few moments followed; and it was a third time odd that he should find the door unbolted and go upstairs. All this, we say, would have been strange to a spectator, but it was not so to these three persons. Presently the one first named found himself in Mr. Secretary's somewhat squalid room. He then stood disclosed as the assistant whom the Secretary had first seen at Whitehall sitting in the Commissioner's Office. This was not the second nor third interview which had taken place since then.

"Well, Mr. Hardy, what do you want here to-night?"

"Well, my friend, you know, I suppose. How goes the game?"

"D---m me if I DO know. If you think I am going to split, you are very much mistaken."

"Split! Who wants you to split? Why, there's nothing to split about. I can tell you just as much as you can tell me."

"Why do you come here then?"

"For the pleasure of seeing you, and to--" Mr. Hardy put his hand carelessly in his pocket, a movement which was followed by a metallic jingle--"and just to--to--explain one or two little matters."

The Secretary observed that he was very tired.

"Are you? I believe I am tired too."

Mr. Hardy took out a little case-bottle with brandy in it, and the Secretary, without saying a word, produced two mugs and a jug of water. The brandy was mixed by Mr. Hardy; but his share of the

spirit differed from that assigned to his friend.

"Split!" he continued; "no, I should think not. But we want you to help us. The Major and one or two more had better be kept out of harm's way for a little while; and we propose not to hurt them, but to take care of them a bit, you understand? And if, the next time, he and the others will be there--we have been looking for the Major for three or four days, but he is not to be found in his old quarters--we will just give them a call. When will you have your next meeting? They will be all handy then."

"You can find that out without my help. It's to-morrow."

"Ah! I suppose you've had a stormy discussion. I hope your moderate counsels prevailed."

Mr. Secretary winked and gave his head a twist on one side, as if he meant thereby to say: "You don't catch me."

"It's a pity," continued Mr. Hardy, taking no notice, "that some men are always for rushing into extremities. Why don't they try and redress their grievances, if they have any, in the legitimate way which you yourself propose--by petition?"

It so happened that a couple of hours before, Mr. Secretary having been somewhat noisy and insubordinate, the Major had been obliged to rule him out of order and request his silence. The insult--for so he

considered it--was rankling in him.

"Because," he replied, "we have amongst us two or three d---d conceited, stuck-up fools, who think they are going to ride over us. By God, they are mistaken though! They are the chaps who do all the mischief. Not that I'd say anything against them--no, notwithstanding I stand up against them."

"Do all the mischief--yes, you've just hit it. I do believe that if it were not for these fellows the others would be quiet enough."

The Secretary took a little more brandy and water. The sense of wrong within him was like an open wound, and the brandy inflamed it. He also began to think that it would not be a bad thing for him if he could seclude the Major, Caillaud, and Zachariah for a season. Zachariah in particular he mortally hated.

"What some of these fine folks would like to do, you see, Mr. Hardy, is to persuade us poor devils to get up the row, while they DIRECT it. DIRECT it, that's their word; but we're not going to be humbugged."

"Too wide awake, I should say."

"I should say so too. We are to be told off for the Bank of England, and they are to show it to us at the other end of Cheapside."

"Bank of England," said Mr. Hardy, laughing; "that's a joke. You might run your heads a long while against that before you get in. You don't drink your brandy and water."

The Secretary took another gulp. "And he's a military man--a military man--a military man." He was getting rather stupid now, and repeated the phrase each of the three times with increasing unsteadiness, but also with increasing contempt.

Mr. Hardy took out his watch. It was getting on towards midnight. "Good-bye; glad to see you all right," and he turned to leave. There was a jingling of coin again, and when he had left Mr. Secretary took up the five sovereigns which had found their way to the table and put them in his pocket. His visitor picked his way downstairs. The constable was still pacing up and down Carter's Rents, but again did not seem to observe him, and he walked meditatively to Jermyn Street. He was at his office by half-past nine, and his chief was only half-an-hour later.

The Major had thought it prudent to change his address; and, furthermore, it was the object of the Government to make his arrest, with that of his colleagues, at the place of meeting, not only to save trouble, but because it would look better. Mr. Hardy had found out, therefore, all he wanted to know, and was enabled to confirm his opinion that the Major was the head of the conspiracy.

But underneath Mr. Secretary's mine was a deeper mine; for as the Major sat at breakfast the next morning a note came for him, the messenger leaving directly he delivered it to the servant. It was very brief:- "No meeting to-night. Warn all except the Secretary, who has already been acquainted." There was no signature, and he did not know the handwriting. He reflected for a little while, and then determined to consult Caillaud and Coleman, who were his informal Cabinet. He had no difficulty in finding Coleman, but the Caillauds were not at home, and it was agreed that postponement could do no harm. A message was therefore left at Caillaud's house, and one was sent to every one of the members, but two or three could not be discovered.

Meanwhile Mr. Secretary, who, strange to say, had NOT been acquainted, had been a little overcome by Mr. Hardy's brandy on the top of the beer he had taken beforehand, and woke in the morning very miserable. Finding the five guineas in his pocket, he was tempted to a public-house hard by, in order that he might cool his stomach and raise his spirits with a draught or two of ale. He remained there a little too long, and on reaching home was obliged to go to bed again. He awoke about six, and then it came into his still somewhat confused brain that he had to attend the meeting. At half-past seven he accordingly took his departure. Meanwhile the Major and Zachariah had determined to post themselves in Red Lion Street, to intercept those of their comrades with whom they had not been able to communicate, and also to see what was going to happen. At a quarter to eight the Secretary turned out of Holborn, and when he came a little nearer, Zachariah saw that at a distance of fifty yards there was a constable following him. He came on slowly until he was abreast of a narrow court, when suddenly there was a pistol-shot, and he was dead on the pavement. Zachariah's first impulse was to rush forward, but he saw the constable running, followed by others, and he discerned in an instant that to attempt to assist would lead to his own arrest and do no good. He managed, however, to reach the Major, and for two or three moments they stood stock-still on the edge of the pavement struck with amazement. Presently a woman passed them with a thick veil over her face.

"Home," she said; "don't stay here like fools. Pack up your things and be off. You'll be in prison to-morrow morning."

"Be off!" gasped Zachariah; "be off!--where?"

"Anywhere!" and she had gone.

The constables, after putting the corpse in a hackney coach, proceeded to the room; but it was dark and empty. They had no directions to do anything more that night, and returned to Bow Street. The next morning, however, as soon as it was light, a Secretary of State's warrant, backed by sufficient force, was presented at the lodgings of Caillaud and Zachariah. The birds had flown, and not a soul could tell what had become of them. In Zachariah's street, which was rather a Radical quarter, the official inquiries were not answered politely, and one of the constables received on the top of his head an old pail with slops in it. The minutest investigation failed to discover to whom the pail belonged.

