The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 4, No. 24, Oct. 1859

Various

Title: The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 4, No. 24, Oct. 1859

Author: Various

Release Date: November, 2005 [EBook #9381]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on September 27, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

Produced by Joshua Hutchinson, and PG Distributed Proofreaders

THE

ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

A MAGAZINE OF LITERATURE, ART, AND POLITICS.

VOL. IV.--OCTOBER, 1859.--NO. XXIV.

DAILY BEAUTY.

Toward the end of a city morning, that is, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Stanford Grey, and his guest, Daniel Tomes, paused in an argument which had engaged them earnestly for more than half an hour. What they had talked about it concerns us not to know. We take them as we find them, each leaning back in his chair, confirmed in the opinion that he had maintained, convinced only of his opponent's ability and rectitude of purpose, and enjoying the gradual subsidence of the excitement that accompanies the friendliest intellectual strife as surely as it does the gloved set-tos between those two "talented professors of the noble science of self-defence" who beat each other with stuffed buck-skin, at notably brief intervals, for the benefit of the widow and children of the late lamented Slippery Jim, or some other equally mysterious and eminent person.

The room in which they sat was one of those third rooms on the first floor, by which city house-builders, self-styled architects, have made the second room useless except at night, in their endeavor to reconcile a desire for a multitude of apartments with the fancied necessity that compels some men to live where land costs five dollars the square foot. The various members of Mr. Grey's household designated this room by different names. The servants called it the library; Mrs. Grey and two small people, the delight and torment of her life, papa's study; and Grey himself spoke of it as his workshop, or his den. Against every stretch of wall a bookcase rose from floor to ceiling, upon the shelves of which the books stood closely packed in double ranks, the varied colors of the rows in sight wooing the eye by their harmonious arrangement. A pedestal in one corner supported a half-size copy of the Venus of Milo, that masterpiece of sculpture; in its faultless amplitude of form, its large life-giving loveliness, and its sweet dignity, the embodiment of the highest type of womanhood. In another corner stood a similar reduction of the Flying Mercury. Between the bookcases and over the mantel-piece hung prints;--most noticeable among them, Steinla's engraving of Raphael's Sistine Madonna, and Toschi's reproduction, in lines, of the luminous majesty of Correggio's St. Peter and St. Paul; and these were but specimens of the treasures inclosed in a huge portfolio that stood where the light fell favorably upon it. Opposite Grey's chair, when in its place, (it was then wheeled half round toward his guest,) a portrait of Raphael and one of Beethoven flanked a copy of the Avon bust of Shakespeare; and where the wallpaper peeped through this thick array of works of literature and art, it showed a tint of soft tea-green. In the middle of the room a large library-table groaned beneath a mass of books and papers, some of them arranged in formal order, others disarranged by present use into that irregular order which seems chaotic to every eye but one, while for that one the displacement of a single sheet would insure perplexity and loss of time. But neither spreading table nor towering cases seemed to afford their owner room enough to store his printed treasures. Books were everywhere. Below the windows the recesses were filled out with crowded shelves; the door of a closet, left ajar, showed that the place was packed with books, roughly or cheaply clad, and pamphlets. At the bottom of the cases, books

stretched in serried files along the floor. Some had crept up upon the library-steps, as if, impatient to rejoin their companions, they were mounting to the shelves of their own accord. They invaded all accessible nooks and crannies of the room; big folios were bursting out from the larger gaps, and thin quartos trickling through chinks that otherwise would have been choked with dust; and even from the mouldings above the doors bracketed shelves thrust out, upon which rows of volumes perched, like penguins on a ledge of rock. In fact, books flocked there as martlets did to Macbeth's castle; there was "no jutty frieze or coigne of vantage" but a book had made it his "pendent bed,"--and it appeared "his procreant cradle" too; for the children, in calling the great folios "papa-books" and "mamma-books," seemed instinctively to have hit upon the only way of accounting for the rapid increase and multiplication of volumes in that apartment.

Upon this scene the light fell, tempered by curtains, at the cheapness and simplicity of which a fashionable upholsterer would have sneered, but toward whose graceful folds, and soft, rich hues, the study-wearied eye turned ever gratefully. The two friends sat silently for some minutes in ruminative mood, till Grey, turning suddenly to Tomes, asked,--

"What does Iago mean, when he says of Cassio,--

'He hath a daily beauty in his life,
That makes me ugly'?"

"How can you ask the question?" Tomes replied; adding, after a moment's pause, "he means, more plainly than any other words can tell, that Cassio's truthful nature and manly bearing, his courtesy, which was the genuine gold of real kindness brought to its highest polish, and not a base alloy of selfishness and craft galvanized into a surface-semblance of such worth, his manifest reverence for and love of what was good and pure and noble, his charitable, generous, unenvious disposition, his sweetness of temper, and his gallantry, all of which found expression in face or action, made a character so lovely and so beautiful that every daily observer of them both found him, Iago, hateful and hideous by comparison."

Grey. I suspected as much before I had the benefit of your comment; which, by the way, ran off your tongue as glibly as if you were one of the folk who profess Shakespeare, and you were threatening the world with an essay on Othello. But sometimes it has seemed to me as if these words meant more; Shakespeare's mental vision took in so much. Was the beauty of Cassio's life only a moral beauty?

Tomes. For all we know, it was.

Grey. I say, perhaps, or--No,--Cassio has seemed to me not more a gallant soldier and a generous spirit than a cultivated and accomplished gentleman; he, indeed, shows higher culture than any other character in the tragedy, as well as finer natural tastes; and I have thought that into the scope of this phrase, "daily beauty," Shakespeare took not only the honorable and lovely traits of moral nature, to which you, and perhaps the rest of the world with you, seem to limit it, but all the outward belongings and surroundings of the personage to whom it is applied. For these, indeed, were a part of his life, of him,--and went to make up, in no small measure, that daily beauty in which he presented so strong a contrast to Iago. Look at "mine Ancient" closely, and see,

that, with all his subtle craft, he was a coarse-mannered brute, of gross tastes and grovelling nature, without a spark of gallantry, and as destitute of courtesy as of honor. We overrate his very subtlety; for we measure it by its effects, the woful and agonizing results it brings about; forgetting that these, like all results, or resultants, are the product of at least two forces,--the second, in this instance, being the unsuspecting and impetuous nature of Othello, Had Iago undertaken to deceive any other than such a man, he would have failed. Why, even simple-hearted Desdemona, who sees so little of him, suspects him; that poor goose, Roderigo, though blind with vanity and passion, again and again loses faith in him; and his wife knows him through and through. Believe me, he had no touch of gentleness, not one point of contact with the beautiful, in all his nature,--while Cassio's was filled up with gentleness and beauty, and all that is akin to them.

Tomes. His weakness for wine and women among them?--But thanks for your commentary. I am quite eclipsed. On you go, too, in your old way, trying to make out that what is good is beautiful,--no, rather that what is beautiful is good.--Do you think that Peter and Paul were well-dressed? I don't believe that you would have listened to them, if they were not.

Grey. I'm not sure about St. Peter,--or whether it was necessary or proper that he should have been well-dressed, in the general acceptation of the term. You forget that there is a beauty of fitness. Beside, I have listened, deferentially and with pleasure, to a fisherman in a red shirt, a woollen hat, and with his trousers tucked into cow-hide boots; and why should I not have listened to the great fisherman of Galilee, had it been my happy fortune to live within sound of his voice?

Tomes. Ay, if it had been a fine voice, perhaps you might.

Grey. But as to Saint Paul I have less doubt, or none. I believe that he appeared the gentleman of taste and culture that he was.

Tomes. When he made tents? and when he lived at the house of one Simon, a tanner?

Grey. Why not? What had those accidents of Paul's life to do with Paul, except as occasions which elicited the flexibility of his nature and the extent of his capacity and culture?

Tomes. In making tents? Tent-making is an honest and a useful handicraft; but I am puzzled to discover how it would afford opportunity for the exhibition of the talents of such a man as Paul.

Grey. Not his peculiar talents, perhaps; though, on that point, those who sat under the shadow of his canvas were better able to judge than we are. For a man will make tents none the worse for being a gentleman, a scholar, and a man of taste,--but, other things being equal, the better. Your general intelligence and culture enter into your ability to perform the humblest office of daily life. An educated man, who can use his hands, will make an anthracite coal-fire better and quicker after half a dozen trials than a raw Irish servant after a year's experience; and many a lady charges her housemaid with stupidity and obstinacy, because she fails again and again in the performance of some oft-explained task which to the mistress seems "so simple," when there is no obstinacy in the case, and only the stupidity of a poor neglected creature who had been taught nothing till she came to this country, not even to eat with

decency, and, since she came, only to do the meanest chores. As to living with a tanner, I am no Brahmin, and believe that a man may not only live with a tanner, but be a tanner, and have all the culture, if not all the learning and the talent, of Simon's guest. Thomas Dowse pointed the way for many who will go much farther upon it than he did.

Tomes. The tanners are obliged to you. But of what real use is that process of intellectual refinement upon which you set so high a value? How much better is discipline than culture! Of how much greater worth, to himself and to the world, is the man who by physical and mental training, the use of his muscles, the exercise of his faculties, the restraint of his appetites,--even those mental appetites which you call tastes,--has acquired vigor, endurance, self-reliance, self-control! Let a man be pure and honorable, do to others as he would have them do to him, and, in the words of the old Church of England Catechism, "learn and labor truly to get his own living in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him," and what remains for him to do, and of time in which to do it, is of very small importance.

Grey. You talk like what you are.

Tomes. And that is----?

Grey. Pardon me,--a cross between a Stoic and a Puritan:--morally, I mean.

Tomes. Don't apologize. You might say many worse things of me, and few better. But telling me what I am does not disprove what I say.

Grey. Do you not see? you cannot fail to see, that, after the labor of your human animal has supplied his mere animal needs, provided him with shelter, food, and clothes, he must set himself about something else. Having made life endurable, he will strive to make it comfortable, according to his notions of comfort. Comfort secured, he will seek pleasure; and among the earliest objects of his endeavors in this direction will be that form of pleasure which results from the embellishment of his external life; the craving that he then supplies being just as natural, that is, just as much an inevitable result of his organization, as that which first claimed his thought and labor.

Tomes. A statement of your case entirely inconsistent with the facts that bear upon it What do you think of your red savage, who, making no _pro-vision_ for even his animal needs, but merely supplying them for the moment as he can, and living in squalor, filth, and extreme discomfort, yet daubs himself with grease and paint, and decorates his head with feathers, his neck with bear's claws, and his feat with gaudily-stained porcupine's quills? What of your black barbarian, whose daily life is a succession of unspeakable abominations, and who embellishes it by blackening his teeth, tattooing his skin, and wearing a huge ring in the gristle of his nose? Either of them will give up his daily food, and run the risk of starvation, for a glass bead or a brass button. This desire for ornament is plainly, then, no fruit of individual development, no sign of social progress; it has no relations whatever with them, but is merely a manifestation of that vanity, that lust of the eye and pride of life, which we are taught to believe inherent in all human nature, and which the savage exhibits according to his savageness, the civilized man according to his civilization.

Grey. You're a sturdy fellow, Tomes, but not strong enough to draw

that conclusion from those premises, and make it stay drawn. The savage does order his life in the preposterous manner which you have described; but he does it because he is a savage. He has not the wants of the civilized man, and therefore he does not wait to supply them before he seeks to gratify others. When man rises in the scale of civilization, his whole nature rises. You can't mount a ladder piecemeal; your head will go up first, unless you are an acrobat, and choose to go up feet foremost; but even if you are Gabriel Ravel, your whole body must needs ascend together. The savage is comfortable, not according to your notions of comfort, but according to his own. Comfort is not positive, but relative. If, with your present habits, you could be transported back only one hundred years to the best house in London,--a house provided with all that a princely revenue could then command,--you would find it, with all its splendor, very uncomfortable in many respects. The luxuries of one generation become the comforts of the next, the necessaries of life to the next; and what is comfort for any individual at any period depends on the manner in which he has been brought up. So, too, the savage decorates himself after his own savage tastes. His smoky wigwam or his filthy mud hut is no stronger evidence of his barbarous condition than his party-colored face, or the hoop of metal in his nose. Call this desire to enjoy the beauty of the world and to be a part of it the lust of the eye, or whatever name you please, you will find, that, with exceedingly rare exceptions, it is universal in the race, and that its gratification, although it may have an indirectly injurious effect on some individuals tends to harmonize and humanize mankind, to lift them above debasing pleasures, and to foster the finer social feelings by promoting the higher social enjoyments.

Tomes. Yes; it makes Mrs. A. snub Mrs. B. because the B.-bonnet is within a hair's breadth's less danger of falling down her back, or is decorated with lace made by a poor bonnetless girl in one town of Europe, at a time when fashion has declared that it should bloom with flowers made by a poor shoeless girl in another: it instigates Mrs. C. to make a friendly call on Mrs. D. for the purpose of exulting over the inferior style in which her house is furnished: it tempts F. to overreach his business friend, or to embezzle his employer's money, that he may live in a house with a brown-stone front and give great dinners twice a month: and it sustains G. in his own eyes as he sits at F.'s table stimulating digestion by inward sneers at the vulgar fashion of the new man's plate or the awkwardness of his attendants: and perhaps, worse than all, it tempts H. to exhibit his pictures, and Mrs. I. to exhibit herself, "for the benefit of our charitable institutions," in order that the one may read fulsome eulogies of his munificence and his taste, and the other see a critical catalogue of the beauties of her person and her costume in all the daily papers. Such are the social benefits of what you call the desire to be a part of the world's beauty.

Grey. Far from it! They have no relation to each other. You mistake the occasion for the cause, the means for the motive. Your alphabet is in fault. Such a set of vain, frivolous, dishonest, mean, hypocritical, and insufferably vulgar letters would be turned out of any respectable, well-bred spelling-book. Vanity, frivolity, dishonesty, meanness, hypocrisy, and vulgarity can be exhibited in all the affairs of life, not excepting those whose proper office is to sweeten and to beautify it; but it does not need all your logical faculty to discover that there is not, therefore, any connection between a pretty bonnet, or an elegantly furnished house, and the disposition to snub and sneer at those who are without them,--between dishonesty and the desire to live handsomely and hospitably,--between a cultivated taste for the fine arts

and hypocrisy or a vulgar desire for notoriety and consequence.

Tomes. Perhaps so. But they are very often in each other's company.

Grey. And then, of course, the evil taints the reputation of the good, even with thinking men like you; and how much more with those who have your prejudices without your sense! But note well that they are not oftener in company--these tastes and vices--than honesty and meanness, good-nature and clownishness, sincerity and brutality, hospitality and debauchery, chastity and the absence of that virtue without which all others are as nothing. And let me remind you, by the way, that we of this age and generation make it our business, in fact, feel it our duty, to violate the injunction of the English Catechism, and get _out_ of that state of life in which we find ourselves, into a better, as soon as possible. And even old Mother Church does not insist upon content so strongly as you made her seem to do; she speaks of the state of life to which her catechumen "shall" be, not "has" been, called; and thus makes it possible for a dean to resolve to be content with a bishopric, and a bishop to muse upon the complete satisfaction with which he would grasp an archbishop's crosier, without forfeiture of orthodoxy.

Tomes would doubtless have replied; but at this point the attention of the disputants was attracted by the rustle of silk; there was a light, quick tap at the glass-door which separated the den of books from the middle room, and before an answer could be given the emblazoned valves opened partly, and a sweet, decided voice asked, "Please, may we come in? or" (and the speaker opened the doors wide) "are you and Mr. Tomes so absorbed in construing a sentence in a book that nobody ever reads, that ladies must give place to lexicons?"

"Enter, of course," cried Grey, "and save me from annihilation by Tomes's next reply, and both of us from our joint stupidity."

And so Mrs. Grey entered, and there were salutations, and presentation of Mr. Tomes to Miss Laura Larches, and introduction to each other of the same gentleman and Mr. Carleton Key, who attended the ladies. Abandoning the only four chairs in the room to the others, Mrs. Grey sank down upon a hassock with a sigh of satisfaction, and was lost for a moment in the rising swell of silken-crested waves of crinoline. Emerging in another moment as far as the shoulders, she turned a look of intelligence and inquiry upon her husband, who said, "When you came in, Tomes and I were talking about"--

Mrs. Grey. Something very important, I've no doubt; but we've your own confession that you were stupid, and I've no notion of permitting a relapse. You were doubtless discussing your favorite subject, Dante, who, as far as I can discover, was more a politician than a poet, and went to his _Inferno_ only for the pleasure of sending the opposite party there, and quartering them according to his notion of their deserts. But he and they are dead and buried long ago. Let them rest. We should much rather have you tell us whether his poor countrymen of to-day are to have their liberty when that ugly Emperor beats the Austrians; for beat them he surely will.

Grey. That is a subject of great moment, and one in which I, perhaps, feel no less interest than you; but did you never think that the question, whether these thousands of Italians have liberty or even food to-day, is one of a few months', or, at most, a few years', concern, while the soul's experience of that one Italian who died more than five

hundred years ago will be a fruitful theme forever?

Mrs. Grey. Why, so it will! I never did think of that. And now I'll not think of it. Here we are just come from a wedding, and before you ask us how the bride looked, or even what she had on, you begin to talk to us about that grim old Florentine, who looks like a hard-featured Scotch woman in her husband's night-cap, and who wrote such a succession of frightful things! Where is all your interest in Kitty Jones? I've seen you talk to her by the half-hour, and heard you say she is a charming woman; and now she marries,--and you not only won't go to the wedding, but you don't ask a word about it.

Grey. You seem to forget, Nelly, that I saw one wedding all through, and, indeed, bore as prominent a part in it as one of my downtrodden sex could aspire to; and as the Frenchman said, who went on an English fox-chase, _"Une fois, c'est assez;_ I am ver' satisfy." The marriage service I can read in ten minutes whenever I need its solace; rich morning-dresses are to be seen by scores in the Academy of Music at every _matinee,_ as garnish to Verdi's music; and as to Miss Kitty Jones, I am sure that she, like all brides, never looked so ill as she did to-day. I would do anything in my power to serve her, and would willingly walk a mile to have half an hour's chat with her; but to-day I could not serve her, nor could she talk with me; so why should I trouble myself about the matter? Had I gone, I should only have seen her flushed and nervous, her poor fresh-caught husband looking foolish and superfluous, and an uncomfortable crowd of over-dressed, ill-dressed people, engaged in analyzing her emotions, estimating the value of her wedding-presents, and criticizing each other's toilettes.

Mrs.Grey. You're an unfeeling wretch!

Grey. Of course I am. Any woman will break her neck to see two people, for whom she does not care a hair-pin, stand up, one in white and the other in black, and mumble a few words that she knows by heart, and then take position at the end of a room and have "society" paraded up to them by solemn little corporals with white favors, and then file off to the rear for rations of Perigord pie and Champagne.

Tomes. Well said, Grey! Here's another of the many ways of wasting life by your embellishment of it.

Mr. Key. I don't know precisely what Mr. Tomes means; but as to ill-dressed people, I'm sure that the set you meet at the Jones's are the best-dressed people in town; and I never saw in Paris more splendid toilettes than were there this morning.

Miss Larches. Why, to be sure! What can Mr. Grey mean? There was Mrs. Oakum's gray and silver brocade, and Mrs. Cotton's _point-de-Venice_ mantle, and Miss Prime and Miss Messe and Miss Middlings, who always dress exquisitely, and Mrs. Shinnurs Sharcke with that superb India shawl that must have cost two thousand dollars! What could be finer?

Mrs. Grey. And then Mrs. Robinson Smith, celebrated as the best-dressed woman in town. Being a connection of the family, and so a sort of hostess, she wore no bonnet; and her dress, of the richest _gros d'Afrique_, had twenty-eight pinked and scalloped flounces, alternately one of white and three of as many graduated tints of green. So elegant and distinguished!

Grey. Twenty-eight pinked and scalloped flounces of white and graduated tints of green! With her pale, sodden complexion, she must have looked like an enormous chicken-salad _mayonnaise._

Mrs. Grey [after a brief pause]. Why, so she did! You good-for-nothing thing, you've spoiled the prettiest dress I ever saw, for me! It was quite my ideal; and now I never want to see it again.

Grey. Your ideal must have been of marvellous beauty, to admit such a comparison,--and your preference most intelligently based, to be swept away by it!

Tomes. Come, Grey, be fair. You know that merit has no immunity from ridicule.

Grey. True; but no less true that ridicule does no real harm to merit. If this Mrs. Robinson Crusoe's gown had been truly beautiful, my ridiculous comparison could not have so entirely disenchanted my wife with it;--she, mind you, being supposed (for the sake of our argument only) to be a woman of sense and taste.

Mrs. Grey. Accept my profoundest and most grateful curtsy,--on credit. It's too much trouble to rise and make it; and, to confess the truth, I can't; my foot has caught in my hoop. Help me, Laura.

[Disentanglement,--from which the gentlemen avert modest eyes, laughing the while.]

Grey. I do assure you, Nelly, that, until you leave off that monstrosity of steel and cordage, your sense and taste, so far as costume is concerned, must be taken on credit, as well as your curtsies.

Mrs. Grey. Leave off my hoop? Would you have me look like a fright?--as slinky as if I had been drawn through a key-hole?

Miss Larches. Leave off her hoop?

Mr. Key. Be seen without a hoop? Why, what a guy a woman would look without a hoop! I suppose they do take them off at certain times, but then they are not visible to the naked eye.

Tomes. Yes, Grey,--why take off her hoop? I don't care, you know, to have hoops worn. But worn or not worn, what difference does it make?

Grey. All against me?--a fair representation of the general feeling on the momentous subject at this moment, I suppose. But ten years ago,--that's about a year after I first saw you, and a year before we were married, you remember, Nelly,--no lady wore a hoop; and had I said then that you looked like a fright, or, as Mr. Key phrases it, a guy, I should have belied my own opinion, and, I believe, given you no little pain.

Mrs. Grey. Master Presumption, I'm responsible for none of your conceited notions; and if I were, it wasn't the fashion then to wear hoops,--and to be out of the fashion is to be a fright and a guy.

Miss Larches. Yes, the fashion is always pretty.

Grey. Is it, Miss Larches? Then it must always have been pretty. Let

us see. Look you all here. In this small portfolio is a collection of prints which exhibits the fashions of France, Italy, and England, in more or less detail, for eight hundred years back.

Miss Larches. Is there? Oh, that's charming! Do let us see them!

Grey. With pleasure. But remember that I expect you to admire them all,--although I tell you that not one in ten of them is endurable, not one in fifty pretty, not one in a hundred beautiful.

Miss Larches. Why, there aren't more than two or three hundred.

Grey. About two hundred and fifty; and if you find more than two that fulfil all the conditions of beauty in costume, you will be more fortunate than I have been.

Miss Larches [_after a brief Inspection_]. Ah, Mr. Grey, how can you? Most of these are caricatures.

Grey. Nothing of the sort. All veritable costumes, I assure you. Those from 1750 down, fashion-plates; the others, portraits.

Mrs. Grey. True, Laura. I've looked at them many a time, and thought how fearfully and wonderfully dresses have been made. Not to go back to those bristling horrors of the Middle Ages and the _renaissance_, look at this ball-dress of 1810: a night-gown without sleeves, made of two breadths of pink silk, very low in the neck, and _very_ short in the skirt.

Tomes. And these were our modest grandmothers, of whom we hear so much! They went rather far in their search after the beautiful.

Grey. Say, rather, in their revelation of it. That was, at least, an honest fashion, and men who married could not well complain that they had been deceived by concealment. But that tells nothing against the modesty of our grandmothers. What is modest in dress depends entirely on what is customary; and there is an immodesty that hides, as well as one that exposes. Unconsciousness is modesty's triple shelter against shame. See here, the dissolute Marguerite of Navarre, visible only at head and hands; the former from the chin upwards, the latter from the knuckles downwards; and here, _La belle Hamilton_, rightly named, as chaste as beautiful, and so modest in her carriage that she escaped the breath of scandal even in the court of Charles II., and yet with a gown (if gown it can be called) so loose about the bust and arms that the pink night-gown would blush crimson at it.

Tomes. The ladies seem convinced, though puzzled; but that is because they don't detect your fallacy. You confound the woman and the fashion. An immodest woman may be modestly dressed; and if it is the fashion to be so, she most certainly will, unless she is able herself to set a fashion more suited to her taste. For usually a woman's care of her costume is in inverse proportion to that she takes of her character.

The Ladies [having a vague notion that "inverse proportion" means something horrible']. Mr. Tomes!

Grey. Don't misapprehend my friend Daniel. On this occasion he has come to judgment upon a subject of which he knows so little that it is worse than nothing. I have reason to believe that he has a profound

respect for one of you, and, being a bachelor, such exalted notions of your sex in general that he would not wantonly misjudge the humblest individual of it. His remark was but the fruit of such sheer innocence with regard to your charming sisterhood, that he has yet to learn that there is not a single member of it, who confesses to less than seventy years, to whom, even if she is black, deformed, and the meanest hireling household drudge, her dress, when she is to be seen of men, is not the object of a watchful solicitude at least next to that which she feels for her reputation. Among the sharpest of Douglas Jerrold's unmalicious witticisms was his saying, that Eve ate the apple that she might dress.

Mrs. Grey. Eve's daughters--two of them, at least--are inexpressibly obliged to you for your defence of the sex against the valorous Tomes. Another time, pray, leave us to our fate. But, Laura, do look here! See these hideous peaked and horned head-dresses of the fifteenth century. That one looks like an Old-Dominion coffee-pot with wings. How frightful! how uncomfortable! how inconvenient! How could the women wear such things?

Miss Larches. Perfectly ridiculous! How could they get into their carriages with those steeples on their heads? and how they must have been in the way at the opera!

Grey. Miss Larches forgets. These head-dresses, monstrous as they are, are not exposed to the objection of being inconsistent with the habits of life of those who wore them, as so many of the fashions of later periods and of the present day are. There were no such vehicles as she is thinking of until more than a century after these stupendous head-dresses were worn, until which time ladies very rarely used even a covered wagon as a means of locomotion; and these steeple-crowned ladies, and many generations after them, had passed away before the performance of the first opera.

Miss Larches. No carriages? Why, how did they go to parties? No opera? What did they do on winter evenings when there were no parties?

