

A Strange Story, Volume 7.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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CHAPTER LXIV.

Lilian's wondrous gentleness of nature did not desert her in the suspension of her reason. She was habitually calm,--very silent; when she spoke it was rarely on earthly things, on things familiar to her past, things one could comprehend. Her thought seemed to have quitted the earth, seeking refuge in some imaginary heaven. She spoke of wanderings with her father as if he were living still; she did not seem to understand the meaning we attach to the word "Death." She would sit for hours murmuring to herself: when one sought to catch the words, they seemed in converse with invisible spirits. We found it cruel to disturb her at such times, for if left unmolested, her face was serene,--more serenely beautiful than I had seen it even in our happiest hours; but when we called her back to the wrecks of her real life, her eye became troubled, restless, anxious, and she would sigh--oh, so heavily! At times, if we did not seem to observe her, she would quietly resume her once favourite accomplishments,--drawing, music. And in these her young excellence was still apparent, only the drawings were strange and fantastic: they had a resemblance to those with which the painter Blake, himself a visionary, illustrated the Poems of the "Night Thoughts" and "The Grave,"--faces of exquisite loveliness, forms of aerial grace, coming forth from the bells of flowers, or floating upwards amidst the spray of fountains, their outlines melting away in fountain or in flower. So with her music: her mother could not recognize the airs she played, for a while so sweetly and with so ineffable a pathos, that one could scarcely hear her without weeping; and then would come, as if involuntarily, an abrupt discord, and, starting, she would cease and look around, disquieted, aghast.

And still she did not recognize Mrs. Ashleigh nor myself as her mother, her husband; but she had by degrees learned to distinguish us both from others. To her mother she gave no name, seemed pleased to see her, but not sensibly to miss her when away; me she called her brother: if longer absent than usual, me she missed. When, after the toils of the day, I came to join her, even if she spoke not, her sweet face brightened. When she sang, she beckoned me to come near to her, and looked at me fixedly, with eyes ever tender, often tearful; when she drew she would pause and glance over her shoulder to see that I was watching her, and point to the drawings with a smile of strange significance, as if they conveyed in some covert allegory messages meant for me; so, at least, I interpreted her smile, and taught myself to say, "Yes, Lilian, I understand!"

And more than once, when I had so answered, she rose, and kissed my forehead. I thought my heart would have broken when I felt that spirit-like melancholy kiss.

And yet how marvellously the human mind teaches itself to extract consolations from its sorrows. The least wretched of my hours were those that I had passed in that saddened room, seeking how to establish fragments of intercourse, invent signs, by which each might interpret each, between the intellect I had so laboriously cultured, so arrogantly vaunted, and the fancies wandering through the dark, deprived of their guide in reason. It was something even of joy to feel myself needed for her guardianship, endeared and yearned for still by some unshattered instinct of her heart; and when, parting from her for the night, I stole the moment in which on her soft face seemed resting least of shadow, to

ask, in a trembling whisper, "Lilian, are the angels watching over you?" and she would answer "Yes," sometimes in words, sometimes with a mysterious happy smile--then--then I went to my lonely room, comforted and thankful.

CHAPTER LXV.

The blow that had fallen on my hearth effectually, inevitably killed all the slander that might have troubled me in joy. Before the awe of a great calamity the small passions of a mean malignity slink abashed. I had requested Mrs. Ashleigh not to mention the vile letter which Lilian had received. I would not give a triumph to the unknown calumniator, nor wring forth her vain remorse, by the pain of acknowledging an indignity to my darling's honour; yet, somehow or other, the true cause of Lilian's affliction had crept out,--perhaps through the talk of servants,--and the public shock was universal. By one of those instincts of justice that lie deep in human hearts, though in ordinary moments overlaid by many a worldly layer, all felt (all mothers felt especially) that innocence alone could have been so unprepared for reproach. The explanation I had previously given, discredited then, was now accepted without a question. Lilian's present state accounted for all that ill nature had before misconstrued. Her good name was restored to its maiden whiteness, by the fate that had severed the ties of the bride. The formal dwellers on the Hill vied with the franker, warmer-hearted households of Low Town in the nameless attentions by which sympathy and respect are rather delicately indicated than noisily proclaimed. Could Lilian have then recovered and been sensible of its repentant homage, how reverently that petty world would have thronged around her! And, ah! could fortune and man's esteem have atoned for the blight of hopes that had been planted and cherished on ground beyond their reach, ambition and pride might have been well contented with the largeness of the exchange that courted their acceptance. Patients on patients crowded on me. Sympathy with my sorrow seemed to create and endear a more trustful belief in my skill. But the profession I had once so enthusiastically loved became to me wearisome, insipid, distasteful; the kindness heaped on me gave no comfort,--it but brought before me more vividly the conviction that it came too late to avail me: it could not restore to me the mind, the love, the life of my life, which lay dark and shattered in the brain of my guileless Lilian. Secretly I felt a sullen resentment. I knew that to the crowd the resentment was unjust. The world itself is but an appearance; who can blame it if appearances guide its laws? But to those who had been detached from the crowd by the professions of friendship,--those who, when the slander was yet new, and might have been awed into silence had they stood by my side,--to the pressure of their hands, now, I had no response.

Against Mrs. Poyntz, above all others, I bore a remembrance of unrelaxed, unmitigable indignation. Her schemes for her daughter's marriage had triumphed: Jane was Mrs. Ashleigh Sumner. Her mind was, perhaps, softened now that the object which had sharpened its worldly faculties was accomplished: but in vain, on first hearing of my affliction, had this she-Machiavel owned a humane remorse, and, with all her keen comprehension of each facility that circumstances gave to her will, availed herself of the general compassion to strengthen the popular reaction in favour of Lilian's assaulted honour; in vain had she written to me with a gentleness of sympathy foreign to her habitual characteristics; in vain besought me to call on her; in vain waylaid and accosted me with a humility that

almost implored forgiveness. I vouchsafed no reproach, but I could imply no pardon. I put between her and my great sorrow the impenetrable wall of my freezing silence.

One word of hers at the time that I had so pathetically besought her aid, and the parrot-flock that repeated her very whisper in noisy shrillness would have been as loud to defend as it had been to defame; that vile letter might never have been written. Whoever its writer, it surely was one of the babblers who took their malice itself from the jest or the nod of their female despot; and the writer might have justified herself in saying she did but coarsely proclaim what the oracle of worldly opinion, and the early friend of Lilian's own mother, had authorized her to believe.

By degrees, the bitterness at my heart diffused itself to the circumference of the circle in which my life went its cheerless mechanical round. That cordial brotherhood with his patients, which is the true physician's happiest gift and humanest duty, forsook my breast. The warning words of Mrs. Poyntz had come true. A patient that monopolized my thought awaited me at my own hearth! My conscience became troubled; I felt that my skill was lessened. I said to myself, "The physician who, on entering the sick-room, feels, while there, something that distracts the finest powers of his intellect from the sufferer's case is unfit for his calling." A year had scarcely passed since my fatal wedding day, before I had formed a resolution to quit L---- and abandon my profession; and my resolution was confirmed, and my goal determined, by a letter I received from Julius Faber.

I had written at length to him, not many days after the blow that had fallen on me, stating all circumstances as calmly and clearly as my grief would allow; for I held his skill at a higher estimate than that of any living brother of my art, and I was not without hope in the efficacy of his advice. The letter I now received from him had been begun, and continued at some length, before my communication reached him; and this earlier portion contained animated and cheerful descriptions of his Australian life and home, which contrasted with the sorrowful tone of the supplement written in reply to the tidings with which I had wrung his friendly and tender heart. In this, the latter part of his letter, he suggested that if time had wrought no material change for the better, it might be advisable to try the effect of foreign travel. Scenes entirely new might stimulate observation, and the observation of things external withdraw the sense from that brooding over images delusively formed within, which characterized the kind of mental alienation I had described. "Let any intellect create for itself a visionary world, and all reasonings built on it are fallacious: the visionary world vanishes in proportion as we can arouse a predominant interest in the actual."

This grand authority, who owed half his consummate skill as a practitioner to the scope of his knowledge as a philosopher, then proceeded to give me a hope which I had not dared of myself to form. He said:--

"I distinguish the case you so minutely detail from that insanity which is reason lost; here it seems rather to be reason held in suspense. Where there is hereditary predisposition, where there is organic change of structure in the brain,--nay, where there is that kind of insanity which takes the epithet of moral, whereby the whole character becomes so transformed that the prime element of sound understanding, conscience itself, is either erased or warped into the sanction of what in a healthful state it would most disapprove,--it is

only charlatans who promise effectual cure. But here I assume that there is no hereditary taint; here I am convinced, from my own observation, that the nobility of the organs, all fresh as yet in the vigour of youth, would rather submit to death than to the permanent overthrow of their equilibrium in reason; here, where you tell me the character preserves all its moral attributes of gentleness and purity, and but over-indulges its own early habit of estranged contemplation; here, without deceiving you in false kindness, I give you the guarantee of my experience when I bid you 'hope!' I am persuaded that, sooner or later, the mind, thus for a time affected, will right itself; because here, in the cause of the malady, we do but deal with the nervous system. And that, once righted, and the mind once disciplined in those practical duties which conjugal life necessitates, the malady itself will never return; never be transmitted to the children on whom your wife's restoration to health may permit you to count hereafter. If the course of travel I recommend and the prescriptions I conjoin with that course fail you, let me know; and though I would fain close my days in this land, I will come to you. I love you as my son. I will tend your wife as my daughter."

Foreign travel! The idea smiled on me. Julius Faber's companionship, sympathy, matchless skill! The very thought seemed as a raft to a drowning mariner. I now read more attentively the earlier portions of his letter. They described, in glowing colours, the wondrous country in which he had fixed his home; the joyous elasticity of its atmosphere; the freshness of its primitive, pastoral life; the strangeness of its scenery, with a Flora and a Fauna which have no similitudes in the ransacked quarters of the Old World. And the strong impulse seized me to transfer to the solitudes of that blithesome and hardy Nature a spirit no longer at home in the civilized haunts of men, and household gods that shrank from all social eyes, and would fain have found a wilderness for the desolate hearth, on which they had ceased to be sacred if unveiled. As if to give practical excuse and reason for the idea that seized me, Julius Faber mentioned, incidentally, that the house and property of a wealthy speculator in his immediate neighbourhood were on sale at a price which seemed to me alluringly trivial, and, according to his judgment, far below the value they would soon reach in the hands of a more patient capitalist. He wrote at the period of the agricultural panic in the colony which preceded the discovery of its earliest gold-fields. But his geological science had convinced him that strata within and around the property now for sale were auriferous, and his intelligence enabled him to predict how inevitably man would be attracted towards the gold, and how surely the gold would fertilize the soil and enrich its owners. He described the house thus to be sold--in case I might know of a purchaser. It had been built at a cost unusual in those early times, and by one who clung to English tastes amidst Australian wilds, so that in this purchase a settler would escape the hardships he had then ordinarily to encounter; it was, in short, a home to which a man more luxurious than I might bear a bride with wants less simple than those which now sufficed for my darling Lilian.

This communication dwelt on my mind through the avocations of the day on which I received it, and in the evening I read all, except the supplement, aloud to Mrs. Ashleigh in her daughter's presence. I desired to see if Faber's descriptions of the country and its life, which in themselves were extremely spirited and striking, would arouse Lilian's interest. At first she did not seem to heed me while I read; but when I came to Faber's loving account of little Amy, Lilian turned her eyes towards me, and

evidently listened with attention. He wrote how the child had already become the most useful person in the simple household. How watchful the quickness of the heart had made the service of the eye; all their associations of comfort had grown round her active, noiseless movements; it was she who had contrived to monopolize the management, or supervision, of all that added to Home the nameless, interior charm. Under her eyes the rude furniture of the log-house grew inviting with English neatness; she took charge of the dairy; she had made the garden gay with flowers selected from the wild, and suggested the trellised walk, already covered with hardy vine. She was their confidant in every plan of improvement, their comforter in every anxious doubt, their nurse in every passing ailment, her very smile a refreshment in the weariness of daily toil. "How all that is best in womanhood," wrote the old man, with the enthusiasm which no time had reft from his hearty, healthful genius,--"how all that is best in womanhood is here opening fast into flower from the bud of the infant's soul! The atmosphere seems to suit it,--the child-woman in the child-world!"

I heard Lilian sigh; I looked towards her furtively; tears stood in her softened eyes; her lip was quivering. Presently, she began to rub her right hand over the left--over the wedding-ring--at first slowly; then with quicker movement.

"It is not here," she said impatiently; "it is not here!"

"What is not here?" asked Mrs. Ashleigh, hanging over her.

Lilian leaned back her head on her mother's bosom, and answered faintly,--

"The stain! Some one said there was a stain on this hand. I do not see it, do you?"

"There is no stain, never was," said I; "the hand is white as your own innocence, or the lily from which you take your name."

"Hush! you do not know my name. I will whisper it. Soft!--my name is Nightshade! Do you want to know where the lily is now, brother? I will tell you. There, in that letter. You call her Amy,--she is the lily; take her to your breast, hide her. Hist! what are those bells? Marriage-bells. Do not let her hear them; for there is a cruel wind that whispers the bells, and the bells ring out what it whispers, louder and louder,

"'Stain on lily
Shame on lily,
Wither lily.'"

"If she hears what the wind whispers to the bells, she will creep away into the dark, and then she, too, will turn to Nightshade."

"Lilian, look up, awake! You have been in a long, long dream: it is passing away. Lilian, my beloved, my blessed Lilian!"

Never till then had I heard from her even so vague an allusion to the fatal calumny and its dreadful effect, and while her words now pierced my heart, it beat, amongst its pangs, with a thrilling hope.

But, alas! the idea that had gleamed upon her had vanished already. She murmured something about Circles of Fire, and a Veiled Woman in black

garments; became restless, agitated, and unconscious of our presence, and finally sank into a heavy sleep.

That night (my room was next to hers with the intervening door open) I heard her cry out. I hastened to her side. She was still asleep, but there was an anxious labouring expression on her young face, and yet not an expression wholly of pain--for her lips were parted with a smile,--that glad yet troubled smile with which one who has been revolving some subject of perplexity or fear greets a sudden thought that seems to solve the riddle, or prompt the escape from danger; and as I softly took her hand she returned my gentle pressure, and inclining towards me, said, still in sleep,--

"Let us go."

"Whither?" I answered, under my breath, so as not to awake her; "is it to see the child of whom I read, and the land that is blooming out of the earth's childhood?"

"Out of the dark into the light; where the leaves do not change; where the night is our day, and the winter our summer. Let us go! let us go!"