CHAPTER IX--A STRAIN ON THE CABLE

Bow Street was completely at fault, and never discovered the secret of that assassination. It was clear that neither the Major nor Coleman were the murderers, as they had been noticed at some distance from the spot where the Secretary fell by several persons who described them accurately. Nor was Caillaud suspected, as the constable testified that he passed him on the opposite side of the street, as he followed the Secretary. The only conclusion, according to Bow Street, which was free from all doubt was, that whoever did the deed was a committee consisting of a single member. A reward of 500 pounds did not bring forward anybody who knew anything about the business. As for Caillaud, his daughter and the Major, the next morning saw them far on the way to Dover, and eventually they arrived at Paris in safety. Zachariah, when he reached home, found his wife gone. A note lay for him there, probably from the same hand which warned the Major, telling him not to lose an instant, but to join in Islington one of the mails to Manchester. His wife would start that night from St. Martin's le Grand by a coach which went by another road. He was always prompt, and in five minutes he was out of the house. The fare was carefully folded by his unknown friend in the letter. He just managed as directed, to secure a place, not by the regular Manchester mail, but by one which went through Barnet and stopped to take up passengers at the "Angel." He climbed upon the roof, and presently was travelling rapidly through Holloway and Highgate. He found, to his relief, that nobody had heard of the murder, and he was left pretty much to his own reflections. His first thoughts were an attempt to unravel the mystery. Why was it so sudden? Why had no word not hint of what was intended reached him? He could not guess. In those days the clubs were so beset with spies that frequently the most important resolutions were taken by one man, who confided in nobody. It was winter, but fortunately Zachariah was well wrapped up. He journeyed on, hour after hour, in a state of mazed bewilderment, one thought tumbling over another, and when morning broke over the flats he had not advanced a single step in the

determination of his future path. Nothing is more painful to a man of any energy than the inability to put things in order in himself--to place before himself what he has to do, and arrange the means for doing it. To be the passive victim of a rushing stream of disconnected impressions is torture, especially if the emergency be urgent. So when the sun came up Zachariah began to be ashamed of himself that the night had passed in these idiotic moonings, which had left him just where he was, and he tried to settle what he was to do when he reached Manchester. He did not know a soul; but he could conjecture why he was advised to go thither. It was a disaffected town, and Friends of the People were very strong there. His first duty was to get a lodging, his second to get work, and his third to find out a minister of God under whom he could worship. He put this last, not because it was the least important, but because he had the most time to decide upon it. At about ten o'clock at night he came to his journey's end, and to his joy saw his wife waiting for him. They went at once to a small inn hard by, and Mrs. Coleman began to overwhelm him with interrogation; but he quietly suggested that not a syllable should be spoken till they had had some rest, and that they should swallow their supper and go to bed. In the morning Zachariah rose and looked out of the window. He saw nothing but a small backyard in which some miserable, scraggy fowls were crouching under a cart to protect themselves from the rain, which was falling heavily through the dim, smoky air. His spirits sank. He had no fear of apprehension or prosecution, but the prospect before him was depressing. Although he was a poor man, he had not been accustomed to oscillations of fortune, and he was in an utterly strange place, with five pounds in his pocket, and nothing to do.

He was, however, resolved not to yield, and thought it best to begin with his wife before she could begin with him.

"Now, my dear, tell me what has happened, who sent you here, and what kind of a journey you have had?"

"Mr. Bradshaw came about seven o'clock, and told me the Government was about to suppress the Friends of the People; that you did not know it; that I must go to Manchester; that you would come after me; and that a message would be left for you. He took me to the coach, and paid for me."

"Mr. Bradshaw! Did he tell you anything more?"

"No; except that he did not think we should be pursued, and that he would send our things after us when he knew where we were."

"You have not heard anything more, then?"

"No."

"You haven't heard that the Secretary was shot?"

"Shot! Oh dear! Zachariah, what will become of us?"

Her husband then told her what he knew, she listening with great eagerness and in silence.

"Oh, Zachariah, what will become of us?" she broke out again.

"There is no reason to worry yourself, Jane; it is perfectly easy for me to prove my innocence. It is better for us, however, to stay here for a time. The Government won't go any further with us; they will search for the murderer--that's all."

"Why, then, are we sent here and the others are let alone? I suppose the Major is not here?"

"I cannot say."

"To think I should ever come to this! I haven't got a rag with me beyond what I have on. I haven't got any clean things; a nice sort of creature I am to go out of doors. And it all had nothing to do with us."

"Nothing to do with us! My dear Jane, do you mean that we are not to help other people, but sit at home and enjoy ourselves? Besides, if you thought it wrong, why did you not say so before?"

"How was I to know what you were doing? You never told me anything; you never do. One thing I do know is that we shall starve and I suppose I shall have to go about and beg. I haven't even another pair of shoes or stockings to my feet."

Zachariah pondered for a moment. His first impulse was something very different; but at last he rose, went up to his wife, kissed her softly on the forehead, and said:

"Never mind, my dear; courage, you will have your clothes next week. Come with me and look out for a lodging."

Mrs. Zachariah, however, shook herself free--not violently, but still decidedly--from his caresses.

"Most likely seized by the Government. Look for a lodging! That's just like you! How can I go out in this pouring rain?"

Zachariah lately, at any rate, had ceased to expect much affection in his wife for him; but he thought she was sensible, and equal to any complexity of circumstances, or even to disaster. He thought this, not on any positive evidence; but he concluded, somewhat absurdly, that her coldness meant common sense and capacity for facing trouble courageously and with deliberation. He had now to find out his mistake, and to learn that the absence of emotion neither proves, nor is even a ground for suspecting, any good whatever of a person; that, on the contrary, it is a ground for suspecting weakness, and possibly imbecility.

Mrs. Coleman refused to go out, and after breakfast Zachariah went by himself, having first inquired what was a likely quarter. As he wandered along much that had been before him again and again once more recurred to him. He had been overtaken by calamity, and he had not heard from his wife one single expression of sympathy, nor had he received one single idea which could help him. She had thought of nothing but herself, and even of herself not reasonably. She was not the helpmeet which he felt he had a right to expect. He could have endured any defect, so it seemed, if only he could have had love; he could have endured the want of love if only he could have had a counsellor. But he had neither, and he rebelled, questioning the

justice of his lot. Then he fell into the old familiar controversy with himself, and it was curiously characteristic of him, that, as he paced those dismal Manchester pavements, all their gloom disappeared as he re-argued the universal problem of which his case was an example. He admitted the unquestionable right of the Almighty to damn three parts of creation to eternal hell if so He willed; why not, then, one sinner like Zachariah Coleman to a weary pilgrimage for thirty or forty years? He rebuked himself when he found that he had all his life assented so easily to the doctrine of God's absolute authority in the election and disposal of the creatures He had made, and yet that he revolted when God touched him, and awarded him a punishment which, in comparison with the eternal loss of His presence, was as nothing. At last--and here, through his religion, he came down to the only consolation possible for him--he said to himself, "Thus hath He decreed; it is foolish to struggle against His ordinances; we can but submit." "A poor gospel," says his critic. Poor!--yes, it may be; but it is the gospel according to Job, and any other is a mere mirage. "Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom and stretch her wings towards the south?" Confess ignorance and the folly of insurrection, and there is a chance that even the irremediable will be somewhat mitigated. Poor!--yes; but it is genuine; and this at least must be said for Puritanism, that of all the theologies and philosophies it is the most honest in its recognition of the facts; the most real, if we penetrate to the heart of it, in the remedy which it offers.