Grey. They went to parties in the day-time on horseback; and on the days when there were no parties, of which there were a great many then, they gave themselves up to a very delightful mode of passing the time, when it is intelligently practised, known as staying at home.

Mr. Key. What a bore!

Grey. But don't confine your criticism of head-dresses to the fifteenth century. Look through the costumes of the three succeeding centuries, and see how often invention was taxed for artificial decorations of the head, equally elaborate and hideous. Anything but to have a head look like a head! anything but to have hair look like hair! See this lady of 1750, her hair drawn violently back from her forehead and piled up on a cushion nine inches high. She is plainly one of those lovely, warm-toned blondes whose hair is of that priceless red that makes all other tints look poor and sad; and so she defiles its exquisite texture with grease, and blanches out its wealth of color with flour. She might have gathered its gleaming waves into a ravishing knot behind her head; but no, she has four stiff, enormous curls, noisome with a mingled smell of hot iron, musk, and ambergris, hanging like rolls of parchment from the top of her cushion to below her ear. O' top of this elevation is mounted a wreath of gaudy artificial flowers, in its turn surmounted by four vast plumes, two yellow, one pink, one blue,

from the midst of which shoot up two long feathers, one green and one red, while behind hangs down a greasy, floury mass gathered at the end into a club-like handle, which has some fitness for its place, in suggesting that it should be used to jerk the heap of hair, grease, and feathers from the head of the unfortunate who sustains it. Just think of it! that sweet creature must have given up at least two hours of every day to this disfigurement of her pretty head.

Tomes. And I've no doubt she made a sensation in the ball-room or at court, in spite of all your ridicule, and so attained her purpose.

Grey. Certainly she did; for she was so beautiful in person and alluring in manner, that even that head-dress, and the accompanying costume with which she was deformed, could not eclipse her charms for those who had become at all accustomed to the absurd disguise which she assumed. But it was the woman that was beautiful, not the costume; and the woman was so beautiful, in spite of the costume, that she was able to light up even its forbidding features with the reflection of her own loveliness. There have been countless similar cases since;--there are some now.

Mrs. Grey. Miss Larches, doubtless, appreciates the approving glance of so severe a censor.

Grey. And this head-dress _was_ open to the objection which Miss Larches brought against that which preceded it three centuries. These ladies were in each other's way at the opera; and while riding there in their coaches, they were obliged to sit with their heads out of the windows.

Mrs. Grey. Their carriages must have been of great service when it rained!--But look at these stomachers, stiff with embroidery and jewels, and with points that reach half-way from the waist to the ground! See those enormous ruffs, standing out a quarter of a yard, and curving over so smoothly to their very edges! What a protection the fear of ruining those ruffs must have been against children, and--other troublesome creatures!

Grey. It is true, that ruffs and stomachers seem to indicate great propriety of conduct, including an aversion to children and--other troublesome creatures; but students of the manners and morals of the period at which those articles of dress were worn do not find that the women who wore them differed much in their conduct, at least as to the other troublesome creatures, from the women who nowadays have revived one of the most unsightly and absurd traits of the costume of which ruffs and stomachers formed a part.

Mrs. Grey. What can you mean? Our fashion like that frightful rig? Why, see this portrait of Queen Elizabeth in full dress! What with stomacher and pointed waist and fardingale, and sticking in here and sticking out there, and ruffs and cuffs and ouches and jewels and puckers, she looks like a hideous flying insect with expanded wings, seen through a microscope,--not at all like a woman.

Grey. And her costume is rivalled, if not outdone, by that of her critic, in the very peculiarity by which she is made to look most unlike a woman;--the straight line of the waist and the swelling curve below it, which meet in such a sharp, unmitigated angle. Look at the Venus yonder,--she is naked to the hips,--and see how utterly these lines

misrepresent those of Nature. You will find no instance of such a contour as is formed by the meeting of these lines among all living creatures, except, perhaps, when a turtle thrusts his head and his tail out of his shell.

Miss Larches. But there's a vase with just such an outline, that I have heard you admire a hundred times.

Grey. True, Miss Larches; but a woman is not a vase;--more beautiful even than this, certainly more precious, perhaps almost as fragile, but still not a vase; and she shows as little taste in making herself look like a vase as some potters do in making vases that look like women.

Mr. Key. But I thought it was decided that the female figure below the shoulders should be left to the imagination. Does Mr. Grey propose to substitute the charming reality of undisguised Nature?

Grey. True, we do not attempt to define the female figure below the waist, at least; but although we may safely veil or even conceal Nature, we cannot misrepresent or outrage her, except at the cost of utter loss of beauty. The lines of drapery, or of any article of dress, must conform to those of that part of the figure which it conceals, or the effect will be deforming, monstrous.

Mr. Key. Does Mr. Grey mean, to say that ladies nowadays' look monstrous and deformed?

Grey. To a certain extent they do. But such is the influence of habit upon the eye, that we fully apprehend the effect of such incongruity as that of which I spoke only in the costumes of past generations, or when there is a very violent, instead of a gradual change in the fashion of our own day. Look at these full-length portraits of Catherine de Medicis and the Princess Marguerite, daughter of Francis the First.

The Ladies. What frights!

Mrs. Grey. No, not both; Marguerite's dress is pretty, in spite of those horrid sleeves sticking up so above her shoulders.

Grey. You are right. Those sleeves, rising above the shoulders--as high as the ear in Catherine's costume, you will observe--are unsightly enough to nullify whatever beauty the costume might have in other points; though in her case they only complete the expression of the costume, which is a grim, unnatural stiffness. And the reason of the unsightliness of these sleeves is, that the outline which they present is directly opposed to that of Nature. No human shoulders bulge upward into great hemispherical excrescences nine inches high; and the peculiar sexual characteristic of this part of woman's figure is the gentle downward curve by which the lines of the shoulder pass into those of the arm. Our memory that such is the natural configuration of these parts enters, consciously or unconsciously, into our judgment of this costume, in which we see that Nature is deliberately departed from; and our condemnation of it in this particular respect is strengthened by the perception, at a glance, that great pains have been taken to make its outlines discordant with those of the part which they conceal. You qualified your censure of Marguerite's dress partly because, in her case, the slope of the shoulder is preserved until the very junction of the arm with the bust, and partly because her bust and waist are defined by her gown with a tolerably near approach to Nature, instead of being

entirely concealed, as in the case of her sister-in-law, by stiff lines sloping outward on all sides to the ground, making the remorseless Queen look like an enormous extinguisher with a woman's head set on it. And these advantages of form in the Princess's costume are enhanced by its presentation of a fine contrast of rich color in unbroken masses, instead of the Queen's black velvet and white satin elaborately disfigured with embroidery, ermine, lace, and jewels. You were prompt in your condemnation of the fashion to which your eye had not been accustomed: now turn to the costume that you wear, and which you are in a manner compelled to wear; for I am not so visionary as to expect a woman, or even a man under sixty, to fly directly in the face of fashion, although her extravagant caprices may be gracefully disregarded by both sexes and all ages. Here are two fashion-plates of the last month,--[Footnote: March, 1869.] not magazine caricatures, mind you, or anything like it,--but from the first _modistes_ in Paris. Look at that shawled lady, with her back toward us. If you did not know that that is a shawl, and that the thing which surmounts it is a bonnet, you would not suspect the figure to be human. See; there is a slightly undulating slope at an angle of about sixty-five degrees from the crown of the head to the lowest hem of the skirt, so that the outline is that of a pyramid slightly rounded at the apex, and nearly as broad across the base as it is high. What is there of woman in such a figure? And this evening-dress; it suggests the enchantments in the stories of the Dark Ages, where knights encounter women who are women to the breasts and monsters below. From the head to as far as halfway down the waist, this figure is natural.

Mr. Key. Under the circumstances it could hardly be otherwise. _Au naturel_, I should call it, except for the spice of a few flowers and a little lace.

Grey. But from that point it begins to lose its semblance to a woman's shape, (as you will see by raising your eyes again to the Venus,) and after running two or three inches decidedly inward in a straight line, where it should turn outward with a gentle curve, its outlines break into a sharp angle, and it expands, with a sudden hyperbolical curve, into a monstrous and nameless figure that is not only unlike Nature, but has no relations whatever with Nature. The eye needs no cultivation, the brain no instruction, to perceive that such an outline cannot be produced by drapery upon a woman's form. It is clear, at a glance, that there is an artificial structure underneath that swelling skirt; that a scaffold, a framework, has been erected to support that dome of silk; and that the wearer is merely an automatic machine by which it is made to perambulate. A woman in this rig hangs in her skirts like a clapper in a bell; and I never meet one without being tempted to take her by the neck and ring her.

Mr. Key. Those belles like ringing well enough, but not exactly of that kind.

Grey. The costume is also faulty in two other most important respects: it is without pure, decided color of any tint, but is broken into patches and blotches of various mongrel hues,----

Mrs. Grey. Hear the man! that exquisite brocade!

Grey.----and whatever effect it might otherwise have had, of form or color, would be entirely frittered away by the multitudinous and multiform trimmings with which it is bedizened; and it is without a

girdle of any kind.

Mrs. Grey. Oh, sweet Simplicity, hear and reward thy priest and prophet! What would your Highness have the woman wear?--a white muslin gown, with a blue sash, and a rose in her hair? That style went out on the day that Mesdames Shem, Ham, and Japhet left the ark.

Grey. And well it might,--for evening-dress, at least No,--my taste, or, if you will permit me to say it, good taste, craves rich colors, and ample, flowing lines,--colors which require taste to be shown in their arrangement and adaptation, and forms which show invention and knowledge in their design. Your woman who dresses in white, and your man who wears plain black, are safe from impeachment of their taste, just as people who say nothing are secure against an exhibition of folly or ignorance. They are the mutes of costume, and contribute nothing to the chromatic harmony of the social circle. They succeed in nothing but the avoidance of positive offence.

Miss Larches. Pray, then, Mr. Grey, what--shall--we--do? You have condemned enough, and told us what is wrong; can't you find in all this collection a single costume that is positively beautiful? and can't you tell us what is right, as well as what is wrong?

Grey. Both,--and will. The first, at once; the last, if you continue to desire it. Here are two costumes, quite unlike in composition and effect, and yet both beautiful;--the first, the fashions of 1811 and 1812 (for the variations, during that time, were so trifling, and in such unessential particulars, that the costume had but one character, as you will see by comparing the twenty-four plates for those years); the second, that worn by this peasant-girl of Normandy. Look first at the fashion-plates, and see the adaptation of that beautiful gown to all the purposes for which a gown is intended. How completely it clothes the entire figure, and with what ease and comfort to the wearer! There is not a line about it which indicates compression, or one expressive of that looseness and languishing abandonment that we remarked just now in the costume of _La belle Hamilton_. The entire person is concealed, except the tip of one foot, the hands, the head and throat, and just enough of the bust to confess the existence of its feminine charms, without exposing them; both limbs and trunk are amply draped; and yet how plainly it can be seen that there is a well-developed, untortured woman underneath those tissues! The waist, girdled in at the proper place, neither just beneath the breasts, as it was a few years before and after, nor just above the hips, as it has been for many years past, and as it was three hundred years ago, is of its natural size:--compare it with the Venus, and then look at those cruel cones, thrust, point downward, into mounds of silk and velvet, to which women adapted themselves about 1575, 1750, and 1830, and thence, with little mitigation, to the present day. How expressive the lines of one figure are of health, and grace, and bounteous fulness of life! and how poor, and sickly, and mean, and man-made the other creatures seem! See, too, in the former, that all the wearer's limbs are as free as air; she can even clasp her hands, with arms at full-length, above her head. Queen Bess, yonder, could do many things, but she could not do that; neither could your great-great-grandmothers, ladies, if they were people of the least pretensions to fashion, nor your mothers. Can you?

[_Mrs. Grey, presuming upon her demi-toilette, with a look of arch defiance, lifts her hands quickly up above her head; but before they have approached each other, there is a sharp sound, as of rending and

snapping; and, with a sudden flush and a little scream, she subsides into her crinoline_.]

Miss Larches. Why, you foolish creature! you might have known you couldn't.

Mr. Key. A most ignominious failure! Mr. Grey, you had better announce a course of lectures on costume, with illustrations from the life. Your subjects will cost you nothing.

Grey. Except for silk- and mantua-making. I have no doubt that I could make such a course useful, and Mrs. Grey has shown that she could make it amusing. But we can get on very well as we are. Observe this figure again. Its chief beauty is, that the gown has, or seems to have, _no form of its own_; it adapts itself to the person, and, while that is entirely concealed, falls round it in lines of exquisite grace and softness, upon which the eye rests with untiring pleasure, and which, upon every movement of the wearer, must change only for others also beautiful. Notice also, that, although the gown forms an ample drapery, it yet follows the contour of the figure sufficiently to taper gracefully to the feet at the front, where it touches the floor lightly, and presents, as it should, the narrowest diameter of the whole figure,--not, contrary to Nature, (I beg pardon of your _modistes_, ladies,) the widest.

Tomes. You needn't apologize so ceremoniously to the ladies; for you've involved yourself in a flagrant contradiction. You said that these two costumes were equally beautiful; and here's the lady of 1812 with her dress all clinging in little wrinkles round her feet, while the peasant-girl's frock is wider at the bottom than it is anywhere else.

Grey. A most profound and logical objection, 0 Daniel! which in due time shall be considered. But I am not now to be diverted from two other very important elements of the beauty of these costumes of 1811 and 1812. They are in one or two, or, at most, three colors,--the tissues of the gowns, the outer garments, (when they are worn,) and the bonnets or head-dresses being of one unbroken tint; and they are almost entirely free from trimming, which appears only upon the principal seams and the edges of the garments, and then in very moderate quantity, though of rich quality.

Miss Larches. Why, so it is! I should not have noticed that.

Grey. You did not notice the lack of it, because it is not required to make the dress complete or give it character. It is only the presence of trimming that attracts attention; its absence is never felt in a well-designed costume.--Now turn to my pretty peasant-girl, who, although she is not in full holiday-costume, is unmistakably "dressed," as ladies call it; for we see that she is going to some slight merry-making, as she carries in her hands the shoes which are to cover those stockingless feet. She, too, is entirely at her ease and unconscious of her costume, except for a shy suspicion that it becomes her, and she, it. Her waist is of its natural size and in its proper place. Her shoulders are covered, and her arms have free play; and although her bodice is cut rather low, the rising chemise and the falling kerchief redeem it from all objection on that score.

Tomes. But how about the length, or rather the shortness, of that skirt? It seems to me to cry _excelsior_ to the pink night-gown.

Grey. You are implacable as to this poor girl's petticoats. Don't you see that her arms are bare? and yet you make no objection. Now, a woman has legs as well as arms; and why, if it be the custom, should not one be seen as well as the other? That girl's grandmothers, to the tenth degree of greatness, wore skirts of just that length from their childhood to their dying day; and why should not she? She would as soon think of hiding her nose as her ankle; and why should she not? Besides, as you will see, her gown is not shorter than those our grandmothers wore, or our mothers, twenty-eight or thirty years ago; and that they were modest, which of us will deny? And now as to the width of these skirts. You will see that they reach only a little below the calf of the leg, and therefore it is both impossible and undesirable that they should fall so closely round the figure as in the case of the fashionable gowns of 1812 that we were just examining. And besides, in the case of our peasant-girl, we see that the lines of her gown are determined by the outline of her figure; and we also see her feet and the lower part of her legs. Her humanity is not extinguished, her means of locomotion are visible;--but in looking at a lady nowadays, we see nothing of the kind; from the waist down, she is a puzzle of silk and conic sections, a marvellous machine that moves in a mysterious way. See, again, how beautiful in color this peasant's costume is. The gown of a rich red, not glaring, but yet positive and pure; the apron, blue; she is a brunette, and so has wisely chosen to have that enviable little shawl or kerchief, the ends of which reach but just below her waist, of yellow; while that high head-dress, quaint and graceful, that serves her for a bonnet, and in fact is one, is of tender green.

Miss Larches. She is not troubled with trimming.

Grey. Not troubled with it; but she has it just where it should be,--on the bottom of her gown, which is edged with black,--in the flowered border of her kerchief,--on the edge of her bonnet, where there is a narrow line of yellow,--and in the lace or muslin ruffle of the cape which falls from it If she were a queen, or the wife of a Russian prince who owned thousands of girls like her, she might have trimming of greater cost and beauty, but not a shred more without deterioration of her costume, which, if she were court-lady to Eugenie and had the court-painter to help her, could not be in better taste.

Mrs. Grey. But, Stanford, don't you see? (just like a man!) you are charmed with these women, not with their dresses. These fashion-plates of fifty years ago are designed by very different hands from those which produce our niminy-piminy looking things,--by artists plainly; and your peasant-girl was seized upon by some errant knight of palette and brush, and painted for her beauty. These women are what you men call fine creatures. Their limbs are rounded and shapely, their figures full and lithe; they are what I've heard you say Homer calls Briseis.

Grey. White-armed, deep-bosomed?

Mrs. Grey. Yes; and their necks rise from their shoulders like ivory towers. Any costume will look beautiful on such women. But how are poor, puny, ill-made women to dress in such fashions? They could not wear those dresses without exhibiting all those personal defects which our present fashion conceals. It's all very fine for perfectly beautiful women to have such fashions; but it's very cruel to those who are not beautiful. Don't you remember, at Mrs. Clarkson's party, just before we were married, you, and half a dozen other men just like you, went round

raving about Mrs. Horn, and how elegantly she was dressed? and when I saw her, I found she had on only a plain pale-blue silk dress, that couldn't have cost a penny more than twelve shillings a yard, and not a thing beside. All the women were turning up their noses at her.

Grey. Because all the men were ready to bend down their heads to her?

Mrs. Grey. Yes.--No.--The upshot of it was, that the woman had the figure and complexion of Hebe, and this dress showed it and set it off; but the dress was nothing particular in itself.

Grey. That is, I suppose, it was not particularly fanciful or costly;--no detriment to its beauty. But as to the beauty of these costumes depending on the beauty of the women who wear them, and their unsuitableness to the needs of women who are without beauty,--It is undeniably true, that, to be beautiful in any costume, a woman must be--beautiful. This may be very cruel, but there is no help for it. Color may enhance the beauty of complexion, as in the case of Mrs. Horn's blue dress; but as to form and material, the most elaborate, the most costly, even the most beautiful costume ever devised, cannot make the woman that wears it be other than she is, or seem so, except to people who do not look at her, but at her clothes. What did all the ugly women in 1811 and '12 do? and what have all the ugly peasant-girls in Normandy done for hundreds of years past? Do you suppose that their beautiful costume made them look any uglier than ugly women do now and here? Not a whit. Ugliness may be covered, but it cannot be concealed. And does the fashion of our day so kindly veil the personal defects in the interest of which you plead? At parties I have thought differently, and sorrowed for the owners of arms and busts and shoulders that inexorable fashion condemns on such occasions to an exposure which, to say the least, is in many cases needless. No,--by flying in the face of fashion, a woman attracts attention to her person, which can be done with impunity only by the beautiful; but do you not see that an ugly woman, by conforming to fashion, obtains no advantage over other women, ugly or beautiful, who also conform to it? and consequently, that a set fashion for all rigidly preserves the contrasts of unequally developed Nature? If there were no fashion to which all felt that they must conform at peril of singularity, then, indeed, there would be some help for the unfortunate; for each individual might adopt a costume suited to his or her peculiarities of person. Yet, even then, there could only be a mitigation or humoring of blemishes, not a remedy for them. There is no way of making deformity or imperfection beautiful.

Mrs. Grey. But, Stanford, there are times when----

Grey. There are no times when woman's figure has not the charm of womanhood, unless she attempts to improve it by some monstrous contrivance of her own; no times when good taste and womanly tact cannot so drape it that it will possess some attraction peculiar to her sex. And were it not so, how irrational, how wrongful is it to extinguish, I will not say the beauty, but, in part, the very humanity of all women, at all times, for the sake of hiding for some women the sign of their perfected womanhood at certain times!

Mr. Key. It certainly results in most astonishing surprises. In fact, I was quite stultified the other day, when Mrs. Novamater, who only a week before had been out yachting with me----

Mrs. Grey. Declined going again. That was not strange. I fear that you

did not take good care of her.

Mr. Key. I was not as tender of her as I might have been; but it was her fault, or that of my ignorance,--not really mine. But, Mr. Grey, why can't you boil all this talk down into an essay, or a paper, as you call it, for the "Oceanic"? You promised Miss Larches something of the sort just now. _Miss Larches_. Yes, Mr. Grey, do let us have it. We ladies would so like to have some masculine rules to dress by!

Tomes. Don't confine your endeavors to one sex. Think what an achievement it would be to teach me how to dress!

Grey. Unanimous, even in your irony! for I see that Mrs. Grey looks quizzical expectation. Well, I will. In fact, I'm as well prepared as a man whose health is drunk at a dinner given to him, and who is unexpectedly called upon for a speech,--or as Rosina, when Figaro begs for _un biglietio_ to Almaviva. [_Opens a drawer_.] _Eccolo qua_! Here is something not long enough or elaborate enough to be called an essay nowadays, though it might have borne the name in Bacon's time. I will read it to you. I call it

THE RUDIMENTS OF DRESS.

To dress the body is to put it into a right, proper, and becoming external condition. Comfort and decency are to be sought first in dress; next, fitness to the person and the condition of the wearer; last, beauty of form and color, and richness of material. But the last object is usually made the first, and thus all are perilled and often lost; for that which is not comfortable or decent or suitable cannot be completely beautiful. The two chief requisites of dress are easily attained. Only a sufficiency of suitable covering is necessary to them; and this varies according to climate and custom. The Hottentot has them both in his strip of cloth; the Esquimau, in his double case of skins over all except face and fingers;--the most elegant Parisian, the most prudish Shakeress, has no more.

The two principal objects of covering the body being so easily attainable, the others are immediately, almost simultaneously sought; and dress rises at the outset into one of those mixed arts which seek to combine the useful and the beautiful, and which thus hold a middle place between mechanic art and fine art. But of these mixed arts, dress is the lowest and the least important: the lowest, because perfection in it is most easily arrived at,--being within the reach of persons whose minds are uninformed and frivolous, whose souls are sensual and grovelling, and whose taste has little culture,--as in the case of many American, and more French women, who have had a brief experience of metropolitan life: the least important, because it has no intellectual or even emotional significance, and is thus without the slightest aesthetic purpose, having for its end (as an art) only the transient, sensuous gratification of an individual, or, at most, of the comparatively few persons by whom he may be seen in the course of not more than a single day; for every renovation of the dress is, in its kind, a new work of Art. As men emerge from the savage state and acquire mechanic skill, the distaff, the spindle, and the loom produce the earliest fruits of their advancement, and dress is the first decorative art in which they reach perfection. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the most beautiful

articles of clothing, the most tasteful and comfortable costumes, have not been produced by people who are classed as barbarous, or, at best, as half-civilized. What fabrics surpass the shawls of India in tint or texture? What garment is more graceful or more serviceable than the Mexican _poncho_, or the Peruvian _rebozo_? What Frenchman is so comfortably or so beautifully dressed as a wealthy unsophisticated Turk? There seems to be an instinct about dress, which, joined to the diffusion of wealth and the reduced price of all textile fabrics, has caused it to be no longer any criterion of culture, social position, breeding, or even taste, except as regards itself.

Dress has, however, some importance in its relations to society and to the individual. It is always indicative of the temper of the time. This is notably true of the wanton ease of the costume of Charles the Second, and the meretricious artificiality of that of the middle of the last century. And in the deliberate double-skirted costliness of the female fashions of our own day,--fashions not intended for courts or wealthy aristocracies, but for everybody,--contrasted as they are with the sober-hued and unpretending habits which all men wear, and in which little more is sought than comfort and convenience, we have an expression of the laborious and the lavish spirit of the times,--the right hand gathering with painful, unremitting toil, the left scattering with splendid recklessness. Dress has an appreciable effect upon the mental condition of individuals, whatever their gravity or intelligence. There are few men not far advanced in years, and still fewer women, who do not feel more confidence in themselves, perhaps more self-respect, for the consciousness of being well-dressed, or, rather, when the knowledge that they are well-dressed relieves them of all consciousness upon the subject. To decide upon the costume which can secure this serene self-satisfaction is impossible. For to excellence in dress there are positive and relative conditions. A man cannot be positively well-dressed, whose costume does not suit the peculiarities of his person and position,--or relatively, whose exterior does not sufficiently conform to the fashion of his day (unless that should be very monstrous and ridiculous) to escape remark for eccentricity. The question is, therefore, complicated with the consideration of individual peculiarities and the fashion of the day, which are unknown and variable elements. But maxims of general application can be laid down, to which both fashions and individuals must conform at peril consequent upon violation of the laws of reason and beauty.

The comfort and decency needful to dress--the Esquimau's double case of skins and the Hottentot's _cumberbund_--need not be insisted on; for maxims are not made for idiots. But dress should not only secure these points, but seem to secure them; for, as to others than the wearer of a dress, what difference is there between shivering and seeming to shiver, sweltering and seeming to swelter?

Convenience, which is to be distinguished from mere bodily comfort, is the next essential of becoming dress. A man should not go partridge-shooting in a Spanish cloak; a woman should not enter an omnibus, that must carry twelve inside, with her skirts so expanded by steel ribs that the vehicle can comfortably hold but four of her,--or do the honors of a table in hanging-sleeves that threaten destruction to cups and saucers, and take toll of gravy from every dish that passes them. Hoops, borrowed by bankrupt invention from a bygone age to satisfy craving fickleness, suited the habits of their first wearers, who would as soon have swept the streets as driven through them, packed thirteen to the dozen, in a carriage common to every passenger who could pay six

cents; and hanging-sleeves were fit for women who, instead of serving others, were served themselves by pages on the knee. No beauty of form or splendor of material in costume can compensate for manifest inconvenience to the wearer. It is partly from an intuitive recognition of this truth, that a gown which opens before seems, and is, more beautiful than one that opens behind. The lady's maid is invisible.