"We will go. Dream on undisturbed, my bride. Oh, that the dream could tell you that my love has not changed in our sorrow, holier and deeper than on the day in which our vows were exchanged! In you still all my hopes fold their wings; where you are, there still I myself have my dreamland!"

The sweet face grew bright as I spoke; all trouble left the smile; softly she drew her hand from my clasp, and rested it for a moment on my bended head, as if in blessing.

I rose; stole back to my own room, closing the door, lest the sob I could not stifle should mar her sleep.

CHAPTER LXVI.

I unfolded my new prospects to Mrs. Ashleigh. She was more easily reconciled to them than I could have supposed, judging by her habits, which were naturally indolent, and averse to all that disturbed their even tenor. But the great grief which had befallen her had roused up that strength of devotion which lies dormant in all hearts that are capable of loving another more than self. With her full consent I wrote to Faber, communicating my intentions, instructing him to purchase the property he had so commended, and inclosing my banker's order for the amount, on an Australian firm. I now announced my intention to retire from my profession; made prompt arrangements with a successor to my practice; disposed of my two houses at L----; fixed the day of my departure. Vanity was dead within me, or I might have been gratified by the sensation which the news of my design created. My faults became at once forgotten; such good qualities as I might possess were exaggerated. The public regret vented and consoled itself in a costly testimonial, to which even the poorest of my patients insisted on the privilege to contribute, graced with an inscription flattering enough to have served for the epitaph on some great man's tomb. No one who has served an art and striven for a name is a stoic to the esteem of others; and sweet indeed would such

honours have been to me had not publicity itself seemed a wrong to the sanctity of that affliction which set Lilian apart from the movement and the glories of the world.

The two persons most active in "getting up" this testimonial were, nominally, Colonel Poyntz--in truth, his wife--and my old disparager, Mr. Vigors! It is long since my narrative has referred to Mr. Vigors. It is due to him now to state that, in his capacity of magistrate, and in his own way, he had been both active and delicate in the inquiries set on foot for Lilian during the unhappy time in which she had wandered, spellbound, from her home. He, alone, of all the more influential magnates of the town, had upheld her innocence against the gossips that aspersed it; and during the last trying year of my residence at L----, he had sought me, with frank and manly confessions of his regret for his former prejudice against me, and assurances of the respect in which he had held me ever since my marriage--marriage but in rite--with Lilian. He had then, strong in his ruling passion, besought me to consult his clairvoyants as to her case. I declined this invitation so as not to affront him,--declined it, not as I should once have done, but with no word nor look of incredulous disdain. The fact was, that I had conceived a solemn terror of all practices and theories out of the beaten track of sense and science. Perhaps in my refusal I did wrong. I know not. I was afraid of my own imagination. He continued not less friendly in spite of my refusal. And, such are the vicissitudes in human feeling, I parted from him whom I had regarded as my most bigoted foe with a warmer sentiment of kindness than for any of those on whom I had counted on friendship. He had not deserted Lilian. It was not so with Mrs. Poyntz. I would have paid tenfold the value of the testimonial to have erased, from the list of those who subscribed to it, her husband's name.

The day before I quitted L----, and some weeks after I had, in fact, renounced my practice, I received an urgent entreaty from Miss Brabazon to call on her. She wrote in lines so blurred that I could with difficulty decipher them, that she was very ill, given over by Dr. Jones, who had been attending her. She implored my opinion.

CHAPTER LXVII.

On reaching the house, a formal man-servant, with indifferent face, transferred me to the guidance of a hired nurse, who led me up the stairs, and, before I was well aware of it, into the room in which Dr. Lloyd had died. Widely different, indeed, the aspect of the walls, the character of the furniture! The dingy paperhangings were replaced by airy muslins, showing a rose-coloured ground through their fanciful openwork; luxurious fauteuils, gilded wardrobes, full-length mirrors, a toilet-table tricked out with lace and ribbons; and glittering with an array of silver gewgaws and jewelled trinkets,--all transformed the sick chamber of the simple man of science to a boudoir of death for the vain coquette. But the room itself, in its high lattice and heavy ceiling, was the same--as the coffin itself has the same confines, whether it be rich in velvets and bright with blazoning, or rude as a pauper's shell.

And the bed, with its silken coverlet, and its pillows edged with the thread-work of Louvain, stood in the same sharp angle as that over which had flickered the frowning smoke-reek above the dying, resentful foe. As I approached, a man, who was seated beside the sufferer, turned round his

face, and gave me a silent kindly nod of recognition. He was Mr. C----, one of the clergy of the town, the one with whom I had the most frequently come into contact wherever the physician resigns to the priest the language that bids man hope. Mr. C-----, as a preacher, was renowned for his touching eloquence; as a pastor, revered for his benignant piety; as friend and neighbour, beloved for a sweetness of nature which seemed to regulate all the movements of a mind eminently masculine by the beat of a heart tender as the gentlest woman's.

This good man; then whispering something to the sufferer which I did not overhear, stole towards me, took me by the hand, and said, also in a whisper, "Be merciful as Christians are." He led me to the bedside, there left me, went out, and closed the door.

"Do you think I am really dying, Dr. Fenwick?" said a feeble voice. "I fear Dr. Jones has misunderstood my case. I wish I had called you in at the first, but--but I could not--I could not! Will you feel my pulse? Don't you think you could do me good?"

I had no need to feel the pulse in that skeleton wrist; the aspect of the face sufficed to tell me that death was drawing near.

Mechanically, however, I went through the hackneyed formulae of professional questions. This vain ceremony done, as gently and delicately as I could, I implied the expediency of concluding, if not yet settled, those affairs which relate to this world.

"This duty," I said, "in relieving the mind from care for others to whom we owe the forethought of affection, often relieves the body also of many a gnawing pain, and sometimes, to the surprise of the most experienced physician, prolongs life itself."

"Ah," said the old maid, peevishly, "I understand! But it is not my will that troubles me. I should not be left to a nurse from a hospital if my relations did not know that my annuity dies with me; and I forestalled it in furnishing this house, Dr. Fenwick, and all these pretty things will be sold to pay those horrid tradesmen!--very hard!--so hard!--just as I got things about me in the way I always said I would have them if I could ever afford it! I always said I would have my bedroom hung with muslin, like dear Lady L----'s; and the drawing-room in geranium-coloured silk: so pretty. You have not seen it: you would not know the house, Dr. Fenwick. And just when all is finished, to be taken away and thrust into the grave. It is so cruel!" And she began to weep. Her emotion brought on a violent paroxysm, which, when she recovered from it, had produced one of those startling changes of mind that are sometimes witnessed before death,--changes whereby the whole character of a life seems to undergo solemn transformation. The hard will becomes gentle, the proud meek, the frivolous earnest. That awful moment when the things of earth pass away like dissolving scenes, leaving death visible on the background by the glare that shoots up in the last flicker of life's lamp.

And when she lifted her haggard face from my shoulder, and heard my pitying, soothing voice, it was not the grief of a trifler at the loss of fondled toys that spoke in the fallen lines of her lip, in the woe of her pleading eyes.

"So this is death," she said. "I feel it hurrying on. I must speak. I promised Mr. C---- that I would. Forgive me, can you--can you? That letter--that letter to Lilian Ashleigh, I wrote it! Oh, do not look at me

so terribly; I never thought it could do such evil! And am I not punished enough? I truly believed when I wrote that Miss Ashleigh was deceiving you, and once I was silly enough to fancy that you might have liked me. But I had another motive; I had been so poor all my life--I had become rich unexpectedly; I set my heart on this house--I had always fancied it--and I thought if I could prevent Miss Ashleigh marrying you, and scare her and her mother from coming back to L----, I could get the house. And I did get it. What for?--to die. I had not been here a week before I got the hurt that is killing me--a fall down the stairs,--coming out of this very room; the stairs had been polished. If I had stayed in my old lodging, it would not have happened. Oh, say you forgive me! Say, say it, even if you do not feel you can! Say it!" And the miserable woman grasped me by the arm as Dr. Lloyd had grasped me.

I shaded my averted face with my hands; my heart heaved with the agony of my suppressed passion. A wrong, however deep, only to myself, I could have pardoned without effort; such a wrong to Lilian,--no! I could not say "I forgive."

The dying wretch was perhaps more appalled by my silence than she would have been by my reproach. Her voice grew shrill in her despair.

"You will not pardon me! I shall die with your curse on my head! Mercy! mercy! That good man, Mr. C----, assured me you would be merciful. Have you never wronged another? Has the Evil One never tempted you?"

Then I spoke in broken accents: "Me! Oh, had it been I whom you defamed--but a young creature so harmless, so unoffending, and for so miserable a motive!"

"But I tell you, I swear to you, I never dreamed I could cause such sorrow; and that young man, that Margrave, put it into my head!"

"Margrave! He had left L---- long before that letter was written!"

"But he came back for a day just before I wrote: it was the very day. I met him in the lane yonder. He asked after you,--after Miss Ashleigh; and when he spoke he laughed, and I said, 'Miss Ashleigh had been ill, and was gone away;' and he laughed again. And I thought he knew more than he would tell me, so I asked him if he supposed Mrs. Ashleigh would come back, and said how much I should like to take this house if she did not; and again he laughed, and said, 'Birds never stay in the nest after the young ones are hurt,' and went away singing. When I got home, his laugh and his song haunted me. I thought I saw him still in my room, prompting me to write, and I sat down and wrote. Oh, pardon, pardon me! I have been a foolish poor creature, but never meant to do such harm. The Evil One tempted me! There he is, near me now! I see him yonder! there, at the doorway. He comes to claim me! As you hope for mercy yourself, free me from him! Forgive me!"

I made an effort over myself. In naming Margrave as her tempter, the woman had suggested an excuse, echoed from that innermost cell of my mind, which I recoiled from gazing into, for there I should behold his image. Inexpiable though the injury she had wrought against me and mine, still the woman was human--fellow-creature-like myself;--but he?

I took the pale hand that still pressed my arm, and said, with firm voice,--

"Be comforted. In the name of Lillian, my wife, I forgive you for her and for me as freely and as fully as we are enjoined by Him, against whose precepts the best of us daily sin, to forgive--we children of wrath--to forgive one another!"

"Heaven bless you!--oh, bless you!" she murmured, sinking back upon her pillow.

"Ah!" thought I, "what if the pardon I grant for a wrong far deeper than I inflicted on him whose imprecation smote me in this chamber, should indeed be received as atonement, and this blessing on the lips of the dying annul the dark curse that the dead has left on my path through the Valley of the Shadow!"

I left my patient sleeping quietly,--the sleep that precedes the last. As I went down the stairs into the hall, I saw Mrs. Poyntz standing at the threshold, speaking to the man-servant and the nurse.

I would have passed her with a formal bow, but she stopped me.

"I came to inquire after poor Miss Brabazon," said she.

"You can tell me more than the servants can: is there no hope?"

"Let the nurse go up and watch beside her. She may pass away in the sleep into which she has fallen."

"Allen Fenwick, I must speak with you--nay, but for a few minutes. I hear that you leave L---- to-morrow. It is scarcely among the chances of life that we should meet again." While thus saying, she drew me along the lawn down the path that led towards her own home. "I wish," said she, earnestly, "that you could part with a kindlier feeling towards me; but I can scarcely expect it. Could I put myself in your place, and be moved by your feelings, I know that I should be implacable; but I--"

"But you, madam, are The World! and the World governs itself, and dictates to others, by laws which seem harsh to those who ask from its favour the services which the World cannot tender, for the World admits favourites, but ignores friends. You did but act to me as the World ever acts to those who mistake its favour for its friendship."

"It is true," said Mrs. Poyntz, with blunt candour; and we continued to walk on silently. At length she said abruptly, "But do you not rashly deprive yourself of your only consolation in sorrow? When the heart suffers, does your skill admit any remedy like occupation to the mind? Yet you abandon that occupation to which your mind is most accustomed; you desert your career; you turn aside, in the midst of the race, from the fame which awaits at the goal; you go back from civilization itself, and dream that all your intellectual cravings can find content in the life of a herdsman, amidst the monotony of a wild! No, you will repent, for you are untrue to your mind!"

"I am sick of the word 'mind'!" said I, bitterly. And therewith I relapsed into musing.

The enigmas which had foiled my intelligence in the unravelled Sibyl Book of Nature were mysteries strange to every man's normal practice of thought, even if reducible to the fraudulent impressions of outward sense; for illusions in a brain otherwise healthy suggest problems in our human

organization which the colleges that record them rather guess at than solve. But the blow which had shattered my life had been dealt by the hand of a fool. Here, there were no mystic enchantments. Motives the most commonplace and paltry, suggested to a brain as trivial and shallow as ever made the frivolity of woman a theme for the satire of poets, had sufficed, in devastating the field of my affections, to blast the uses for which I had cultured my mind; and had my intellect been as great as heaven ever gave to man, it would have been as vain a shield as mine against the shaft that had lodged in my heart. While I had, indeed, been preparing my reason and my fortitude to meet such perils, weird and marvellous, as those by which tales round the winter fireside scare the credulous child, a contrivance--so vulgar and hackneyed that not a day passes but what some hearth is vexed by an anonymous libel--had wrought a calamity more dread than aught which my dark guess into the Shadow-Land unpierced by Philosophy could trace to the prompting of malignant witchcraft. So, ever this truth runs through all legends of ghost and demon--through the uniform records of what wonder accredits and science rejects as the supernatural--lo! the dread machinery whose wheels roll through Hades! What need such awful engines for such mean results? The first blockhead we meet in our walk to our grocer's can tell us more than the ghost tells us; the poorest envy we ever aroused hurts us more than the demon. How true an interpreter is Genius to Hell as to Earth! The Fiend comes to Faust, the tired seeker of knowledge; Heaven and Hell stake their cause in the Mortal's temptation. And what does the Fiend to astonish the Mortal? Turn wine into fire, turn love into crime. We need no Mephistopheles to accomplish these marvels every day!

Thus silently thinking, I walked by the side of the world-wise woman; and when she next spoke, I looked up, and saw that we were at the Monks' Well, where I had first seen Lilian gazing into heaven!

Mrs. Poyntz had, as we walked, placed her hand on my arm; and, turning abruptly from the path into the glade, I found myself standing by her side in the scene where a new sense of being had first disclosed to my sight the hues with which Love, the passionate beautifier, turns into purple and gold the gray of the common air. Thus, when romance has ended in sorrow, and the Beautiful fades from the landscape, the trite and positive forms of life, banished for a time, reappear, and deepen our mournful remembrance of the glories they replace. And the Woman of the World, finding how little I was induced to respond to her when she had talked of myself, began to speak, in her habitual clear, ringing accents, of her own social schemes and devices,--

"I shall miss you when you are gone, Allen Fenwick; for though, during the last year or so, all actual intercourse between us has ceased, yet my interest in you gave some occupation to my thoughts when I sat alone,--having lost my main object of ambition in settling my daughter, and having no longer any one in the house with whom I could talk of the future, or for whom I could form a project. It is so wearisome to count the changes which pass within us, that we take interest in the changes that pass without. Poyntz still has his weather-glass; I have no longer my Jane."