He found two small furnished rooms which would answer his purpose till his own furniture should arrive, and he and his wife took possession that same morning. He then wrote to his landlord in London--a man whom he knew he could trust--and directed him to send his goods. For the present, although he had no fear whatever of any prosecution, he thought fit to adopt a feigned name, with which we need not trouble ourselves. In the afternoon he sallied out to seek employment. The weather had cleared, but Mrs. Coleman still refused to accompany him, and she occupied herself moodily with setting the place to rights, as she called it, although, as it happened, it was particularly neat and clean. There was not so much printing done in Manchester then as now, and Zachariah had no success. He came home about seven o'clock, weary and disheartened. His wife was one of those women who under misfortune show all that is worst in them, as many women in misfortune show all that is best.

"You might have been sure you would get nothing to do here. If, as you say, there is no danger, why did you not stay in London?"

"You know all about it, my dear; we were warned to come."

"Yes, but why in such a hurry? Why didn't you stop to think?"

"It is all very well to say so now, but there were only a few minutes in which to decide. Besides, when I got home I found you gone."

Mrs. Zachariah conveniently took no notice of the last part of this remark, which, of course, settled the whole question, but continued:

"Ah, well, I suppose it's all right; but I'm sure we shall starve--I am convinced we shall. Oh! I wish my poor dear mother were alive! I have no home to go to. What WILL become of us?"

He lost his patience a little.

"Jane," he said, "what is our religion worth if it does not support us in times like these? Does it not teach us to bow to God's will? Surely we, who have had such advantages, ought to behave under our trials better than those who have been brought up like heathens. God will not leave us. Don't you remember Mr. Bradshaw's sermon upon the passage through the Red Sea. When the Israelites were brought down to the very shore with nothing but destruction before them, a way was opened. What did Mr. Bradshaw bid us observe? The Egyptians were close behind--so close that the Israelites saw them; the sea was in front. The road was not made till the enemy was upon them, and then the waters were divided and became a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left; the very waters, Mr. Bradshaw remarked, which before were their terror. God, too, might have sent them a different way; no doubt He might, but He chose THAT way."

"Zachariah, I heard Mr. Bradshaw as well as yourself; I am a member of the church just as much as you are, and I don't think it becoming of you to preach to me as if you were a minister." Her voice rose and became shriller as she went on. "I will not stand it. Who are you that you should talk to me so?--bad enough to bring me down here to die, without treating me as if I were an unconverted character. Oh! if I had but a home to go to!" and she covered her face with her apron and became hysterical.

What a revelation! By this time he had looked often into the soul of the woman whom he had chosen--the woman with whom he was to be for ever in this world--and had discovered that there was nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing which answered anything in himself with a smile of recognition; but he now looked again, and found something worse than emptiness. He found lurking in the obscure darkness a reptile with cruel fangs which at any moment might turn upon him when he was at his weakest and least able to defend himself. He had that in him by nature which would have prompted him to desperate deeds. He could have flung himself from her with a curse, or even have killed himself in order to escape from his difficulty. But whatever there was in him originally had been changed. Upon the wild stem had been grafted a nobler slip, which drew all its sap from the old root, but had civilised and sweetened its acrid juices. He leaned over his wife, caressed her, gave her water, and restored her.

"God knows," he said, "I did not mean to preach to you. God in heaven knows I need that somebody should preach to me." He knelt down before her as she remained leaning back in the chair, and he repeated the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." But will it be believed that as he rose from his knees, before he had actually straightened his limbs, two lines from the "Corsair" flashed into his mind, not particularly apposite, but there they were:

"She rose--she sprung--she clung to his embrace
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face?"

Whence had they descended? He was troubled at their sudden intrusion, and he went silently to the window, moodily gazing into

the street. His wife, left to herself, recovered, and prepared supper. There was no reconciliation, at least on her side. She was not capable of reconciliation. Her temper exhausted itself gradually. With her the storm never broke up nobly and with magnificent forgetfulness into clear spaces of azure, with the singing of birds and with hot sunshine turning into diamonds every remaining drop of the deluge which had threatened ruin; the change was always rather to a uniformly obscured sky and a cold drizzle which lasted all day.

The next morning he renewed his quest. He was away all day long, but he had no success. He was now getting very anxious. He was expecting his furniture, which he had directed to be sent to the inn where they had first stayed, and he would have to pay for the carriage. His landlord had insisted on a week's rent beforehand, so that, putting aside the sum for the carrier, he had now two pounds left. He thought of appealing to his friends; but he had a great horror of asking for charity, and could not bring himself to do it.

The third, fourth, and fifth day passed, with no result. On the seventh day he found that his goods had come; but he decided not to move, as it meant expense. He took away a chest of clothes, and remained where he was. By way of recoil from the older doctrine that suffering does men good, it has been said that it does no good. Both statements are true, and both untrue. Many it merely brutalises. Half the crime of the world is caused by suffering, and half its virtues are due to happiness. Nevertheless suffering, actual personal suffering, is the mother of innumerable beneficial experiences, and unless we are so weak that we yield and break, it extracts from us genuine answers to many questions which, without it, we either do not put to ourselves, or, if they are asked, are turned aside with traditional replies. A man who is strong and survives can hardly pace the pavements of a city for days searching for employment, his pocket every day becoming lighter, without feeling in after life that he is richer by something which all the universities in the world could not have given him. The most dramatic of poets cannot imagine, even afar off, what such a man feels and thinks, especially if his temperament be nervous and foreboding. How foreign, hard, repellent, are the streets in which he is a stranger, alone amidst a crowd of people all intent upon their own occupation, whilst he has none! At noon, when business is at its height, he, with nothing to do, sits down on a seat in an open place, or, may be, on the doorstep of an empty house, unties the little parcel he has brought with him, and eats his dry bread. He casts up in his mind the shops he has visited; he reflects that he has taken all the more promising first, and that not more than two or three are left. He thinks of the vast waste of the city all round him; its miles of houses; and he has a more vivid sense of abandonment than if he were on a plank in the middle of the Atlantic. Towards the end of the afternoon the pressure in the offices and banks increases; the clerks hurry hither and thither; he has no share whatever in the excitement; he is an intrusion. He lingers about aimlessly, and presently the great tide turns outwards and flows towards the suburbs. Every vehicle which passes him is crowded with happy folk who have earned their living and are going home. He has earned nothing. Let anybody who wants to test the strength of the stalk of carle hemp in him try it by the wringing strain of a day thus spent! How humiliating are the repulses he encounters! Most employers to whom a request is made for something to do prefer to treat it as a petition for aims, and

answer accordingly. They understand what is wanted before a word is spoken, and bawl out "No! Shut the door after you." One man to whom Zachariah applied was opening his letters. For a moment he did not pay the slightest attention, but as Zachariah continued waiting, he shouted with an oath, "What do you stand staring there for? Be off!" There was once a time when Zachariah would have stood up against the wretch; but he could not do it now, and he retreated in silence. Nevertheless, when he got out into the Street he felt as if he could have rushed back and gripped the brute's throat till he had squeezed the soul out of his carcass. Those of us who have craved unsuccessfully for permission to do what the Maker of us all has fitted us to do alone understand how revolutions are generated. Talk about the atrocities of the Revolution! All the atrocities of the democracy heaped together ever since the world began would not equal, if we had any gauge by which to measure them, the atrocities perpetrated in a week upon the poor, simply because they are poor; and the marvel rather is, not that there is every now and then a September massacre at which all the world shrieks, but that such horrors are so infrequent. Again, I say, let no man judge communist or anarchist TILL HE HAS ASKED FOR LEAVE TO WORK, and a "Damn your eyes!" has rung in his ears.