No dress is tolerable, by good taste, which does not permit, and seem to permit, the easy performance of any movement proper to the wearer's age and condition in life. Such a costume openly defies the first law of the mixed arts,--fitness. Thus, the dress of children should be simple, loose, and, whatever the condition of their parents, inexpensive. Let them not, girls or boys, except on rare, formal occasions, be tormented with the toilette. Give them clean skins, twice a day; and, for the rest, clothes that will protect them from the weather as they exercise their inalienable right to roll upon the grass and play in the dirt, and which it will trouble no one to see torn or soiled. Do this, if you have a prince's revenue,--unless you would be vulgar. For, although you may be able to afford to cast jewels into the mire or break the Portland vase for your amusement, if you do so, you are a Goth. Jewels were not made for the mire, vases to be broken, or handsome clothes to be soiled and torn.

Next to convenience is fitness to years and condition in life. A man can as soon, by taking thought, add a cubit to his stature as a woman take five years from her appearance by "dressing young." The attempt to make age look like youth only succeeds in depriving age of its peculiar and becoming beauty, and leaving it a bloated or a haggard sham.--Conditions of life have no political recognition, with us, yet they none the less exist. They are not higher and lower; they are different. The distinction between them is none the less real, that it is not written down, and they are not labelled. Reason and taste alike require that this difference should have outward expression. The abandonment of distinctive professional costume is associated with a movement of social progress, and so cannot be arrested; but it is much to be deplored in its effect upon the beauty, the keeping, and the harmonious contrast of external life.

Of the absolute beauty of dress form is the most important element, as it is of all arts which appeal to the eye. The lines of costume should, in every part, conform to those of Nature, or be in harmony with them. "Papa," said a little boy, who saw his father for the first time in complete walking-costume, "what a high hat! Does your head go up to the top of it?" The question touched the cardinal point of form in costume. Unbroken, flowing lines are essential to the beauty of dress; and fixed angles are monstrous, except where Nature has placed them, at the junction of the limbs with the trunk. The general outlines of the figure should be indicated; and no long garment which flows from the shoulders downward is complete without a girdle.

[Footnote: _Mr. Grey_ [_in parenthesis, and by way of illustration_]. The fashion for ladies' full dress during several years, and but recently abandoned, with its straight line cutting pitilessly across the rounded forms of the shoulders and bust, and making women seem painfully squeezed upward out of their gowns,--its _berthe_, concealing both the union of the arms with the trunk and the flowing lines of that part of the person, and adding another discordant straight line (its lower edge) to the costume,--its long, ungirdled waist, wrought into peaks before and behind, and its gathered swell below, is an instance in point, of

utter disregard of Nature and deliberate violation of harmony, and the consequent attainment of discord and absurdity in every particular. It is rivalled only by the dress-coat, which, with quite unimportant variations, has been worn by gentlemen for fifty years. The collar of this, when stiff and high, quite equals the _berthe_ in absurdity and ugliness; and the useless skirt is the converse in monstrosity to the hooped petticoat.]

As to distinctive forms of costume for the sexes, long robes, concealing the person from the waist to considerably below the knee, are required by the female figure, if only to veil certain inherent defects,--if those peculiarities may be called defects, which adapt it to its proper functions and do not diminish its sexual attractiveness. Woman's figure having its centre of gravity low, its breadth at the hip great, and, from the smallness of her feet, its base narrow, her natural movement in a costume which does not conceal the action of the hip and knee-joints is unavoidably awkward, though none the less attractive to the eye of the other sex. [Footnote: For instance, the movements of ballet-dancers, except the very artificial ones of the feet and hands.]

In color, the point of next importance, no fine effects of costume are to be attained without broad masses of pure and positive tints. These, however, may be enlivened with condimental garniture of broken and combined colors. But dresses striped, or, yet worse, plaided or checkered, are atrocious violations of good taste; indeed, party-colored costumes are worthy only of the fools and harlequins to whose official habits they were once set apart. The three primary, and the three secondary colors, red, yellow, and blue, orange, green, and purple, (though not in their highest intensity,) afford the best hues for costume, and are inexhaustible in their beautiful combinations. White and black have, in themselves, no costumal character; but they may be effectively used in combination with other colors. The various tints of so-called brown, that we find in Nature, may be employed with fine effect; but other colors, curiously sought out and without distinctive hue, have little beauty in themselves; and any richness of appearance which they may present is almost always due to the fabric to which they are imparted. Colors have harmonies and discords, like sounds, which must be carefully observed in composing a costume. Perception of these cannot be taught, more than perception of harmony in music; but, if possessed, it may be cultivated.

Extrinsic ornament or trimming should be avoided, except to indicate completeness, as at a hem,--or to blend forms and colors, as soft lace at the throat or wrists. The essential beauty of costume is in its fitness, form, and color; and the effect of this beauty may be entirely frittered away by trimmings. These, however costly, are in themselves mere petty accessories to dress; and the use of them, except to define its chief terminal outlines, or soften their infringement upon the flesh, is a confession of weakness in the main points of the costume, and an indication of a depraved and trivial taste. When used, they should have beauty in themselves, which is attainable only by a clearly marked design. Thus, the exquisite delicacy of fabric in some kinds of lace does not compensate for the blotchy confusion of the shapeless flower-patterns worked upon it. Not that lace or any other ornamental fabric should imitate exactly the forms of flowers or other natural objects, but that the conventional forms should be beautiful in themselves and clearly traced in the pattern.--Akin to trimmings are all other appendages to dress,--jewels, or humbler articles; and as every part of dress should have a function, and fulfil it, and seem to do so,

and should not seem to do that which it does not, these should never be worn unless they serve a useful purpose,--as a brooch, a button, a chain, a signet or guard ring,--or have significance,--as a wedding-ring, an epaulet, or an order. [Footnote: Thus, it is the office of a bonnet or a hat to protect the head and face; and so a sun-shade carried by the wearer of a bonnet is a confession that the bonnet is a worthless thing, worn only for show: but an umbrella is no such confession; because it is not the office of the hat or bonnet to shelter the whole person from sun or rain.] But the brooch and the button must fasten, the chain suspend, the ring bear a device, or they sink into pretentious, vulgar shams. And there must be keeping between these articles and their offices. To use, for instance, a massive golden, or, worse, gilded chain to support a cheap silver watch is to reverse the order of reason and good taste.

The human head is the most beautiful object in Nature. It needs a covering at certain times; but to decorate it is superfluous; and any decoration, whether of flowers, or jewels, or the hair itself, that distorts its form or is in discord with its outlines, is an abomination.

Perfumes are hardly a part of dress; yet, as an addition to it often made, they merit censure, with slight exception, as deliberate contrivances to attract attention to the person, by appealing to the lowest and most sensuous of the senses. Next to no perfume at all, a faint odor of roses, or of lavender, obtained by scattering the leaves of those plants in clothes-presses, or of the very best Cologne-water, is most pleasant.

In its general expression, dress should be cheerful and enlivening, but, at least in the case of adults, not inconsistent with thoughtful earnestness. There is a radical and absurd incongruity between the real condition and the outward seeming of a man or woman who knows what life is, and purposes to discharge its duties, enjoy its joys, and bear its sorrows, and who is clad in a trivial, grotesque, or extravagant costume.--These, then, are the elementary requisites of dress: that it be comfortable and decent, convenient and suitable, beautiful in form and color, simple, genuine, harmonious with Nature and itself.

* * * * *

Mrs. Grey. All very fine, and, doubtless, very true, as well as sententious and profound. But hark you, Mr. Wiseman, to something not dreamt of in your philosophy! We women dress, not to be simple, genuine, and harmonious, or even to please you men, but to brave each other's criticism; and so, when the time comes to get our Fall things, Laura and I will go and ask what is the fashion, and wear what is the fashion, in spite of you and your rudiments and elements.

Grey. I expected nothing else; and, indeed, I am not sure that in your present circumstances I should desire you to do otherwise, or, at most, to deviate more than slightly from the prevailing mode toward such remote points as simplicity, genuineness, and harmony. But if you were to set the fashion instead of following it, I should hope for better things.

Mrs. Grey. Fall things?

Tomes. But society has little to hope for from you, who would brand callings and conditions with a distinctive costume. That was a part of

the essay that surprised me much. For the mere sake of a picturesque variety, would you perpetuate the degradation of labor, the segregation of professions, and set up again one of the social barriers between man and man? Your doctrine is fitter for Hindostan than for America. This uniformity of costume, of which you complain, is the great outward and visible sign of the present political, and future social, equality of the race.

Grey. You forget that the essay expressly recognizes, not only the connection between social progress and the abandonment of distinction in professional costume, but admits, perhaps somewhat hastily, that it cannot be arrested, and deplores it only on the score of the beauty and fitness of external life. If we must give up social progress or variety of costume, who could doubt which to choose? But I do not hesitate to assert that this uniform phase of costume is not a logical consequence of social advancement, that it is the result of vanity and petty pride, and in its spirit at variance with the very doctrine of equality, irrespective of occupation or condition, from which it seems to spring. For the carpenter, the smith, the physician, the lawyer, who, when not engaged in his calling, makes it a point not to be known as belonging to it, contemns it and puts it to open shame; and so this endeavor of all men to dress on every possible occasion in a uniform style unsuited to labor, so far from elevating labor, degrades it, and demoralizes the laborer. This is exemplified every day, and especially on Sunday, when nine-tenths of our population do all in their power, at cost of cash and stretch of credit, at sacrifice of future comfort and present self-respect and peace of mind, to look as unlike their real selves On other days as possible. Our very maid-servants, who were brought up shoeless, stockingless, and bonnetless, and who work day and night for a few dollars a month, spend those dollars in providing themselves with hoops, flounced silk dresses, and variegated bonnets for Sunday wearing.

Tomes. Do you grudge the poor creatures their holiday and their holiday-dress?

Grey. Far from it! Let them, let us all, have more holidays, and holiday-dresses as beautiful as may be. But I cannot see why a holiday-dress should be so entirely unlike the dress they wear on other days. I have a respect as well as an admiration for the white-capped, bonnetless head of the French maid, which I cannot feel for my own wife's nurse, when I meet her flaunting along the streets on Sunday afternoon in a bonnet which is a cheap and vulgar imitation of that which my wife wears, and really like it only in affording no protection to her head, and requiring huge pins to keep it in the place where a bonnet is least required. I have seen a farmer, whose worth, intelligence, and manly dignity found fitting expression in the dress that he daily wore, sacrifice this harmonious outward seeming in an hour, and sink into insignificance, if not vulgarity, by putting on a dress-coat and a shiny stove-pipe hat to go to meeting or to "York." A dress-coat and a fashionable hat are such hideous habits in themselves, that he must be unmistakably a man bred to wearing them, and on whom they sit easily, if not a well-looking and distinguished man, who can don them with impunity, especially if we have been accustomed to see him in a less exacting costume.

Mr. Key. The very reason why every man will, at sacrifice of his comfort and his last five dollars, exercise his right to wear them whenever he can do so. But your idea of a beautiful costume, Mr. Grey, seems to be a blue, red, or yellow bag, or bolster-case, drawn over the

head, mouth downwards, with a hole in the middle of the bottom for the neck and two at the corners for the arms, and bound about the waist with a cord; for I observe that you insist upon a girdle.

Grey. I don't scout your pattern so much as you probably expected. Costumes worse in every respect have been often worn.--And the girdle? Is it not, in female dress, at least, the most charming accessory of costume? that which most defines the peculiar beauties of woman's form? that to which the tenderest associations cling? Its knot has ever had a sweet significance that makes it sacred. What token could a lover receive that he would prize so dearly as the girdle whose office he has so often envied? "That," cries Waller,--

"That which her slender waist confin'd
Shall now my joyful temples bind.

* * * * *

Give me but what this ribbon bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round."

Have women taste? and can they put off this cestus with which the least attractive of them puts on some of Venus's beauty? Have they sentiment? and can they discard so true a type of their tender power that its mere lengthening makes every man their servant?

Tomes. Your bringing up the poets to your aid reminds me that you have the greatest of them against you, as to the importance of richness in dress. What do you say to Shakespeare's "Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, but not expressed in fancy"?

Grey. That it is often quoted as Shakespeare's advice in dress by people who know nothing else that he wrote, and who would have his support for their extravagance, when, in fact, we do not know what Shakespeare would have thought upon the subject, had he lived now. It is the advice of a worldly-minded old courtier to his son, given as a mere prudential maxim, at a time when, to make an impression and get on at court, a man had need to be richly dressed. That need has entirely passed away.

Miss Larches. But, Mr. Grey, I remember your finding fault with the powder on the head-dress of that _marquise_ costume, because it concealed the red hair of the wearer. In such a case I should consider powder a blessing. Do you really admire red hair?

Grey. When it is beautiful, I do, and prefer it to that of any other tint. I don't mean golden hair, or flaxen, or yellow, but red,--the color of dark red amber, or, nearer yet, of freshly cut copper. There is ugly red hair, as there is ugly hair of black and brown, and every other hue. It is not the mere name of the color of the hair that makes it beautiful or not, but its tint and texture. I have seen black hair that was hideous to the sight and repulsive to the touch,--other, also black, that charmed the eyes and wooed the fingers. Fashion has asserted herself even in this particular. There have been times when the really fortunate possessor of such brown tresses as Miss Larches's would have been deemed unfortunate. No troubadour would have sung her praises; or if he did, he would either have left her hair unpraised, or else lied and called it golden, meaning red, as we know by the illuminated books of the Middle Ages. Had she lived in Venice, that great school of color,

two or three hundred years ago, in the days of Titian and Giorgione, its greatest masters, she would probably have sat upon a balcony with her locks drawn through a crownless broad-brimmed hat, and covered with dye, to remove some of their rich chestnut hue, and substitute a reddish tinge;--just as this lady is represented as doing in this Venetian book of costumes of that date.

Key. Oh that two little nephews of mine, that the boys call Carroty Bill and Brickdust Ben, were here! How these comfortable words would edify them!

Grey. I'm afraid not, if they understood me, or the poets, who, as well as the painters, are with me, Horace's Pyrrha had red hair,--

"Cui flavam religas comam
Simplex munditiis?"

which, if Tomes will not be severely critical, I will translate,--

"For whom bind'st back thy amber hair
In neat simplicity?"

Mrs. Grey. The poets are always raving about neat simplicity, or something else that is not the fashion. I suppose they sustain you in your condemnation of perfumes, too.

Tomes. There I'm with Grey,--and the poets, too, I think.

Mrs. Grey. What say you, Mr. Key?

Tomes. At least, Grey, [_turning to him_,] Plautus says, "_Mulier recte olet ubi nihil olet_" which you may translate for the ladies, if you choose. I always distrust a woman steeped in perfumes upon the very point as to which she seeks to impress me favorably.

Grey [_as if to himself and Tomes_]--

"Still to be powder'd, still perfum'd,
Lady, it is to be presum'd,
Though Art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound."

Mrs. Grey. What is that you are having to yourselves, there?

Grey. Only a verse or two _a-propos_ from rare Ben.

Mrs. Grey. What do poets know about dress, even when they are poetesses? Look at your friend, the authoress of the "Willow Wreath." What a spook that woman is! Where does she get those dresses? I've often wondered--

* * * * *

Here the glass door opened, and a neat, fresh-looking maid-servant said, "Please, Ma'am, dinner is served."

Grey. Dinner! Have we been talking here two mortal hours? You'll all stop, of course: don't think of declining. Nelly blushes, yonder, doubtful, on "hospitable thoughts intent," I don't believe "our general

mother," though she had Eden for her larder, heard Adam announce the Archangel's unexpected visit about dinner-time without a momentary qualm as to whether the peaches would go round twice. There'll be enough for Miss Larches and you, Nelly; and we gentlemen will beam smiles upon you as we mince our modest share. Let us go in. Mr. Key, will you commit yourself to Mrs. Grey? Miss Larches, will you lay aside your bonnet? Oh, it's off already! One can't see, unless one stands behind you; and I prefer the front view. Pray, take my arm. And, Tomes, keep at a respectful distance in the rear, for the safety of Miss Larches's skirts, or she will be for excluding you, if we should have a talk about another phase of Daily Beauty, or stay away herself; and neither of you could be spared.

THE ARTIST-PRISONER.

Here, in this vacant cell of mine,
I picture and paint my Apennine.

In spite of walls and gyved wrist,
I gather my gold and amethyst.

The muffled footsteps' ebb and swell,
Immutable tramp of sentinel,

The clenched lip, the gaze of doom,
The hollow-resounding dungeon-gloom,

All fade and cease, as, mass and line,
I shadow the sweep of Apennine,

And from my olive palette take
The marvellous pigments, flake by flake.

With azure, pearl, and silver white,
The purple of bloom and malachite,

Ceiling, wall, and iron door,
When the grim guard goes, I picture o'er.

E'en where his shadow falls athwart
The sunlight of noon, I've a glory wrought,--

Have shaped the gloom and golden shine
To image my gleaming Apennine.

No cruel Alpine heights are there,
Dividing the depths of pallid air;

But sea-blue liftings, far and fine,
With driftings of pearl and coralline;

And domes of marble, every one
All ambered o'er by setting sun;--

Yes, marble realms, that, clear and high,
So float in the purple-azure sky,

We all have deemed them, o'er and o'er,
Miraculous isles of madrepore;

Nor marvel made that hither floods
Bore wonderful forms of hero-gods.
Oh, can you see, as spirit sees,
Yon silvery sheen of olive-trees?

To me a sound of murmuring doves
Comes wandering up from olive-groves,

And lingers near me, while I dwell
On yonder fair field of asphodel,

Half-lost in sultry songs of bees,
As, touching my chaliced anemones,

I prank their leaves with dusty sheen
To show where the golden bees have been.

On granite wall I paint the June
With emerald grape and wild festoon,--

Its chestnut-trees with open palms
Beseeching the sun for daily alms,--

In sloping valley, veiled with vines,
A violet path beneath the pines,--

The way one goes to find old Rome,
Its far away sign a purple dome.

But not for me the glittering shrine:
I worship my God in the Apennine!

To all save those of artist eyes,
The listeners to silent symphonies,

Only a cottage small is mine,
With poppied pasture, sombre pine.

But _they_ hear anthems, prayer, and bell,
And sometimes they hear an organ swell;

They see what seems--so saintly fair--
Madonna herself a-wandering there,

Bearing baby so divine
They speak of the Child in Palestine!

Yet I, who threw my palette down
To fight on the walls of yonder town,

Know them for wife and baby mine,
As, weeping, I trace them, line by line,
In far-off glen of Apennine!

THE MINISTER'S WOOING.

[Continued.]

CHAPTER XXV.

A GUEST AT THE COTTAGE.

Nothing is more striking, in the light and shadow of the human drama, than to compare the inner life and thoughts of elevated and silent natures with the thoughts and plans which those by whom they are surrounded have of and for them. Little thought Mary of any of the speculations that busied the friendly head of Miss Prissy, or that lay in the provident forecastings of her prudent mother. When a life into which all our life-nerves have run is cut suddenly away, there follows, after the first long bleeding is stanched, an internal paralysis of certain portions of our nature. It was so with Mary: the thousand fibres that bind youth and womanhood to earthly love and life were all in her as still as the grave, and only the spiritual and divine part of her being was active. Her hopes, desires, and aspirations were all such as she could have had in greater perfection as a disembodied spirit than as a mortal woman. The small stake for self which she had invested in life was gone,--and henceforward all personal matters were to her so indifferent that she scarce was conscious of a wish in relation to her own individual happiness. Through the sudden crush of a great affliction, she was in that state of self-abnegation to which the mystics brought themselves by fastings and self-imposed penances,--a state not purely healthy, nor realizing the divine ideal of a perfect human being made to exist in the relations of human life,--but one of those exceptional conditions, which, like the hours that often precede dissolution, seem to impart to the subject of them a peculiar aptitude for delicate and refined spiritual impressions. We could not afford to have it always night,--and we must think that the broad, gay morning light, when meadow-lark and robin and bobolink are singing in chorus with a thousand insects and the waving of a thousand breezes, is on the whole the most in accordance with the average wants of those who have a material life to live and material work to do. But then we reverence that clear-obscure of midnight, when everything is still and dewy;--then sing the nightingales, which cannot be heard by day; then shine the mysterious stars. So when all earthly voices are hushed in the soul, all earthly lights darkened, music and color float in from a higher sphere.

No veiled nun, with her shrouded forehead and downcast eyes, ever moved about a convent with a spirit more utterly divided from the world, than Mary moved about her daily employments. Her care about the details of life seemed more than ever minute; she was always anticipating her mother in every direction, and striving by a thousand gentle preveniences to save her from fatigue and care; there was even a tenderness about her ministrations, as if the daughter had changed feelings and places with the mother.

The Doctor, too, felt a change in her manner towards him, which, always considerate and kind, was now invested with a tender thoughtfulness and anxious solicitude to serve which often brought tears to his eyes.
All the neighbors who had been in the habit of visiting at the house received from her, almost daily, in one little form or another, some proof of her thoughtful remembrance.

She seemed in particular to attach herself to Mrs. Marvyn,--throwing her care around that fragile and wounded nature, as a generous vine will sometimes embrace with tender leaves and flowers a dying tree.

But her heart seemed to have yearnings beyond even the circle of home and friends. She longed for the sorrowful and the afflicted,--she would go down to the forgotten and the oppressed,--and made herself the companion of the Doctor's secret walks and explorings among the poor victims of the slave-ships, and entered with zeal as teacher among his African catechumens.

Nothing but the limits of bodily strength could confine her zeal to do and suffer for others; a river of love had suddenly been checked in her heart, and it needed all these channels to drain off the waters that must otherwise have drowned her in the suffocating agonies of repression.

Sometimes, indeed, there would be a returning thrill of the old wound,--one of those overpowering moments when some turn in life brings back anew a great anguish. She would find unexpectedly in a book a mark that he had placed there,--or a turn in conversation would bring back a tone of his voice,--or she would see on some thoughtless young head curls just like those which were swaying to and fro down among the wavering seaweeds,--and then her heart gave one great throb of pain, and turned for relief to some immediate act of love to some living being. They who saw her in one of these moments felt a surging of her heart towards them, a moisture of the eye, a sense of some inexpressible yearning, and knew not from what pain that love was wrung, nor how that poor heart was seeking to still its own throbbings in blessing them.

By what name shall we call this beautiful twilight, this night of the soul, so starry with heavenly mysteries? _Not_ happiness,--but blessedness. They who have it walk among men "as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing,--as poor, yet making many rich,--as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

The Doctor, as we have seen, had always that reverential spirit towards women which accompanies a healthy and great nature; but in the constant converse which he now held with a beautiful being, from whom every particle of selfish feeling or mortal weakness seemed sublimed, he appeared to yield his soul up to her leading with a wondering humility, as to some fair, miraculous messenger of Heaven. All questions of internal experience, all delicate shadings of the spiritual history, with which his pastoral communings in his flock made him conversant, he brought to her to be resolved with the purest simplicity of trust.

"She is one of the Lord's rarities," he said, one day, to Mrs. Scudder, "and I find it difficult to maintain the bounds of Christian faithfulness in talking with her. It is a charm of the Lord's hidden ones that they know not their own beauty; and God forbid that I should tempt a creature made so perfect by divine grace to self-exaltation, or lay my hand unadvisedly, as Uzzah did, upon the ark of God, by my inconsiderate praises!"

"Well, Doctor," said Miss Prissy, who sat in the corner, sewing on the dove-colored silk, "I do wish you could come into one of our meetings and hear those blessed prayers. I don't think you nor anybody else ever heard anything like 'em."

"I would, indeed, that I might with propriety enjoy the privilege," said the Doctor.

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Miss Prissy; "next week they're going to meet here; and I'll leave the door just ajar, and you can hear every word, just by standing in the entry."

"Thank you, Madam," said the Doctor; "it would certainly be a blessed privilege, but I cannot persuade myself that such an act would be consistent with Christian propriety."

"Ah, now do hear that good man!" said Miss Prissy, after he had left the room; "if he ha'n't got the making of a real gentleman in him, as well as a real Christian!--though I always did say, for my part, that a real Christian will be a gentleman. But I don't believe all the temptations in the world could stir that blessed man one jot or grain to do the least thing that he thinks is wrong or out of the way. Well, I must say, I never saw such a good man; he is the only man I ever saw good enough for our Mary." Another spring came round, and brought its roses, and the apple-trees blossomed for the third time since the commencement of our story; and the robins had rebuilt their nest, and began to lay their blue eggs in it; and Mary still walked her calm course, as a sanctified priestess of the great worship of sorrow. Many were the hearts now dependent on her, the spiritual histories, the threads of which were held in her loving hand,--many the souls burdened with sins, or oppressed with sorrow, who found in her bosom at once confessional and sanctuary. So many sought her prayers, that her hours of intercession were full, and often needed to be lengthened to embrace all for whom she would plead. United to the good Doctor by a constant friendship and fellowship, she had gradually grown accustomed to the more and more intimate manner in which he regarded her,--which had risen from a simple "dear child," and "dear Mary," to "dear friend," and at last "dearest of all friends," which he frequently called her, encouraged by the calm, confiding sweetness of those still, blue eyes, and that gentle smile, which came without one varying flutter of the pulse or the rising of the slightest flush on the marble cheek.

One day a letter was brought in, postmarked "Philadelphia." It was from Madame de Frontignac; it was in French, and ran as follows:---

"MY DEAR LITTLE WHITE ROSE:--

"I am longing to see you once more, and before long [shall be in Newport. Dear little Mary, I am sad, very sad;--the days seem all of them too long; and every morning I look out of my window and wonder why I was born. I am not so happy as I used to be, when I cared for nothing but to sing and smooth my feathers like the birds. That is the best kind of life for us women;--if we love anything better than our clothes, it is sure to bring us great sorrow. For all that, I can't help thinking it is very noble and beautiful to love;--love is very beautiful, but very, very sad. My poor dear little white cat, I should like to hold you a little while to my heart;--it is so cold all the time, and aches so, I wish I were dead; but then I am not good enough to die. The Abbe says, we must offer up our sorrow to God as a satisfaction for our sins. I have a good deal to offer, because my nature is strong and I can feel a great deal.

"But I am very selfish, dear little Mary, to think only of myself, when

I know how you must suffer. Ah! but you knew he loved you truly, the poor dear boy!--that is something. I pray daily for his soul; don't think it wrong of me; you know it is our religion;--we should all do our best for each other.

"Remember me tenderly to Mrs. Marvyn. Poor mother!--the bleeding heart of the Mother of God alone can understand such sorrows.