"I cannot linger with you on this spot," said I, impatiently turning back into the path; she followed, treading over fallen leaves. And unheeding my interruption, she thus continued her hard talk,--

"But I am not sick of my mind, as you seem to be of yours; I am only somewhat tired of the little cage in which, since it has been alone, it

ruffles its plumes against the flimsy wires that confine it from wider space. I shall take up my home for a time with the new-married couple: they want me. Ashleigh Sumner has come into parliament. He means to attend regularly and work hard, but he does not like Jane to go into the world by herself, and he wishes her to go into the world, because he wants a wife to display his wealth for the improvement of his position. In Ashleigh Sumner's house I shall have ample scope for my energies, such as they are. I have a curiosity to see the few that perch on the wheels of the State and say, 'It is we who move the wheels!' It will amuse me to learn if I can maintain in a capital the authority I have won in a country town; if not, I can but return to my small principality. Wherever I live I must sway, not serve. If I succeed--as I ought, for in Jane's beauty and Ashleigh's fortune I have materials for the woof of ambition, wanting which here, I fall asleep over my knitting--if I succeed, there will be enough to occupy the rest of my life. Ashleigh Sumner must be a power; the power will be represented and enjoyed by my child, and created and maintained by me! Allen Fenwick, do as I do. Be world with the world, and it will only be in moments of spleen and chagrin that you will sigh to think that the heart may be void when the mind is full. Confess you envy me while you listen."

"Not so; all that to you seems so great appears to me so small! Nature alone is always grand, in her terrors as well as her charms. The World for you, Nature for me. Farewell!"

"Nature!" said Mrs. Poyntz, compassionately. "Poor Allen Fenwick! Nature indeed,--intellectual suicide! Nay, shake hands, then, if for the last time."

So we shook hands and parted, where the wicket-gate and the stone stairs separated my blighted fairy-land from the common thoroughfare.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

That night as I was employed in collecting the books and manuscripts which I proposed to take with me, including my long-suspended physiological work, and such standard authorities as I might want to consult or refer to in the portions yet incompleting, my servant entered to inform me, in answer to the inquiries I had sent him to make, that Miss Brabazon had peacefully breathed her last an hour before. Well! my pardon had perhaps soothed her last moments; but how unavailing her death-bed repentance to undo the wrong she had done!

I turned from that thought, and, glancing at the work into which I had thrown all my learning, methodized into system with all my art, I recalled the pity which Mrs. Poyntz had expressed for my meditated waste of mind. The tone of superiority which this incarnation of common-sense accompanied by uncommon will assumed over all that was too deep or too high for her comprehension had sometimes amused me; thinking over it now, it piqued. I said to myself, "After all, I shall bear with me such solace as intellectual occupation can afford. I shall have leisure to complete this labour; and a record that I have lived and thought may outlast all the honours which worldly ambition may bestow upon Ashleigh Summer!" And, as I so murmured, my hand, mechanically selecting the books I needed, fell on the Bible that Julius Faber had given to me.

It opened at the Second Book of Esdras, which our Church places amongst the Apocrypha, and is generally considered by scholars to have been written in the first or second century of the Christian era,[1]--but in which the questions raised by man in the remotest ages, to which we can trace back his desire "to comprehend the ways of the Most High," are invested with a grandeur of thought and sublimity of word to which I know of no parallel in writers we call profane.

My eye fell on this passage in the lofty argument between the Angel whose name was Uriel, and the Prophet, perplexed by his own cravings for knowledge:--

"He [the Angel] answered me, and said, I went into a forest, into a plain, and the trees took counsel,

"And said, Come, let us go and make war against the sea, that it may depart away before us, and that we may make us more woods.

"The floods of the sea also in like manner took counsel, and said, Come, let us go up and subdue the woods of the plain, that there also we may make us another country.

"The thought of the wood was in vain, for the fire came and consumed it.

"The thought of the floods of the sea came likewise to nought, for the sand stood up and stopped them.

"If thou wert judge now betwixt these two, whom wouldst thou begin to justify; or whom wouldst thou condemn?

"I answered and said, Verily it is a foolish thought that they both have devised; for the ground is given unto the wood, and the sea also hath his place to bear his floods.

"Then answered he me, and said, Thou halt given a right judgment; but why judgest thou not thyself also?

"For like as the ground is given unto the wood, and the sea to his floods, even so they that dwell upon the earth may understand nothing but that which is upon the earth; and He that dwelleth above the heavens may only understand the things that are above the height of the heavens."

I paused at those words, and, closing the Sacred Volume, fell into deep, unquiet thought.

[1] Such is the supposition of Jahn. Dr. Lee, however, is of opinion that the author was contemporary, and, indeed, identical, with the author of the Book of Enoch.

CHAPTER LXIX.

I had hoped that the voyage would produce some beneficial effect upon Lilian; but no effect, good or bad, was perceptible, except, perhaps, a deeper silence, a gentler calm. She loved to sit on the deck when the

nights were fair, and the stars mirrored on the deep. And once thus, as I stood beside her, bending over the rail of the vessel, and gazing on the long wake of light which the moon made amidst the darkness of an ocean to which no shore could be seen, I said to myself, "Where is my track of light through the measureless future? Would that I could believe as I did when a child! Woe is me, that all the reasonings I take from my knowledge should lead me away from the comfort which the peasant who mourns finds in faith! Why should riddles so dark have been thrust upon me,--me, no fond child of fancy; me, sober pupil of schools the severest? Yet what marvel--the strangest my senses have witnessed or feigned in the fraud they have palmed on me--is greater than that by which a simple affection, that all men profess to have known, has changed the courses of life prearranged by my hopes and confirmed by my judgment? How calmly before I knew love I have anatomized its mechanism, as the tyro who dissects the web-work of tissues and nerves in the dead! Lo! it lives, lives in me; and, in living, escapes from my scalpel, and mocks all my knowledge. Can love be reduced to the realm of the senses? No; what nun is more barred by her grate from the realm of the senses than my bride by her solemn affliction? Is love, then, the union of kindred, harmonious minds? No, my beloved one sits by my side, and I guess not her thoughts, and my mind is to her a sealed fountain. Yet I love her more--oh, ineffably more!--for the doom which destroys the two causes philosophy assigns to love--in the form, in the mind! How can I now, in my vain physiology, say what is love, what is not? Is it love which must tell me that man has a soul, and that in soul will be found the solution of problems never to be solved in body or mind alone?"

My self-questionings halted here as Lilian's hand touched my shoulder. She had risen from her seat, and had come to me.

"Are not the stars very far from earth?" she said.

"Very far."

"Are they seen for the first time to-night?"

"They were seen, I presume, as we see them, by the fathers of all human races!"

"

"Yet close below us they shine reflected in the waters; and yet, see, wave flows on wave before we can count it!"

"Lilian, by what sympathy do you read and answer my thought?"

Her reply was incoherent and meaningless. If a gleam of intelligence had mysteriously lighted my heart to her view, it was gone. But drawing her nearer towards me, my eye long followed wistfully the path of light, dividing the darkness on either hand, till it closed in the sloping horizon.

CHAPTER LXX.

The voyage is over. At the seaport at which we landed I found a letter from Faber. My instructions had reached him in time to effect the purchase on which his descriptions had fixed my desire. The stock, the implements of husbandry, the furniture of the house, were included in the

purchase. All was prepared for my arrival, and I hastened from the then miserable village, which may some day rise into one of the mightiest capitals of the world, to my lodge in the wilderness.

It was the burst of the Australian spring, which commences in our autumn month of October. The air was loaded with the perfume of the acacias. Amidst the glades of the open forest land, or climbing the craggy banks of winding silvery creeks,[1] creepers and flowers of dazzling hue contrasted the olive-green of the surrounding foliage. The exhilarating effect of the climate in that season heightens the charm of the strange scenery. In the brilliancy of the sky, in the lightness of the atmosphere, the sense of life is wondrously quickened. With the very breath the Adventurer draws in from the racy air, he feels as if inhaling hope.

We have reached our home, we are settled in it; the early unfamiliar impressions are worn away. We have learned to dispense with much that we at first missed, and are reconciled to much that at first disappointed or displeased.

The house is built but of logs; the late proprietor had commenced, upon a rising ground, a mile distant, a more imposing edifice of stone, but it is not half finished.

This log-house is commodious, and much has been done, within and without, to conceal or adorn its primitive rudeness. It is of irregular, picturesque form, with verandas round three sides of it, to which the grape-vine has been trained, with glossy leaves that clamber up to the gable roof. There is a large garden in front, in which many English fruit-trees have been set, and grow fast amongst the plants of the tropics and the orange-trees of Southern Europe. Beyond stretch undulous pastures, studded not only with sheep, but with herds of cattle, which my speculative predecessor had bred from parents of famous stock, and imported from England at mighty cost; but as yet the herds had been of little profit, and they range their luxuriant expanse of pasture with as little heed. To the left soar up, in long range, the many-coloured hills; to the right meanders a creek, belted by feathery trees; and on its opposite bank a forest opens, through frequent breaks, into park-like glades and alleys. The territory, of which I so suddenly find myself the lord, is vast, even for a colonial capitalist.

It had been originally purchased as "a special survey," comprising twenty thousand acres, with the privilege of pasture over forty thousand more. In very little of this land, though it includes some of the most fertile districts in the known world, has cultivation been even commenced. At the time I entered into possession, even sheep were barely profitable; labour was scarce and costly. Regarded as a speculation, I could not wonder that my predecessor fled in fear from his domain. Had I invested the bulk of my capital in this lordly purchase, I should have deemed myself a ruined man; but a villa near London, with a hundred acres, would have cost me as much to buy, and thrice as much to keep up. I could afford the investment I had made. I found a Scotch bailiff already on the estate, and I was contented to escape from rural occupations, to which I brought no experience, by making it worth his while to serve me with zeal. Two domestics of my own, and two who had been for many years with Mrs. Ashleigh, had accompanied us: they remained faithful and seemed contented. So the clockwork of our mere household arrangements went on much the same as in our native home. Lilian was not subjected to the ordinary privations and discomforts that await the wife even of the wealthy

emigrant. Alas! would she have heeded them if she had been?

The change of scene wrought a decided change for the better in her health and spirits, but not such as implied a dawn of reviving reason. But her countenance was now more rarely overcast. Its usual aspect was glad with a soft mysterious smile. She would murmur snatches of songs, that were partly borrowed from English poets, and partly glided away into what seemed spontaneous additions of her own,--wanting intelligible meaning, but never melody nor rhyme. Strange, that memory and imitation--the two earliest parents of all inventive knowledge--should still be so active, and judgment--the after faculty, that combines the rest into purpose and method--be annulled!

Julius Faber I see continually, though his residence is a few miles distant. He is sanguine as to Lilian's ultimate recovery; and, to my amazement and to my envy, he has contrived, by some art which I cannot attain, to establish between her and himself intelligible communion. She comprehends his questions, when mine, though the simplest, seem to her in unknown language; and he construes into sense her words, that to me are meaningless riddles.

"I was right," he said to me one day, leaving her seated in the garden beside her quiet, patient mother, and joining me where I lay--listless yet fretful--under the shadeless gum-trees, gazing not on the flocks and fields that I could call my own, but on the far mountain range, from which the arch of the horizon seemed to spring,--"I was right," said the great physician; "this is reason suspended, not reason lost. Your wife will recover; but--"

"But what?"

"Give me your arm as I walk homeward, and I will tell you the conclusion to which I have come."

I rose, the old man leaned on me, and we went down the valley along the craggy ridges of the winding creek. The woodland on the opposite bank was vocal with the chirp and croak and chatter of Australian birds,--all mirthful, all songless, save that sweetest of warblers, which some early irreverent emigrant degraded to the name of magpie, but whose note is sweeter than the nightingale's, and trills through the lucent air with a distinct ecstatic melody of joy that dominates all the discords, so ravishing the sense, that, while it sings, the ear scarcely heeds the scream of the parrots.

[1] Creek is the name given by Australian colonists to precarious water Courses and tributary streams.

CHAPTER LXXI.

"You may remember," said Julius Faber, "Sir Humphry Davy's eloquent description of the effect produced on him by the inhalation of nitrous oxide. He states that he began to lose the perception of external things; trains of vivid visible images rapidly passed through his mind, and were connected with words in such a manner as to produce perceptions perfectly novel. 'I existed,' he said, 'in a world of newly-connected and newly-modified ideas.' When he recovered, he exclaimed: 'Nothing exists

but thoughts; the universe is composed of impressions, ideas, pleasures, and pains!"

"Now observe, that thus a cultivator of positive science, endowed with one of the healthiest of human brains, is, by the inhalation of a gas, abstracted from all external life,--enters into a new world, which consists of images he himself creates and animates so vividly that, on waking, he resolves the universe itself into thoughts."

"Well," said I, "but what inference do you draw from that voluntary experiment, applicable to the malady of which you bid me hope the cure?"

"Simply this: that the effect produced on a healthful brain by the nitrous oxide may be produced also by moral causes operating on the blood, or on the nerves. There is a degree of mental excitement in which ideas are more vivid than sensations, and then the world of external things gives way to the world within the brain.[1] But this, though a suspension of that reason which comprehends accuracy of judgment, is no more a permanent aberration of reason than were Sir Humphry Davy's visionary ecstasies under the influence of the gas. The difference between the two states of suspension is that of time, and it is but an affair of time with our beloved patient. Yet prepare yourself. I fear that the mind will not recover without some critical malady of the body!"

"Critical! but not dangerous?--say not dangerous! I can endure the pause of her reason; I could not endure the void in the universe if her life were to fade from the earth."

"Poor friend! would not you yourself rather lose life than reason?"

"I--yes! But we men are taught to set cheap value on our own lives; we do not estimate at the same rate the lives of those we love. Did we do so, Humanity would lose its virtues."

"What, then! Love teaches that there is something of nobler value than mere mind? Yet surely it cannot be the mere body? What is it, if not that continuance of being which your philosophy declines to acknowledge,--namely, soul? If you fear so painfully that your Lilian should die, is it not that you fear to lose her forever?"