Zachariah had some self-respect; he was cared for by God, and in God's Book was a registered decree concerning him. These men treated him as if he were not a person, an individual soul, but as an atom of a mass to be swept out anywhere, into the gutter--into the river. He was staggered for a time. Hundreds and thousands of human beings swarmed past him, and he could not help saying to himself as he looked up to the grey sky, "Is it true, then? Does God really know anything about me? Are we not born by the million every week, like spawn, and crushed out of existence like spawn? Is not humanity the commonest and cheapest thing in the world?" But as yet his faith was unshaken, and he repelled the doubt as a temptation of Satan. Blessed is the man who can assign promptly everything which is not in harmony with himself to a devil, and so get rid of it. The pitiful case is that of the distracted mortal who knows not what is the degree of authority which his thoughts and impulses possess; who is constantly bewildered by contrary messages, and has no evidence as to their authenticity. Zachariah had his rule still; the suggestion in the street was tried by it; found to be false; was labelled accordingly, and he was relieved.

The dread of the real, obvious danger was not so horrible as a vague, shapeless fear which haunted him. It was a coward enemy, for it seized him when he was most tired and most depressed. What is that nameless terror? Is it a momentary revelation of the infinite abyss which surrounds us; from the sight of which we are mercifully protected by a painted vapour, by an illusion that unspeakable darkness which we all of us know to exist, but which we hypocritically deny, and determine never to confess to one another? Here again, however, Zachariah had his advantage over others. He had his precedent. He remembered that quagmire in the immortal Progress into which, if even a good man falls, he can find no bottom; he remembered that gloom so profound "that oftentimes, when he lifted up his foot to set forward, he knew not where or upon what he should set it next;" he remembered the flame and smoke, the sparks and hideous noises, the things that cared not for Christian's sword, so that he was forced to betake himself to another weapon called All-prayer; he remembered how that Christian "was so confounded that he did not know

his own voice;" he remembered the voice of a man as going before, saying, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear none ill, for Thou art with me." Lastly, he remembered that by-and-by the day broke, and Christian cried, "He hath turned the shadow of death into the morning." He remembered all this; he could connect his trouble with the trouble of others; he could give it a place in the dispensation of things, and could therefore lift himself above it.

He had now been in Manchester a fortnight, and his little store had dwindled down to five shillings. It was Saturday night. On the Sunday, as his last chance, he meant to write to Mr. Bradshaw. He went out on the Sunday morning, and had persuaded his wife to accompany him. They entered the first place of worship they saw. It was a Methodist chapel, and the preacher was Arminian in the extreme. It was the first time Zachariah had ever been present at a Methodist service. The congregation sang with much fervour, and during the prayer, which was very long, they broke in upon it with ejaculations of their own, such as "Hear him, O Lord!"--"Lord have mercy on us!"

The preacher spoke a broad Lancashire dialect, and was very dramatic. He pictured God's efforts to save a soul. Under the pulpit ledge was the imaginary bottomless pit of this world--not of the next. He leaned over and pretended to be drawing the soul up with a cord. "He comes, he comes!" he cried; "God be praised he is safe!" and he landed him on the Bible. The congregation gave a great groan of relief. "There he is on the Rock of Ages! No, no, he slips; the Devil has him!" The preacher tried to rescue him: "He is gone--gone!" and he bent over the pulpit in agony. The people almost shrieked. "Gone--gone!" he said again with most moving pathos, and was still for a moment. Then gathering himself up, he solemnly repeated the terrible verses: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Zachariah knew that text well. Round it had raged the polemics of ages. Mr. Bradshaw had never referred to it but once, and all the elder members of his congregation were eager in the extreme to hear what he had to say about it. He boldly declared that it had nothing to do with the elect. He was compelled to do so. Following his master Calvin, he made it apply to outsiders. The elect, says Calvin, are beyond the risk of fatal fall. But "I deny," he goes on to say, that "there is any reason why God may not bestow even on the reprobate a taste of His favour; may irradiate their minds with some scintillations of His light; may touch them with some sense of His goodness; may somehow engrave His word on their minds." Horrible, most horrible, we scream, that the Almighty should thus play with those whom He means to destroy; but let us once more remember that these men did not idly believe in such cruelty. They were forced into their belief by the demands of their understanding, and their assent was more meritorious than the weak protests of so-called enlightenment. Zachariah, pondering absently on what he had heard, was passing out of the chapel when a hand was gently laid on his shoulder.

"Ah, friend, what are you doing here?"

He turned round and recognised William Ogden, who had been sent by

the Hampden Club in Manchester some six months before as a delegate to the Friends of the People in London. The two walked some distance together, and Zachariah gave him the history of the last three weeks. With the murder he was, of course, acquainted. Ogden was a letterpress printer, and when he heard that Zachariah was in such straits, he said that he thought he might perhaps find him a job for the present, and told him to come to his office on the following morning. Zachariah's heart rejoiced that his bread would not fail, but he characteristically rejoiced even more at this signal proof that his trust in his God was justified. When he reached home he proposed to his wife that they should at once kneel down and thank God for His mercy.

"Of course, Zachariah; but you are not yet sure you will get anything. I will take off my things directly."

"Need you wait to take off your things, my dear?"

"Really, Zachariah, you do make such strange remarks sometimes. I need not wait; but I am sure it will be more becoming, and it will give you an opportunity to think over what you are going to say."

Accordingly Mrs. Coleman retired for about five minutes. On her return she observed that it was the time for regular family prayer, and she produced the Bible. Zachariah had indeed had the opportunity to think, and he had thought very rapidly. The mere opening of the sacred Book, however, always acted as a spell, and when its heavy lids fell down on either side the room cleared itself of all haunting, intrusive evil spirits. He read the seventeenth chapter of Exodus, the story of the water brought out of the rock; and he thanked the Almighty with great earnestness for the favour shown him, never once expressing a doubt that he would not be successful. He was not mistaken, for Ogden had a place for him, just as good and just as permanent as the one he had left in London.