"I am coming in a week or two, and then I have many things to say to _ma belle rose blanche_; till then I kiss her little hands.

"VIRGINIE DE FRONTIGNAC."

One beautiful afternoon, not long after, a carriage stopped at the cottage, and Madame de Frontignac alighted. Mary was spinning in her garret-boudoir, and Mrs. Scudder was at that moment at a little distance from the house, sprinkling some linen, which was laid out to bleach on the green turf of the clothes-yard.

Madame de Frontignac sent away the carriage, and ran up the stairway, pursuing the sound of Mary's spinning-wheel mingled with her song; and in a moment, throwing aside the curtain, she seized Mary in her arms, and kissed her on either cheek, laughing and crying both at once.

"I knew where I should find you, _ma blanche_! I heard the wheel of my poor little princess! It's a good while since we spun together, _mimi_! Ah, Mary, darling, little do we know what we spin! life is hard and bitter, isn't it? Ah, how white your cheeks are, poor child!"

Madame de Frontignac spoke with tears in her own eyes, passing her hand caressingly over the fair checks.

"And you have grown pale, too, dear Madame," said Mary, looking up, and struck with the change in the once brilliant face.

"Have I, _petite?_ I don't know why not. We women have secret places where our life runs out. At home I wear rouge; that makes all right;--but I don't put it on for you, Mary; you see me just as I am."

Mary could not but notice the want of that brilliant color and roundness in the cheek, which once made so glowing a picture; the eyes seemed larger and tremulous with a pathetic depth, and around them those bluish circles that speak of languor and pain. Still, changed as she was, Madame de Frontignac seemed only more strikingly interesting and fascinating than ever. Still she had those thousand pretty movements, those nameless graces of manner, those wavering shades of expression, that irresistibly enchained the eye and the imagination,--true Frenchwoman as she was, always in one rainbow shimmer of fancy and feeling, like one of those cloud-spotted April days which give you flowers and rain, sun and shadow, and snatches of bird-singing all at once.

"I have sent away my carriage, Mary, and come to stay with you. You want me--_n'est ce pas?_" she said, coaxingly, with her arms round Mary's neck; "if you don't, _tant pis!_ for I am the bad penny you English speak of,--you cannot get me off."

"I am sure, dear friend," said Mary, earnestly, "we don't want to put you off."

"I know it; you are true; you _mean_ what you say; you are all good real gold, down to your hearts; that is why I love you. But you, my poor Mary, your cheeks are very white; poor little heart, you suffer!"

"No," said Mary; "I do not suffer now. Christ has given me the victory over sorrow."

There was something sadly sublime in the manner in which this was said,--and something so sacred in the expression of Mary's face that Madame de Frontignac crossed herself, as she been wont before a shrine; and then said, "Sweet Mary, pray for me; I am not at peace; I cannot get the victory over sorrow."

"What sorrow can you have?" said Mary,--"you, so beautiful, so rich, so admired, whom everybody must love?"

"That is what I came to tell you; I came to confess to you. But you must sit down there" she said, placing Mary on a low seat in the garret-window; "and Virginie will sit here," she said, drawing a bundle of uncarded wool towards her, and sitting down at Mary's feet.

"Dear Madame," said Mary, "let me get you a better seat."

"No, no, _mignonne_, this is best; I want to lay my head in your lap";--and she took off her riding-hat with its streaming plume, and tossed it carelessly from her, and laid her head down on Mary's lap. "Now don't call me Madame any more. Do you know," she said, raising her head with a sudden brightening of cheek and eye, "do you know that there are two _mes_ to this person?--one is Virginie, and the other is Madame de Frontignac. Everybody in Philadelphia knows Madame de Frontignac:--she is very gay, very careless, very happy; she never has any serious hours, or any sad thoughts; she wears powder and diamonds, and dances all night, and never prays;--that is Madame. But Virginie is quite another thing. She is tired of all this,--tired of the balls, and the dancing, and the diamonds, and the beaux; and she likes true people, and would like to live very quiet with somebody that she loved. She is very unhappy; and she prays, too, sometimes, in a poor little way,--like the birds in your nest out there, who don't know much, but chipper and cry because they are hungry. This is your Virginie. Madame never comes here,--never call me Madame."

"Dear Virginie," said Mary, "how I love you!"

"Do you, Mary,--_bien sur?_ You are my good angel! I felt a good impulse from you when I first saw you, and have always been stronger to do right when I got one of your pretty little letters. Oh, Mary, darling, I have been very foolish and very miserable, and sometimes tempted to be very, very bad! Oh, sometimes I thought I would not care for God or anything else!--it was very bad of me,--but I was like a foolish little fly caught in a spider's net before he knows it."

Mary's eyes questioned her companion, with an expression of eager sympathy, somewhat blended with curiosity.

"I can't make you understand me quite," said Madame de Frontignac,

"unless I go back a good many years. You see, dear Mary, my dear angel mamma died when I was very little, and I was sent to be educated at the Sacre Coeur, in Paris. I was very happy and very good, in those days; the sisters loved me, and I loved them; and I used to be so pious, and loved God dearly. When I took my first communion, Sister Agatha prepared me. She was a true saint, and is in heaven now; and I remember, when I came to her, all dressed like a bride, with my white crown and white veil, that she looked at me so sadly, and said she hoped I would never love anybody better than God, and then I should be happy. I didn't think much of those words then; but, oh, I have since, many times! They used to tell me always that I had a husband who was away in the army, and who would come to marry me when I was seventeen, and that he would give me all sorts of beautiful things, and show me everything I wanted to see in the world, and that I must love and honor him.

"Well, I was married at last; and Monsieur de Frontignac is a good brave man, although he seemed to me very old and sober; but he was always kind to me, and gave me nobody knows how many sets of jewelry, and let me do everything I wanted to, and so I liked him very much; but I thought there was no danger I should love him, or anybody else, better than God. I didn't _love_ anybody in those days; I only liked people, and some people more than others. All the men I saw professed to be lovers, and I liked to lead them about and see what foolish things I could make them do, because it pleased my vanity; but I laughed at the very idea of love.

"Well, Mary, when we came to Philadelphia, I heard everybody speaking of Colonel Burr, and what a fascinating man he was; and I thought it would be a pretty thing to have him in my train,--and so I did all I could to charm him. I tried all my little arts,--and if it is a sin for us women to do such things, I am sure I have been punished for it. Mary, he was stronger than I was. These men, they are not satisfied with having the whole earth under their feet, and having all the strength and all the glory, but they must even take away our poor little reign;--it's too bad!

"I can't tell you how it was; I didn't know myself; but it seemed to me that he took my very life away from me; and it--was all done before I knew it. He called himself my friend, my brother; he offered to teach me English; he read with me; and by-and-by he controlled my whole life. I, that used to be so haughty, so proud,-I, that used to laugh to think how independent I was of everybody,--I was entirely under his control, though I tried not to show it. I didn't well know where I was; for he talked friendship, and I talked friendship; he talked about sympathetic natures that are made for each other, and I thought how beautiful it all was; it was living in a new world. Monsieur de Frontignac was as much charmed with him as I was; he often told me that he was his best friend,--that he was his hero, his model man; and I thought,----oh, Mary, you would wonder to hear me say what I thought! I thought he was a Bayard, a Sully, a Montmorenci,--everything grand and noble and good. I loved him with a religion; I would have died for him; I sometimes thought how I might lay down my life to save his, like women I read of in history. I did not know myself; I was astonished I could feel so; and I did not dream that this could be wrong. How could I, when it made me feel more religious than anything in my whole life? Everything in the world seemed to grow sacred. I thought, if men could be so good and admirable, life was a holy thing, and not to be trifled with.

"But our good Abbe is a faithful shepherd; and when I told him these

things in confession, be told me I was in great danger,--danger of falling into mortal sin. Oh, Mary, it was as if the earth had opened under me! He told me, too, that this noble man, this man so dear, was a heretic, and that, if he died, he would go to dreadful pains. Oh, Mary, I dare not tell you half what he told me,--dreadful things that make me shiver when I think of them! And then he said that I must offer myself a sacrifice for him; that, if I would put down all this love, and overcome it, God would perhaps accept it as a satisfaction, and bring him into the True Church at last.

"Then I began to try. Oh, Mary, we never know how we love till we try to unlove! It seemed like taking my heart out of my breast, and separating life from life. How can one do it? I wish any one would tell me. The Abbe said I must do it by prayer; but it seemed to me prayer only made me think the more of him.

"But at last I had a great shock; everything broke up like a great, grand, noble dream,--and I waked out of it just as weak and wretched as one feels when one has overslept. Oh, Mary, I found I was mistaken in him,--all, all, wholly!"

Madame de Frontignac laid her forehead on Mary's knee, and her long chestnut hair drooped down over her face.

"He was going somewhere with my husband to explore, out in the regions of the Ohio, where he had some splendid schemes of founding a state; and I was all interest. And one day, as they were preparing, Monsieur de Frontignac gave me a quantity of papers to read and arrange, and among them was a part of a letter;--I never could imagine how it got there; it was from Burr to one of his confidential friends. I read it, at first, wondering what it meant, till I came to two or three sentences about me."

Madame de Frontignac paused a moment, and then said, rising with sudden energy,--

"Mary, that man never loved me; he cannot love; he does not know what love is. What I felt he cannot know; he cannot even dream of it, because he never felt anything like it. Such men never know us women; we are as high as heaven above them. It is true enough that my heart was wholly in his power,--but why? Because I adored him as something divine, incapable of dishonor, incapable of selfishness, incapable of even a thought that was not perfectly noble and heroic. If he had been all that, I should have been proud to be even a poor little flower that should exhale away to give him an hour's pleasure; I would have offered my whole life to God as a sacrifice for such a glorious soul;--and all this time, what was he thinking of me?

"He was _using_ my feelings to carry his plans; he was admiring me like a picture; he was considering what he should do with me; and but for his interests with my husband, he would have tried his power to make me sacrifice this world and the next to his pleasure. But he does not know me. My mother was a Montmorenci, and I have the blood of her house in my veins; we are princesses;--we can give all; but he must be a god that we give it for."

Mary's enchanted eye followed the beautiful narrator, as she enacted before her this poetry and tragedy of real life, so much beyond what dramatic art can ever furnish. Her eyes grew splendid in their depth

and brilliancy; sometimes they were full of tears, and sometimes they flashed out like lightnings; her whole form seemed to be a plastic vehicle which translated every emotion of her soul; and Mary sat and looked at her with the intense absorption that one gives to the highest and deepest in Art or Nature.

"_Enfin,--que faire_?" she said at last, suddenly stopping, and drooping in every limb. "Mary, I have lived on this dream so long!--never thought of anything else!--now all is gone, and what shall I do? I think, Mary," she added, pointing to the nest in the tree, "I see my life in many things. My heart was once still and quiet, like the round little eggs that were in your nest;--now it has broken out of its shell, and cries with cold and hunger. I want my dream again,--I wish it all back,--or that my heart could go back into its shell. If I only could drop this year out of my life, and care for nothing, as I used to! I have tried to do that; I can't; I cannot get back where I was before."

"_Would_ you do it, dear Virginie?" said Mary; "would you, if you could?"

"It was very noble and sweet, all that," said Virginie; "it gave me higher thoughts than ever I had before; I think my feelings were beautiful;--but now they are like little birds that have no mother; they kill me with their crying."

"Dear Virginie, there is a real Friend in heaven, who is all you can ask or think,--nobler, better, purer,--who cannot change, and cannot die, and who loved you and gave Himself for you."

"You mean Jesus," said Virginie. "Ah, I know it; and I say the offices to him daily, but my heart is very wild and starts away from my words. I say, 'My God, I give myself to you!'--and after all, I don't give myself, and I don't feel comforted. Dear Mary, you must have suffered, too,--for you loved really,--I saw it;--when we feel a thing ourselves, we can see very quick the same in others;--and it was a dreadful blow to come so all at once."

"Yes, it was," said Mary; "I thought I must die; but Christ has given me peace."

These words were spoken with that long-breathed sigh with which we always speak of peace,--a sigh that told of storms and sorrows past,--the sighing of the wave that falls spent and broken on the shores of eternal rest.

There was a little pause in the conversation, and then Virginie raised her head and spoke in a sprightlier lone.

"Well, my little fairy cat, my white doe, I have come to you. Poor Virginie wants something to hold to her heart; let me have you," she said, throwing her arms round Mary.

"Dear, dear Virginie, indeed you shall!" said Mary. "I will love you dearly, and pray for you. I always have prayed for you, ever since the first day I knew you."

"I knew it,--I felt your prayers in my heart. Mary, I have many thoughts that I dare not tell to any one, lately,--but I cannot help feeling that some are real Christians who are not in the True Church. You are as true

a saint as Saint Catharine; indeed, I always think of you when I think of our dear Lady; and yet they say there is no salvation out of the Church."

This was a new view of the subject to Mary, who had grown up with the familiar idea that the Romish Church was Babylon and Antichrist, and who, during the conversation, had been revolving the same surmises with regard to her friend. She turned her grave, blue eyes on Madame de Frontignac with a somewhat surprised look, which melted into a half-smile. But the latter still went on with a puzzled air, as if trying to talk herself out of some mental perplexity.

"Now, Burr is a heretic,--and more than that, he is an infidel; he has no religion in his heart,--I saw that often,--it made me tremble for him,--it ought to have put me on my guard. But you, dear Mary, you love Jesus as your life. I think you love him just as much as Sister Agatha, who was a saint. The Abbe says that there is nothing so dangerous as to begin to use our reason in religion,--that, if we once begin, we never know where it may carry us; but I can't help using mine a very little. I must think there are some saints that are not in the True Church."

"All are one who love Christ," said Mary; "we are one in Him."

"I should not dare to tell the Abbe," said Madame de Frontignac; and Mary queried in her heart, whether Dr. H. would feel satisfied that she could bring this wanderer to the fold of Christ without undertaking to batter down the walls of her creed; and yet, there they were, the Catholic and the Puritan, each strong in her respective faith, yet melting together in that embrace of love and sorrow, joined in the great communion of suffering. Mary took up her Testament, and read the fourteenth chapter of John:--

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Mary read on through the chapter,--through the next wonderful prayer; her face grew solemnly transparent, as of an angel; for her soul was lifted from earth by the words, and walked with Christ far above all things, over that starry pavement where each footstep is on a world.

The greatest moral effects are like those of music,--not wrought out by sharp-sided intellectual propositions, but melted in by a divine fusion, by words that have mysterious, indefinite fulness of meaning, made living by sweet voices, which seem to be the out-throbbings of angelic hearts. So one verse in the Bible read by a mother in some hour of tender prayer has a significance deeper and higher than the most elaborate of sermons, the most acute of arguments.

Virginie Frontignac sat as one divinely enchanted, while that sweet voice read on; and when the silence fell between them, she gave a long sigh, as we do when sweet music stops. They heard between them the soft stir of summer leaves, the distant songs of birds, the breezy hum when the afternoon wind shivered through many branches, and the silver sea chimed in. Virginie rose at last, and kissed Mary on the forehead.

"That is a beautiful book," she said, "and to read it all by one's self

must be lovely. I cannot understand why it should be dangerous; it has not injured you.

"Sweet saint," she added, "let me stay with you; you shall read to me every day. Do you know I came here to get you to take me? I want you to show me how to find peace where you do; will you let me be your sister?"

"Yes, indeed," said Mary, with a cheek brighter than it had been for many a day; her heart feeling a throb of more real human pleasure than for long months.

"Will you get your mamma to let me stay?" said Virginie, with the bashfulness of a child; "haven't you a little place like yours, with white curtains and sanded floor, to give to poor little Virginie to learn to be good in?"

"Why, do you really want to stay here with us," said Mary, "in this little house?"

"Do I really?" said Virginie, mimicking her voice with a start of her old playfulness;--"_don't_ I really? Come now, _mimi_, coax the good mamma for me,--tell her I shall try to be very good. I shall help you with the spinning,--you know I spin beautifully,--and I shall make butter, and milk the cow, and set the table. Oh, I will be so useful, you can't spare me!"

"I should love to have you dearly," said Mary, warmly; "but you would soon be dull for want of society here."

"_Quelle idee! ma petite drole!_" said the lady,--who, with the mobility of her nation, had already recovered some of the saucy mocking grace that was habitual to her, as she began teasing Mary with a thousand little childish motions. "Indeed, _mimi_, you must keep me hid up here, or may-be the wolf will find me and eat me up; who knows?"

Mary looked at her with inquiring eyes.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, Mary,--I mean, that, when _he_ comes back to Philadelphia, he thinks he shall find me there; he thought I should stay while my husband was gone; and when he finds I am gone, he may come to Newport; and I never want to see him again without you;--you must let me stay with you."

"Have you told him," said Mary, "what you think?"

"I wrote to him, Mary,--but, oh, I can't trust my heart! I want so much to believe him, it kills me so to think evil of him, that it will never do for me to see him. If he looks at me with those eyes of his, I am all gone; I shall believe anything he tells me; he will draw me to him as a great magnet draws a poor little grain of steel."

"But now you know his unworthiness, his baseness," said Mary, "I should think it would break all his power."

"_Should_ you think so? Ah, Mary, we cannot unlove in a minute; love is a great while dying. I do not worship him now as I did. I know what he is. I know he is bad, and I am sorry for it. I should like to cover

it from all the world,--even from you, Mary, since I see it makes you dislike him; it hurts me to hear any one else blame him. But sometimes I do so long to think I am mistaken, that I know, if I should see him, I should catch at anything he might tell me, as a drowning man at straws; I should shut my eyes, and think, after all, that it was all my fault, and ask a thousand pardons for all the evil he has done. No,--Mary, you must keep your blue eyes upon me, or I shall be gone."

At this moment Mrs. Scudder's voice was heard, calling Mary below.

"Go down now, darling, and tell mamma; make a good little talk to her, _ma reine_! Ah, you are queen here! all do as you say,--even the good priest there; you have a little hand, but it leads all; so go, _petite_."

Mrs. Scudder was somewhat flurried and discomposed at the proposition;--there were the _pros_ and the _cons_ in her nature, such as we all have. In the first place, Madame de Frontignac belonged to high society,--and that was _pro_; for Mrs. Scudder prayed daily against worldly vanities, because she felt a little traitor in her heart that was ready to open its door to them, if not constantly talked down. In the second place, Madame de Frontignac was French,--there was a _con_; for Mrs. Scudder had enough of her father John Bull in her heart to have a very wary look-out on anything French. But then, in the third place, she was out of health and unhappy,--and there was a _pro_ again; for Mrs. Scudder was as kind and motherly a soul as ever breathed. But then she was a Catholic,--_con_. But the Doctor and Mary might convert her,--_pro_. And then Mary wanted her,--_pro_. And she was a pretty, bewitching, lovable creature,--_pro_.--The _pros_ had it; and it was agreed that Madame de Frontignac should be installed as proprietress of the spare chamber, and she sat down to the tea-table that evening in the great kitchen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DECLARATION.

The domesticating of Madame de Frontignac as an inmate of the cottage added a new element of vivacity to that still and unvaried life. One of the most beautiful traits of French nature is that fine gift of appreciation, which seizes at once the picturesque side of every condition of life, and finds in its own varied storehouse something to assort with it. As compared with the Anglo-Saxon, the French appear to be gifted with a _naive_ childhood of nature, and to have the power that children have of gilding every scene of life with some of their own poetic fancies.

Madame de Frontignac was in raptures with the sanded floor of her little room, which commanded, through the apple-boughs, a little morsel of a seaview. She could fancy it was a nymph's cave, she said.

"Yes, _ma Marie_, I will play Calypso, and you shall play Telemachus, and Dr. H. shall be Mentor. Mentor was so very, very good!--only a little bit--_dull_," she said, pronouncing the last word with a wicked accent, and lifting her hands with a whimsical gesture like a naughty child who expects a correction.

Mary could not but laugh; and as she laughed, more color rose in her waxen cheeks than for many days before.

Madame de Frontignac looked as triumphant as a child who has made its mother laugh, and went on laying things out of her trunk into her drawers with a zeal that was quite amusing to see.

"You see, _ma blanche_, I have left all Madame's clothes at Philadelphia, and brought only those that belong to Virginie,--no _tromperie_, no feathers, no gauzes, no diamonds,--only white dresses, and my straw hat _en bergere_, I brought one string of pearls that was my mother's; but pearls, you know, belong to the sea-nymphs. I will trim my hat with seaweed and buttercups together, and we will go out on the beach to-night and get some gold and silver shells to dress _mon miroir_."

"Oh, I have ever so many now!" said Mary, running into her room, and coming back with a little bag.

They both sat on the bed together, and began pouring them out,--Madame de Frontignac showering childish exclamations of delight.

Suddenly Mary put her hand to her heart as if she had been struck with something; and Madame de Frontignac heard her say, in a low voice of sudden pain, "Oh, dear!"

"What is it, _mimi?_" she said, looking up quickly.

"Nothing," said Mary, turning her head.

Madame de Frontignac looked down, and saw among the sea-treasures a necklace of Venetian shells, that she knew never grew on the shores of Newport. She held it up.

"Ah, I see," she said. "He gave you this. Ah, _ma pauvrette_" she said, clasping Mary in her arms, "thy sorrow meets thee everywhere! May I be a comfort to thee!--just a little one!"

"Dear, dear friend!" said Mary, weeping. "I know not how it is. Sometimes I think this sorrow is all gone; but then, for a moment, it comes back again. But I am at peace; it is all right, all right; I would not have it otherwise. But, oh, if he could have spoken one word to me before! He gave me this," she added, "when he came home from his first voyage to the Mediterranean. I did not know it was in this bag. I had looked for it everywhere."

"Sister Agatha would have told you to make a rosary of it," said Madame de Frontignac; "but you pray without a rosary. It is all one," she added; "there will be a prayer for every shell, though you do not count them. But come, _ma chere_, get your bonnet, and let us go out on the beach."

That evening, before going to bed, Mrs. Scudder came into Mary's room. Her manner was grave and tender; her eyes had tears in them; and although her usual habits were not caressing, she came to Mary and put her arms around her and kissed her. It was an unusual manner, and Mary's gentle eyes seemed to ask the reason of it.

"My daughter," said her mother, "I have just had a long and very

interesting talk with our dear good friend, the Doctor; ah, Mary, very few people know how good he is!"

"True, mother," said Mary, warmly; "he is the best, the noblest, and yet the humblest man in the world."

"You love him very much, do you not?" said her mother.

"Very dearly," said Mary.

"Mary, he has asked me, this evening, if you would be willing to be his wife."

"His _wife_, mother?" said Mary, in the tone of one confused with a new and strange thought.

"Yes, daughter; I have long seen that he was preparing to make you this proposal."

"You have, mother?"

"Yes, daughter; have you never thought of it?"

"Never, mother."

There was a long pause,--Mary standing, just as she had been interrupted, in her night toilette, with her long, light hair streaming down over her white dress, and the comb held mechanically in her hand. She sat down after a moment, and, clasping her hands over her knees, fixed her eyes intently on the floor; and there fell between the two a silence so profound, that the tickings of the clock in the next room seemed to knock upon the door. Mrs. Scudder sat with anxious eyes watching that silent face, pale as sculptured marble.

"Well, Mary," she said at last.

A deep sigh was the only answer. The violent throbbings of her heart could be seen undulating the long hair as the moaning sea tosses the rockweed.

"My daughter," again said Mrs. Scudder.

Mary gave a great sigh, like that of a sleeper awakening from a dream, and, looking at her mother, said,--

"Do you suppose he really _loves_ me, mother?"

"Indeed he does, Mary, as much as man ever loved woman!"

"Does he indeed?" said Mary, relapsing into thoughtfulness.

"And you love him, do you not?" said her mother.

"Oh, yes, I love him."

"You love him better than any man in the world, don't you?"

"Oh, mother, mother! yes!" said Mary, throwing herself passionately forward, and bursting into sobs; "yes, there is no one else now that I

love better,--no one!--no one!"

"My darling! my daughter!" said Mrs. Scudder, coming and taking her in her arms.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she said, sobbing distressfully, "let me cry, just for a little,--oh, mother, mother, mother!"

What was there hidden under that despairing wail?--It was the parting of the last strand of the cord of youthful hope.

Mrs. Scudder soothed and caressed her daughter, but maintained still in her breast a tender pertinacity of purpose, such as mothers will, who think they are conducting a child through some natural sorrow into a happier state.

Mary was not one, either, to yield long to emotion of any kind. Her rigid education had taught her to look upon all such outbursts as a species of weakness, and she struggled for composure, and soon seemed entirety calm.

"If he really loves me, mother, it would give him great pain, if I refused," said Mary, thoughtfully.

"Certainly it would; and, Mary, you have allowed him to act as a very near friend for a long time; and it is quite natural that he should have hopes that you loved him."

"I do love him, mother,--better than anybody in the world except you. Do you think that will do?"

"Will do?" said her mother; "I don't understand you."

"Why, is that loving enough to marry? I shall love him more, perhaps, after,--shall I, mother?"

"Certainly you will; every one does."

"I wish he did not want to marry me, mother," said Mary, after a pause. "I liked it a great deal better as we were before."

"All girls feel so, Mary, at first; it is very natural."

"Is that the way you felt about father, mother?"

Mrs. Scudder's heart smote her when she thought of her own early love,--that great love that asked no questions,--that had no doubts, no fears, no hesitations,--nothing but one great, outsweeping impulse, which swallowed her life in that of another. She was silent; and after a moment, she said,--

"I was of a different disposition from you, Mary. I was of a strong, wilful, positive nature. I either liked or disliked with all my might. And besides, Mary, there never was a man like your father."

The matron uttered this first article in the great confession of woman's faith with the most unconscious simplicity.

"Well, mother, I will do whatever is my duty. I want to be guided. If

I can make that good man happy, and help him to do some good in the world--After all, life is short, and the great thing is to do for others."

"I am sure, Mary, if you could have heard how he spoke, you would be sure you could make him happy. He had not spoken before, because he felt so unworthy of such a blessing; he said I was to tell you that he should love and honor you all the same, whether you could be his wife or not,--but that nothing this side of heaven would be so blessed a gift,--that it would make up for every trial that could possibly come upon him. And you know, Mary, he has a great many discouragements and trials;--people don't appreciate him; his efforts to do good are misunderstood and misconstrued; they look down on him, and despise him, and tell all sorts of evil things about him; and sometimes he gets quite discouraged."