"Oh, cease, cease!" I cried impatiently. "I cannot now argue on metaphysics. What is it that you anticipate of harm to her life? Her health has been stronger ever since her affliction. She never seems to know ailment now. Do you not perceive that her cheek has a more hardy bloom, her frame a more rounded symmetry, than when you saw her in England?"

"Unquestionably. Her physical forces have been silently recruiting themselves in the dreams which half lull, half amuse her imagination. Imagination! that faculty, the most glorious which is bestowed on the human mind, because it is the faculty which enables thought to create, is of all others the most exhausting to life when unduly stimulated and consciously reasoning on its own creations. I think it probable that had this sorrow not befallen you, you would have known a sorrow yet graver,--you would have long survived your Lilian. As it is now, when she recovers, her whole organization, physical and mental, will have undergone a beneficent change. But, I repeat my prediction,--some severe malady of the body will precede the restoration of the mind; and it is my hope that the present suspense or aberration of the more wearing powers of the mind

may fit the body to endure and surmount the physical crisis. I remember a case, within my own professional experience, in many respects similar to this, but in other respects it was less hopeful. I was consulted by a young student of a very delicate physical frame, of great mental energies, and consumed by an intense ambition. He was reading for university honours. He would not listen to me when I entreated him to rest his mind. I thought that he was certain to obtain the distinction for which he toiled, and equally certain to die a few months after obtaining it. He falsified both my prognostics. He so overworked himself that, on the day of examination, his nerves were agitated, his memory failed him; he passed, not without a certain credit, but fell far short of the rank amongst his fellow competitors to which he aspired. Here, then, the irritated mind acted on the disappointed heart, and raised a new train of emotions. He was first visited by spectral illusions; then he sank into a state in which the external world seemed quite blotted out. He heeded nothing that was said to him; seemed to see nothing that was placed before his eyes,--in a word, sensations became dormant, ideas preconceived usurped their place, and those ideas gave him pleasure. He believed that his genius was recognized, and lived amongst its supposed creations enjoying an imaginary fame. So it went on for two years, during which suspense of his reason, his frail form became robust and vigorous. At the end of that time he was seized with a fever, which would have swept him in three days to the grave had it occurred when I was first called in to attend him. He conquered the fever, and, in recovering, acquired the full possession of the intellectual faculties so long suspended. When I last saw him, many years afterwards, he was in perfect health, and the object of his young ambition was realized; the body had supported the mind,--he had achieved distinction. Now what had so, for a time, laid this strong intellect into visionary sleep? The most agonizing of human emotions in a noble spirit,--shame! What has so stricken down your Lilian? You have told me the story: shame!--the shame of a nature pre-eminently pure. But observe that, in his case as in hers, the shock inflicted does not produce a succession of painful illusions: on the contrary, in both, the illusions are generally pleasing. Had the illusions been painful, the body would have suffered, the patient died. Why did a painful shock produce pleasing illusions? Because, no matter how a shock on the nerves may originate, if it affects the reason, it does but make more vivid than impressions from actual external objects the ideas previously most cherished. Such ideas in the young student were ideas of earthly fame; such ideas in the young maiden are ideas of angel comforters and heavenly Edens. You miss her mind on the earth, and, while we speak, it is in paradise."

"Much that you say, my friend, is authorized by the speculations of great writers, with whom I am not unfamiliar; but in none of those writers, nor in your encouraging words, do I find a solution for much that has no precedents in my experience,--much, indeed, that has analogies in my reading, but analogies which I have hitherto despised as old wives' fables. I have bared to your searching eye the weird mysteries of my life. How do you account for facts which you cannot resolve into illusions,--for the influence which that strange being, Margrave, exercised over Lilian's mind or fancy, so that for a time her love for me was as dormant as is her reason now; so that he could draw her--her whose nature you admit to be singularly pure and modest--from her mother's home? The magic wand; the trance into which that wand threw Margrave himself; the apparition which it conjured up in my own quiet chamber when my mind was without a care and my health without a flaw,--how account for all this: as you endeavoured, and perhaps successfully, to account for all my impressions of the Vision in the Museum, of the luminous, haunting shadow in its earlier apparitions, when my fancy was heated, my heart tormented,

and, it might be, even the physical forces of this strong frame disordered?"

"Allen," said the old pathologist, "here we approach a ground which few physicians have dared to examine. Honour to those who, like our bold contemporary, Elliotson, have braved scoff and sacrificed dress in seeking to extract what is practical in uses, what can be tested by experiment, from those exceptional phenomena on which magic sought to found a philosophy, and to which philosophy tracks the origin of magic."

"What! do I understand you? Is it you, Julius Faber, who attach faith to the wonders attributed to animal magnetism and electro-biology, or subscribe to the doctrines which their practitioners teach?"

"I have not examined into those doctrines, nor seen with my own eyes the wonders recorded, upon evidence too respectable, nevertheless, to permit me peremptorily to deny what I have not witnessed.[2] But wherever I look through the History of Mankind in all ages and all races, I find a concurrence in certain beliefs which seem to countenance the theory that there is in some peculiar and rare temperaments a power over forms of animated organization, with which they establish some unaccountable affinity; and even, though much more rarely, a power over inanimate matter. You are familiar with the theory of Descartes, 'that those particles of the blood which penetrate to the brain do not only serve to nourish and sustain its substance, but to produce there a certain very subtle Aura, or rather a flame very vivid and pure, that obtains the name of the Animal Spirits;'[3] and at the close of his great fragment upon Man, he asserts that 'this flame is of no other nature than all the fires which are in inanimate bodies.'[4] This notion does but forestall the more recent doctrine that electricity is more or less in all, or nearly all, known matter. Now, whether in the electric fluid or some other fluid akin to it of which we know still less, thus equally pervading all matter, there may be a certain magnetic property more active, more operative upon sympathy in some human constitutions than in others, and which can account for the mysterious power I have spoken of, is a query I might suggest, but not an opinion I would hazard. For an opinion I must have that basis of experience or authority which I do not need when I submit a query to the experience and authority of others. Still, the supposition conveyed in the query is so far worthy of notice, that the ecstatic temperament (in which phrase I comprehend all constitutional mystics) is peculiarly sensitive to electric atmospheric influences. This is a fact which most medical observers will have remarked in the range of their practice. Accordingly, I was prepared to find Mr Hare Townshend, in his interesting work,[5] state that he himself was of 'the electric temperament,' sparks flying from his hair when combed in the dark, etc. That accomplished writer, whose veracity no one would impugn, affirms that between this electrical endowment and whatever mesmeric properties he might possess, there is a remarkable relationship and parallelism. Whatever state of the atmosphere tends to accumulate and insulate electricity in the body, promotes equally' (says Mr. Townshend) 'the power and facility with which I influence others mesmerically.' What Mr. Townshend thus observes in himself, American physicians and professors of chemistry depose to have observed in those modern magicians, the mediums of (so-called) 'spirit manifestation.' They state that all such mediums are of the electric temperament, thus everywhere found allied with the ecstatic, and their power varies in proportion as the state of the atmosphere serves to depress or augment the electricity stored in themselves. Here, then, in the midst of vagrant phenomena, either too hastily dismissed as altogether the tricks of fraudulent imposture, or too credulously accepted as

supernatural portents—here, at least, in one generalized fact, we may, perhaps, find a starting point, from which inductive experiment may arrive, soon or late, at a rational theory. But however the power of which we are speaking (a power accorded to special physical temperament) may or may not be accounted for by some patient student of nature, I am persuaded that it is in that power we are to seek for whatever is not wholly imposture, in the attributes assigned to magic or witchcraft. It is well said, by a writer who has gone into the depth of these subjects with the research of a scholar and the science of a pathologist, 'that if magic had exclusively reposed on credulity and falsehood, its reign would never have endured so long; but that its art took its origin in singular phenomena, proper to certain affections of the nerves, or manifested in the conditions of sleep. These phenomena, the principle of which was at first unknown, served to root faith in magic, and often abused even enlightened minds. The enchanters and magicians arrived, by divers practices, at the faculty of provoking in other brains a determined order of dreams, of engendering hallucinations of all kinds, of inducing fits of hypnotism, trance, mania, during which the persons so affected imagined that they saw, heard, touched, supernatural beings, conversed with them, proved their influences, assisted at prodigies of which magic proclaimed itself to possess the secret. The public, the enchanters, and the enchanted were equally dupes.' [6] Accepting this explanation, unintelligible to no physician of a practice so lengthened as mine has been, I draw from it the corollary, that as these phenomena are exhibited only by certain special affections, to which only certain special constitutions are susceptible, so not in any superior faculties of intellect, or of spiritual endowment, but in peculiar physical temperaments, often strangely disordered, the power of the sorcerer in affecting the imagination of others is to be sought. In the native tribes of Australasia the elders are instructed in the arts of this so-called sorcery, but only in a very few constitutions does instruction avail to produce effects in which the savages recognize the powers of a sorcerer: it is so with the Obi of the negroes. The fascination of Obi is an unquestionable fact, but the Obi man cannot be trained by formal lessons; he is born a fascinator, as a poet is born a poet. It is so with the Laplanders, of whom Tornoeus reports that of those instructed in the magical art 'only a few are capable of it.' 'Some,' he says, 'are naturally magicians.' And this fact is emphatically insisted upon by the mystics of our own middle ages, who state that a man must be born a magician; in other words, that the gift is constitutional, though developed by practice and art. Now, that this gift and its practice should principally obtain in imperfect states of civilization, and fade into insignificance in the busy social enlightenment of cities, may be accounted for by reference to the known influences of imagination. In the cruder states of social life not only is imagination more frequently predominant over all other faculties, but it has not the healthful vents which the intellectual competition of cities and civilization affords. The man who in a savage tribe, or in the dark feudal ages, would be a magician, is in our century a poet, an orator, a daring speculator, an inventive philosopher. In other words, his imagination is drawn to pursuits congenial to those amongst whom it works. It is the tendency of all intellect to follow the directions of the public opinion amidst which it is trained. Where a magician is held in reverence or awe, there will be more practitioners of magic than where a magician is despised as an impostor or shut up as a lunatic. In Scandinavia, before the introduction of Christianity, all tradition records the wonderful powers of the Vala, or witch, who was then held in reverence and honour. Christianity was introduced, and the early Church denounced the Vala as the instrument of Satan, and from that moment down dropped the majestic prophetess into a

miserable and execrated old hag!"

"The ideas you broach," said I, musingly, "have at moments crossed me, though I have shrunk from reducing them to a theory which is but one of pure hypothesis. But this magic, after all, then, you would place in the imagination of the operator, acting on the imagination of those whom it affects? Here, at least, I can follow you, to a certain extent, for here we get back into the legitimate realm of physiology."

"And possibly," said Faber, "we may find hints to guide us to useful examination, if not to complete solution of problems that, once demonstrated, may lead to discoveries of infinite value,--hints, I say, in two writers of widely opposite genius, Van Helmont and Bacon. Van Helmont, of all the mediaeval mystics, is, in spite of his many extravagant whims, the one whose intellect is the most suggestive to the disciplined reasoners of our day. He supposed that the faculty which he calls Fantasy, and which we familiarly call Imagination,--is invested with the power of creating for itself ideas independent of the senses, each idea clothed in a form fabricated by the imagination, and becoming an operative entity. This notion is so far favoured by modern physiologists, that Lincke reports a case where the eye itself was extirpated; yet the extirpation was followed by the appearance of luminous figures before the orbit. And again, a woman, stone-blind, complained of 'luminous images, with pale colours, before her eyes.' Abercrombie mentions the case 'of a lady quite blind, her eyes being also disorganized and sunk, who never walked out without seeing a little old woman in a red cloak, who seemed to walk before her.' [7] Your favourite authority, the illustrious Miller, who was himself in the habit of 'seeing different images in the field of vision when he lay quietly down to sleep, asserts that these images are not merely presented to the fancy, but that even the images of dreams are really seen,' and that 'any one may satisfy himself of this by accustoming himself regularly to open his eyes when waking after a dream,--the images seen in the dream are then sometimes visible, and can be observed to disappear gradually.' He confirms this statement not only by the result of his own experience, but by the observations made by Spinoza, and the yet higher authority of Aristotle, who accounts for spectral appearance as the internal action of the sense of vision. [8] And this opinion is favoured by Sir David Brewster, whose experience leads him to suggest 'that the objects of mental contemplation may be seen as distinctly as external objects, and will occupy the same local position in the axis of vision as if they had been formed by the agency of light.' Be this as it may, one fact remains,--that images can be seen even by the blind as distinctly and vividly as you and I now see the stream below our feet and the opossums at play upon yonder boughs. Let us come next to some remarkable suggestions of Lord Bacon. In his Natural History, treating of the force of the imagination, and the help it receives 'by one man working by another,' he cites an instance he had witnessed of a kind of juggler, who could tell a person what card he thought of. He mentioned this 'to a pretended learned man, curious in such things,' and this sage said to him, 'It is not the knowledge of the man's thought, for that is proper to God, but the enforcing of a thought upon him, and binding his imagination by a stronger, so that he could think of no other card.' You see this sage anticipated our modern electro-biologists! And the learned man then shrewdly asked Lord Bacon, 'Did the juggler tell the card to the man himself who had thought of it, or bid another tell it?' 'He bade another tell it,' answered Lord Bacon. 'I thought so,' returned his learned acquaintance, 'for the juggler himself could not have put on so strong an imagination; but by telling the card to the other, who believed the juggler was some strange man who could do strange things, that other man

caught a strong imagination.[9] The whole story is worth reading, because Lord Bacon evidently thinks it conveys a guess worth examining. And Lord Bacon, were he now living, would be the man to solve the mysteries that branch out of mesmerism or (so-called) spiritual manifestation, for he would not pretend to despise their phenomena for fear of hurting his reputation for good sense. Bacon then goes on to state that there are three ways to fortify the imagination. 'First, authority derived from belief in an art and in the man who exercises it; secondly, means to quicken and corroborate the imagination; thirdly, means to repeat and refresh it.' For the second and the third he refers to the practices of magic, and proceeds afterwards to state on what things imagination has most force,--'upon things that have the lightest and easiest motions, and, therefore, above all, upon the spirits of men, and, in them, on such affections as move lightest,--in love, in fear, in irresolution. And,' adds Bacon, earnestly, in a very different spirit from that which dictates to the sages of our time the philosophy of rejecting without trial that which belongs to the Marvellous,--'and whatsoever is of this kind, should be thoroughly inquired into.' And this great founder or renovator of the sober inductive system of investigation even so far leaves it a matter of speculative inquiry, whether imagination may not be so powerful that it can actually operate upon a plant, that he says: 'This likewise should be made upon plants, and that diligently; as if you should tell a man that such a tree would die this year, and will him, at these and these times, to go unto it and see how it thriveth.' I presume that no philosopher has followed such recommendations: had some great philosopher done so, possibly we should by this time know all the secrets of what is popularly called witchcraft."