CHAPTER X--DISINTEGRATION BY DEGREES

We must now advance a little more rapidly. It was in the beginning of 1815 that Zachariah found himself settled in Manchester. That eventful year passed without any external change, so far as he was concerned. He became a member of the Hampden Club, to which Ogden and Bamford belonged; but he heard nothing of Maitland nor of Caillaud. He had a letter now and then from Mr. Bradshaw and it was a sore trial to him that nobody could be found in Manchester to take the place of that worthy man of God. He could not attach himself definitely to any church in the town, and the habit grew upon him of wandering into this or the other chapel as his fancy led him. His comrades often met on Sunday evenings. At first he would not go; but he was afterwards persuaded to do so. The reasons which induced him to alter his mind were, in the first place, the piety, methodistic most of it, which was then mixed up with politics; and secondly, a growing fierceness of temper, which made the cause of the people a religion. From 1816 downwards it may be questioned whether he would not have felt himself more akin with any of his democratic friends, who were really in earnest over the great struggle, than with a sleek

half Tory professor of the gospel, however orthodox he might have been. In 1816 the situation of the working classes had become almost intolerable. Towards the end of the year wheat rose to a quarter, and incendiarism was common all over England. A sense of insecurity and terror took possession of everybody. Secret outrages, especially fires by night, chill the courage of the bravest, as those know well enough who have lived in an agricultural county, when, just before going to bed, great lights are seen on the horizon; when men and women collect on bridges or on hill tops, asking "Where is it?" and when fire-engines tearing through the streets arrive useless at their journey's end because the hose has been cut. One evening in November 1816, Zachariah was walking home to his lodgings. A special meeting of the club had been called for the following Sunday to consider a proposal made for a march of the unemployed upon London. Three persons passed him--two men and a woman--who turned round and looked at him and then went on. He did not recognise them, but he noticed that they stopped opposite a window, and as he came up they looked at him again. He could not be mistaken; they were the Major, Caillaud, and his daughter. The most joyous recognition followed, and Zachariah insisted on their going home with him. It often happens that we become increasingly intimate with one another even when we are shut out from all intercourse. Zachariah had not seen the Major nor Caillaud nor Pauline for two years, and not a single thought had been interchanged. Nevertheless he was much nearer and dearer to them than he was before. He had unconsciously moved on a line rapidly sweeping round into parallelism with theirs. The relationship between himself and his wife during those two years had become, not openly hostile, it is true, but it was neutral. Long ago he had given up the habit of talking to her about politics, the thing which lay nearest to his heart just then. The pumping effort of bringing out a single sentence in her presence on any abstract topic was incredible, and so he learned at last to come home, though his heart and mind were full to bursting, and say nothing more to her than that he had seen her friend Mrs. Sykes, or bought his tea at a different shop. On the other hand, the revolutionary literature of the time, and more particularly Byron, increasingly interested him. The very wildness and remoteness of Byron's romance was just what suited him. It is all very well for the happy and well-to-do to talk scornfully of poetic sentimentality. Those to whom a natural outlet for their affection is denied know better. They instinctively turn to books which are the farthest removed from commonplace and are in a sense unreal. Not to the prosperous man, a dweller in beautiful scenery, well married to an intelligent wife, is Byron precious, but to the poor wretch, say some City clerk, with an aspiration beyond his desk, who has two rooms in Camberwell and who before he knew what he was doing made a marriage--well--which was a mistake, but who is able to turn to that island in the summer sea, where dwells Kaled, his mistress--Kaled, the Dark Page disguised as a man, who watches her beloved dying:

"Who nothing fears, nor feels, nor heeds, nor sees,
Save that damp brow which rests upon his knees;
Save that pale aspect, where the eye, though dim,
Held all the light that shone on earth for him."

When they came indoors, and Mrs. Zachariah heard on the stairs the tramp of other feet besides those of her husband, she prepared

herself to be put out of temper. Not that she could ever be really surprised. She was not one of those persons who keep a house orderly for the sake of appearances. She would have been just the same if she had been living alone, shipwrecked on a solitary island in the Pacific. She was the born natural enemy of dirt, dust, untidiness, and of every kind of irregularity, as the cat is the born natural enemy of the mouse. The sight of dirt, in fact, gave her a quiet kind of delight, because she foresaw the pleasure of annihilating it. Irregularity was just as hateful to her. She could not sit still if one ornament on the mantelpiece looked one way and the other another way, and she would have risen from her deathbed, if she could have done so, to put a chair straight. She was not, therefore, aggrieved in expectancy because she was not fit to be seen. It was rather because she resented any interruption of domestic order of which she had not been previously forewarned. As it happened, however the Major came first, and striding into the room, he shook her hand with considerable fervour and kissed it gallantly. Her gathering ill-temper disappeared with the promptitude of a flash. It was a muddy night; the Major had not carefully wiped his boots, and the footmarks were all over the floor. She saw them, but they were nothing.

"My dear Mrs. Coleman, how are you? What a blessing to be here again in your comfortable quarters."

"Really, Major Maitland, it is very good of you to say so. I am very glad to see you again. Where have you been? I thought we had lost you for ever."

Caillaud and his daughter had followed. They bowed to her formally, and she begged them to be seated.

"Then, my dear madam," continued the Major, laughing, "you must have thought me dead. You might have known that if I had not been dead I must have come back."

She coloured just a trifle, but made no reply further than to invite all the company to have supper.

Zachariah was somewhat surprised. He did not know what sort of a supper it could be; but he was silent. She asked Pauline to take off her bonnet, and then proceeded to lay the cloth. For five minutes, or perhaps ten minutes, she disappeared, and then there came, not only bread and cheese, but cold ham, a plentiful supply of beer, and, more wonderful still, a small cold beefsteak pie. Everything was produced as easily as if it had been the ordinary fare, and Zachariah was astonished at his wife's equality to the emergency. Whence she obtained the ham and beefsteak pie he could not conjecture. She apologised for having nothing hot; would have had something better if she had known, etc., etc., and then sat down at the head of the table. The Major sat on her right, Pauline next to him, and opposite to Pauline, Caillaud and Zachariah. Their hostess immediately began to ask questions about the events of that fatal night when they all left London.

The Major, however, interposed, and said that it would perhaps be better if nothing was said upon that subject.

"A dismal topic," he observed; "talking about it can do no good, and I for one don't want to be upset by thinking about it just before I

go to bed."

"At least," said Zachariah, "you can tell us why you are in Manchester?"

"Certainly," replied the Major. "In the first place, Paris is not quite so pleasant as it used to be; London, too, is not attractive; and we thought that, on the whole, Manchester was to be preferred. Moreover, a good deal will have to be done during the next twelvemonth, and Manchester will do it. You will hear all about it when your club meets next time."

"You've been in Paris?" said Mrs. Zachariah. "Isn't it very wicked?"

"Well, that depends on what you call wicked."

"Surely there cannot be two opinions on that point."

"It does seem so; and yet when you live abroad you find that things which are made a great deal of here are not thought so much of there; and, what is very curious, they think other things very wrong there of which we take no account here."

"Is that because they are not Christians?"