"Yes, mother, I will marry him," said Mary;--"yes, I will."

"My darling daughter!" said Mrs. Scudder,--"this has been the hope of my life!"

"Has it, mother?" said Mary, with a faint smile; "I shall make you happier, then?"

"Yes, dear, you will. And think what a prospect of usefulness opens before you! You can take a position, as his wife, which will enable you to do even more good than you do now; and you will have the happiness of seeing, everyday, how much you comfort the hearts and encourage the hands of God's dear people."

"Mother, I ought to be very glad I can do it," said Mary; "and I trust I am. God orders all things for the best."

"Well, my child, sleep to-night, and to-morrow we will talk more about it."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SURPRISES.

Mrs. Scudder kissed her daughter, and left her. After a moment's thought, Mary gathered the long silky folds of hair around her head, and knotted them for the night. Then leaning forward on her toilet-table, she folded her hands together, and stood regarding the reflection of herself in the mirror.

Nothing is capable of more ghostly effect than such a silent, lonely contemplation of that mysterious image of ourselves which seems to look out of an infinite depth in the mirror, as if it were our own soul beckoning to us visibly from unknown regions. Those eyes look into our own with an expression sometimes vaguely sad and inquiring. The face wears weird and tremulous lights and shadows; it asks us mysterious questions, and troubles us with the suggestions of our relations to some dim unknown. The sad, blue eyes that gazed into Mary's had that look of calm initiation, of melancholy comprehension, peculiar to eyes made clairvoyant by "great and critical" sorrow. They seemed to say to her, "Fulfil thy mission; life is made for sacrifice; the flower must fall

before fruit can perfect itself." A vague shuddering of mystery gave intensity to her reverie. It seemed as if those mirror-depths were another world; she heard the far-off dashing of sea-green waves; she felt a yearning impulse towards that dear soul gone out into the infinite unknown.

Her word just passed had in her eyes all the sacred force of the most solemnly attested vow; and she felt as if that vow had shut some till then open door between her and him; she had a kind of shadowy sense of a throbbing and yearning nature that seemed to call on her,--that seemed surging towards her with an imperative, protesting force that shook her heart to its depths.

Perhaps it is so, that souls, once intimately related, have ever after this a strange power of affecting each other,--a power that neither absence nor death can annul. How else can we interpret those mysterious hours in which the power of departed love seems to overshadow us, making our souls vital with such longings, with such wild throbbings, with such unutterable sighings, that a little more might burst the mortal bond? Is it not deep calling unto deep? the free soul singing outside the cage to her mate beating against the bars within?

Mary even, for a moment, fancied that a voice called her name, and started, shivering. Then the habits of her positive and sensible education returned at once, and she came out of her reverie as one breaks from a dream, and lifted all these sad thoughts with one heavy sigh from her breast; and opening her Bible, she read: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even forever."

Then she kneeled by her bedside, and offered her whole life a sacrifice to the loving God who had offered his life a sacrifice for her. She prayed for grace to be true to her promise,--to be faithful to the new relation she had accepted. She prayed that all vain regrets for the past might be taken away, and that her soul might vibrate without discord in unison with the will of Eternal Love. So praying, she rose calm, and with that clearness of spirit which follows an act of uttermost self-sacrifice; and so calmly she laid down and slept, with her two hands crossed upon her breast, her head slightly turned on the pillow, her cheek pale as marble, and her long dark lashes lying drooping, with a sweet expression, as if under that mystic veil of sleep the soul were seeing things forbidden to the waking eye. Only the gentlest heaving of the quiet breast told that the heavenly spirit within had not gone whither it was hourly aspiring to go.

Meanwhile Mrs. Scudder had left Mary's room, and entered the Doctor's study, holding a candle in her hand. The good man was sitting alone in the dark, with his head bowed upon his Bible. When Mrs. Scudder entered, he rose, and regarded her wistfully, but did not speak. He had something just then in his heart for which he had no words; so he only looked as a man does who hopes and fears for the answer of a decisive question.

Mrs. Scudder felt some of the natural reserve which becomes a matron coming charged with a gift in which lies the whole sacredness of her own existence, and which she puts from her hands with a jealous reverence. She therefore measured the man with her woman's and mother's eye, and said, with a little stateliness,--

"My dear Sir, I come to tell you the result of my conversation with Mary."

She made a little pause,--and the Doctor stood before her as humbly as if he had not weighed and measured the universe; because he knew, that, though he might weigh the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, yet it was a far subtiler power which must possess him of one small woman's heart. In fact, he felt to himself like a great, awkward, clumsy, mountainous earthite asking of a white-robed angel to help him up a ladder of cloud. He was perfectly sure for the moment, that he was going to be refused; and he looked humbly firm,--he would take it like a man. His large blue eyes, generally so misty in their calm, had a resolute clearness, rather mournful than otherwise. Of course, no such celestial experience was going to happen to him.

He cleared his throat, and said,--

"Well, Madam?"

Mrs. Scudder's womanly dignity was appeased; she reached out her hand, cheerfully, and said,--

"_She has accepted_."

The Doctor drew his hand suddenly away, turned quickly round, and walked to the window,--although, as it was ten o'clock at night and quite dark, there was evidently nothing to be seen there. He stood there, quietly, swallowing very hard, and raising his handkerchief several times to his eyes. There was enough went on under the black coat just then to make quite a little figure in a romance, if it had been uttered; but he belonged to a class who _lived_ romance, but never spoke it. In a few moments he returned to Mrs. Scudder, and said,--

"I trust, dear Madam, that this very dear friend may never have reason to think me ungrateful for her wonderful goodness; and whatever sins my evil heart may lead me into, I _hope_ I may never fall so low as to forget the undeserved mercy of this hour. If ever I shrink from duty or murmur at trials, while so sweet a friend is mine, I shall be vile indeed."

The Doctor, in general, viewed himself on the discouraging side, and had berated and snubbed himself all his life as a most flagitious and evil-disposed individual,--a person to be narrowly watched, and capable of breaking at any moment into the most flagrant iniquity; and therefore it was that he received his good fortune in so different a spirit from many of the lords of creation, in similar circumstances.

"I am sensible," he added, "that a poor minister, without much power of eloquence, and commissioned of the Lord to speak unpopular truths, and whose worldly condition, in consequence, is never likely to be very prosperous,--that such an one could scarcely be deemed a suitable partner for so very beautiful a young woman, who might expect proposals, in a temporal point of view, of a much more advantageous nature; and I am therefore the more struck and overpowered with this blessed result."

These last words caught in the Doctor's throat, as if he were overpowered in very deed.

"In regard to _her_ happiness," said the Doctor, with a touch of awe in

his voice, "I would not have presumed to become the guardian of it, were it not that I am persuaded it is assured by a Higher Power; for 'when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?' (Job, xxxiv. 29.) But I trust I may say no effort on my part shall be wanting to secure it."

Mrs. Scudder was a mother, and had come to that stage in life where mothers always feel tears rising behind their smiles. She pressed the Doctor's hand silently, and they parted for the night.

We know not how we can acquit ourselves to our friends of the great world for the details of such an unfashionable courtship, so well as by giving them, before they retire for the night, a dip into a more modish view of things.

The Doctor was evidently green,--green in his faith, green in his simplicity, green in his general belief of the divine in woman, green in his particular humble faith in one small Puritan maiden, whom a knowing fellow might at least have maneuvered so skilfully as to break up her saintly superiority, discompose her, rout her ideas, and lead her up and down a swamp of hopes and fears and conjectures, till she was wholly bewildered and ready to take him at last--if he made up his mind to have her at all--as a great bargain, for which she was to be sensibly grateful.

Yes, the Doctor was green,--_immortally_ green, as a cedar of Lebanon, which, waving its broad archangel wings over some fast-rooted eternal old solitude, and seeing from its sublime height the vastness of the universe, veils its kingly head with humility before God's infinite majesty.

He has gone to bed now,--simple old soul!--first apologizing to Mrs. Scudder for having kept her up to so dissipated and unparalleled an hour as ten o'clock on his personal matters.

Meanwhile our Asmodeus shall transport us to a handsomely furnished apartment in one of the most fashionable hotels of Philadelphia, where Colonel Aaron Burr, just returned from his trip to the then aboriginal wilds of Ohio, is seated before a table covered with maps, letters, books, and papers. His keen eye runs over the addresses of the letters, and he eagerly seizes one from Madame de Frontignac, and reads it; and as no one but ourselves is looking at him now, his face has no need to wear its habitual mask. First comes an expression of profound astonishment; then of chagrin and mortification; then of deepening concern; there were stops where the dark eyelashes flashed together, as if to brush a tear out of the view of the keen-sighted eyes; and then a red flush rose even to his forehead, and his delicate lips wore a sarcastic smile. He laid down the letter, and made one or two turns through the room.

The man had felt the dashing against his own of a strong, generous, indignant woman's heart fully awakened, and speaking with that impassioned vigor with which a French regiment charges in battle. There were those picturesque, winged words, those condensed expressions, those subtile piercings of meaning, and, above all, that simple pathos, for which the French tongue has no superior; and for the moment the woman had the victory; she shook his heart. But Burr resembled the marvel with which chemists amuse themselves. His heart was a vase filled with boiling passions,--while his _will_, a still, cold, unmelted lump of ice, lay at the bottom.

Self-denial is not peculiar to Christians. He who goes downward often puts forth as much force to kill a noble nature as another does to annihilate a sinful one. There was something in this letter so keen, so searching, so self-revealing, that it brought on one of those interior crises in which a man is convulsed with the struggle of two natures, the godlike and the demoniac, and from which he must pass out more wholly to the dominion of the one or the other.

Nobody knew the true better than Burr. He _knew_ the godlike and the pure; he had _felt_ its beauty and its force to the very depths of his being, as the demoniac knew at once the fair Man of Nazareth; and even now he felt the voice within that said, "What have I to do with thee?" and the rending of a struggle of heavenly life with fast-coming eternal death.

That letter had told him what he might be, and what he was. It was as if his dead mother's hand had held up before him a glass in which he saw himself white-robed and crowned, and so dazzling in purity that he loathed his present self.

As he walked up and down the room perturbed, he sometimes wiped tears from his eyes, and then set his teeth and compressed his lips. At last his face grew calm and settled in its expression, his mouth wore a sardonic smile; he came and took the letter, and, folding it leisurely, laid it on the table, and put a heavy paperweight over it, as if to hold it down and bury it. Then drawing to himself some maps of new territories, he set himself vigorously to some columns of arithmetical calculations on the margin; and thus he worked for an hour or two, till his mind was as dry and his pulse as calm as a machine; then he drew the inkstand towards him, and scribbled hastily the following letter to his most confidential associate,--a letter which told no more of the conflict that preceded it than do the dry sands and the civil gossip of the sea-waves to-day of the storm and wreck of last week.

"Dear ------. _Nous voici_--once more in Philadelphia. Our schemes in Ohio prosper. Frontignac remains there to superintend. He answers our purpose _passablement_. On the whole, I don't see that we could do better than retain him; he is, besides, a gentlemanly, agreeable person, and wholly devoted to me,--a point certainly not to be overlooked.

"As to your railleries about the fair Madame, I must say, in justice both to her and myself, that any grace with which she has been pleased to honor me is not to be misconstrued. You are not to imagine any but the most Platonic of _liaisons_. She is as high-strung as an Arabian steed,--proud, heroic, romantic, and _French!_ and such must be permitted to take their own time and way, which we in our _gaucherie_ can only humbly wonder at I have ever professed myself her abject slave, ready to follow any whim, and obeying the slightest signal of the jewelled hand. As that is her sacred pleasure, I have been inhabiting the most abstract realms of heroic sentiment, living on the most diluted moonshine, and spinning out elaborately all those charming and seraphic distinctions between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee with which these ecstatic creatures delight themselves in certain stages of _affaires du coeur_.

"The last development, on the part of my goddess, is a fit of celestial anger, of the cause of which I am in the most innocent ignorance. She writes me three pages of French sublimities, writing as only a French

woman can,--bids me an eternal adieu, and informs me she is going to Newport.

"Of course the affair becomes stimulating. I am not to presume to dispute her sentence, or doubt a lady's perfect sincerity in wishing never to see me again; but yet I think I shall try to pacify the 'tantas in animis coelestibus iras.'

"If a woman hates you, it is only her love turned wrong side out, and you may turn it back with due care. The pretty creatures know how becoming a _grande passion_ is, and take care to keep themselves in mind; a quarrel serves their turn, when all else fails.

"To another point. I wish you to advertise S------, that his insinuations in regard to me in the 'Aurora' have been observed, and that I require that they be promptly retracted. He knows me well enough to attend to this hint. I am in earnest when I speak; if the word does nothing, the blow will come,--and if I strike once, no second blow will be needed. Yet I do not wish to get him on my hands needlessly; a duel and a love affair and hot weather, coming on together, might prove too much even for me.--N.B. Thermometer stands at 85. I am resolved on Newport next week.

"Yours ever,

"BURR.

"P.S. I forgot to say, that, oddly enough, my goddess has gone and placed herself under the wing of the pretty Puritan I saw in Newport. Fancy the _melange_! Could anything be more piquant?--that cart-load of goodness, the old Doctor, that sweet little saint, and Madame Faubourg St. Germain shaken up together! Fancy her listening with well-bred astonishment to a _critique_ on the doings of the unregenerate, or flirting that little jewelled fan of hers in Mrs. Scudder's square pew of a Sunday! Probably they will carry her to the weekly prayer-meeting, which of course she will contrive some fine French subtilty for admiring, and find _revissant_. I fancy I see it."

When Burr had finished this letter, he had actually written himself into a sort of persuasion of its truth. When a finely constituted nature wishes to go into baseness, it has first to bribe itself. Evil is never embraced undisguised, as evil, but under some fiction which the mind accepts and with which it has the singular power of blinding itself in the face of daylight. The power of imposing on one's self is an essential preliminary to imposing on others. The man first argues himself down, and then he is ready to put the whole weight of his nature to deceiving others. This letter ran so smoothly, so plausibly, that it produced on the writer of it the effect of a work of fiction, which we _know_ to be unreal, but _feel_ to be true. Long habits of this kind of self-delusion in time produce a paralysis in the vital nerves of truth, so that one becomes habitually unable to see things in their verity, and realizes the awful words of Scripture,--"He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Between three and four the next morning, the robin in the nest above Mary's window stretched out his left wing, opened one eye, and gave a short and rather drowsy chirp, which broke up his night's rest and restored him to the full consciousness that he was a bird with wings and feathers, with a large apple-tree to live in, and all heaven for an estate,--and so, on these fortunate premises, he broke into a gush of singing, clear and loud, which Mary, without waking, heard in her slumbers.

Scarcely conscious, she lay in that dim clairvoyant state, when the half-sleep of the outward senses permits a delicious dewy clearness of the soul, that perfect ethereal rest and freshness of faculties, comparable only to what we imagine of the spiritual state,--season of celestial enchantment, in which the heavy weight "of all this unintelligible world" drops off, and the soul, divinely charmed, nestles like a wind-tossed bird in the protecting bosom of the One All-Perfect, All-Beautiful. What visions then come to the inner eye have often no words corresponding in mortal vocabularies. The poet, the artist, and the prophet in such hours become possessed of divine certainties which all their lives they struggle with pencil or song or burning words to make evident to their fellows. The world around wonders; but they are unsatisfied, because they have seen the glory and know how inadequate the copy.

And not merely to selectest spirits come these hours, but to those humbler poets, ungifted with utterance, who are among men as fountains sealed, whose song can be wrought out only by the harmony of deeds, the patient, pathetic melodies of tender endurance, or the heroic chant of undiscouraged labor. The poor slave-woman, last night parted from her only boy, and weary with the cotton-picking,--the captive pining in his cell,--the patient wife of the drunkard, saddened by a consciousness of the growing vileness of one so dear to her once,--the delicate spirit doomed to harsh and uncongenial surroundings,--all in such hours feel the soothings of a celestial harmony, the tenderness of more than a mother's love.

It is by such seasons as these, more often than by reasonings or disputings, that doubts are resolved in the region of religious faith. The All-Father treats us as the mother does her "infant crying in the dark"; He does not reason with our fears, or demonstrate their fallacy, but draws us silently to His bosom, and we are at peace. Nay, there have been those, undoubtedly, who have known God falsely with the intellect, yet felt Him truly with the heart,--and there be many, principally among the unlettered little ones of Christ's flock, who positively know that much that is dogmatically propounded to them of their Redeemer is cold, barren, unsatisfying, and utterly false, who yet can give no account of their certainties better than that of the inspired fisherman, "We know Him, and have seen Him." It was in such hours as these that Mary's deadly fears for the soul of her beloved had passed all away,--passed out of her,--as if some warm, healing nature of tenderest vitality had drawn out of her heart all pain and coldness, and warmed it with the breath of an eternal summer.

So, while the purple shadows spread their gauzy veils inwoven with fire along the sky, and the gloom of the sea broke out here and there into lines of light, and thousands of birds were answering to each other from apple-tree and meadow-grass and top of jagged rock, or trooping in bands

hither and thither, like angels on loving messages, Mary lay there with the flickering light through the leaves fluttering over her face, and the glow of dawn warming the snow-white draperies of the bed and giving a tender rose-hue to the calm cheek. She lay half-conscious, smiling the while, as one who sleeps while the heart waketh, and who hears in dreams the voice of the One Eternally Beautiful and Beloved.

Mrs. Scudder entered her room, and, thinking that she still slept, stood and looked down on her. She felt as one does who has parted with some precious possession, a sudden sense of its value coming over her; she queried in herself whether any living mortal were worthy of so perfect a gift; and nothing but a remembrance of the Doctor's prostrate humility at all reconciled her to the sacrifice she was making.

"Mary, dear!" she said, bending over her, with an unusual infusion of emotion in her voice,--"darling child!"

The arms moved instinctively, even before the eyes unclosed, and drew her mother down to her with a warm, clinging embrace. Love in Puritan families was often like latent caloric,--an all-pervading force, that affected no visible thermometer, shown chiefly by a noble silent confidence, a ready helpfulness, but seldom outbreathed in caresses; yet natures like Mary's always craved these outward demonstrations, and leaned towards them as a trailing vine sways to the nearest support. It was delightful for once fully to feel how much her mother loved her, as well as to know it.

"Dear, precious mother! do you love me so very much?"

"I live and breathe in you, Mary!" said Mrs. Scudder,--giving vent to herself in one of those trenchant shorthand expressions wherein positive natures incline to sum up everything, if they must speak at all.

Mary held her mother silently to her breast, her heart shining through her face with a quiet radiance.

"Do you feel happy this morning?" said Mrs. Scudder.

"Very, very, very happy, mother!"

"I am so glad to hear you say so!" said Mrs. Scudder,--who, to say the truth, had entertained many doubts on her pillow the night before.

Mary began dressing herself in a state of calm exaltation. Every trembling leaf on the tree, every sunbeam, was like a living smile of God,--every fluttering breeze like His voice, full of encouragement and hope.

"Mother, did you tell the Doctor what I said last night?"

"I did, my darling."

"Then, mother, I would like to see him a few moments alone."

"Well, Mary, he is in his study, at his morning devotions."

"That is just the time. I will go to him."

The Doctor was sitting by the window; and the honest-hearted, motherly

lilacs, abloom for the third time since our story began, were filling the air with their sweetness.

Suddenly the door opened, and Mary entered, in her simple white short-gown and skirt, her eyes calmly radiant, and her whole manner having something serious and celestial. She came directly towards him and put out both her little hands, with a smile half-childlike, half-angelic; and the Doctor bowed his head and covered his face with his hands.

"Dear friend," said Mary, kneeling and taking his hands, "if you want me, I am come. Life is but a moment,--there is an eternal blessedness just beyond us,--and for the little time between I will be all I can to you, if you will only show me how."

And the Doctor----

No, young man,--the study-door closed just then, and no one heard those words from a quaint old Oriental book which told that all the poetry of that grand old soul had burst into flower, as the aloe blossoms once in a hundred years. The feelings of that great heart might have fallen unconsciously into phrases from that one love-poem of the Bible which such men as he read so purely and devoutly, and which warm the icy clearness of their intellection with the myrrh and spices of ardent lands, where earthly and heavenly love meet and blend in one indistinguishable horizon-line, like sea and sky.

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun? My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother. Thou art all fair, my love! there is no spot in thee!"

The Doctor might have said all this; we will not say he did, nor will we say he did not; all we know is, that, when the breakfast-table was ready, they came out cheerfully together. Madame de Frontignac stood in a fresh white wrapper, with a few buttercups in her hair, waiting for the breakfast. She was startled to see the Doctor entering all-radiant, leading in Mary by the hand, and looking as if he thought she were some dream-miracle which might dissolve under his eyes, unless he kept fast hold of her.

The keen eyes shot their arrowy glance, which went at once to the heart of the matter. Madame de Frontignac knew they were affianced, and regarded Mary with attention.

The calm, sweet, elevated expression of her face struck her; it struck her also that _that_ was not the light of any earthly love,--that it had no thrill, no blush, no tremor, but only the calmness of a soul that knows itself no more; and she sighed involuntarily.

She looked at the Doctor, and seemed to study attentively a face which happiness made this morning as genial and attractive as it was generally strong and fine.

There was little said at the breakfast-table; and yet the loud singing of the birds, the brightness of the sunshine, the life and vigor of all things, seemed to make up for the silence of those who were too well pleased to speak.

"_Eh bien, ma chere_" said Madame, after breakfast, drawing Mary into

her little room,-"_c'est donc fini?_"

"Yes," said Mary, cheerfully.

"Thou art content?" said Madame, passing her arm around her. "Well, then, I should be. But, Mary, it is like a marriage with the altar, like taking the veil, is it not?"

"No," said Mary; "it is not taking the veil; it is beginning a cheerful, reasonable life with a kind, noble friend, who will always love me truly, and whom I hope to make as happy as he deserves."

"I think well of him, my little cat," said Madame, reflectively; but she stopped something she was going to say, and kissed Mary's forehead. After a moment's pause, she added, "One must have love or refuge, Mary;--this is thy refuge, child; thou wilt have peace in it." She sighed again. "_Enfin_," she said, resuming her gay tone, "what shall be _la toilette de noces?_ Thou shalt have Virginia's pearls, my fair one, and look like a sea-born Venus. _Tiens_, let me try them in thy hair."

And in a few moments she had Mary's long hair down, and was chattering like a blackbird, wreathing the pearls in and out, and saying a thousand pretty little nothings,--weaving grace and poetry upon the straight thread of Puritan life.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BUSTLE IN THE PARISH.

The announcement of the definite engagement of two such bright particular stars in the hemisphere of the Doctor's small parish excited the interest that such events usually create among the faithful of the flock.

There was a general rustle and flutter, as when a covey of wild pigeons has been started; and all the little elves who rejoice in the name of "says he" and "says I" and "do tell" and "have you heard" were speedily flying through the consecrated air of the parish.

The fact was discussed by matrons and maidens, at the spinning-wheel, in the green clothes-yard, and at the foamy wash-tub, out of which rose weekly a new birth of freshness and beauty. Many a rustic Venus of the foam, as she splashed her dimpled elbows in the rainbow-tinted froth, talked of what should be done for the forthcoming solemnities, and wondered what Mary would have on when she was married, and whether she (the Venus) should get an invitation to the wedding, and whether Ethan would go,--not, of course, that she cared in the least whether he did or not.

Grave, elderly matrons talked about the prosperity of Zion, which they imagined intimately connected with the event of their minister's marriage; and descending from Zion, speculated on bed-quilts and table-cloths, and rummaged their own clean, sweet-smelling stores, fragrant with balm and rose-leaves, to lay out a bureau-cover, or a pair of sheets, or a dozen napkins for the wedding outfit.

The solemnest of solemn quillings was resolved upon. Miss Prissy declared that she fairly couldn't sleep nights with the responsibility of the wedding-dresses on her mind, but yet she must give one day to getting on that quilt.

The _grand monde_ also was in motion. Mrs. General Wilcox called in her own particular carriage, bearing present of a Cashmere shawl for the bride, with the General's best compliments,--also an oak-leaf pattern for quilting, which had been sent her from England, and which was authentically established to be that used on a petticoat belonging to the Princess Royal. And Mrs. Major Seaforth came also, bearing a scarf of wrought India muslin; and Mrs. Vernon sent a splendid China punch-bowl. Indeed, to say the truth, the notables high and mighty of Newport, whom the Doctor had so unceremoniously accused of building their houses with blood and establishing their city with iniquity, considering that nobody seemed to take his words to heart, and that they were making money as fast as old Tyre, rather assumed the magnanimous, and patted themselves on the shoulder for this opportunity to show the Doctor that after all they were good fellows, though they did make money at the expense of thirty _per cent_. on human life.

Simeon Brown was the only exception. He stood aloof, grim and sarcastic, and informed some good middle-aged ladies who came to see if he would, as they phrased it, "esteem it a privilege to add his mite" to the Doctor's outfit, that he would give him a likely negro boy, if he wanted him, and, if he was too conscientious to keep him, he might sell him at a fair profit,--a happy stroke of humor which he was fond of relating many years after.

The quilting was in those days considered the most solemn and important recognition of a betrothal. And for the benefit of those not to the manner born, a little preliminary instruction may be necessary.

The good wives of New England, impressed with that thrifty orthodoxy of economy which forbids to waste the merest trifle, had a habit of saving every scrap clipped out in the fashioning of household garments, and these they cut into fanciful patterns and constructed of them rainbow shapes and quaint traceries, the arrangement of which became one of their few fine arts. Many a maiden, as she sorted and arranged fluttering bits of green, yellow, red, and blue, felt rising in her breast a passion for somewhat vague and unknown, which came out at length in a new pattern of patchwork. Collections of these tiny fragments were always ready to fill an hour when there was nothing else to do; and as the maiden chatted with her beau, her busy flying needle stitched together those pretty bits, which, little in themselves, were destined, by gradual unions and accretions, to bring about at last substantial beauty, warmth, and comfort,--emblems thus of that household life which is to be brought to stability and beauty by reverent economy in husbanding and tact in arranging the little useful and agreeable morsels of daily existence.