And as Faber here paused, there came a strange laugh from the fantastic she-oak-tree overhanging the stream,--a wild, impish laugh.

"Pooh! it is but the great kingfisher, the laughing-bird of the Australian bush," said Julius Faber, amused at my start of superstitious alarm.

We walked on for some minutes in musing silence, and the rude log-hut in which my wise companion had his home came in view,--the flocks grazing on undulous pastures, the lone drinking at a watercourse fringed by the slender gum-trees, and a few fields, laboriously won from the luxuriant grassland, rippling with the wave of corn.

I halted, and said, "Rest here for a few moments, till I gather up the conclusions to which your speculative reasoning seems to invite me."

We sat down on a rocky crag, half mantled by luxuriant creepers with vermilion buds.

"From the guesses," said I, "which you have drawn from the erudition of others and your own ingenious and reflective inductions, I collect this solution of the mysteries, by which the experience I gain from my senses confounds all the dogmas approved by my judgment. To the rational conjectures by which, when we first conversed on the marvels that perplexed me, you ascribe to my imagination, predisposed by mental excitement, physical fatigue or derangement, and a concurrence of singular events tending to strengthen such predisposition, the phantasmal impressions produced on my senses,--to these conjectures you now add a new one, more startling and less admitted by sober physiologists. You conceive it possible that persons endowed with a rare and peculiar temperament can so operate on imagination, and, through the imagination,

on the senses of others, as to exceed even the powers ascribed to the practitioners of mesmerism' and electro-biology, and give a certain foundation of truth to the old tales of magic and witchcraft. You imply that Margrave may be a person thus gifted, and hence the influence he unquestionably exercised over Lilian, and over, perhaps, less innocent agents, charmed or impelled by his will. And not discarding, as I own I should have been originally induced to do, the queries or suggestions adventured by Bacon in his discursive speculations on Nature, to wit, 'that there be many things, some of them inanimate, that operate upon the spirits of men by secret sympathy and antipathy,' and to which Bacon gave the quaint name of 'imaginants,' so even that wand, of which I have described to you the magic-like effects, may have had properties communicated to it by which it performs the work of the magician, as mesmerists pretend that some substance mesmerized by them can act on the patient as sensibly as if it were the mesmerizer himself. Do I state your suppositions correctly?"

"Yes; always remembering that they are only suppositions, and volunteered with the utmost diffidence. But since, thus seated in the early wilderness, we permit ourselves the indulgence of childlike guess, may it not be possible, apart from the doubtful question whether a man can communicate to an inanimate material substance a power to act upon the mind or imagination of another man--may it not, I say, be possible that such a substance may contain in itself such a virtue or property potent over certain constitutions, though not over all. For instance, it is in my experience that the common hazel-wood will strongly affect some nervous temperaments, though wholly without effect on others. I remember a young girl, who having taken up a hazel-stick freshly cut, could not relax her hold of it; and when it was wrenched away from her by force, was irresistibly attracted towards it, repossessed herself of it, and, after holding it a few minutes, was cast into a kind of trance, in which she beheld phantasmal visions. Mentioning this curious case, which I supposed unique, to a learned brother of our profession, he told me that he had known other instances of the effect of the hazel upon nervous temperaments in persons of both sexes. Possibly it was some such peculiar property in the hazel that made it the wood selected for the old divining-rod. Again, we know that the bay-tree, or laurel, was dedicated to the oracular Pythian Apollo. Now wherever, in the old world, we find that the learning of the priests enabled them to exhibit exceptional phenomena, which imposed upon popular credulity, there was a something or other which is worth a philosopher's while to explore; and, accordingly, I always suspected that there was in the laurel some property favourable to ecstatic vision in highly impressionable temperaments. My suspicion, a few years ago, was justified by the experience of a German physician, who had under his care a cataleptic or ecstatic patient, and who assured me that he found nothing in this patient so stimulated the state of 'sleep-waking,' or so disposed that state to indulge in the hallucinations of prevision, as the berry of the laurel.[10] Well, we do not know what this wand that produced a seemingly magical effect upon you was really composed of. You did not notice the metal employed in the wire, which you say communicated a thrill to the sensitive nerves in the palm of the hand. You cannot tell how far it might have been the vehicle of some fluid force in nature. Or still more probably, whether the pores of your hand insensibly imbibed, and communicated to the brain, some of those powerful narcotics from which the Buddhists and the Arabs make unguents that induce visionary hallucinations, and in which substances undetected in the hollow of the wand, or the handle of the wand itself, might be steeped.[11] One thing we do know, namely, that amongst the ancients, and especially in the East, the construction of wands for

magical purposes was no commonplace mechanical craft, but a special and secret art appropriated to men who cultivated with assiduity all that was then known of natural science in order to extract from it agencies that might appear supernatural. Possibly, then, the rods or wands of the East, of which Scripture makes mention, were framed upon some principles of which we in our day are very naturally ignorant, since we do not ransack science for the same secrets; and thus, in the selection or preparation of the material employed, mainly consisted whatever may be referrible to natural philosophical causes in the antique science of Rhabdomancy, or divination and enchantment by wands. The staff, or wand, of which you tell me, was, you say, made of iron or steel and tipped with crystal. Possibly iron and crystal do really contain some properties not hitherto scientifically analyzed, and only, indeed, potential over exceptional temperaments, which may account for the fact that iron and crystal have been favourites with all professed mystics, ancient and modern. The Delphic Pythoness had her iron tripod, Mesmer his iron bed; and many persons, indisputably honest, cannot gaze long upon a ball of crystal but what they begin to see visions. I suspect that a philosophical cause for such seemingly preternatural effects of crystal and iron will be found in connection with the extreme impressionability to changes in temperatures which is the characteristic both of crystal and iron. But if these materials do contain certain powers over exceptional constitutions, we do not arrive at a supernatural but at a natural phenomenon."

"Still," said I, "even granting that your explanatory hypotheses hit or approach the truth;--still what a terrible power you would assign to man's will over men's reason and deeds!"

"Man's will," answered Faber, "has over men's deeds and reason, habitual and daily, power infinitely greater and, when uncounterbalanced, infinitely more dangerous than that which superstition exaggerates in magic. Man's will moves a war that decimates a race, and leaves behind it calamities little less dire than slaughter. Man's will frames, but it also corrupts laws; exalts, but also demoralizes opinion; sets the world mad with fanaticism, as often as it curbs the heart's fierce instincts by the wisdom of brother-like mercy. You revolt at the exceptional, limited sway over some two or three individuals which the arts of a sorcerer (if sorcerer there be) can effect; and yet, at the very moment in which you were perplexed and appalled by such sway, or by your reluctant belief in it, your will was devising an engine to unsettle the reason and wither the hopes of millions!"

"My will! What engine?"

"A book conceived by your intellect, adorned by your learning, and directed by your will, to steal from the minds of other men their persuasion of the soul's everlasting Hereafter."

I bowed my head, and felt myself grow pale.

"And if we accept Bacon's theory of 'secret sympathy,' or the plainer physiological maxim that there must be in the imagination, morbidly impressed by the will of another, some trains of idea in affinity with such influence and preinclined to receive it, no magician could warp you to evil, except through thoughts that themselves went astray. Grant that the Margrave who still haunts your mind did really, by some occult, sinister magnetism, guide the madman to murder, did influence the servant-woman's vulgar desire to pry into the secrets of her ill-fated master, or the old maid's covetous wish and envious malignity: what could

this awful magician do more than any commonplace guilty adviser, to a mind predisposed to accept the advice?"

"You forget one example which destroys your argument,--the spell which this mysterious fascinators could cast upon a creature so pure from all guilt as Lilian!"

"Will you forgive me if I answer frankly?"

"Speak."

"Your Lilian is spotless and pure as you deem her, and the fascination, therefore, attempts no lure through a sinful desire; it blends with its attraction no sentiment of affection untrue to yourself. Nay, it is justice to your Lilian, and may be melancholy comfort to you, to state my conviction, based on the answers my questions have drawn from her, that you were never more cherished by her love than when that love seemed to forsake you. Her imagination impressed her with the illusion that through your love for her you were threatened with a great peril. What seemed the levity of her desertion was the devotion of self-sacrifice. And, in her strange, dream-led wanderings, do not think that she was conscious of the fascination you impute to this mysterious Margrave: in her belief it was your own guardian angel that guided her steps, and her pilgrimage was ordained to disarm the foe that menaced you, and dissolve the spell that divided her life from yours! But had she not, long before this, willingly prepared herself to be so deceived? Had not her fancies been deliberately encouraged to dwell remote from the duties we are placed on the earth to perform? The loftiest faculties in our nature are those that demand the finest poise, not to fall from their height and crush all the walls that they crown. With exquisite beauty of illustration, Hume says of the dreamers of 'bright fancies,' 'that they may be compared to those angels whom the Scriptures represent as covering their eyes with their wings.' Had you been, like my nephew, a wrestler for bread with the wilderness, what helpmate would your Lilian have been to you? How often would you have cried out in justifiable anger, 'I, son of Adam, am on earth, not in Paradise! Oh, that my Eve were at home on my hearth, and not in the skies with the seraphs!' No Margrave, I venture to say, could have suspended the healthful affections, or charmed into danger the wide-awake soul of my Amy. When she rocks in its cradle the babe the young parents intrust to her heed; when she calls the kine to the milking, the chicks to their corn; when she but flits through my room to renew the flowers on the stand, or range in neat order the books that I read, no spell on her fancy could lead her a step from the range of her provident cares! At day she is contented to be on the commonplace earth; at evening she and I knock together at the one door of heaven, which opens to thanksgiving and prayer; and thanksgiving and prayer send us back, calm and hopeful, to the task that each morrow renews."

I looked up as the old man paused, and in the limpid clearness of the Australian atmosphere, I saw the child he thus praised standing by the garden-gate, looking towards us, and though still distant she seemed near. I felt wroth with her. My heart so cherished my harmless, defenceless Lilian, that I was jealous of the praise taken from her to be bestowed on another.

"Each of us," said I, coldly, "has his or her own nature, and the uses harmonious to that nature's idiosyncrasy. The world, I grant, would get on very ill if women were not more or less actively useful and quietly good, like your Amy. But the world would lose standards that exalt and

refine, if no woman were permitted to gain, through the indulgence of fancy, thoughts exquisite as those which my Lilian conceived, while thought, alas! flowed out of fancy. I do not wound you by citing your Amy as a type of the mediocre; I do not claim for Lilian the rank we accord to the type of genius. But both are alike to such types in this: namely, that the uses of mediocrity are for every-day life, and the uses of genius, amidst a thousand mistakes which mediocrity never commits, are to suggest and perpetuate ideas which raise the standard of the mediocre to a nobler level. There would be fewer Amys in life if there were no Lilian! as there would be far fewer good men of sense if there were no erring dreamer of genius!"

"You say well, Allen Fenwick. And who should be so indulgent to the vagaries of the imagination as the philosophers who taught your youth to doubt everything in the Maker's plan of creation which could not be mathematically proved? 'The human mind,' said Luther, 'is like a drunkard on horseback; prop it on one side, and it falls on the other.' So the man who is much too enlightened to believe in a peasant's religion, is always sure to set up some insane superstition of his own. Open biographical volumes wherever you please, and the man who has no faith in religion is a man who has faith in a nightmare. See that type of the elegant sceptics,--Lord Herbert of Cherbury. He is writing a book against Revelation; he asks a sign from heaven to tell him if his book is approved by his Maker, and the man who cannot believe in the miracles performed by his Saviour gravely tells us of a miracle vouchsafed to himself. Take the hardest and strongest intellect which the hardest and strongest race of mankind ever schooled and accomplished. See the greatest of great men, the great Julius Caesar! Publicly he asserts in the Senate that the immortality of the soul is a vain chimera. He professes the creed which Roman voluptuaries deduced from Epicurus, and denies all Divine interference in the affairs of the earth. A great authority for the Materialists--they have none greater! They can show on their side no intellect equal to Caesar's! And yet this magnificent freethinker, rejecting a soul and a Deity, habitually entered his chariot muttering a charm; crawled on his knees up the steps of a temple to propitiate the abstraction called 'Nemesis;' and did not cross the Rubicon till he had consulted the omens. What does all this prove?--a very simple truth. Man has some instincts with the brutes; for instance, hunger and sexual love. Man has one instinct peculiar to himself, found universally (or with alleged exceptions in savage States so rare, that they do not affect the general law[12]),--an instinct of an invisible power without this earth, and of a life beyond the grave, which that power vouchsafes to his spirit. But the best of us cannot violate an instinct with impunity. Resist hunger as long as you can, and, rather than die of starvation, your instinct will make you a cannibal; resist love when youth and nature impel to it, and what pathologist does not track one broad path into madness or crime? So with the noblest instinct of all. Reject the internal conviction by which the grandest thinkers have sanctioned the hope of the humblest Christian, and you are servile at once to some faith inconceivably more hard to believe. The imagination will not be withheld from its yearnings for vistas beyond the walls of the flesh, and the span of the present hour. Philosophy itself, in rejecting the healthful creeds by which man finds his safeguards in sober prayer and his guide through the wilderness of visionary doubt, invents systems compared to which the mysteries of theology are simple. Suppose any man of strong, plain understanding had never heard of a Deity like Him whom we Christians adore, then ask this man which he can the better comprehend in his mind, and accept as a natural faith,--namely, the simple Christianity of his shepherd or the Pantheism of Spinoza? Place before an accomplished critic

(who comes with a perfectly unprejudiced mind to either inquiry), first, the arguments of David Hume against the gospel miracles, and then the metaphysical crotchets of David Hume himself. This subtle philosopher, not content, with Berkeley, to get rid of matter,--not content, with Condillac, to get rid of spirit or mind,--proceeds to a miracle greater than any his Maker has yet vouchsafed to reveal. He, being then alive and in the act of writing, gets rid of himself altogether. Nay, he confesses he cannot reason with any one who is stupid enough to think he has a self. His words are: 'What we call a mind is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions or objects united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with perfect simplicity and identity. If any one, upon serious and candid reflection, thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I can reason with him no longer.' Certainly I would rather believe all the ghost stories upon record than believe that I am not even a ghost, distinct and apart from the perceptions conveyed to me, no matter how,--just as I am distinct and apart from the furniture in my room, no matter whether I found it there or whether I bought it. If some old cosmogonist asked you to believe that the primitive cause of the solar system was not to 'be traced to a Divine Intelligence, but to a nebulosity, originally so diffused that its existence can with difficulty be conceived, and that the origin of the present system of organized beings equally dispensed with the agency of a creative mind, and could be referred to molecules formed in the water by the power of attraction, till by modifications of cellular tissue in the gradual lapse of ages, one monad became an oyster and another a Man,--would you not say this cosmogony could scarce have misled the human understanding even in the earliest dawn of speculative inquiry? Yet such are the hypotheses to which the desire to philosophize away that simple proposition of a Divine First Cause, which every child can comprehend, led two of the greatest geniuses and profoundest reasoners of modern times,--La Place and La Marck.[13] Certainly, the more you examine those arch phantasmagorists, the philosophers who would leave nothing in the universe but their own delusions, the more your intellectual pride may be humbled. The wildest phenomena which have startled you are not more extravagant than the grave explanations which intellectual presumption adventures on the elements of our own organism and the relations between the world of matter and the world of ideas."