"Oh dear no; I am speaking of good Christian people; at least so I take them to be. And really, when you come to consider it, we all of us make a great fuss about our own little bit of virtue, and undervalue the rest--I cannot tell upon whose authority."

"But are they not, Major, dreadfully immoral in France?"

Pauline leaned over her plate and looked Mrs. Coleman straight in the face.

"Mrs. Coleman, you are English; you--"

Her father put up his hand; he foresaw what was coming, and that upon this subject Pauline would have defied all the rules of hospitality. So he replied calmly, but with the calm of suppressed force:

"Mrs. Coleman, as my daughter says, you are English; you are excusable. I will not dispute with you, but I will tell you a little story."

"Will you not take some more beer, Mr. Caillaud, before you begin?"

"No, thank you, madam, I have finished."

Caillaud pushed away his plate, on which three parts of what was given him, including all the ham, remained untouched, and began--his Gallicisms and broken English have been corrected in the version now before the reader:

"In 1790 a young man named Dupin was living in Paris, in the house of his father, who was a banker there. The Dupins were rich, and the son kept a mistress, a girl named Victorine. Dupin the younger had developed into one of the worst of men. He was strictly correct in all his dealings, sober, guilty of none of the riotous excesses which

often distinguish youth at that age, and most attentive to business; but he was utterly self-regarding, hard, and emotionless. What could have induced Victorine to love him I do not know; but love him she did, and her love instead of being a folly, was her glory. If love were always to be in proportion to desert, measured out in strictest and justest huckstering conformity therewith, what a poor thing it would be! The love at least of a woman is as the love of the Supreme Himself, and just as magnificent. Victorine was faithful to Dupin; and poor and handsome as she was, never wronged him by a loose look. Well, Dupin's father said his son must marry, and the son saw how reasonable and how necessary the proposal was. He did marry, and he cut himself adrift from Victorine without the least compunction, allowing her a small sum weekly, insufficient to keep her. There was no scene when they parted, for his determination was communicated to her by letter. Three months afterwards she had a child of whom he was the father. Did she quietly take the money and say nothing? Did she tear up the letter in a frenzy and return him the fragments? She did neither. She wrote to him and told him that she would not touch his gold. She would never forget him, but she could not be beholden to him now for a crust of bread. She had done no wrong hitherto--so she said, Mrs. Coleman; I only repeat her words--they are not mine. But to live on him after he had left her would be a mortal crime. So they separated, a victim she--both victims, I may say--to this cursed thing we call Society. One of the conditions on which the money was to have been given was, that she should never again recognise him in any way whatever. This half of the bargain she faithfully observed. For some months she was alone, trying to keep herself and her child, but at last she was taken up by a working stone-mason named Legouve. In 1793 came the Terror, and the Dupins were denounced and thrown into the Luxembourg. Legouve was one of the Committee of Public Safety. It came to the recollection of the younger Dupin as he lay expecting death that he had heard that the girl Victorine had gone to live with Legouve, and a ray of light dawned on him in his dungeon. He commissioned his wife to call on Victorine and implore her to help them. She did so. Ah, that was a wonderful sight--so like the Revolution! Madame Dupin, in her silks and satins, had often passed the ragged Victorine in the streets, and, of course, had never taken the slightest notice of her. Now Madame was kneeling to her! Respectability was in the dust before that which was not by any means respectable; the legitimate before the illegitimate! Oh, it was, I say, a wonderful sight in Victorine's wretched garret! She was touched with pity, and, furthermore, the memory of her old days with Dupin and her love for him revived. Legouve was frightfully jealous, and she knew that if she pleaded Dupin's cause before him she would make matters worse. A sudden thought struck her. She went to Couthon and demanded an audience.

"Couthon,' she said, 'are the Dupins to die?'

"Yes, to-morrow.'

"Dupin the younger is the father of my child.'

"And he has deserted you, and you hate him. He shall die.'

"Pardon me, I do not hate him.'

"Ah, you love him still; but that is no reason why he should be spared, my pretty one. We must do our duty. They are plotters

against the Republic, and must go.'

"Couthon, they must live. Consider; shall that man ascend the scaffold with the thought in his heart that I could have rescued him, and that I did not; that I have had my revenge? Besides, what will be said?--that the Republic uses justice to satisfy private vengeance. All the women in my quarter know who I am.'

"That is a fancy.'

"Fancy! Is it a fancy to murder Dupin's wife--murder all that is good in her--murder the belief in her for ever that there is such a thing as generosity? You do not wish to kill the soul? That is the way with tyrants, but not with the Republic.'

"Thus Victorine strove with Couthon, and he at last yielded. Dupin and his father were released that night, and before daybreak they were all out of Paris and safe. In the morning Legouve found that they were liberated, and on asking Couthon the reason, was answered with a smile that they had an eloquent advocate. Victorine had warned Couthon not to mention her name, and he kept his promise; but Legouve conjectured but too truly. He went home, and in a furious rage taxed Victorine with infidelity to him, in favour of the man who had abandoned her. He would not listen to her, and thrust her from him with curses. I say nothing more about her history. I will only say this, that Pauline is that child who was born to her after Dupin left her. I say it because I am so proud that Pauline has had such a mother!"

"Pauline her daughter!" said Zachariah. "I thought she was your daughter."

"She is my daughter: I became her father."

Everybody was silent.

"Ah, you say nothing," said Caillaud; "I am not surprised. You are astonished. Well may you be so that such a creature should ever have lived. What would Jesus Christ have said to her?"

The company soon afterwards rose to go.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Coleman," said the Major in his careless way; "I am glad to find Manchester does not disagree with you. At least, I should think it does not."

"Oh no, Major Maitland, I like it quite as well as London. Mind, you promise to come again SOON--very soon."

The Major had gone downstairs first. She had followed him to the first landing, and then returned to bid Pauline and Caillaud good-bye. She stood like a statue while Pauline put on her hat.

"Good-night, madam," said Caillaud, slightly bowing.

"Good-night, madam," said Pauline, not bowing in the least.

"Good-night," she replied, without relaxing her rigidity.

As soon as they were in the street Pauline said, "Father, I abhor that woman. If she lives she will kill her husband."

Mrs. Coleman, on the other hand, at the same moment said, "Zachariah, Pauline and Caillaud cannot come to this house again."

"Why not?"

"Why not, Zachariah? I am astonished at you! The child of a woman who lived in open sin!"

He made no reply. Years ago not a doubt would have crossed his mind. That a member of Mr. Bradshaw's church could receive such people as Caillaud and Pauline would have seemed impossible. Nevertheless, neither Caillaud nor Pauline were now repugnant to him; nor did he feel that any soundless gulf separated them from him, although, so far as he knew his opinions had undergone no change.

Mrs. Coleman forbore to pursue the subject, for her thoughts went off upon another theme, and she was inwardly wondering whether the Major would ever invite her to the theatre again. Just as she was going to sleep, the figure of the Major hovering before her eyes, she suddenly bethought herself that Pauline, if not handsome, was attractive. She started, and lay awake for an hour. When she rose in the morning the same thought again presented itself, to dwell with her hence forwards, and to gnaw her continually like vitriol.