When a wedding was forthcoming, there was a solemn review of the stores of beauty and utility thus provided, and the patchwork-spread best worthy of such distinction was chosen for the quilting. Thereto, duly summoned, trooped all intimate female friends of the bride, old and young; and the quilt being spread on a frame, and wadded with cotton, each vied with the others in the delicacy of the quilting she could put upon it. For the quilting also was a fine art, and had its delicacies and nice points,--which grave elderly matrons discussed with judicious

care. The quilting generally began at an early hour in the afternoon, and ended at dark with a great supper and general jubilee, at which that ignorant and incapable sex which could not quilt was allowed to appear and put in claims for consideration of another nature. It may, perhaps, be surmised that this expected reinforcement was often alluded to by the younger maidens, whose wickedly coquettish toilettes exhibited suspicious marks of that willingness to get a chance to say "No" which has been slanderously attributed to mischievous maidens.

In consideration of the tremendous responsibilities involved in this quilting, the reader will not be surprised to learn, that, the evening before, Miss Prissy made her appearance at the brown cottage, armed with thimble, scissors, and pin-cushion, in order to relieve her mind by a little preliminary confabulation.

"You see me, Miss Scudder, run 'most to death," she said; "but I thought I would just run up to Miss Major Seaforth's, and see her best bed-room quilt, 'cause I wanted to have all the ideas we possibly could, before I decided on the pattern. Hers is in shells,--just common shells,--nothing to be compared with Miss Wilcox's oak-leaves; and I suppose there isn't the least doubt that Miss Wilcox's sister, in London, did get that from a lady who had a cousin who was governess in the royal family; and I just quilted a little bit to-day on an old piece of silk, and it comes out beautiful; and so I thought I would just come and ask you if you did not think it was best for us to have the oak-leaves."

"Well, certainly, Miss Prissy, if you think so," said Mrs. Scudder, who was as pliant to the opinions of this wise woman of the parish as New England matrons generally are to a reigning dress-maker and _factotum_.

Miss Prissy had the happy consciousness, always, that her early advent under any roof was considered a matter of especial grace; and therefore it was with rather a patronizing tone that she announced that she would stay and spend the night with them.

"I knew," she added, "that your spare chamber was full, with that Madame de ------, what do you call her?--if I was to die, I could not remember the woman's name. Well, I thought I could curl in with you, Mary, 'most anywhere."

"That's right, Miss Prissy," said Mary; "you shall be welcome to half my bed any time."

"Well, I knew you would say so, Mary; I never saw the thing you would not give away one half of, since you was that high," said Miss Prissy,--illustrating her words by placing her hand about two feet from the floor.

Just at this moment, Madame de Frontignac entered and asked Mary to come into her room and give her advice as to a piece of embroidery. When she was gone out, Miss Prissy looked after her and sunk her voice once more to the confidential whisper which we before described.

"I have heard strange stories about that Frenchwoman," she said; "but as she is here with you and Mary, I suppose there cannot be any truth in them. Dear me! the world is so censorious about women! But then, you know, we don't expect much from French women. I suppose she is a Roman Catholic, and worships pictures and stone images; but then, after all, she has got an immortal soul, and I can't help hoping Mary's influence

may be blest to her. They say, when she speaks French, she swears every few minutes; and if that is the way she was brought up, may-be she isn't accountable. I think we can't be too charitable for people that a'n't privileged as we are. Miss Vernon's Polly told me she had seen her sew Sundays,--sew Sabbath-day! She came into her room sudden, and she was working on her embroidery there; and she never winked nor blushed, nor offered to put it away, but sat there just as easy! Polly said she never was so beat in all her life; she felt kind o' scared, every time she thought of it. But now she has come here, who knows but she may be converted?"

"Mary has not said much about her state of mind," said Mrs. Scudder; "but something of deep interest has passed between them. Mary is such an uncommon child, that I trust everything to her."

We will not dwell further on the particulars of this evening,--nor describe how Madame de Frontignac reconnoitred Miss Prissy with keen, amused eyes,--nor how Miss Prissy assured Mary, in the confidential solitude of her chamber, that her fingers just itched to get hold of that trimming on Madame de Frog--something's dress, because she was pretty nigh sure she could make some just like it, for she never saw any trimming she could not make.

The robin that lived in the apple-tree was fairly outgeneralled the next morning; for Miss Prissy was up before him, tripping about the chamber on the points of her toes, knocking down all the movable things in the room, in her efforts to be still, so as not to wake Mary; and it was not until she had finally upset the stand by the bed, with the candlestick, snuffers, and Bible on it, that Mary opened her eyes.

"Miss Prissy! dear me! what is it you are doing?"

"Why, I am trying to be still, Mary, so as not to wake you up; and it seems to me as if everything was possessed, to tumble down so. But it is only half past three,--so you turn over and go to sleep."

"But, Miss Prissy," said Mary, sitting up in bed, "you are all dressed; where are you going?"

"Well, to tell the truth, Mary, I am just one of those people that can't sleep when they have got responsibility on their minds; and I have been lying awake more than an hour here, thinking about that quilt. There is a new way of getting it on to the frame that I want to try; 'cause, you know, when we quilted Cerinthy Stebbins's, it _would_ trouble us in the rolling; and I have got a new way that I want to try, and I mean just to get it on to the frame before breakfast. I was in hopes I should get out without waking any of you. I am in hopes I shall get by your mother's door without waking her,--'cause I know she works hard and needs her rest,--but that bed-room door squeaks like a cat, enough to raise the dead!

"Mary," she added, with sudden energy, "if I had the least drop of oil in a teacup, and a bit of quill, I'd stop that door making such a noise." And Miss Prissy's eyes glowed with resolution.

"I don't know where you could find any at this time," said Mary.

"Well, never mind; I'll just go and open the door as slow and careful as I can," said Miss Prissy, as she trotted out of the apartment.

The result of her carefulness was very soon announced to Mary by a protracted sound resembling the mewing of a hoarse cat, accompanied by sundry audible grunts from Miss Prissy, terminating in a grand finale of clatter, occasioned by her knocking down all the pieces of the quilting-frame that stood in the corner of the room, with a concussion that roused everybody in the house.

"What is that?" called out Mrs. Scudder, from her bed-room.

She was answered by two streams of laughter,--one from Mary, sitting up in bed, and the other from Miss Prissy, holding her sides, as she sat dissolved in merriment on the sanded floor,

[To be continued.]

OLD PAPERS.

As who, in idly searching o'er
Some seldom-entered garret-shed,
Might, with strange pity, touch the poor
Moth-eaten garments of the dead,--

Thus (to their wearer once allied)
I lift these weeds of buried woe,--
These relics of a self that died
So sadly and so long ago!
'Tis said that seven short years can change,
Through nerve and bone, this knitted frame,
Cellule by cellule waxing strange,
Till not an atom is the same.

By what more subtile, slow degrees
Thus may the mind transmute its all,
That calmly it should dwell on these,
As on another's fate and fall!

So far remote from joy or bale,
Wherewith each dusky page is rife,
I seem to read some piteous tale
Of strange romance, but true to life.

Too daring thoughts! too idle deeds!
A soul that questioned, loved, and sinned!
And hopes, that stand like last year's weeds,
And shudder in the dead March wind!

Grave of gone dreams!--could such convulse
Youth's fevered trance?--The plot grows thick;--
Was it this cold and even pulse
That thrilled with life so fierce and quick?

Well, I can smile at all this now,--
But cannot smile when I recall
The heart of faith, the open brow,
The trust that once was all in all;--

Nor when--Ah, faded, spectral sheet,
Wraith of long-perished wrong and time,
Forbear! the spirit starts to meet
The resurrection of its crime!

Starts,--from its human world shut out,--
As some detected changeling elf,
Doomed, with strange agony and doubt,
To enter on his former self.

Ill-omened leaves, still rust apart!
No further!--'tis a page turned o'er,
And the long dead and coffined heart
Throbs into wretched life once more.

RIFLED GUNS.[1]

When, nearly fifty years ago, England was taught one of the bloodiest lessons her history has to record, before the cotton-bale breastworks of New Orleans, a lesson, too, which was only the demonstration of a proposition laid down more than a hundred years ago by one of her own philosophers,[2] who would have believed that she, aiming to be the first military power in the world, would have left the first advantage of that lesson to be gained by her rival, France?

When the troops that had defeated Napoleon stopped, baffled, before a breast-work defended by raw militiamen; when, finding that the heads of their columns melted away like wax in fire as they approached the blaze of those hunters' rifles, they finally recoiled, terribly defeated,--saved from total destruction, perhaps, only by the fact that their enemy had not enough of a military organization to enable them to pursue effectively; when, in brief, a battle with men who never before had seen a skirmish of regular troops was turned into a slaughter almost unparalleled for disproportioned losses in the history of civilized warfare, the English loss being about twelve hundred, the American some fifteen all told; one would have thought that such a demonstration of the power of the rifle would have brought Robins's words to the memory of England,--"will perhaps fall but little short of the wonderful effects which histories relate to have been formerly produced by the first inventors of fire-arms." What more astonishing disparity of military power does the history of fire-arms record? twelve hundred to fifteen! But this lesson, so terrible and so utterly ignored by English pride, was simply that of the value of the rifle intelligently used.

They tell a story which makes a capital foot-note to the history of the battle:--that General Jackson, having invited some of the English officers to dine with him, had on the table a robin-pie which he informed the guests contained twelve robins whose heads had all been shot off by one of his marksmen, who, in shooting the twelve, used but thirteen balls. The result of the battle must be mainly attributed to the deadly marksmanship of the hunters who composed the American forces; but the same men armed with muskets would not only not have shown the same accuracy in firing, but they would not have felt the moral force which a complete reliance on their weapons gave,--a certainty that they

held the life of any antagonist in their hands, as soon as enough of him appeared to "draw a bead on." Put the same men in the open field where a charge of bayonets was to be met, and they would doubtless have broken and fled without crossing steel. Nor, on the other hand, could any musketry have kept the English columns out of the cotton-bale breast-work;--they had often in the Peninsula stormed stronger works than that,--without faltering for artillery, musketry, or bayonet. But here they were literally unable to reach the works; the fatal rifle-bullet drew a line at which bravery and cowardice, nonchalant veterans and trembling boys, were equalized in the dust.

[Footnote 1: _Instructions to Young Marksmen_ in all that relates to the General Construction, Practical Manipulation, etc., etc., as exhibited in the Improved American Rifle. By John Ratcliffe Chapman, C. E. New York: D. Appleton &. Co. 1848.

Rifle-Practice. By Lieut.-Col. John Jacob, C. B., of the Bombay Artillery. London: Smith, Elder, & Co. 1857.

The Rifle; and how to use it. Comprising a Description of that Admirable Weapon, etc., etc. By Hans Busk, M.A. First Lieut. Victoria Rifles. London: J. Routledge & Co. 1858.

Report of the U. S. Commission on Rifles. 1856.]

[Footnote 2: Robins {on Projectiles) said in 1748, "Whatever state shall thoroughly comprehend the nature and advantages of rifle-pieces, and, having facilitated and completed their construction, shall introduce into their armies their general use, with a dexterity in the management of them, will by this means acquire a superiority which will almost equal anything that has been done at any time by the particular excellence of any one kind of arms, and will perhaps fall but little short of the wonderful effects which histories relate to have been formerly produced by the first inventors of fire-arms." Words, we now see, how prophetic!]

We remember once to have met an old hunter who was one of the volunteers at Hattsburg, (another rifle battle, fought by militiamen mainly,) a man who never spoiled his furs by shooting his game in the body, and who carried into the battle his hunting-rifle. Being much questioned as to his share in the day's deeds, he told us that he, with a body of men, all volunteers, and mainly hunters like himself, was stationed at a ford on the Saranac, where a British column attempted to cross. Their captain ordered no one to fire until the enemy were half-way across; "and then," said he, "none of 'em ever got across, and not many of them that got into the water got out again. They found out it wa'n't of any kind of use to try to get across there, and after a while they give it up and went farther down the river; and by-and-by an officer come and told us to go to the other ford, and we went there, and so they didn't get across there either." We were desirous of getting the estimate of an expert as to the effect of such firing, and asked him directly how many men he had killed. "I don't know," said he, modestly; "I rather guess I killed one fellow, _certain_; but how many more I can't say. I was going down to the river with another volunteer to get some water, and I heerd a shot right across the river, and I peeked out of the bushes, and see a red-coat sticking his head out of the bushes on the other side, and looking down the river, as if he'd been firing at somebody on our side, and pretty soon he stuck his head out agin, and took aim at something in that way; and I thought, of course, it must be some of our folks. I

couldn't stand that, so I just drawed up and fired at him. He dropped his gun, and pitched head-first into the water. I guess I hit him amongst the waistcoat-buttons; but then, you know, if I hadn't shot him, he might have killed somebody on our side." We put the question in another form, asking how many shots he fired that day. "About sixteen, I guess, or maybe twenty." "And how far off were the enemy?" "Well, I should think about twenty rod." We suggested that he did not waste many of his bullets; to which he replied, that "he didn't often miss a deer at that distance."

But these were the exploits of fifty years ago; the weapon, the old heavy-metalled, long-barrelled "Kentucky" rifle; and the missile, the old round bullet, sent home with a linen patch. It is a form of the rifled gun not got up by any board of ordnance or theoretic engineers, but which, as is generally the case with excellent tools, was the result of the trials and experience of a race of practical men, something which had grown up to supply the needs of hunters; and with the improvements which greater mechanical perfection in gun-making has effected, it stands at this day the king of weapons, unapproached for accuracy by the work of any nation beside our own, very little surpassed in its range by any of the newly invented modifications of the rifle. The Kentucky[1] [Footnote 1: The technical name for the long, heavy, small-calibred rifle, in which the thickness of the metal outside the bore is about equal to the diameter of the bore.] rifle is to American mechanism what the chronometer is to English, a speciality in which rivalry by any other nation is at this moment out of the question. An English board of ordnance may make a series of experiments, and in a year or two contrive an Enfield rifle, which, to men who know of nothing better, is wonderful; but here we have the result of experiments of nearly a hundred years, by generations whose daily subsistence depended on the accuracy and excellence of their rifles, and who all experimented on the value of an inch in the length of the barrel, an ounce in its weight, or a grain in the weight of the ball. They tried all methods of creasing, all variations of the spiral of the groove; every town had its gunsmith, who experimented in almost every gun he made, and who was generally one of the best shots and hunters in the neighborhood; and often the hunter, despairing of getting a gun to suit him in any other way, went to work himself, and wrought out a clumsy, but unerring gun, in which, perhaps, was the germ of some of the latest improvements in scientific gunnery. The different gun-makers had shooting-matches, at which the excellence of the work of each was put to the severest tests, and by which their reputations were established. The result is a rifle, compared with which, as manufactured by a dozen rifle-makers in the United States, the Minie, the Enfield, the Lancaster, or even the Sharpe's, and more recent breech-loaders, are bungling muskets. The last adopted form of missile, the sugar-loaf-shaped, of which the Minie, Enfieid, Colonel Jacob's, and all the conical forms are partial adaptations, has been, to our personal knowledge, in use among our riflemen more than twenty years. In one of our earliest visits to that most fascinating of _ateliers_ to most American youth, a gunsmith's shop, a collection of "slugs" was shown to us, in which the varieties of forms, ovate, conical, elliptical, and all nameless forms in which the length is greater than the diameter, had been exhausted in the effort to find that shape which would range farthest; and the shape (very nearly) which Colonel (late General) Jacob alludes to, writing in 1854, in these terms, "This shape, after hundreds of thousands of experiments, proves to be quite perfect," had been adopted by this unorganized ordnance-board, composed of hundreds of gun-makers, stimulated by the most powerful incentives to exertion. The experiments by which they

arrived at their conclusion not only anticipated by years the trials of the European experimenters, but far surpass, in laboriousness and nicety, all the experiments of Hythe, Vincennes, and Jacobabad. The resulting curve, which the longitudinal section of the perfect "slug" shows, is as subtile and incapable of modification, without loss, as that of the boomerang; no hair's thickness could be taken away or added without injury to its range. Such a weapon and such a missile, in their perfection, could never have come into existence except in answer to the demand of a nation of hunters to whom a shade of greater accuracy is the means of subsistence. No man who is not a first-rate shot can judge justly of the value of a rifle; and one of our backwoodsmen would never use any rifle but the Kentucky _of American manufacture_, if it were given him. An Adirondack hunter would not thank the best English rifle-maker for one of his guns any more warmly than a sea-captain in want of a chronometer would thank his owners for a Swiss lepine watch.

The gun which we thus eulogize we shall describe, and compare the results which its use shows with those shown by the other known varieties of rifle, and this without any consideration of the powers of American marksmen as compared with European. The world is full of fables of shooting-exploits as absurd as those told of Robin Hood. Cooper tells of Leatherstocking's driving the nail with unfailing aim at a hundred paces,--a degree of skill no man out of romance has ever been _reported_ to possess amongst riflemen. We have seen the best marksmen the continent holds attempt to drive the nail at fifty yards, and take fifty balls to drive one nail. A story is current of a French rifleman shooting an Arab chief a mile distant, which, if true, was only a chance shot; for no human vision will serve the truest rifle ever made and the steadiest nerves ever strung to perform such a feat with any certainty. Lieutenant Busk informs us that Captain Minie "will undertake to hit a man at a distance of 1420 yards three times out of five shots,"--a feat Captain Minie or any other man will "undertake" many times before accomplishing, for the simple reason, that, supposing the rifle _perfect_, at _that_ distance a man is too small a mark to be found in the sights of a rifle, except by the aid of the telescope.[1] [Footnote 1: A man, five feet ten inches high, at 1450 yards, will, in the buck-sight of the Minie rifle, at fourteen inches from the eye, appear 1/53 of an inch in height and 1/185 in breadth of shoulders. If the reader will look at these measures on a finely divided scale, he will appreciate the absurdity of such a boast. A man at that distance could hardly be found in the sights.] We could fill a page with marvellous shots _quos nidi et quorum pars_, etc. We have seen a bird no larger than a half-grown chicken killed off-hand at eighty rods (nearly fourteen hundred feet); have known a deer to be killed at a good half mile; have shot off the skull-cap of a duck at thirty rods; at twenty rods have shot a loon through the head, putting the ball in at one eye and out at the other, without breaking the skin;--but such shooting, ordinarily, is a physical impossibility, as any experienced rifleman knows. These were chance shots, or so nearly so that they could not be repeated in a hundred shots. The impossibility lies in the marksman and in human vision.

In comparing the effects of rifles, then, we shall suppose them, as in government trials and long-range shooting-matches, to be fired from a "dead rest,"--the only way in which the absolute power of a rifle can be shown. First, for the gun itself. There are two laws of gunnery which must be kept in sight in comparing the results of such trials:--1st, that the shape and material of two missiles being the same, the heavier will range the farther, because in proportion to its momentum it meets

less resistance from the atmosphere; 2d, that the less the recoil of the gun, the greater will be the initial velocity of the ball, since the motion lost in recoil is taken from the velocity of the ball. Of course, then, the larger the bore of the rifle, the greater will be its range, supposing always the best form of missile and a proportionate weight of gun. As the result of these two laws, we see that of two guns throwing the same weight and description of missile, the heavier will throw its missile the farther; while of two guns of the same weight, that one which throws the smaller missile will give it the greater initial velocity,--supposing the gun free to recoil, as it must, fired from the shoulder. But the smaller ball will yield the sooner to the resistance of the atmosphere, owing to its greater proportional surface presented. Suppose, then, two balls of different weights to be fired from guns of the same weight;--the smaller ball will start with the higher rate of speed, but will finally be overtaken and passed by the larger ball; and the great problem of rifle-gauge is to ascertain that relation of weight of gun to weight of projectile which will give the greatest velocity at the longest range at which the object fired at can be seen distinctly enough to give a reasonable chance of hitting it. This problem the maker of the Kentucky rifle solves, by accepting, as a starting-point, the greatest weight of gun which a man may reasonably be expected to carry,--say, ten to twelve pounds,--and giving to that weight the heaviest ball it will throw, without serious recoil,--for no matter what the proportion, there will be _some_ recoil. This proportion of the weight of gun to that of projectile, as found by experience, is about five hundred to one; so that if a gun weigh ten pounds, the ball should weigh about 19/500 of a pound. Of course, none of these gun-makers have ever made a mathematical formula expressing this relation; but hundreds of thousands of shots have pretty well determined it to be the most effective for all hunting needs (and the best hunting-rifles are the best for a rifle-corps, acting as sharp-shooters). By putting this weight of ball into a conical form of good proportions, the calibre of the gun may be made about ninety gauge. which, for a range of four hundred yards, cannot be excelled in accuracy with that weight of gun.

But in a rifle the grooving is of the utmost importance; for velocity without accuracy is useless. To determine the best kind of groove has been, accordingly, the object of the most laborious investigations. The ball requires an initial rotary motion sufficient to keep it "spinning" up to its required range, and is found to gain in accuracy by increasing this rotatory speed; but if the pitch of the grooves be too great, the ball will refuse to follow them; but, being driven across them, "strips,"--that is, the lead in the grooves is torn off, and the ball goes out without rotation. The English gunsmiths have avoided the dilemma by giving the requisite pitch and making the grooves very deep, and even by having wings cast on the ball to keep it in the grooves, expedients which increase the friction in the barrel and the resistance of the air enormously.

The American gun-makers have solved the problem by adopting the "gaining twist," in which the grooves start from the breech nearly parallel to the axis of the barrel, and gradually increase the spiral, until, at the muzzle, it has the pitch of one revolution in three to four; _the pitch being greater as the bore is less_. This gives, as a result, safety from stripping, and a rapid revolution at the exit, with comparatively little friction and shallow groove-marks on the ball,--accomplishing what is demanded of a rifled barrel, to a degree that no other combination of groove and form of missile ever has.

English makers have experimented somewhat on the rifling of barrels, but with no results which compare with those shown by the improved Kentucky. English hunting-rifles, and _all_ military rifles, are made with complete disregard of the law of relation between the weights of ball and barrel. The former seems to be determined by dividing the weight of ammunition a soldier may carry in his cartridge-box by the number of charges he is required to have, and then the gun is made as light as will stand the test of firing,--blunders all the way through; for we never want a rifle-ball to range much farther than it is possible to hit a single man with it; and a missile of the proper shape from a barrel of sixty gauge will kill a man at a mile's distance, if it strike a vital part. The consequence is, that the rifles are so light in proportion to their load that the recoil seriously diminishes the force of the ball, and entirely prevents accuracy of aim; and at the same time their elastic metal springs so much under the pressure of the gas generated by the explosion of the powder that anything like exactitude becomes impossible.[1][Footnote 1: Experiments have shown, that, with a barrel about the thickness of that of our "regulation rifles," the spring will throw a ball nearly two feet from the aim in a range of six hundred yards, if the barrel be firmly held in a machine.] This the English gunsmiths do not seem to have learned, since their best authorities recommend a gun of sixty-four gauge to have a barrel of four pounds weight, and that is considered heavy,--while ours, of sixty gauge, would weigh at least twice that. To get the best possible shooting, we find not only weight of barrel requisite, but a thickness of the metal nearly or quite equal to the diameter of the bore.

Mr. Whitworth, of Manchester, revived the old polygonal bore, and, by a far more perfect boring of barrel than was ever before attained in England, has succeeded in doing some very accurate shooting; but the pitch of his grooves requisite to give sufficient rotation to his polygonal missile to enable it to rotate to the end of its flight is so great, that the friction and recoil are enormous, and the liability to burst very great, Mr. Whitworth's missile is a twisted prism, corresponding to the bore, of two and a half diameters, with a cone at the front of one half the diameter. Such a gun, in a firing-machine, with powder enough to overcome all the friction, and heavy enough to counteract torsion and springing, would give very great accuracy, if perfectly made, or as well made as American rifles generally; but no maker in England, not even Mr. Whitworth, has attained _that_ point yet; and even so made, they would never be available as service--or hunting-guns.

The Lancaster rifle avoids grooves (nominally) altogether, and substitutes an elliptical bore, twisted to Mr. Whitworth's pitch (twenty inches). General Jacob says, very justly, of this gun: "The mode of rifling is the _very worst possible. It is only the two-grooved rifle in disguise_. Let the shoulders of the grooves of a two-grooved rifle be removed, and you have the Lancaster rifle. But by the removal of these shoulders, the friction, if the twist be considerable, becomes enormous." To compare this twist with the rifled bore, one has only to take a lead tube, made slightly elliptical in its cross-section, and, fitting a plug to its ellipse, turn the plug round, and he will see that the result is to enlarge the whole bore to the longest diameter of the ellipse, which, if it were a gun-barrel, unelastic, would be equivalent to bursting it. But this is exactly the action which the ball has on the barrel, so that, to use General Jacob's words, "the heat developed by the friction must be very great, and the tendency of the gun to burst also very great." Lieutenant Busk--who seems, if we may judge from the

internal evidence of his book, to know little or nothing of good rifles or rifle-practice, and to have no greater qualification for writing the book than the reading of what has been written on the subject and an acquaintance of great extent with gunsmiths--remarks, in reply to the veteran of English riflemen: "Having given the matter the very closest attention, I am enabled confidently to state that the whole of this supposition [quoted above] is founded in error.... So far from the friction being enormous, it is less than that generated in any other kind of rifle. It is also utterly impossible for the bullet to act destructively on the barrel in the way suggested." Such cool assurance, in an unsupported contradiction of experience and the dictates of the simplest mechanical common-sense, would seem to promise little real value in the book, and promises no less than it really has.

The same objection which lies against the Lancaster rifle (?) applies to the Whitworth in a less degree. If the reader, having tried the lead-pipe experiment above, will next hammer the tube hexagonal and try the plug again, he will find the same result; but if he will try it with a round bore grooved, and with a plug fitting the grooves, he will see that the pressure is against the wall of the groove, and acts at right angles to the radius of the bore, having only a tendency to twist the barrel in order to straighten the grooves,--a tendency which the barrel meets in the direction of its greatest stability. We may see, then, that, in theory at least, there is no way of rifling so secure as that in which the walls of the grooves are parts of radii of the bore. They should be numerous, that the hold of the lands (the projection left between the grooves) may divide the friction and resistance as much as possible, and so permit the grooves to be as shallow as may be. The figure

[Illustration:]

represents, on one side of the dotted line, three grooves, 1, 1, 1, cut in this way, exaggerated to show more clearly their character. In the Kentucky rifle this law is followed, except that, for convenience in cutting, the grooves are made of the same width at the bottom and top, as shown at 2, 2, 2, which is, for grooves of the depth of which they are made, practically the same, as the dotted circle will show. Our gun-makers use from six to ten grooves.