Here our conversation stopped, for Amy had now joined us, and, looking up to reply, I saw the child's innocent face between me and the furrowed brow of the old man.

[1] See, on the theory elaborated from this principle, Dr. Hibbert's interesting and valuable work on the "Philosophy of Apparitions."

[2] What Faber here says is expressed with more authority by one of the most accomplished metaphysicians of our time (Sir W. Hamilton):

"Somnambulism is a phenomenon still more astonishing [than dreaming]. In this singular state a person performs a regular series of rational actions, and those frequently of the most difficult and delicate nature; and what is still more marvellous, with a talent to which he could make no pretension when awake. (Cr. Ancillon, *Essais Philos.* ii. 161.) His memory and reminiscence supply him with recollections of words and things which, perhaps, never were at his disposal in the ordinary state,--he speaks more fluently a more refined language. And if we are to credit what the evidence on which it rests hardly allows us to disbelieve, he has not only perception of things through other channels than the common organs of sense, but the sphere of his cognition is amplified to an extent

far beyond the limits to which sensible perception is confined. This subject is one of the most perplexing in the whole compass of philosophy; for, on the one hand, the phenomena are so remarkable that they cannot be believed, and yet, on the other, they are of so unambiguous and palpable a character, and the witnesses to their reality are so numerous, so intelligent, and so high above every suspicion of deceit, that it is equally impossible to deny credit to what is attested by such ample and unexceptionable evidence."--Sir W. Hamilton: Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic, vol. ii. p. 274.

This perplexity, in which the distinguished philosopher leaves the judgment so equally balanced that it finds it impossible to believe, and yet impossible to disbelieve, forms the right state of mind in which a candid thinker should come to the examination of those more extraordinary phenomena which he has not himself yet witnessed, but the fair inquiry into which may be tendered to him by persons above the imputation of quackery and fraud. Muffler, who is not the least determined, as he is certainly one of the most distinguished, disbelievers of mesmeric phenomena, does not appear to have witnessed, or at least to have carefully examined, them, or he would, perhaps, have seen that even the more extraordinary of those phenomena confirm, rather than contradict, his own general theories, and may be explained by the sympathies one sense has with another,--"the laws of reflection through the medium of the brain." (Physiology of the Senses, p. 1311.) And again by the maxim "that the mental principle, or cause of the mental phenomena, cannot be confined to the brain, but that it exists in a latent state in every part of the organism." (Ibid., p. 1355.) The "nerve power," contended for by Mr. Bain, also may suggest a rational solution of much that has seemed incredible to those physiologists who have not condescended to sift the genuine phenomena of mesmerism from the imposture to which, in all ages, the phenomena exhibited by what may be called the ecstatic temperament have been applied.

[3] Descartes, L'Homme, vol. iv. p. 345. Cousin's Edition.

[4] Ibid., p. 428.

[5] Facts in Mesmerism.

[6] La Magic et l'Astrologie dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen-Age. Par L. F. Alfred Maury, Membre de l'Institut. p. 225.

[7] "She had no illusions when within doors."--Abercrombie, On the Intellectual Powers, p. 277. (15th Edition.)

[8] Muller, Physiology of the Senses, Baley's translation, pp. 1068-1395, and elsewhere. Mr. Bain, in his thoughtful and suggestive work on the "Senses and Intellect," makes very powerful use of these statements in support of his proposition, which Faber advances in other words, namely, "the return of the nervous currents exactly on their old track in revived sensations."

[9] Perhaps it is for the reason suggested in the text, namely, that the magician requires the interposition of a third imagination between his own and that of the consulting believer, that any learned adept in (so-called) magic will invariably refuse to exhibit without the presence of a third person. Hence the author of "Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magic," printed at Paris 1852-53--a book less remarkable for its learning than for the earnest belief of a scholar of our own day in the reality of the art of

which he records the history--insists much on the necessity of rigidly observing Le Ternaire, in the number of persons who assist in an enchanter's experiments.

[10] I may add that Dr. Kerner instances the effect of laurel-berries on the Seeress of Prevorst, corresponding with that asserted by Julius Faber in the text.

[11] See for these unguents the work of M. Maury, before quoted, "La Magic et l'Astrologie," etc., p. 417.

[12] It seems extremely doubtful whether the very few instances in which it has been asserted that a savage race has been found without recognition of a Deity and a future state would bear searching examination. It is set forth, for example, in most of the popular works on Australia, that the Australian savages have no notion of a Deity or a Hereafter, that they only worship a devil, or evil spirit. This assumption, though made more peremptorily, and by a greater number of writers than any similar one regarding other savages, is altogether erroneous, and has no other foundation than the ignorance of the writers. The Australian savages recognize a Deity, but He is too august for a name in their own language; in English they call Him the Great Master,--an expression synonymous with "The Great Lord." They believe in a hereafter of eternal joy, and place it amongst the stars.--See Strzelecki's Physical Description of New South Wales.

[13] See the observations on La Place and La Marck in the Introduction to Kirby's "Bridgewater Treatise."

CHAPTER LXXII.

I turned back alone. The sun was reddening the summits of the distant mountain-range, but dark clouds, that portended rain, were gathering behind my way and deepening the shadows in many a chasm and hollow which volcanic fires had wrought on the surface of uplands undulating like diluvian billows fixed into stone in the midst of their stormy swell. I wandered on and away from the beaten track, absorbed in thought. Could I acknowledge in Julius Faber's conjectures any basis for logical ratiocination; or were they not the ingenious fancies of that empirical Philosophy of Sentiment by which the aged, in the decline of severer faculties, sometimes assimilate their theories to the hazy romance of youth? I can well conceive that the story I tell will be regarded by most as a wild and fantastic fable; that by some it may be considered a vehicle for guesses at various riddles of Nature, without or within us, which are free to the license of romance, though forbidden to the caution of science. But, I--I--know unmistakably my own identity, my own positive place in a substantial universe. And beyond that knowledge, what do I know? Yet had Faber no ground for his startling parallels between the chimeras of superstition and the alternatives to faith volunteered by the metaphysical speculations of knowledge? On the theorems of Condillac, I, in common with numberless contemporaneous students (for, in my youth, Condillac held sway in the schools, as now, driven forth from the schools, his opinions float loose through the talk and the scribble of men of the world, who perhaps never opened his page),--on the theorems of Condillac I had built up a system of thought designed to immure the swathed form of material philosophy from all rays and all sounds of a world not material,

as the walls of some blind mausoleum shut out, from the mummy within, the whisper of winds and the gleaming of stars.

And did not those very theorems, when carried out to their strict and completing results by the close reasonings of Hume, resolve my own living identity, the one conscious indivisible me, into a bundle of memories derived from the senses which had bubbled and duped my experience, and reduce into a phantom, as spectral as that of the Luminous Shadow, the whole solid frame of creation?

While pondering these questions, the storm whose forewarnings I had neglected to heed burst forth with all the suddenness peculiar to the Australian climes. The rains descended like the rushing of floods. In the beds of watercourses, which, at noon, seemed dried up and exhausted, the torrents began to swell and to rave; the gray crags around them were animated into living waterfalls. I looked round, and the landscape was as changed as a scene that replaces a scene on the player's stage. I was aware that I had wandered far from my home, and I knew not what direction I should take to regain it. Close at hand, and raised above the torrents that now rushed in many a gully and tributary creek, around and before me, the mouth of a deep cave, overgrown with bushes and creeping flowers tossed wildly to and fro between the rain from above and the spray of cascades below, offered a shelter from the storm. I entered,--scaring innumerable flocks of bats striking against me, blinded by the glare of the lightning that followed me into the cavern, and hastening to resettle themselves on the pendants of stalactites, or the jagged buttresses of primaeval wall.

From time to time the lightning darted into the gloom and lingered amongst its shadows; and I saw, by the flash, that the floors on which I stood were strewn with strange bones, some amongst them the fossilized relics of races destroyed by the Deluge. The rain continued for more than two hours with unabated violence; then it ceased almost as suddenly as it had come on, and the lustrous moon of Australia burst from the clouds shining bright as an English dawn, into the hollows of the cave. And then simultaneously arose all the choral songs of the wilderness,--creatures whose voices are heard at night,--the loud whir of the locusts, the musical boom of the bullfrog, the cuckoo note of the morepork, and, mournful amidst all those merrier sounds, the hoot of the owl, through the wizard she-oaks and the pale green of the gum-trees.

I stepped forth into the open air and gazed, first instinctively on the heavens, next, with more heedful eye, upon the earth. The nature of the soil bore the evidence of volcanic fires long since extinguished. Just before my feet, the rays fell full upon a bright yellow streak in the block of quartz half imbedded in the soft moist soil. In the midst of all the solemn thoughts and the intense sorrows which weighed upon heart and mind, that yellow gleam startled the mind into a direction remote from philosophy, quickened the heart to a beat that chimed with no household affections. Involuntarily I stooped; impulsively I struck the block with the hatchet, or tomahawk, I carried habitually about me, for the purpose of marking the trees that I wished to clear from the waste of my broad domain. The quartz was shattered by the stroke, and left disburied its glittering treasure. My first glance had not deceived me. I, vain seeker after knowledge, had, at least, discovered gold. I took up the bright metal--gold! I paused; I looked round; the land that just before had seemed to me so worthless took the value of Ophir. Its features had before been as unknown to me as the Mountains of the Moon, and now my memory became wonderfully quickened. I recalled the rough map of my

possessions, the first careless ride round their boundaries. Yes, the land on which I stood--for miles, to the spur of those farther mountains--the land was mine, and, beneath its surface, there was gold! I closed my eyes; for some moments visions of boundless wealth, and of the royal power which such wealth could command, swept athwart my brain. But my heart rapidly settled back to its real treasure. "What matters," I sighed, "all this dross? Could Ophir itself buy back to my Lilian's smile one ray of the light which gave 'glory to the grass and splendour to the flower'?"

So muttering, I flung the gold into the torrent that raged below, and went on through the moonlight, sorrowing silently,--only thankful for the discovery that had quickened my reminiscence of the landmarks by which to steer my way through the wilderness.

The night was half gone, for even when I had gained the familiar track through the pastures, the swell of the many winding creeks that now intersected the way obliged me often to retrace my steps; to find, sometimes, the bridge of a felled tree which had been providently left unremoved over the now foaming torrent, and, more than once, to swim across the current, in which swimmers less strong or less practised would have been dashed down the falls, where loose logs and torn trees went clattering and whirling: for I was in danger of life. A band of the savage natives were stealthily creeping on my track,--the natives in those parts were not then so much awed by the white man as now. A boomerang[1] had whirred by me, burying itself amongst the herbage close before my feet. I had turned, sought to find and to face these dastardly foes; they contrived to elude me. But when I moved on, my ear, sharpened by danger, heard them moving, too, in my rear. Once only three hideous forms suddenly faced me, springing up from a thicket, all tangled with honeysuckles and creepers of blue and vermilion. I walked steadily up to them. They halted a moment or so in suspense; but perhaps they were scared by my stature or awed by my aspect; and the Unfamiliar, though Human, had terror for them, as the Unfamiliar, although but a Shadow, had had terror for me. They vanished, and as quickly as if they had crept into the earth.

At length the air brought me the soft perfume of my well-known acacias, and my house stood before me, amidst English flowers and English fruit-trees, under the effulgent Australian moon. Just as I was opening the little gate which gave access from the pastureland into the garden, a figure in white rose up from under light, feathery boughs, and a hand was laid on my arm. I started; but my surprise was changed into fear when I saw the pale face and sweet eyes of Lilian.

"Heavens! you here! you! at this hour! Lilian, what is this?"

"Hush!" she whispered, clinging to me; "hush! do not tell: no one knows. I missed you when the storm came on; I have missed you ever since. Others went in search of you and came back. I could not sleep, but the rest are sleeping, so I stole down to watch for you. Brother, brother, if any harm chanced to you, even the angels could not comfort me; all would be dark, dark! But you are safe, safe, safe!" And she clung to me yet closer.

"Ah, Lilian, Lilian, your vision in the hour I first beheld you was indeed prophetic,--'each has need of the other.' Do you remember?"

"Softly, softly," she said, "let me think!" She stood quietly by my side, looking up into the sky, with all its numberless stars, and its solitary

moon now sinking slow behind the verge of the forest. "It comes back to me," she murmured softly,--"the Long ago,--the sweet Long ago!"

I held my breath to listen.

"There, there!" she resumed, pointing to the heavens; "do you see? You are there, and my father, and--and--Oh! that terrible face, those serpent eyes, the dead man's skull! Save me! save me!"

She bowed her head upon my bosom, and I led her gently back towards the house. As we gained the door which she had left open, the starlight shining across the shadowy gloom within, she lifted her face from my breast, and cast a hurried fearful look round the shining garden, then into the dim recess beyond the threshold.

"It is there--there!--the Shadow that lured me on, whispering that if I followed it I should join my beloved. False, dreadful Shadow! it will fade soon,--fade into the grinning horrible skull. Brother, brother, where is my Allen? Is he dead--dead--or is it I who am dead to him?"

I could but clasp her again to my breast, and seek to mantle her shivering form with my dripping garments, all the while my eyes--following the direction which hers had taken--dwelt on the walls of the nook within the threshold, half lost in darkness, half white in starlight. And there I, too, beheld the haunting Luminous Shadow, the spectral effigies of the mysterious being, whose very existence in the flesh was a riddle unsolved by my reason. Distinctly I saw the Shadow, but its light was far paler, its outline far more vague, than when I had beheld it before. I took courage, as I felt Lilian's heart beating against my own. I advanced, I crossed the threshold,--the Shadow was gone.

"There is no Shadow here,--no phantom to daunt thee, my life's life," said I, bending over Lilian.