CHAPTER XI--POLITICS AND PAULINE

Soon after this visit debates arose in Zachariah's club which afterwards ended in the famous march of the Blanketeers, as they were called. Matters were becoming very serious, and the Government was thoroughly alarmed, as well it might be, at the discontent which was manifest all over the country. The Prince Regent was insulted as he went to open Parliament, and the windows of his carriage were broken. It was thought, and with some reason, that the army could not be trusted. One thing is certain, that the reformers found their way into the barracks at Knightsbridge and had lunch there at the expense of the soldiers, who discussed Hone's pamphlets and roared with laughter over the Political Litany. The Prince Regent communicated to both Houses certain papers, and recommended that they should at once be taken into consideration. They contained evidence, so the royal message asserted, of treasonable combinations "to alienate the affections of His Majesty's subjects from His Majesty's person and Government," &c. Secret committees were appointed to consider them both by Lords and Commons, and in about a fortnight they made their reports. The text was the Spitalfields meeting of the preceding 2nd of December. A mob had made it an excuse to march through the city and plunder some shops. Some of the charges brought against the clubs by the Lords' Committee do not now seem so very appalling. One was, that they were agitating for universal suffrage and annual Parliaments--"projects," say the Committee, "which evidently involve, not any qualified or partial change but a total subversion of the British constitution." Another charge was the advocacy of "parochial partnership in land, on the principle that the landholders are not

proprietors in chief; that they are but stewards of the public; that the land is the people's farm; that landed monopoly is contrary to the spirit of Christianity and destructive of the independence and morality of mankind." The Reform party in Parliament endeavoured to prove that the country was in no real danger, and that the singularly harsh measures proposed were altogether unnecessary. That was true. There was nothing to be feared, because there was no organisation; but nevertheless, especially in the manufacturing towns, the suffering was fearful and the hatred of the Government most bitter. What is so lamentable in the history of those times is the undisciplined wildness and feebleness of the attempts made by the people to better themselves. Nothing is more saddening than the spectacle of a huge mass of humanity goaded, writhing, starving, and yet so ignorant that it cannot choose capable leaders, cannot obey them if perchance it gets them, and does not even know how to name its wrongs. The governing classes are apt to mistake the absurdity of the manner in which a popular demand expresses itself for absurdity of the demand itself; but in truth the absurdity of the expression makes the demand more noteworthy and terrible. Bamford, when he came to London in the beginning of 1817, records the impression which the clubs made upon him. He went to several and found them all alike; "each man with his porter-pot before him and a pipe in his mouth; many speaking at once, more talkers than thinkers; more speakers than listeners. Presently 'Order' would be called, and comparative silence would ensue; a speaker, stranger or citizen, would be announced with much courtesy and compliment. 'Hear, hear, hear' would follow, with clapping of hands and knocking of knuckles on the tables, till the half-pints danced; then a speech, with compliments to some brother orator or popular statesman; next a resolution in favour of Parliamentary Reform, and a speech to second it; an amendment on some minor point would follow; a seconding of that; a breach of order by some individual of warm temperament; half a dozen would rise to set him right; a dozen to put them down; and the vociferation and gesticulation would become loud and confounding."

The Manchester clubs had set their hearts upon an expedition to London--thousands strong; each man with a blanket to protect him and a petition in his hand. The discussion on this project was long and eager. The Major, Caillaud and Zachariah steadfastly opposed it; not because of its hardihood, but because of its folly. They were outvoted; but they conceived themselves loyally bound to make it a success. Zachariah and Caillaud were not of much use in organisation, and the whole burden fell upon the Major. Externally gay, and to most persons justifying the charge of frivolity, he was really nothing of the kind when he had once settled down to the work he was born to do. His levity was the mere idle sport of a mind unattached and seeking its own proper object. He was like a cat, which will play with a ball or its own tail in the sunshine, but if a mouse or a bird crosses its path will fasten on it with sudden ferocity. He wrought like a slave during the two months before the eventful 10th March 1817, and well nigh broke his heart over the business. Everything had to be done subterraneously; for though the Habeas Corpus Act was not yet suspended, preparations for what looked like war were perilous. But this was not the greatest difficulty. He pleaded for dictatorial powers, and at once found he had made himself suspected thereby. He was told bluntly that working men did not mean to exchange one despot for another, and that they were just as good as he was. Any other man would have thrown up his commission

in disgust, but not so Major Maitland. He persevered unflaggingly, although a sub-committee had been appointed to act with him and check his proceedings. The secretary of this very sub-committee, who was also treasurer, was one of the causes of the failure of the enterprise, for when the march began neither he nor the funds with which he had been entrusted could be found. After the club meetings in the evening there was often an adjournment to Caillaud's lodgings, where the Major, Zachariah, Caillaud, and Pauline sat up till close upon midnight. One evening there was an informal conference of this kind prior to the club meeting on the following night. The Major was not present, for he was engaged in making some arrangements for the commissariat on the march. He had always insisted on it that they were indispensable, and he had been bitterly opposed the week before by some of his brethren, who were in favour of extempore foraging which looked very much like plunder. He carried his point, notwithstanding some sarcastic abuse and insinuations of half-heartedness, which had touched also Caillaud and Zachariah, who supported him. Zachariah was much depressed.

"Mr. Coleman, you are dull," said Pauline. "What is the matter?"

"Dull!--that's not exactly the word. I was thinking of to-morrow."

"Ah! I thought so. Well?"

Zachariah hesitated a little. "Is it worth all the trouble?" at last he said, an old familiar doubt recurring to him--"Is it worth all the trouble to save them? What are they?--and, after all, what can we do for them? Suppose we succeed, and a hundred thousand creatures like those who blackguarded us last week get votes, and get their taxes reduced, and get all they want, what then?"

Pauline broke in with all the eagerness of a woman who is struck with an idea--"Stop, stop, Mr. Coleman. Here is the mistake you make. Grant it all--grant your achievement is ridiculously small--is it not worth the sacrifice of two or three like you and me to accomplish it? That is our error. We think ourselves of such mighty importance. The question is, whether we are of such importance, and whether the progress of the world one inch will not be cheaply purchased by the annihilation of a score of us. You believe in what you call salvation. You would struggle and die to save a soul; but in reality you can never save a man; you must be content to struggle and die to save a little bit of him--to prevent one habit from descending to his children. You won't save him wholly, but you may arrest the propagation of an evil trick, and so improve a trifle--just a trifle--whole generations to come. Besides, I don't believe what you will do is nothing. 'Give a hundred thousand blackguard creatures votes'-well, that is something. You are disappointed they do not at once become converted and all go to chapel. That is not the way of the Supreme. Your hundred thousand get votes, and perhaps are none the better, and die as they were before they had votes. But the Supreme has a million, or millions, of years before Him."

Zachariah was silent. Fond of dialectic, he generally strove to present the other side; but he felt no disposition to do so now, and he tried rather to connect what she had said with something which he already believed.