To sum up our conditions,--the model rifle will conform to the following description:--Its weight will be from ten to twelve pounds; the length of barrel not less than thirty inches,[1] and of calibre from ninety to sixty gauge; six to ten freed grooves, about .005 inch deep, angular at bottom and top, with the lands of the same width as the grooves; twist increasing from six feet to three feet; barrel, of cast steel,[2] fitted to the stock with a patent breech, with back action set lock, and open or hunting and globe and peek sights. Mr. Chapman, whose book is the most interesting and intelligent, by far, of all hitherto published, recommends a straighter stock than those generally used by American hunters. Here we differ;--the Swiss stock, crooking, on an average, two inches more than ours, is preferable for quick shooting, though in a _light_ rifle much crook in the stock will throw the muzzle up by the recoil. With such a gun,--the best for hunting that the ingenuity and skill of man have ever yet contrived and made,--one may depend on his shot, if he have skill, as he cannot on the Minie, Enfield, or Lancaster; and whether he be in the field against a foe, or in the forest against the deer, he holds the life of man or deer in his power at the range of rifle-sighting.

[Footnote 1: There is much difference of opinion amongst gun-makers as to the length of barrel most desirable. We believe in a long barrel, for the following reasons: 1st, a longer distance between sights is given, and the back sight can be put farther from the eye, so that finer sighting is possible; 2d, a long barrel is steadier in off-hand shooting; 3d, it permits a slower powder to be used, so that the ball starts more slowly and yet allows the full strength of the powder to be used before it leaves the barrel, getting a high initial velocity with little recoil, and without "upsetting" the ball, as we shall explain farther on. The experiments of the United States government show that the increasing of the length of the barrel from thirty-three to forty inches (we speak from memory as to numbers) increased the initial velocity fifty feet per second; but this will, in long ranges, be no advantage, except with such a shape of missile as will maintain a high speed.]

[Footnote 2: Hunters still dispute as to iron or steel; and we have used iron barrels made by Amsden, of Saratoga Springs, which for accuracy and wear were unexceptionable; though gunsmiths generally take less pains with iron than steel barrels. But give us steel.]

Of all the variations of the rifle, for the sake of obtaining force of penetration, nothing yet compares with the Accelerating Rifle, invented some years since by a New York mechanic. In this the ball was started by an ordinary charge, and at a certain distance down the barrel received a new charge, by a side chamber, which produced an almost incredible effect. An ellipsoidal missile of ninety gauge and several diameters long, made of brass, was driven through thirty-six inches of oak and twenty-four inches of green spruce timber, or fifty inches of the most impenetrable of timbers. The same principle of acceleration has, it is said, been most successfully applied in Boston by the use of a hollow _tige_ or tube fixed at the bottom of the bore with the inside of which the cap-fire communicates,--so that, when the gun is charged, part of the powder falls into the _tige_, and the remainder into the barrel outside of it. The ball being driven down until it rests on the top of the _tige_, receives its first impulse from the small charge contained in it,--after which, the fire, flashing back, communicates to the powder outside the _tige_, producing an enormous accelerating effect. But it is doubtful if the gun can be brought into actual service, from being so difficult to clean.

It is questionable if any greater range in rifles will be found desirable. With a good Kentucky rifle, we are even now obliged to use telescope sights to avail ourselves of its full range and accuracy of fire. The accelerating inventions may be made use of in artillery, for throwing shells, and for siege trains, but promise nothing for small arms.

Then, as the secondary point, comes the form of projectile, that in which the greatest weight (and thence momentum) combines with least resistance from the atmosphere. In the pursuit of this result every experimenter since the fifteenth century has worked. Lautmann, writing in 1729, recommends an elliptical missile, hollow behind, from a notion that the hollow gathered the explosive force, Robins recommends elongated balls; and they were used in many varieties of form. Theory would assign, as the shape of highest rapidity, one like that which would be made by the revolution of the waterline section of a fast ship on its longitudinal axis; and supposing the force _to have been_

applied, this would doubtless be capable of the greatest speed; but the rifle-missile must first be fitted to receive the action of the powder in the most effective way. An ellipsoid cone would leave the air behind it most smoothly, but it would not receive the pressure of the gas in a line with its direction of motion; and so of the hollow butt; the gas, acting and reacting in every way perpendicularly to the surface it acts on, wastes its force in straining outwardly. The perfectly flat butt would take as much forward impetus at the edge of the cone base, where the soft lead would yield slightly. And so we find the best form to be a base which receives the force of the powder in such a way that the resultant of the forces acting on each point in the base would be coincident with the axis of the missile. And this, in practice, was the shape which the American experiments gave to the butt of the ball, the condition in which it left the air being found of minor importance, compared with its capacity of receiving the force of the powder. The point of the cone was found objectionable in practice, and was gradually brought to the curve of the now universally used sugar-loaf missile or flat-ended picket shown in fig. 1.

[Illustration: Figure 1]

This picket has but a single point of bearing, and is driven down with a greased linen patch, filling up the grooves entirely, and preventing "leading" of the barrel, as well as keeping the picket firm in the barrel. This is of vital importance; for no breech-loading or loose-loading and expanding ball can ever fly so truly as a solid ball whose position in the barrel is accurately fixed. A longitudinal missile must rotate with its axis coincident with its line of flight as it leaves the barrel, or else every rotation will throw the point into wider circles, until finally it becomes more eccentric than a round ball. It is a mistaken notion that a conical missile is more accurate in flight than a round; on the contrary, hunters always prefer the ball for _short shots_,--and a "slug," as the longer missile is called by them, is well known to err more than a ball, if put down untruly.

[Illustration: Figure 2]

The improved Minie ball (fig. 2) was intended to obviate the danger of the missile's turning in flight, by hollowing the butt, and so putting the centre of gravity in front of the centre of resistance, so that it flies like a heavy-headed arrow, while at the same time the powder expands the hollow butt and fills the grooves, securing perfect rotation with easy loading. But the hollow in the ball diminishes the gravity and momentum; the liability of the lead to expand unequally, and so throw the point of the missile out of line, makes a long bearing necessary, producing enormous friction. This objection obtains equally with all pickets having expanding butts, and is a sufficient reason for their inferior accuracy to that of solid pickets fitted to the grooves at the muzzle with a patch. General Jacob says,--"I have tried every expedient I could think of as a substitute for the greased patch for rifle-balls, but had always to return to this"; and every experienced rifleman will agree with him. Yet both English and American (governmental) experiments ignore the fact, that the expansible bullets increase friction enormously; and the Enfield bullet (fig. 3) is as badly contrived as possible, being round-pointed, expansible, and with very long bearings, without the bands which in the French and American bullets reduce the friction somewhat. The Harper's Ferry bullet (fig. 4) is better than either the English or the French, and is as good as a loose-loading bullet can be.

[Illustration: Figure 3]

[Illustration: Fig 4]

Besides all the objections we have urged against the bullet with long bearings, another still remains of a serious nature. No missile that has two points of bearing can be used with the gaining twist, as the change in the direction of the ridges on the shot formed by the grooves will necessarily tend to change the position of the axis of the shot; and the gaining twist is the greatest improvement made since grooving was successfully applied;--to reject it is to reject something indispensable to the _best_ performance of the rifle. The flat-ended picket complies with all the requisites laid down; and we will venture to say, that, if any government will give it a thorough trial, side by side with any loose-loading bullet, it will be found preferable to any other bullet, despite the disadvantage of slow loading from using a patch and a tight-fitting ball.

To make the statement conclusive, we give the results of the United States experiments, and a statement of the European as compared with the United States firing, and then the results of Kentucky rifle-firing. With the new trial-rifle at Harper's Ferry, (a target 1 X 216 feet being put up at two hundred yards,) with the American ball, (fig. 4,) the best string of twenty-five shots averaged 3.2 inches vertical deviation, 2.4 in. horizontal deviation. At five hundred yards, the best string of twenty-five shots averaged 10.8 inches vertical deviation, 14 in. horizontal deviation. At one thousand yards, 26.4 vertical deviation, 16.8 horizontal deviation. In another trial with the new musket-rifle, the mean deviation at two hundred yards was 4.4 vertical, 3.4 horizontal.

In a comparison of the power of French, English, and American rifles, it was found that at two hundred yards the American gun averaged 4.8 vertical and 4.5 horizontal deviation. The Enfield rifle gave 7 in. vertical, 11.3 horizontal; the French rifle _a tige_, 8 vertical, 7.6 horizontal. A Swiss rifle, at the same distance, gave 5.3 vertical and 4.3 horizontal deviation.

At five hundred yards, the following was the result:--

American gun,	13.	in. vert. dev.	11.5	hor. dev.
Enfield, "	20.4	"	19.2	"
Rifle _a tige_,	18.5	"	17.1	"

At one thousand yards,--

American gun,	31.5	in. vert. dev.	20.1	hor. dev.
Enfield, "	42	"	52.8	"
Rifle_a tige_(874 yds.),	47.2	"	37.4	"

The only detailed reports of General Jacob's practice are at one thousand yards or over, at which his _shell_ averaged 31.2 in. horizontal deviation, 55.2 in. vertical; not far from the range of the Enfield. His bullet is fig. 5.

[Illustration: Fig 5.]

But long ranges test less fairly the _accuracy_ of a rifle than short

ones, because in long flights they are more subject to drift, of the wind, etc. We shall compare the government reports of shooting at two hundred yards with that of the Kentucky rifle at two hundred and twenty, the usual trying distance. At that distance, the American gun gave

	4.8	in. vert dev.	and 4.5	hor. dev.
Enfield,	7	"	11.3	"
French _a tige_,	8	"	7.6	"
Swiss,	5.3	"	4.3	"

Kentucky, (according to Mr. Chapman,) 1.06 absolute deviation.

At 500 yards, the comparison stands,--

American, (government,) 13 in. vertical deviation, 11.5 in. horizontal. (About 17 in. absolute.)

Kentucky, (550 yards,) 11 in. absolute deviation

We give cuts of two targets, of which we have duplicates in our possession, made by rifles manufactured by Morgan James, of Utica, New York, that the reader may appreciate the marvellous accuracy of this weapon; the first was made by a rifle of 60 gauge, twenty-five shots being fired, the average deviation being 1.4 in.; the second by a 90 gauge, the average being [Illustration]

[Illustration]

.8 in.; both at two hundred and twenty yards, and better than Mr. Chapman's report. In the northern part of the State of New York, the practice at shooting-matches is, at turkeys at one hundred rods, (five hundred and fifty yards,) and a good marksman is expected to kill one turkey, on an average, in three shots,--and this with a bullet weighing from two hundred and forty to one hundred and sixty grains, while the army bullet weighs five hundred and fifty-seven. The easily fatal range of the bullet of two hundred and forty grains is a thousand yards; and farther than that, no bullet can be relied on as against single men.

In breech-loading guns, much must be sacrificed, in point of accuracy, to mere facility of loading; and here there seems room for doubt whether a breech-loader offers any advantage compensating for its complication of mechanism and the danger of its being disabled by accident in hurried loading. No breech-loading gun is so trustworthy in its execution as a muzzle-loader; for, in spite of all precautions, the bullets will go out irregularly. We have cut out too many balls of Sharpe's rifle from the target, which had entered sidewise, not to be certain on this point; and we know of no other breech-loader so little likely to err in this respect, when the ball is crowded down into the grooves, and the powder poured on the ball,--as we always use it. The government reports on breech-loaders are adverse to their adoption, mainly because they are so likely to get out of working order and to get clogged. We have used one of Sharpe's two years in hunting, and found it, with a round ball at short shots, perfectly reliable; while with the belted picket perhaps one shot in five or six would wander. Used with the cartridge, they are much less reliable. They may be apt to clog, but we have used one through a day's hunting, and found the oil on the slide at night: and we are inclined to believe, that, when fitted with gas rings, they will not clog, if used with good powder. The Maynard rifle is perfectly unexceptionable in this respect, and an excellent gun, in its way. The powder does not flash out any more than in a muzzle-loader. Of the other

kinds of breech-loaders we can say nothing from experience, and should scarcely recommend using one for a hunting-gun. One who has used a rifle of James, of Lewis (of Troy, New York), Amsden of Saratoga, (and doubtless others in the West are equally famous in their sections,) will hardly be willing to use the best breech-loader. There is no time saved, when the important shot is lost; and the gun that is always true is the only one for a rifleman, _if it take twice, the time to load_.

In the rifling of cannon, there seems to be no reason why the same rules should not hold good as in small arms. The gaining twist seems more important, from the greater tendency of the heavy balls to strip; and there being less object in extreme lightness, the gun may be made a large-sized Kentucky rifle on wheels; and there is less difficulty in loading with the precision that the flat-ended picket requires. In the cannon, even more than in the rifle for the line, there is no gain in getting facility of loading at the expense of precision. If, by careful loading, we hit the given mark twice as often as when we load in haste, it is clear how much we gain. The breech-loader seems to be useless as a cannon, because that in which it has the advantage, namely, rapidity of loading, is useless in a field-piece, where, even now, artillery-men can load faster than they can fire safely. Napoleon III. has made his rifled cannon to load at the muzzle, and practical artillerists commend his decision. The Armstrong gun, of which so much is expected, we confidently predict, will prove a failure, when tried in field-practice in the hurry of battle, if it is ever so tried. It is a breech-loader of the clumsiest kind, taking twice as long to load as a common gun, and very complicated. Its wonderful range is owing to its great calibre,--sixty-four pounds; but even at that, it furnishes no results proportionate to those given by the Napoleon cannon, or by our General James's recent gun.

The great anticipations raised by the general introduction of the rifle, and its greater range, of such a change in warfare as to make the bayonet useless, seem to have met with disappointment in the recent wars. No matter how perfect the gun, men, in the heat and excitement of battle, will hardly be deliberate in aim, or effective enough in firing to stop a charge of determined men; the bayonet, with the most of mankind, will always be the queen of weapons in a pitched battle; only for skirmishing, for sharp-shooting, and artillery, will the rifle equal theoretical expectations. Men, not brought up from boyhood to such constant use of the rifle as to make sure aim an act of instinct with them, will never repel with certainty a charge of the bayonet by rifle-balls. With men whose rifles come to an aim with the instinctive accuracy with which a hawk strikes his prey, firing is equivalent to hitting, and excitement only makes the aim surer and more prompt; but such must have been hunters from youth; and no training of the army can give this second nature. American volunteers are the only material, outside the little districts of Switzerland and the Tyrol, who can ever be trained to this point, because they are the only nation of hunters beside the Swiss and Tyrolese. The English game-laws, which prevent the common people from using fire-arms _ad libitum_, have done and are doing more to injure the efficacy of the individual soldier than all their militia-training can ever mend. In the hands of an English peasant, "Brown Bess" is as good as a rifle; for he would only throw the ball of either at random. Discipline is wonderful and wondrously effective; but, in the first place, it won't make a man a ready and accurate shot, in time of excitement; and, in the second place, it won't make his bayonet a shield for a ball from the rifle of a man who has learned, by the practice of years, not to throw away a ball or to fire at random;--it

couldn't carry the bravest men in Wellington's army over a cotton-bale intrenchment, in the face of a double line of Kentucky rifles. It is very well to sing,

"Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen, form!"

but where are the riflemen? Can Britannia stamp them out of the dust? or has she a store of "dragon's teeth" to sow? God grant she may never have to defend those English homes against the guns of Vincennes! but if she must, it is on a comparatively undisciplined militia she must depend;--and then she may remember, with bitter self-reproach, the lesson of New Orleans.

A TRIP TO CUBA.

COMPANY AT THE HOTEL.--SERVANTS.--OUR DRIVE.--DON PEPE.

I do not mean to give portraits of the individuals at our hotel. My chance acquaintance with them confers on me no right to appropriate their several characteristics for my own convenience and the diversion of the public. I will give only such general sketches as one may make of a public body at a respectful distance, marking no features that fix or offend.

Our company is almost entirely composed of two classes,--invalids and men of business, with or without their families. The former are easily recognizable by their sad eyes and pallid countenances; even the hectic of disease does not deceive you,--it has no affinity to the rose of health. There is the cough, too,--the cruel cough that would not be left at the North, that breaks out through all the smothering by day, and shakes the weak frame with uneasy rocking by night.

The men of business are apt to name their firm, when they introduce themselves to you.

"My name is Norval, Sir,--Norval, Grampian, & Company. I suppose you know the firm."

We do not, indeed; but we murmur, in return, that we have an uncle or a cousin in business, who may, very likely, know it.

"What is your uncle's firm?" will be the next question.

"Philpots Brothers."

"Excellent people,--we have often done business with them. Happy to make your acquaintance, Sir."

And so, the first preliminaries being established, and each party assured of the other's solvency, we glide easily into a relation of chat and kind little mutualities which causes the periods of contact to pass smoothly enough.

We found among these some manly, straight-forward fellows, to whom one would confide one's fortunes, or even one's widow and orphans, with small fear of any flaw In their trustworthiness. Nor was the more

slippery class, we judged, without its representatives; but of this we had only hints, not experience. There were various day-boarders, who frequented only our table, and lodged elsewhere. A few of these were decorous Spaniards, who did not stare, nor talk, nor gobble their meals with unbecoming vivacity of appetite. They were obviously staid business-men, differing widely in character from the street Spaniard, whom I have already copiously described. Some were Germans, thinned by the climate, and sharpened up to the true Yankee point of competition; very little smack of Fatherland was left about them,--no song, no sentimentality, not much quivering of the heart-strings at remembering the old folks at home, whom some of them have not seen in twenty years, and never will see again. To be sure, in such a hard life as theirs, with no social surroundings, and grim death meeting them at every corner, there is nothing for it but to be as hard and tough as one's circumstances. But give me rather the German heart in the little old German village, with the small earnings and spendings, the narrow sphere of life and experience, and the great vintage of geniality which is laid up from youth to age, and handed down with the old wine from father to son. I don't like your cosmopolitan German any better than I do your Englishman done to death with travel. I prize the home-flavor in all the races that are capable of home. There are very many Germans scattered throughout Cuba, in various departments of business. They are generally successful, and make very good Yankees, in the technical acceptation of the word. Their original soundness of constitution enables them to resist the climate better than Americans, and though they lose flesh and color, they rarely give that evidence of a disordered liver which foreign residents in tropical countries are so apt to show.

The ladies at the hotel were all our own countrywomen, as we see them at home and abroad. I have already spoken of their diligence in sewing, and of their enthusiasm in shopping. Their other distinctive features are too familiar to us to require illustration. Yet upon one trait I will adventure. A group of them sat peaceably together, one day, when a file of newspapers arrived, with full details of a horrible Washington scandal, and the murder consequent upon it. Now I must say that no swarm of bees ever settled upon a bed of roses more eagerly than our fair sisters pounced upon the carrion of that foul and dreadful tale. It flew from hand to hand and from mouth to mouth, as if it had been glad tidings of great joy,--and the universal judgment upon it caused our heart to shudder with the remembrance, that it had heard some one somewhere propose that female offenders should be tried by a jury of their own sex.

It was a real comfort, a few days later, to hear this sad subject discussed by a circle of intelligent Englishwomen, with good sense and good feeling, and with true appreciation of the twofold crime, the domestic treason and the public assassination. In passing, I must say of this English circle, that it is charming, and that the Britannic Consul has the key of it in his pocket. Wherefore, if any of you, my friends, would desire to know four of the most charming women in Havana, he is to lay hold upon Mr. Consul Crawford, and compel him to be his friend.

Mr. Dana recounts his shopping in Havana, whereof the beginning and ending were one dress, white and blue, which he commendably purchased for his wife. But does Dana know what he had to be thankful for, in getting off with one dress? Tell him, ye patient husbands, whose pockets seem to be made like lemons, only to be squeezed! Tell him, ye insatiate ones, who have new wants and new ideas every day! Dana's dress was, probably, an _holan batista_, which he calls "_Bolan_";--it was, in

other words, a figured linen cambric. But you have bought those cambrics by the piece, and also _pinas_, thin, gossamer fabrics, of all degrees of color and beauty, sometimes with _pattern flounces_,--do you hear? And you have bought Spanish table-cloths with red or blue edges, with bull-fights on them, and balloon-ascensions, and platoons of soldiery in review, and with bull-fighting and ballooning napkins to match. And you have secured such bales of transparent white muslins, that one would think you intended to furnish a whole troupe of ballet-girls with saucer petticoats. Catalan lace you have got, to trim curtains, sheets, pillow-cases, and kitchen-towels with. And as for your fans, we only hope that the stories you tell about them are true, and that Kitty, Julia, and Jemima at home are to divide them with you; for we shrewdly suspect that you mean, after all, to keep them, and to have a fan for every day in the year. Let a man reflect upon all this, added to the inevitable three dollars and fifty cents _per diem_, with the frequent refreshment of _volantes_ and ices at the Dominica, and then say whether it pays to take a partner not of a frugal mind to Havana for the season.

I had intended to give some account of the servants at Mrs. Almy's; but my gossip runs to such lengths that I must dismiss them with a few words. Ramon, the porter, never leaves the vestibule; he watches there all day, takes his meals there, plays cards there in the evening with his fellow-servants, and at night spreads his cot there, and lies down to sleep. He is white, as are most of the others. If I have occasion to go into the kitchen at night, I find a cot there also, with no bed, and a twisted sheet upon it, which, I am told, is the chrysalis of the cook. Said cook is a free yellow, from Nassau, who has wrought in this kitchen for many years past. Heat, hard work, and they say drink, have altogether brought him to a bad pass. His legs are frightfully swollen, and in a few days he leaves, unable to continue his function. Somebody asks after his wife. "She has got a white husband now," he tells us, with a dejected air. She might have waited a little,--he is to die soon.

Garcia is the kind waiter with the rather expressive face, who is never weary of bringing us the rice and fried plantain, which form, after all, the staple of our existence in Cuba. The waiters all do as well as they can, considering the length of the table, and the extremely short staple of the boarders' patience. As a general rule, they understand good English better than bad Spanish; but comparative philology has obviously been neglected among them.

Luis is a negro boy of twelve, fearfully black in the face and white in the eye; his wool cropped to entire bareness. He is chiefly good at dodging your orders,--disappears when anything is asked for, but does not return with it.

Rosalia is the chambermaid, of whom I have already spoken, as dexterous in sweeping the mosquitos from the nets,--her afternoon service. She brings, too, the morning cup of coffee, and always says, "Good morning, Sir; you want coffee?"--the only English she can speak. Her voice and smile are particularly sweet, her person tall and well-formed, and her face comely and modest. She is not altogether black,--about mahogany color. I mention her modesty, because, so far as I saw, the good-looking ones among the black women have an air of assumption, and almost of impudence,--probably the result of flattery.

With all this array of very respectable "help," our hostess avers that she has not a single person about her whom she can trust. Hence the weary look about her eyes and brow, speaking of a load never laid down.

She attends to every detail of business herself, and is at work over her books long after her boarders have retired to rest.

But the one of all the servants who interests us most is Alexander, Mrs. Almy's own slave. He is, like Rosalia, of mahogany color, with a broad forehead and intelligent eyes. His proud, impatient nature is little suited to his position, and every day brings some new account of his petulant outbreaks. To-day he quarrelled with the new cook, and drew a knife upon him. Mrs. Almy threatens continually to sell him, and at this the hearts of some of us grow very sick,--for she always says that his spirit must be broken, that only the severest punishment will break it, and that she cannot endure to send him to receive that punishment. What that mysterious ordeal may be, we dare not question,--we who cannot help him from it; we can only wish that he might draw that knife across his own throat before he undergoes it. He is trying to buy his own freedom, and has something saved towards it. He looks as if he would do good service, with sufficient training. As it is, he probably knows no law, save the two conflicting ones, of necessity and his own wild passions. One of the sad thoughts we shall carry away from here will be, that Alexander is to be sold and his spirit broken. Good Mrs. Almy, do have a little patience with him! Enlighten his dark mind; let Christianity be taught him, which will show him, even in his slave's estate, that he can conquer his fellow-servant better than by drawing a knife upon him. Set him free? Ah! that is past praying for; but, as he has the right to buy himself, give him every chance of doing so, and we, your petitioners, will pray for him, and for you, who need it, with that heavy brow of care.

I have called the negroes of Nassau ugly, clumsy, and unserviceable. The Cuban negroes make, so far, a very different impression upon me. One sees among them considerable beauty of form, and their faces are more expressive and better cut than those of the Nassau blacks. The women are well-made, and particularly well-poised, standing perfectly straight from top to toe, with no hitch or swing in their gait. Beauty of feature is not so common among them; still, one meets with it here and there. There is a massive sweep in the bust and arms of the women which is very striking. Even in their faces, there is a certain weight of feature and of darkness, which makes its own impression. The men have less grace of movement, though powerful and athletic in their make. Those who are employed at hard work, within-doors, wear very little clothing, being stripped to the loins. One often has a glimpse of them, in passing the open smithies and wheelwrights' shops. The greatest defect among the men is the want of calf. The narrow boots of the postilions make this particularly discernible. Such a set of spindle-shanks I never saw, not even in Trumbull's famous Declaration of Independence, in which we have the satisfaction of assuring ourselves that the fathers of our liberty had two legs apiece, and crossed them in concert with the utmost regularity. One might think, at first, that these narrow boots were as uncomfortable to the _calesero_ as the Scottish instrument of torture of that name; but his little swagger when he is down, and his freedom in kicking when he is up, show that he has ample room in them.

Very jolly groups of Spanish artisans does one see in the open shops at noon, gathered around a table. The board is chiefly adorned with earthen jars of an ancient pattern filled with oil and wine, platters of bread and sausage, and the ever fragrant onion is generally perceptible. The personal qualities of these men are quite unknown to us; but they have an air of good-fellowship which gives pleasure.