"It has touched me in passing; I feel it--cold, cold, cold!" she answered faintly.

I bore her to her room, placed her on her bed, struck a light, watched over her. At dawn there was a change in her face, and from that time health gradually left her; strength slowly, slowly, yet to me perceptibly, ebbed from her life away.

[1] A missile weapon peculiar to the Australian savages.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Months upon months have rolled on since the night in which Lilian had watched for my coming amidst the chilling airs--under the haunting moon. I have said that from the date of that night her health began gradually to fail, but in her mind there was evidently at work some slow revolution. Her visionary abstractions were less frequent; when they occurred, less prolonged. There was no longer in her soft face that celestial serenity which spoke her content in her dreams, but often a look of anxiety and trouble. She was even more silent than before; but when she did speak, there were now evident some struggling gleams of memory. She startled us, at times, by a distinct allusion to the events and scenes of her early

childhood. More than once she spoke of commonplace incidents and mere acquaintances at L----. At last she seemed to recognize Mrs. Ashleigh as her mother; but me, as Allen Fenwick, her betrothed, her bridegroom, no! Once or twice she spoke to me of her beloved as of a stranger to myself, and asked me not to deceive her--should she ever see him again? There was one change in this new phase of her state that wounded me to the quick. She had always previously seemed to welcome my presence; now there were hours, sometimes days together, in which my presence was evidently painful to her. She would become agitated when I stole into her room, make signs to me to leave her, grow yet more disturbed if I did not immediately obey, and become calm again when I was gone.

Faber sought constantly to sustain my courage and administer to my hopes by reminding me of the prediction he had hazarded,--namely, that through some malady to the frame the reason would be ultimately restored.

He said, "Observe! her mind was first roused from its slumber by the affectionate, unconquered impulse of her heart. You were absent; the storm alarmed her, she missed you,--feared for you. The love within her, not alienated, though latent, drew her thoughts into definite human tracks. And thus, the words that you tell me she uttered when you appeared before her were words of love, stricken, though as yet irregularly, as the winds strike the harp-strings from chords of awakened memory. The same unwonted excitement, together with lengthened exposure to the cold night-air, will account for the shock to her physical system, and the languor and waste of strength by which it has been succeeded."

"Ay, and the Shadow that we both saw within the threshold. What of that?"

"Are there no records on evidence, which most physicians of very extended practice will perhaps allow that their experience more or less tend to confirm--no records of the singular coincidences between individual impressions which are produced by sympathy? Now, whether you or your Lilian were first haunted by this Shadow I know not. Perhaps before it appeared to you in the wizard's chamber it had appeared to her by the Monks' Well. Perhaps, as it came to you in the prison, so it lured her through the solitudes, associating its illusory guidance with dreams of you. And again, when she saw it within your threshold, your fantasy, so abruptly invoked, made you see with the eyes of your Lilian! Does this doctrine of sympathy, though by that very mystery you two loved each other at first,--though, without it, love at first sight were in itself an incredible miracle,--does, I say, this doctrine of sympathy seem to you inadmissible? Then nothing is left for us but to revolve the conjecture I before threw out. Have certain organizations like that of Margrave the power to impress, through space, the imaginations of those over whom they have forced a control? I know not. But if they have, it is not supernatural; it is but one of those operations in Nature so rare and exceptional, and of which testimony and evidence are so imperfect and so liable to superstitious illusions, that they have not yet been traced--as, if truthful, no doubt they can be, by the patient genius of science--to one of those secondary causes by which the Creator ordains that Nature shall act on Man."

By degrees I became dissatisfied with my conversations with Faber. I yearned for explanations; all guesses but bewildered me more. In his family, with one exception, I found no congenial association. His nephew seemed to me an ordinary specimen of a very trite human nature,--a young man of limited ideas, fair moral tendencies, going mechanically right where not tempted to wrong. The same desire of gain which had urged him

to gamble and speculate when thrown in societies rife with such example, led him, now in the Bush, to healthful, industrious, persevering labour. "Spes fovet agricolas," says the poet; the same Hope which entices the fish to the hook impels the plough of the husband-man. The young farmer's young wife was somewhat superior to him; she had more refinement of taste, more culture of mind, but, living in his life, she was inevitably levelled to his ends and pursuits; and, next to the babe in the cradle, no object seemed to her so important as that of guarding the sheep from the scab and the dingoes. I was amazed to see how quietly a man whose mind was so stored by life and by books as that of Julius Faber--a man who had loved the clash of conflicting intellects, and acquired the rewards of fame--could accommodate himself to the cabined range of his kinsfolks' half-civilized existence, take interest in their trivial talk, find varying excitement in the monotonous household of a peasant-like farmer. I could not help saying as much to him once. "My friend," replied the old man, "believe me that the happiest art of intellect, however lofty, is that which enables it to be cheerfully at home with the Real!"

The only one of the family in which Faber was domesticated in whom I found an interest, to whose talk I could listen without fatigue, was the child Amy. Simple though she was in language, patient of labour as the most laborious, I recognized in her a quiet nobleness of sentiment, which exalted above the commonplace the acts of her commonplace life. She had no precocious intellect, no enthusiastic fancies, but she had an exquisite activity of heart. It was her heart that animated her sense of duty, and made duty a sweetness and a joy. She felt to the core the kindness of those around her; exaggerated, with the warmth of her gratitude, the claims which that kindness imposed. Even for the blessing of life, which she shared with all creation, she felt as if singled out by the undeserved favour of the Creator, and thus was filled with religion, because she was filled with love.

My interest in this child was increased and deepened by my saddened and not wholly unremorseful remembrance of the night on which her sobs had pierced my ear,--the night from which I secretly dated the mysterious agencies that had wrenched from their proper field and career both my mind and my life. But a gentler interest endeared her to my thoughts in the pleasure that Lilian felt in her visits, in the affectionate intercourse that sprang up between the afflicted sufferer and the harmless infant. Often when we failed to comprehend some meaning which Lilian evidently wished to convey to us--we, her mother and her husband--she was understood with as much ease by Amy, the unlettered child, as by Faber, the gray-haired thinker.

"How is it,--how is it?" I asked, impatiently and jealously, of Faber. "Love is said to interpret where wisdom fails, and you yourself talk of the marvels which sympathy may effect between lover and beloved; yet when, for days together, I cannot succeed in unravelling Lilian's wish or her thought--and her own mother is equally in fault--you or Amy, closeted alone with her for five minutes, comprehend and are comprehended."

"Allen," answered Faber, "Amy and I believe in spirit; and she, in whom mind is dormant but spirit awake, feels in such belief a sympathy which she has not, in that respect, with yourself, nor even with her mother. You seek only through your mind to conjecture hers. Her mother has sense clear enough where habitual experience can guide it, but that sense is confused, and forsakes her when forced from the regular pathway in which it has been accustomed to tread. Amy and I through soul guess at soul, and though mostly contented with earth, we can both rise at times into

heaven. We pray."

"Alas!" said I, half mournfully, half angrily, "when you thus speak of Mind as distinct from Soul, it was only in that Vision which you bid me regard as the illusion of a fancy stimulated by chemical vapours, producing on the brain an effect similar to that of opium or the inhalation of the oxide gas, that I have ever seen the silver spark of the Soul distinct from the light of the Mind. And holding, as I do, that all intellectual ideas are derived from the experiences of the body, whether I accept the theory of Locke, or that of Condillac, or that into which their propositions reach their final development in the wonderful subtlety of Hume, I cannot detect the immaterial spirit in the material substance,—much less follow its escape from the organic matter in which the principle of thought ceases with the principle of life. When the metaphysician, contending for the immortality of the thinking faculty, analyzes Mind, his analysis comprehends the mind of the brute, nay, of the insect, as well as that of man. Take Reid's definition of Mind, as the most comprehensive which I can at the moment remember: 'By the mind of a man we understand that in him which thinks, remembers, reasons, and wills.[1] But this definition only distinguishes the mind of man from that of the brute by superiority in the same attributes, and not by attributes denied to the brute. An animal, even an insect, thinks, remembers, reasons, and wills.[1] Few naturalists will now support the doctrine that all the mental operations of brute or insect are to be exclusively referred to instincts; and, even if they do, the word 'instinct' is a very vague word,—loose and large enough to cover an abyss which our knowledge has not sounded. And, indeed, in proportion as an animal like the dog becomes cultivated by intercourse, his instincts grow weaker, and his ideas formed by experience (namely, his mind), more developed, often to the conquest of the instincts themselves. Hence, with his usual candour, Dr. Abercrombie—in contending 'that everything mental ceases to exist after death, when we know that everything corporeal continues to exist, is a gratuitous assumption contrary to every rule of philosophical inquiry'—feels compelled, by his reasoning, to admit the probability of a future life even to the lower animals. His words are: 'To this anode of reasoning it has been objected that it would go to establish an immaterial principle in the lower animals which in them exhibits many of the phenomena of mind. I have only to answer, Be it so. There are in the lower animals many of the phenomena of mind, and with regard to these, we also contend that they are entirely distinct from anything we know of the properties of matter, which is all that we mean, or can mean, by being immaterial.'[2] Am I then driven to admit that if man's mind is immaterial and imperishable, so also is that of the ape and the ant?"

"I own," said Faber, with his peculiar smile, arch and genial, "that if I were compelled to make that admission, it would not shock my pride. I do not presume to set any limit to the goodness of the Creator; and should be as humbly pleased as the Indian, if in--

"yonder sky,
My faithful dog should bear me company.'

"You are too familiar with the works of that Titan in wisdom and error, Descartes, not to recollect the interesting correspondence between the urbane philosopher and our combative countryman, Henry More,[3] on this very subject; in which certainly More has the best of it when Descartes insists on reducing what he calls the soul (l'ame) of brutes into the same kind of machines as man constructs from inorganized matter. The learning,

indeed, lavished on the insoluble question involved in the psychology of the inferior animals is a proof at least of the all-inquisitive, redundant spirit of man.[4] We have almost a literature in itself devoted to endeavours to interpret the language of brutes.[5] Dupont de Nemours has discovered that dogs talk in vowels, using only two consonants, G, Z, when they are angry. He asserts that cats employ the same vowels as dogs; but their language is more affluent in consonants, including M, N, B, R, V, F. How many laborious efforts have been made to define and to construe the song of the nightingale! One version of that song, by Beckstein, the naturalist, published in 1840, I remember to have seen. And I heard a lady, gifted with a singularly charming voice, chant the mysterious vowels with so exquisite a pathos, that one could not refuse to believe her when she declared that she fully comprehended the bird's meaning, and gave to the nightingale's warble the tender interpretation of her own woman's heart.

"But leaving all such discussions to their proper place amongst the Curiosities of Literature, I come in earnest to the question you have so earnestly raised; and to me the distinction between man and the lower animals in reference to a spiritual nature designed for a future existence, and the mental operations whose uses are bounded to an existence on earth, seems ineffaceably clear. Whether ideas or even perceptions be innate or all formed by experience is a speculation for metaphysicians, which, so far as it affects the question of an immaterial principle, I am quite willing to lay aside. I can well understand that a materialist may admit innate ideas in Man, as he must admit them in the instinct of brutes, tracing them to hereditary predispositions. On the other hand, we know that the most devout believers in our spiritual nature have insisted, with Locke, in denying any idea, even of the Deity, to be innate.

"But here comes my argument. I care not how ideas are formed,--the material point is, how are the capacities to receive ideas formed? The ideas may all come from experience, but the capacity to receive the ideas must be inherent. I take the word 'capacity' as a good plain English word, rather than the more technical word 'receptivity,' employed by Kant. And by capacity I mean the passive power[6] to receive ideas, whether in man or in any living thing by which ideas are received. A man and an elephant is each formed with capacities to receive ideas suited to the several places in the universe held by each.

"The more I look through Nature the more I find that on all varieties of organized life is carefully bestowed the capacity to receive the impressions, be they called perceptions or ideas, which are adapted to the uses each creature is intended to derive from them. I find, then, that Man alone is endowed with the capacity to receive the ideas of a God, of Soul, of Worship, of a Hereafter. I see no trace of such a capacity in the inferior races; nor, however their intelligence may be refined by culture, is such capacity ever apparent in them.

"But wherever capacities to receive impressions are sufficiently general in any given species of creature to be called universal to that species, and yet not given to another species, then, from all analogy throughout Nature, those capacities are surely designed by Providence for the distinct use and conservation of the species to which they are given.

"It is no answer to me to say that the inherent capacities thus bestowed on Man do not suffice in themselves to make him form right notions of a Deity or a Hereafter; because it is plainly the design of Providence that

Man must learn to correct and improve all his notions by his own study and observation. He must build a hut before he can build a Parthenon; he must believe with the savage or the heathen before he can believe with the philosopher or Christian. In a word, in all his capacities, Man has only given to him, not the immediate knowledge of the Perfect, but the means to strive towards the Perfect. And thus one of the most accomplished of modern reasoners, to whose lectures you must have listened with delight, in your college days, says well:--

"Accordingly the sciences always studied with keenest interest are those in a state of progress and uncertainty; absolute certainty and absolute completion would be the paralysis of any study, and the last worst calamity that could befall Man, as he is at present constituted, would be that full and final possession of speculative truth which he now vainly anticipates as the consummation of his intellectual happiness.'[7]

"Well, then, in all those capacities for the reception of impressions from external Nature which are given to Man and not to the brutes, I see the evidence of Man's Soul. I can understand why the inferior animal has no capacity to receive the idea of a Deity and of Worship--simply because the inferior animal, even if graciously admitted to a future life, may not therein preserve the sense of its identity. I can understand even why that sympathy with each other which we men possess and which constitutes the great virtue we emphatically call Humanity, is not possessed by the lesser animals (or, at least, in a very rare and exceptional degree) even where they live in communities, like beavers, or bees, or ants; because men are destined to meet, to know, and to love each other in the life to come, and the bond between the brute ceases here.

"Now the more, then, we examine the inherent capacities bestowed distinctly and solely on Man, the more they seem to distinguish him from the other races by their comprehension of objects beyond his life upon this earth.

"'Man alone,' says Muller, 'can conceive abstract notions; and it is in abstract notions--such as time, space, matter, spirit, light, form, quantity, essence--that man grounds, not only all philosophy, all science, but all that practically improves one generation for the benefit of the next.'