"True," he said at last; "true, or true in part. What are we?--what

are we?" and so Pauline's philosophy seemed to reconcile itself with one of his favourite dogmas, but it had not quite the same meaning which it had for him ten years ago.

"Besides," said Caillaud, "we hate Liverpool and all his crew. When I think of that speech at the opening of Parliament I become violent. There it is; I have stuck it up over the mantelpiece:

"Deeply as I lament the pressure of these evils upon the country, I am sensible that they are of a nature not to admit of an immediate remedy. But whilst I observe with peculiar satisfaction the fortitude with which so many privations have been borne, and the active benevolence which has been employed to mitigate them, I am persuaded that the great sources of our national prosperity are essentially unimpaired; and I entertain a confident expectation that the native energy of the country will at no distant period surmount all the difficulties in which we are involved."

"My God," continued Caillaud, "I could drive a knife into the heart of the man who thus talks!"

"No murder, Caillaud," said Zachariah.

"Well, no. What is it but a word? Let us say sacrifice. Do you call the death of your Charles a murder? No; and the reason why you do not is what? Not that it was decreed by a Court. There have been many murders decreed by Courts according to law. Was not the death of your Jesus Christ a murder? Murder means death for base, selfish ends. What said Jesus--that He came to send a sword? Of course He did. Every idea is a sword. What a God He was! He was the first who ever cared for the people--for the real people, the poor, the ignorant, the fools, the weak-minded, the slaves. The Greeks and Romans thought nothing of these. I salute thee, O Thou Son of the People!" and Caillaud took down a little crucifix which, strange to say, always hung in his room, and reverently inclined himself to it. "A child of the people," he continued, "in everything, simple, foolish, wise, ragged, Divine, martyred Hero."

Zachariah was not astonished at this melodramatic display, for he knew Caillaud well; and although this was a little more theatrical than anything he had ever seen before, it was not out of keeping with his friend's character. Nor was it insincere, for Caillaud was not an Englishman. Moreover, there is often more insincerity in purposely lowering the expression beneath the thought, and denying the thought thereby, than in a little exaggeration. Zachariah, although he was a Briton, had no liking for that hypocrisy which takes a pride in reducing the extraordinary to the commonplace, and in forcing an ignoble form upon that which is highest. The conversation went no further. At last Caillaud said:

"Come, Pauline, a tune; we have not had one for a long time."

Pauline smiled, and went into her little room. Meanwhile her father removed chairs and table, piling them one on another so as to leave a clear space. He and Zachariah crouched into the recess by the fireplace. Pauline entered in the self same short black dress trimmed with red, with the red artificial flower, wearing the same

red stockings and dancing-slippers, but without the shawl. The performance this time was not quite what it was when Zachariah had seen it in London. Between herself and the corner where Zachariah and her father were seated she now had an imaginary partner, before whom she advanced, receded, bowed, displayed herself in the most exquisitely graceful attitudes, never once overstepping the mark, and yet showing every limb and line to the utmost advantage. Zachariah, as before, followed every movement with eager--shall we say with hungry eyes? He was so unused to exhibitions of this kind that their grace was not, as it should have been, their only charm; for, as we before observed, in his chapel circle even ordinary dancing was a thing prohibited. The severity of manners to which he had been accustomed tended to produce an effect the very opposite to that which was designed; for it can hardly be doubted that if it were the custom in England for women to conceal the face, a glimpse of an eye or a nose would excite unpleasant thoughts.

The dance came to an end, and as it was getting late Zachariah rose.

"Stop," said Caillaud. "It is agreed that if they persist on this march, one or the other of us goes too. The Major will be sure to go. Which shall it be, you or me?"

"We will draw lots."

"Good." And Zachariah departed, Pauline laughingly making him one of her costume curtseys. He was very awkward. He never knew how to conduct himself becomingly, or with even good manners, on commonplace occasions. When he was excited in argument he was completely equal to the best company, and he would have held his own on level terms at a Duke's dinner-party, provided only the conversation were interesting. But when he was not intellectually excited he was lubberly. He did not know what response to make to Pauline's graceful adieu, and retreated sheepishly. When he got home he found his wife waiting for him. The supper was cleared away, and, as usual, she was reading, or pretending to be reading, the Bible.

"You have had supper, of course?" There was a peculiar tone in the "of course," as if she meant to imply not merely that it was late, but that he had preferred to have it with somebody else.

"I do not want any."

"Then we had better have prayers."

CHAPTER XII--ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT

Next week Zachariah found it necessary to consult with Caillaud again. The Major was to be there. The intended meeting was announced to Mrs. Coleman by her husband at breakfast on the day before, and he informed her that he should probably be late, and that no supper need be kept for him.

"Why do you never meet here, Zachariah? Why must it always be at

Caillaud's?"

"Did you not say that they should not come to this house again?"

"Yes; but I meant I did not want to see them as friends. On business there is no reason why Caillaud should not come."

"I cannot draw the line."

"Zachariah, do you mean to call unconverted infidels your friends?"

They were his friends--he felt they were--and they were dear to him; but he was hardly able as yet to confess it, even to himself.

"It will not do," he said. "Besides, Caillaud will be sure to bring his daughter."

"She will not be so bold as to come if she is not asked. Do I go with you anywhere except when I am asked?"

"She has always been used to go out with her father wherever he goes. She knows all his affairs, and is very useful to him."

"So it seems. She must be VERY useful. Well, if it must be so, and it is on business, invite her too."

"I think still it will be better at Caillaud's; there more room. There would be five of us."

"How do you make five?"

"There is the Major. And why, by the way, do you object to Caillaud and Pauline more than the Major? He is not converted."

"There is plenty of room here. I didn't say I didn't object to the Major. Besides, there is a difference between French infidels and English people, even if they are not church members. But I see how it is. You want to go there, and you will go. I am of no use to you. You care nothing for me. You can talk to such dreadful creatures as Caillaud and that woman who lives with him, and you never talk to me. Oh, I wish Mr. Bradshaw were here, or I were back again at home! What would Mr. Bradshaw say?"

Mrs. Coleman covered her face in her hands. Zachariah felt no pity. His anger was roused. He was able to say hard things at times, and there was even a touch of brutality in him.

"Whose fault is it that I do not talk to you? When did I ever get any help from you? What do you understand about what concerns me, and when have you ever tried to understand anything? Your home is no home to me. My life is blasted, and it might have been different. The meeting shall not be here, and I will do as I please."

He went out of the room in a rage, and downstairs into the street, going straight to his work. It is a terrible moment when the first bitter quarrel takes place, and when hatred, even if it be hatred for the moment only first finds expression. That moment can never be recalled! Is it ever really forgotten, or really forgiven? Some of us can call to mind a word, just one word, spoken, twenty, thirty,

forty, fifty years ago, which rings in our ears even to-day as distinctly as when it was uttered, and forces the blood into the head as it did then. When Zachariah returned that night he and his wife spoke to each other as if nothing had happened, but they spoke only about indifferent things. The next day Mrs. Coleman wondered whether, after all, he would repent; but the evening came and she waited and waited in vain. The poor woman for hours and hours had thought one thought and one thought

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