"And why? Because all these abstract notions unconsciously lead the mind away from the material into the immaterial,--from the present into the future. But if Man ceases to exist when he disappears in the grave, you must be compelled to affirm that he is the only creature in existence whom Nature or Providence has condescended to deceive and cheat by capacities for which there are no available objects. How nobly and how truly has Chalmers said:--

"'What inference shall we draw from this remarkable law in Nature that there is nothing waste and nothing meaningless in the feelings and faculties wherewith living creatures are endowed? For each desire there is a counterpart object; for each faculty there is room and opportunity for exercise either in the present or the coming futurity. Now, but for the doctrine of immortality, Man would be an exception to this law,-he would stand forth as an anomaly in Nature, with aspirations in his heart for which the universe had no antitype to offer, with capacities of understanding and thought that never were to be followed by objects of corresponding greatness through the

whole history of his being!

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"With the inferior animals there is a certain squareness of adjustment, if we may so term it, between each desire and its correspondent gratification. The one is evenly met by the other, and there is a fulness and definiteness of enjoyment up to the capacity of enjoyment. Not so with Man, who, both from the vastness of his propensities and the vastness of his powers, feels himself chained and beset in a field too narrow for him. He alone labours under the discomfort of an incongruity between his circumstances and his powers; and unless there be new circumstances awaiting him in a more advanced state of being, he, the noblest of Nature's products here, would turn out to be the greatest of her failures.'[8]

"This, then, I take to be the proof of Soul in Man, not that he has a mind--because, as you justly say, inferior animals have that, though in a lesser degree--but because he has the capacities to comprehend, as soon as he is capable of any abstract ideas whatsoever, the very truths not needed for self-conservation on earth, and therefore not given to yonder ox and opossum,--namely, the nature of Deity, Soul, Hereafter. And in the recognition of these truths, the Human society, that excels the society of beavers, bees, and ants, by perpetual and progressive improvement on the notions inherited from its progenitors, rests its basis. Thus, in fact, this world is benefited for men by their belief in the next, while the society of brutes remains age after age the same. Neither the bee nor the beaver has, in all probability, improved since the Deluge.

"But inseparable from the conviction of these truths is the impulse of prayer and worship. It does not touch my argument when a philosopher of the school of Bolingbroke or Lucretius says, 'that the origin of prayer is in Man's ignorance of the phenomena of Nature.' That it is fear or ignorance which, 'when rocked the mountains or when groaned the ground, taught the weak to bend, the proud to pray.' My answer is, the brutes are much more forcibly impressed by natural phenomena than Man is; the bird and the beast know before you and I do when the mountain will rock and the ground groan, and their instinct leads them to shelter; but it does not lead them to prayer. If my theory be right that Soul is to be sought not in the question whether mental ideas be innate or formed by experience, by the sense, by association or habit, but in the inherent capacity to receive ideas, then, the capacity bestowed on Man alone, to be impressed by Nature herself with the idea of a Power superior to Nature, with which Power he can establish commune, is a proof that to Man alone the Maker has made Nature itself proclaim His existence,--that to Man alone the Deity vouchsafes the communion with Himself which comes from prayer."

"Even were this so," said I, "is not the Creator omniscient? If all-wise, all-foreseeing? If all-foreseeing, all-pre-ordaining? Can the prayer of His creature alter the ways of His will?"

"For the answer to a question," returned Faber, "which is not unfrequently asked by the clever men of the world, I ought to refer you to the skilled theologians who have so triumphantly carried the reasoner over that ford of doubt which is crossed every day by the infant. But as we have not their books in the wilderness, I am contented to draw my reply as a necessary and logical sequence from the propositions I have sought to ground on the plain observation of Nature. I can only guess at the Deity's Omniscience, or His modes of enforcing His power by the

observation of His general laws; and of all His laws, I know of none more general than the impulse which bids men pray,--which makes Nature so act, that all the phenomena of Nature we can conceive, however startling and inexperienced, do not make the brute pray, but there is not a trouble that can happen to Man, but what his impulse is to pray,--always provided, indeed, that he is not a philosopher. I say not this in scorn of the philosopher, to whose wildest guess our obligations are infinite, but simply because for all which is impulsive to Man, there is a reason in Nature which no philosophy can explain away. I do not, then, bewilder myself by seeking to bind and limit the Omniscience of the Deity to my finite ideas. I content myself with supposing that somehow or other, He has made it quite compatible with His Omniscience that Man should obey the impulse which leads him to believe that, in addressing a Deity, he is addressing a tender, compassionate, benignant Father, and in that obedience shall obtain beneficial results. If that impulse be an illusion, then we must say that Heaven governs the earth by a lie; and that is impossible, because, reasoning by analogy, all Nature is truthful,--that is, Nature gives to no species instincts or impulses which are not of service to it. Should I not be a shallow physician if, where I find in the human organization a principle or a property so general that I must believe it normal to the healthful conditions of that organization, I should refuse to admit that Nature intended it for use? Reasoning by all analogy, must I not say the habitual neglect of its use must more or less injure the harmonious well-being of the whole human system? I could have much to add upon the point in dispute by which the creed implied in your question would enthrall the Divine mercy by the necessities of its Divine wisdom, and substitute for a benignant Deity a relentless Fate. But here I should exceed my province. I am no theologian. Enough for me that in all my afflictions, all my perplexities, an impulse, that I obey as an instinct, moves me at once to prayer. Do I find by experience that the prayer is heard, that the affliction is removed, the doubt is solved? That, indeed, would be presumptuous to say. But it is not presumptuous to think that by the efficacy of prayer my heart becomes more fortified against the sorrow, and my reason more serene amidst the doubt."

I listened, and ceased to argue. I felt as if in that solitude, and in the pause of my wonted mental occupations, my intellect was growing languid, and its old weapons rusting in disuse. My pride took alarm. I had so from my boyhood cherished the idea of fame, and so glorified the search after knowledge, that I recoiled in dismay from the thought that I had relinquished knowledge, and cut myself off from fame. I resolved to resume my once favourite philosophical pursuits, re-examine and complete the Work to which I had once committed my hopes of renown; and, simultaneously, a restless desire seized me to communi- ciate, though but at brief intervals, with other minds than those immediately within my reach,--minds fresh from the old world, and reviving the memories of its vivid civilization. Emigrants frequently passed my doors, but I had hitherto shrunk from tendering the hospitalities so universally accorded in the colony. I could not endure to expose to such rough strangers my Lilian's mournful affliction, and that thought was not less intolerable to Mrs. Ashleigh. I now hastily constructed a log-building a few hundred yards from the house, and near the main track taken by travellers through the spacious pastures. I transported to this building my books and scientific instruments. In an upper story I placed my telescopes and lenses, my crucibles and retorts. I renewed my chemical experiments; I sought to invigorate my mind by other branches of science which I had hitherto less cultured,--meditated new theories on Light and Colour, collected specimens in Natural History, subjected animalcules to my microscope, geological fossils to my hammer. With all these quickened

occupations of thought, I strove to distract myself from sorrow, and strengthen my reason against the, illusion of my fantasy. The Luminous Shadow was not seen again on my wall, and the thought of Margrave himself was banished.

In this building I passed many hours of each day; more and more earnestly plunging my thoughts into depths of abstract study, as Lillian's unaccountable dislike to my presence became more and more decided. When I thus ceased to think that my life cheered and comforted hers, my heart's occupation was gone. I had annexed to the apartment reserved for myself in the log-hut a couple of spare rooms, in which I could accommodate passing strangers. I learned to look forward to their coming with interest, and to see them depart with regret; yet, for the most part, they were of the ordinary class of colonial adventurers,--bankrupt tradesmen, unlucky farmers, forlorn mechanics, hordes of unskilled labourers, now and then a briefless barrister, or a sporting collegian who had lost his all on the Derby. One day, however, a young man of education and manners that unmistakably proclaimed the cultured gentleman of Europe, stopped at my door. He was a cadet of a noble Prussian family, which for some political reasons had settled itself in Paris; there he had become intimate with young French nobles, and living the life of a young French noble had soon scandalized his German parents, forestalled his slender inheritance, and been compelled to fly his father's frown and his tailor's bills. All this he told me with a lively frankness which proved how much the wit of a German can be quickened in the atmosphere of Paris. An old college friend, of birth inferior to his own, had been as unfortunate in seeking to make money as this young prodigal had been an adept in spending it. The friend, a few years previously, had accompanied other Germans in a migration to Australia, and was already thriving; the spendthrift noble was on his way to join the bankrupt trader, at a German settlement fifty miles distant from my house. This young man was unlike any German I ever met. He had all the exquisite levity by which the well-bred Frenchman gives to the doctrines of the Cynic the grace of the Epicurean. He owned himself to be good for nothing with an elegance of candour which not only disarmed censure, but seemed to challenge admiration; and, withal, the happy spendthrift was so inebriate with hope,--sure that he should be rich before he was thirty. How and wherefore rich, he could have no more explained than I can square the circle. When the grand serious German nature does Frenchify itself, it can become so extravagantly French!

I listened, almost enviously, to this light-hearted profligate's babble, as we sat by my rude fireside,--I, sombre man of science and sorrow, he, smiling child of idleness and pleasure, so much one of Nature's courtier-like nobles, that there, as he smoked his villanous pipe, in his dust-soiled shabby garments, and with his ruffianly revolver stuck into his belt, I would defy the daintiest Aristarch who ever presided as critic over the holiday world not to have said, "There smiles the genius beyond my laws, the born darling of the Graces, who in every circumstance, in every age, like Aristippus, would have socially charmed; would have been welcome to the orgies of a Caesar or a Clodius, to the boudoirs of a Montespan or a Pompadour; have lounged through the Mulberry Gardens with a Rochester and a Buckingham, or smiled from the death-cart, with a Richelieu and a Lauzun, a gentleman's disdain of a mob!"

I was so thinking as we sat, his light talk frothing up from his careless lips, when suddenly from the spray and the sparkle of that light talk was flung forth the name of Margrave.

"Margrave!" I exclaimed. "Pardon me. What of him?"

"What of him! I asked if, by chance, you knew the only Englishman I ever had the meanness to envy?"

"Perhaps you speak of one person, and I thought of another."

"Pardieu, my dear host, there can scarcely be two Margraves! The one of whom I speak flashed like a meteor upon Paris, bought from a prince of the Bourse a palace that might have lodged a prince of the blood-royal, eclipsed our Jew bankers in splendour, our jeunesse doree in good looks and hair-brain adventures, and, strangest of all, filled his salons with philosophers and charlatans, chemists and spirit-rappers; insulting the gravest dons of the schools by bringing them face to face with the most impudent quacks, the most ridiculous dreamers,--and yet, withal, himself so racy and charming, so bon prince, so bon enfant! For six months he was the rage at Paris: perhaps he might have continued to be the rage there for six years, but all at once the meteor vanished as suddenly as it had flashed. Is this the Margrave whom you know?"

"I should not have thought the Margrave whom I knew could have reconciled his tastes to the life of cities."

"Nor could this man: cities were too tame for him. He has gone to some far-remote wilds in the East,--some say in search of the Philosopher's Stone; for he actually maintained in his house a Sicilian adventurer, who, when at work on that famous discovery, was stifled by the fumes of his own crucible. After that misfortune, Margrave took Paris in disgust, and we lost him."

"So this is the only Englishman whom you envy! Envy him? Why?"

"Because he is the only Englishman I ever met who contrived to be rich and yet free from the spleen; I envied him because one had only to look at his face and see how thoroughly he enjoyed the life of which your countrymen seem to be so heartily tired. But now that I have satisfied your curiosity, pray satisfy mine. Who and what is this Englishman?"

"Who and what was he supposed at Paris to be?"

"Conjectures were numberless. One of your countrymen suggested that which was the most generally favoured. This gentleman, whose name I forget, but who was one of those old roues who fancy themselves young because they live with the young, no sooner set eyes upon Margrave, than he exclaimed, 'Louis Grayle come to life again, as I saw him forty-four years ago! But no--still younger, still handsomer--it must be his son!'"

"Louis Grayle, who was said to be murdered at Aleppo?"

"The same. That strange old man was enormously rich; but it seems that he hated his lawful heirs, and left behind him a fortune so far below that which he was known to possess that he must certainly have disposed of it secretly before his death. Why so dispose of it, if not to enrich some natural son, whom, for private reasons, he might not have wished to acknowledge, or point out to the world by the signal bequest of his will? All that Margrave ever said of himself and the source of his wealth confirmed this belief. He frankly proclaimed himself a natural son, enriched by a father whose name he knew not nor cared to know."

"It is true. And Margrave quitted Paris for the East. When?"

"I can tell you the date within a day or two, for his flight preceded mine by a week; and, happily, all Paris was so busy in talking of it, that I slipped away without notice."

And the Prussian then named a date which it thrilled me to hear, for it was in that very month, and about that very day, that the Luminous Shadow had stood within my threshold.

The young count now struck off into other subjects of talk: nothing more was said of Margrave. An hour or two afterwards he went on his way, and I remained long gazing musingly on the embers of the dying glow on my hearth.

[1] "Are intelligence and instinct, thus differing in their relative proportion in man as compared with all other animals, yet the same in kind and manner of operation in both? To this question we must give at once an affirmative answer. The expression of Cuvier, regarding the faculty of reasoning in lower animals, 'Leur intelligence execute des operations du meme genre,' is true in its full sense. We can in no manner define reason so as to exclude acts which are at every moment present to our observation, and which we find in many instances to contravene the natural instincts of the species. The demeanour and acts of the dog in reference to his master, or the various uses to which he is put by man, are as strictly logical as those we witness in the ordinary transactions of life."--Sir Henry Holland, chapters on "Mental Physiology," p. 220.

The whole of the chapter on Instincts and Habits in this work should be read in connection with the passage just quoted. The work itself, at once cautious and suggestive, is not one of the least obligations which philosophy and religion alike owe to the lucubrations of English medical men.

[2] Abercrombie's Intellectual Powers, p. 26. (15th Edition.)

[3] OEuvres de Descartes, vol. x. p. 178, et seq. (Cousin's Edition.)

[4] M. Tissot the distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Dijon, in his recent work, "La Vie dans l'Homme," p. 255, gives a long and illustrious list of philosophers who assign a rational soul (ame) to the inferior animals, though he truly adds, "that they have not always the courage of their opinion."

[5] Some idea of the extent of research and imagination bestowed on this subject may be gleaned from the sprightly work of Pierquin de Gemblouz, "Idiomologie des Animaux," published at Paris, 1844.

[6] "Faculty is active power: capacity is passive power."--Sir W. Hamilton: Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic, vol. i. p.178.

[7] Sir W. Hamilton's "Lectures," vol. i. p. 10.

[8] Chalmers, "Bridgewater Treatise," vol. ii. pp. 28, 30. Perhaps I should observe, that here and elsewhere in the dialogues between Faber and Fenwick, it has generally been thought better to substitute the words of the author quoted for the mere outline or purport of the quotation which memory afforded to the interlocutor.

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