We hired a carriage this afternoon,--we and two others from Boston. We had a four-wheeled barouche, with two horses, which costs two dollars an hour; whereas a _volante_ can be hired only at eight dollars and a half per whole afternoon,--no less time, no less money. As it holds but two, or, at the utmost, three, this is paying rather dear for the glory of showing one's self on the Paseo. The moment we were in the carriage, our coachman nodded to us, and saying, "_A la tropa_," galloped off with us in an unknown direction. We soon fell in with a line of other carriages, and concluded that there was something to be seen somewhere, and that we were going to see it. Nor were we mistaken; for in due time, ascending a steep acclivity, we came upon "_la tropa_" and found some ten thousand soldiers undergoing review, in their seersucker coats and Panama hats, which, being very like the costume of an easy Wall-Street man in August, had a very peaceful appearance on so military an occasion. The cavalry and infantry had nearly concluded their evolutions when we arrived. The troops were spread out on a vast plateau. The view was magnificent. The coachman pointed to one immovable figure on horseback, and said, "Concha." We found it was indeed the Captain-General; for as the different bands passed, they all saluted him, and he returned their courtesy. Unluckily, his back was towards us, and so remained until he rode off in an opposite direction. He was mounted on a white horse, and was dressed like the others. He seemed erect and well-made; but his back, after all, was very like any one else's back. _Query_,--Did we see Concha, or did we not? When all was over, the coachman carefully descended the hill. He had come hither in haste, wishing to witness the sport himself; but now he drove slowly, and indulged in every sort of roundabout to spin out his time and our money. We met with a friend who, on our complaint, expostulated with him, and said,--"Senor, these gentlemen say that you drive them very slowly (_muy poco a poco_)." To the which he,--"Senor, if gentlemen will hire a carriage by the hour, and not by the afternoon, they must expect to get on very softly."--_Mem_. A white driver is always addressed as _Senor_, and I have occasionally heard such monologues as the following:--"Senor, why do you drive me this way? Curse you, Senor! You don't know anything, Senor! You are the greatest ass I ever encountered." The coachman takes it all coolly enough; the "Senor" spares his dignity, and he keeps his feelings to himself.

The writer of this has already spoken of various disappointments, in the way of seeing things, incidental to the position of the sex in Cuba. She came abroad prepared for microscopic, telescopic, and stereoscopic investigation,--but, hedged in on all sides by custom and convenience, she often observed only four very bare walls and two or three very stupid people. What could she see? Prisons? No. Men, naked and filthy, lying about, using very unedifying language, and totally unaccustomed to the presence of lady-visitors. She invoked the memory of Mrs. Fry and the example of Miss Dix. "Oh, they were saints, you know." "Only because they went to prisons, which you won't let me do."--Bull-fight? No. "How could you go back to Boston after seeing a bull-fight, eh?" "As if married life were anything else, eh?" And so on.--Negro ball? "Not exactly the place for a lady." "Miss Bremer went." "Very differently behaved woman from you." "Yes, virtue with a nose, impregnable."

But there is something she can go to see,--at least, some one,--the angelic man, Don Pepe, the wise, the gentle, the fearless, whom all the good praise. Yes, she shall go to see Don Pepe; and one burning Sunday noon she makes a pilgrimage through the scorching streets, and comes where he may be inquired for, and is shown up a pair of stairs, at the head of which stands the angelic man, mild and bland, with great, dark

eyes, and a gracious countenance. He ushers us into a room furnished with nothing but books, and finds two chairs for us and one for himself, not without research.

Now I will not pretend to say that Don Pepe occupied himself with me after the first kind greeting, nor that, my presence occasioned him either pleasure or surprise. My companion was a man after his own heart, and, at first sight, the two mounted their humanitarian hobbies, and rode them till they were tired. And when this came, I went away and said nothing. Yet I knew that I had seen a remarkable man.

Don Pepe de la Luz is a Cuban by birth, and his age may number some sixty years. He inherited wealth and its advantages, having received somewhere a first-rate education, to which he copiously added in subsequent years. He is a Liberal in politics and religion, a man of great reason and of great heart. In affairs of state, however, he meddles not, but contents himself with making statesmen. Like all wise philanthropists, he sees the chief source of good to man in education, and devotes his life, and, in a degree, his fortune, to this object. The building in which we found him was a large school, or rather college, founded by himself, and carried on in a great measure through his efforts. This college is upon the same literary footing as the University of Havana; and Don Pepe's graduates pass examinations and receive diplomas in the last-named institution. He himself rarely leaves its walls; and though he has house and wife elsewhere, and the great world is everywhere open to him, he leads here a more congenial life of ascetic seclusion, study, and simplicity.

"Oh, noble instinct of good men, to stay and do their duty!
This let us celebrate above all daring, wit, and beauty."

Don Pepe has been abroad as much as it profits a man to be,--but has not lost his own soul there, as an American is apt to do. He has known the best men in Europe and America. The best languages, he possesses them; the best books, here they are, piled all about his room. The floor is carpeted with them; there are cases all around the walls; and a large parallelogramic arrangement in the middle of the room, stuck all with books, as a pin-cushion with pins. True, there is not in their arrangement that ornateness of order observable in Northern libraries; dust even lies and blows about; and though he can find his favorites, we should be much puzzled to find any volume where it ought to be. But it looks as if the master were happy and undisturbed here, and as if the housemaid and her hated broom were as far off as the snow and frost.

In person, Don Pepe is not above the middle height. He is a fairly developed man, but looks thin and worn, and his shoulders have the stoop of age, which scholars mostly anticipate. His face is much corrugated, but it bears the traces of vivacious thought and emotion, not the withering print of passion. Of his eyes I have already spoken; they are wise, kind, and full of Southern fire.

Don Pepe has had some annoyances from the government,--probably in the more sanguine period of his life. The experience of years has taught him the secret of living peaceably with all men. He can be great and good himself, without perpetually quarrelling with those who can be neither. He spoke with warm interest of his scholars. "They have much capacity," he said; "but we want a little more of that _air_ you spoke of just now, Doctor." That air was Liberty. Reader, have you ever been in a place where her name was contraband? All such places are alike. Here, as in

Rome, men who have thoughts disguise them; and painful circumlocution conveys the meaning of friend to friend. For treachery lies hid, like the scorpion, under your pillow, and your most trusted companion will betray your head, to save his own. I am told that this sub-treason reached, in the days of Lopez, an incredible point. After every secret meeting of those affected to the invaders, each conspirator ran to save himself by denouncing all others. One Cuban, of large fortune and small reputation, being implicated in these matters, brought General Concha a list of all his confederates, which Concha burned before his face, unread. Piteous, laughable spectacle! Better be monkeys than such men; yet such work does Absolutism in government and religion make of the noble human creature! God preserve us ever from tyrants, spies, and Jesuits!

Don Pepe does not tell us this; but we have much pleasant talk with him about books, about great men in Europe, and, lastly, about Prescott, whom he knew and honored. We took leave of him with regret. He accompanied us to the head of the stairs, and then said, "Ah! my dear Madam, my liver will not suffer me to go down." "I am glad it is not your heart," I rejoined, and we parted,--to meet again, in my thoughts, and perhaps elsewhere, in the dim vista of the future.

BLONDEL.

At the castle's outer door
Stood Blondel, the Troubadour.
Up the marble stairs the crowd,
Pressing, talked and laughed aloud.
Upward with the throng he went;
With a heart of discontent,
Timed his sullen instrument;
Tried to sing of mirth and jest,
As the knights around him pressed;
But across his heart a pang
Struck him wordless ere he sang.

Then the guests and vassals roared,
Sitting round the oaken board,
"If thou canst not wake our mirth,
Touch some softer rhyme of earth:
Sing of knights in ladies' bowers,--
Twine a lay of love and flowers."

"Can I sing of love?" he said,--
And a moment bowed his head,
Then looked upward, out of space,
With a strange light in his face.

Said Blondel, the Troubadour,
"When I hear the battle roar,
And the trumpet-tones of war,
Can I tinkle my guitar?"

"But the war is o'er," said all;
"Silent now the bugle's call.
Love should be the warrior's dream,--

Love alone the minstrel's theme.
Sing us _Rose-leaves on a stream_."

Said Blondel, "Not roses now,--
Leafless thorns befit the brow.
In this crowd my voice is weak,
But ye force me now to speak.
Know ye not King Richard groans
Chained 'neath Austria's dungeon-stones?
What care I to sing of aught
Save what presses on my thought?
Over laughter, song, and shout
From these windows swelling out,
Over passion's tender words
Intonating through the chords,

"Rings the prisoned monarch's lay,
Through and through me, night and day;
And the only strain I know
Haunts my brain where'er I go,--
Trumpet-tones that ring and ring
Till I see my Richard king!

"Gallants, hear my song of love,
Deeper tones than courtiers move,--
Hear my royal captive's sigh,--
England, Home, and Liberty!"

Then he struck his lute and sang,
Till the shields and lances rang:
How for Christ and Holy Land
Fought the Lion Heart and Hand,--
How the craft of Leopold
Trapped him in a castle old,--
How one balmy morn in May,
Singing to beguile the day,
In his tower, the minstrel heard
Every note and every word,--
How he answered back the song,
"Let thy hope, my king, be strong!
We will bring thee help ere long!"

Still he sang,--"Who goes with me?
Who is it wills King Richard free?
He who bravely toils and dares,
Pain and danger with me shares,--
He whose heart is true and warm,
Though the night perplex with storm
Forest, plain, and dark morass,
Hanging-rock and mountain-pass,
And the thunder bursts ablaze,--
Is the lover that I praise!"

As the minstrel left the hall,
Silent, sorrowing, sat they all.
"Well they knew his banner-sign,
The Lion-Heart of Palestine.
Like a flame the song had swept
O'er them;--then the warriors leapt

Up from the feast with one accord,--
Pledged around their knightly word,--
From the castle-windows rang
The last verse the minstrel sang,
And from out the castle-door
Followed they the Troubadour.

THE WONDERSMITH.

I.

GOLOSH STREET AND ITS PEOPLE.

A small lane, the name of which I have forgotten, or do not choose to remember, slants suddenly off from Chatham Street, (before that headlong thoroughfare reaches into the Park,) and retreats suddenly down towards the East River, as if it were disgusted with the smell of old clothes, and had determined to wash itself clean. This excellent intention it has, however, evidently contributed towards the making of that imaginary pavement mentioned in the old adage; for it is still emphatically a dirty street. It has never been able to shake off the Hebraic taint of filth which it inherits from the ancestral thoroughfare. It is slushy and greasy, as if it were twin brother of the Roman Ghetto.

I like a dirty slum; not because I am naturally unclean,--I have not a drop of Neapolitan blood in my veins,--but because I generally find a certain sediment of philosophy precipitated in its gutters. A clean street is terribly prosaic. There is no food for thought in carefully swept pavements, barren kennels, and vulgarly spotless houses. But when I go down a street which has been left so long to itself that it has acquired a distinct outward character, I find plenty to think about. The scraps of sodden letters lying in the ash-barrel have their meaning: desperate appeals, perhaps, from Tom, the baker's assistant, to Amelia, the daughter of the dry-goods retailer, who is always selling at a sacrifice in consequence of the late fire. That may be Tom himself who is now passing me in a white apron, and I look up at the windows of the house (which does not, however, give any signs of a recent conflagration) and almost hope to see Amelia wave a white pocket-handkerchief. The bit of orange-peel lying on the sidewalk inspires thought. Who will fall over it? who but the industrious mother of six children, the eldest of which is only nine months old, all of whom are dependent on her exertions for support? I see her slip and tumble. I see the pale face convulsed with agony, and the vain struggle to get up; the pitying crowd closing her off from all air; the anxious young doctor who happened to be passing by; the manipulation of the broken limb, the shake of the head, the moan of the victim, the litter borne on men's shoulders, the gates of the New York Hospital unclosing, the subscription taken up on the spot. There is some food for speculation in that three-year-old, tattered child, masked with dirt, who is throwing a brick at another three-year-old, tattered child, masked with dirt. It is not difficult to perceive that he is destined to lurk, as it were, through life. His bad, flat face--or, at least, what can be seen of it--does not look as if it were made for the light of day. The mire in which he wallows now is but a type of the moral mire in which he will wallow hereafter. The feeble little hand lifted at this instant to smite his companion, half in earnest, half in jest, will be

raised against his fellow-beings forevermore.

Golosh Street--as I will call this nameless lane before alluded to--is an interesting locality. All the oddities of trade seem to have found their way thither and made an eccentric mercantile settlement. There is a bird-shop at one corner, wainscoted with little cages containing linnets, waxwings, canaries, blackbirds, Mino-birds, with a hundred other varieties, known only to naturalists. Immediately opposite is an establishment where they sell nothing but ornaments made out of the tinted leaves of autumn, varnished and gummed into various forms. Farther down is a second-hand book-stall, which looks like a sentry-box mangled out flat, and which is remarkable for not containing a complete set of any work. There is a small chink between two ordinary-sized houses, in which a little Frenchman makes and sells artificial eyes, specimens of which, ranged on a black velvet cushion, stare at you unwinkingly through the window as you pass, until you shudder and hurry on, thinking how awful the world would be, if every one went about without eyelids. There are junk-shops in Golosh Street that seem to have got hold of all the old nails in the Ark and all the old brass of Corinth. Madame Filomel, the fortune-teller, lives at No. 12 Golosh Street, second story front, pull the bell on the left-hand side. Next door to Madame is the shop of Herr Hippe, commonly called the Wondersmith.

Herr Hippe's shop is the largest in Golosh Street, and to all appearance is furnished with the smallest stock. Beyond a few packing-cases, a turner's lathe, and a shelf laden with dissected maps of Europe, the interior of the shop is entirely unfurnished. The window, which is lofty and wide, but much begrimed with dirt, contains the only pleasant object in the place. This is a beautiful little miniature theatre,--that is to say, the orchestra and stage. It is fitted with charmingly painted scenery and all the appliances for scenic changes. There are tiny traps, and delicately constructed "lifts," and real footlights fed with burning-fluid, and in the orchestra sits a diminutive conductor before his desk, surrounded by musical manikins, all provided with the smallest of violoncellos, flutes, oboes, drums, and such like. There are characters also on the stage. A Templar in a white cloak is dragging a fainting female form to the parapet of a ruined bridge, while behind a great black rock on the left one can see a man concealed, who, kneeling, levels an arquebuse at the knight's heart. But the orchestra is silent; the conductor never beats the time, the musicians never play a note. The Templar never drags his victim an inch nearer to the bridge, the masked avenger takes an eternal aim with his weapon. This repose appears unnatural; for so admirably are the figures executed, that they seem replete with life. One is almost led to believe, in looking on them, that they are resting beneath some spell which hinders their motion. One expects every moment to hear the loud explosion of the arquebuse,--to see the blue smoke curling, the Templar falling,--to hear the orchestra playing the requiem of the guilty.

Few people knew what Herr Hippe's business or trade really was. That he worked at something was evident; else why the shop? Some people inclined to the belief that he was an inventor, or mechanician. His workshop was in the rear of the store, and into that sanctuary no one but himself had admission. He arrived in Golosh Street eight or ten years ago, and one fine morning, the neighbors, taking down their shutters, observed that No. 13 had got a tenant. A tall, thin, sallow-faced man stood on a ladder outside the shop-entrance, nailing up a large board, on which "Herr Hippe, Wondersmith," was painted in black letters on a yellow

ground. The little theatre stood in the window, where it stood ever after, and Herr Hippe was established.

But what was a Wondersmith? people asked each other. No one could reply. Madame Filomel was consulted, but she looked grave, and said that it was none of her business. Mr. Pippel, the bird-fancier, who was a German, and ought to know best, thought it was the English for some singular Teutonic profession; but his replies were so vague, that Golosh Street was as unsatisfied as ever. Solon, the little humpback, who kept the odd-volume book-stall at the lowest corner, could throw no light upon it. And at length people had to come to the conclusion, that Herr Hippe was either a coiner or a magician, and opinions were divided.

II.

A BOTTLEFUL OF SOULS.

It was a dull December evening. There was little trade doing in Golosh Street, and the shutters were up at most of the shops. Hippe's store had been closed at least an hour, and the Mino-birds and Bohemian waxwings at Mr. Pippel's had their heads tucked under their wings in their first sleep.

Herr Hippe sat in his parlor, which was lit by a pleasant wood-fire. There were no candles in the room, and the flickering blaze played fantastic tricks on the pale gray walls. It seemed the festival of shadows. Processions of shapes, obscure and indistinct, passed across the leaden-hued panels and vanished in the dusk corners. Every fresh blaze flung up by the wayward logs created new images. Now it was a funeral throng, with the bowed figures of mourners, the shrouded coffin, the plumes that waved like extinguished torches; now a knightly cavalcade with flags and lances, and weird horses, that rushed silently along until they met the angle of the room, when they pranced through the wall and vanished.

On a table close to where Herr Hippe sat was placed a large square box of some dark wood, while over it was spread a casing of steel, so elaborately wrought in an open arabesque pattern that it seemed like a shining blue lace which was lightly stretched over its surface.

Herr Hippe lay luxuriously in his armchair, looking meditatively into the fire. He was tall and thin, and his skin was of a dull saffron hue. Long, straight hair,--sharply cut, regular features,--a long, thin moustache, that curled like a dark asp around his mouth, the expression of which was so bitter and cruel that it seemed to distil the venom of the ideal serpent,--and a bony, muscular form, were the prominent characteristics of the Wondersmith.

The profound silence that reigned in the chamber was broken by a peculiar scratching at the panel of the door, like that which at the French court was formerly substituted for the ordinary knock, when it was necessary to demand admission to the royal apartments. Herr Hippe started, raised his head, which vibrated on his long neck like the head of a cobra when about to strike, and after a moment's silence uttered a strange guttural sound. The door unclosed, and a squat, broad-shouldered woman, with large, wild, Oriental eyes, entered softly.

"Ah! Filomel, you are come!" said the Wondersmith, sinking back in his

chair. "Where are the rest of them?"

"They will be here presently," answered Madame Filomel, seating herself in an arm-chair much too narrow for a person of her proportions, and over the sides of which she bulged like a pudding.

"Have you brought the souls?" asked the Wondersmith.

"They are here," said the fortune-teller, drawing a large pot-bellied black bottle from under her cloak. "Ah! I have had such trouble with them!"

"Are they of the right brand,--wild, tearing, dark, devilish fellows? We want no essence of milk and honey, you know. None but souls bitter as hemlock or scorching as lightning will suit our purpose."

"You will see, you will see, Grand Duke of Egypt! They are ethereal demons, every one of them. They are the pick of a thousand births. Do you think that I, old midwife that I am, don't know the squall of the demon child from that of the angel child, the very moment they are delivered? Ask a musician, how he knows, even in the dark, a note struck by Thalberg from one struck by Listz!"

"I long to test them," cried the Wondersmith, rubbing his hands joyfully. "I long to see how the little devils will behave when I give them their shapes. Ah! it will be a proud day for us when we let them loose upon the cursed Christian children! Through the length and breadth of the land they will go; wherever our wandering people set foot, and wherever they are, the children of the Christians shall die. Then we, the despised Bohemians, the gypsies, as they call us, will be once more lords of the earth, as we were in the days when the accursed things called cities did not exist, and men lived in the free woods and hunted the game of the forest. Toys indeed! Ay, ay, we will give the little dears toys! toys that all day will sleep calmly in their boxes, seemingly stiff and wooden and without life,--but at night, when the souls enter them, will arise and surround the cots of the sleeping children, and pierce their hearts with their keen, envenomed blades! Toys indeed! oh, yes! I will sell them toys!"

And the Wondersmith laughed horribly, while the snaky moustache on his upper lip writhed as if it had truly a serpent's power and could sting.

"Have you got your first batch, Herr Hippe?" asked Madame Filomel. "Are they all ready?"

"Oh, ay! they are ready," answered the Wondersmith with gusto, opening, as he spoke, the box covered with the blue steel lace-work; "they are here."

The box contained a quantity of exquisitely carved wooden manikins of both sexes, painted with great dexterity so as to present a miniature resemblance to Nature. They were, in fact, nothing more than admirable specimens of those toys which children delight in placing in various positions on the table,--in regiments, or sitting at meals, or grouped under the stiff green trees which always accompany them in the boxes in which they are sold at the toy-shops.

The peculiarity, however, about the manikins of Herr Hippe was not alone the artistic truth with which the limbs and the features were gifted;

but on the countenance of each little puppet the carver's art had wrought an expression of wickedness that was appalling. Every tiny face had its special stamp of ferocity. The lips were thin and brimful of malice; the small black bead-like eyes glittered with the fire of a universal hate. There was not one of the manikins, male or female, that did not hold in his or her hand some miniature weapon. The little men, scowling like demons, clasped in their wooden fingers swords delicate as a housewife's needle. The women, whose countenances expressed treachery and cruelty, clutched infinitesimal daggers, with which they seemed about to take some terrible vengeance.

"Good!" said Madame Filomel, taking one of the manikins out of the box and examining it attentively; "you work well, Duke Balthazar! These little ones are of the right stamp; they look as if they had mischief in them. Ah! here come our brothers."

At this moment the same scratching that preceded the entrance of Madame Filomel was heard at the door, and Herr Hippe replied with a hoarse, guttural cry. The next moment two men entered. The first was a small man with very brilliant eyes. He was wrapt in a long shabby cloak, and wore a strange nondescript species of cap on his head, such a cap as one sees only in the low billiard-rooms in Paris. His companion was tall, long-limbed, and slender; and his dress, although of the ordinary cut, either from the disposition of colors, or from the careless, graceful attitudes of the wearer, assumed a certain air of picturesqueness. Both the men possessed the same marked Oriental type of countenance which distinguished the Wondersmith and Madame Filomel. True gypsies they seemed, who would not have been out of place telling fortunes, or stealing chickens in the green lanes of England, or wandering with their wild music and their sleight-of-hand tricks through Bohemian villages.

"Welcome, brothers!" said the Wondersmith; "you are in time. Sister Filomel has brought the souls, and we are about to test them. Monsieur Kerplonne, take off your cloak. Brother Oaksmith, take a chair. I promise you some amusement this evening; so make yourselves comfortable. Here is something to aid you."

And while the Frenchman Kerplonne, and his tall companion, Oaksmith, were obeying Hippe's invitation, he reached over to a little closet let into the wall, and took thence a squat bottle and some glasses, which he placed on the table.

"Drink, brothers!" he said; "it is not Christian blood, but good stout wine of Oporto. It goes right to the heart, and warms one like the sunshine of the South."

"It is good," said Kerplonne, smacking his lips with enthusiasm.

"Why don't you keep brandy? Hang wine!" cried Oaksmith, after having swallowed two bumpers in rapid succession.

"Bah! Brandy has been the ruin of our race. It has made us sots and thieves. It shall never cross my threshold," cried the Wondersmith, with a sombre indignation.

"A little of it is not bad, though, Duke," said the fortune-teller. "It consoles us for our misfortunes; it gives us the crowns we once wore; it restores to us the power we once wielded; it carries us back, as if by magic, to that land of the sun from which fate has driven us; it darkens

the memory of all the evils that we have for centuries suffered."

"It is a devil; may it be cursed!" cried Herr Hippe, passionately. "It is a demon that stole from me my son, the finest youth in all Courland. Yes! my son, the son of the Waywode Balthazar, Grand Duke of Lower Egypt, died raving in a gutter, with an empty brandy-bottle in his hands. Were it not that the plant is a sacred one to our race, I would curse the grape and the vine that bore it."

This outburst was delivered with such energy that the three gypsies kept silence. Oaksmith helped himself to another glass of Port, and the fortune-teller rocked to and fro in her chair, too much overawed by the Wondersmith's vehemence of manner to reply. The little Frenchman, Kerplonne, took no part in the discussion, but seemed lost in admiration of the manikins, which he took from the box in which they lay, handling them with the greatest care. After the silence had lasted for about a minute, Herr Hippe broke it with the sudden question,--

"How does your eye get on, Kerplonne?"

"Excellently, Duke. It is finished. I have it here." And the little Frenchman put his hand into his breeches-pocket and pulled out a large artificial human eye. Its great size was the only thing in this eye that would lead any one to suspect its artificiality. It was at least twice the size of life; but there was a fearful speculative light in its iris, which seemed to expand and contract like the eye of a living being, that rendered it a horrible staring paradox. It looked like the naked eye of the Cyclops, torn from his forehead, and still burning with wrath and the desire for vengeance.

The little Frenchman laughed pleasantly as he held the eye in his hand, and gazed down on that huge dark pupil, that stared back at him, it seemed, with an air of defiance and mistrust.

"It is a devil of an eye," said the little man, wiping the enamelled surface with an old silk pocket-handkerchief; "it reads like a demon. My niece--the unhappy one--has a wretch of a lover, and I have a long time feared that she would run away with him. I could not read her correspondence, for she kept her writing-desk closely locked. But I asked her yesterday to keep this eye in some very safe place for me. She put it, as I knew she would, into her desk, and by its aid I read every one of her letters. She was to run away next Monday, the ungrateful! but she will find herself disappointed."

And the little man laughed heartily at the success of his stratagem, and polished and fondled the great eye until that optic seemed to grow sore with rubbing.

"And you have been at work, too, I see, Herr Hippe. Your manikins are excellent. But where are the souls?"

"In that bottle," answered the Wondersmith, pointing to the pot-bellied black bottle that Madame Filomel had brought with her. "Yes, Monsieur Kerplonne," he continued, "my manikins are well made. I invoked the aid of Abigor, the demon of soldiery, and he inspired me. The little fellows will be famous assassins when they are animated. We will try them to-night."

"Good!" cried Kerplonne, rubbing his hands joyously. "It is close upon

New Year's Day. We will fabricate millions of the little murderers by New Year's Eve, and sell them in large quantities; and when the households are all asleep, and the Christian children are waiting for Santa Claus to come, the small ones will troop from their boxes and the Christian children will die. It is famous! Health to Abigor!"

"Let us try them at once," said Oaksmith. "Is your daughter, Zonela, in bed, Herr Hippe? Are we secure from intrusion?"

"No one is stirring about the house," replied the Wondersmith, gloomily.

Filomel leaned over to Oaksmith, and said, in an undertone,--

"Why do you mention his daughter? You know he does not like to have her spoken about."

"I will take care that we are not disturbed," said Kerplonne, rising. "I will put my eye outside the door, to watch."

He went to the door and placed his great eye upon the floor with tender care. As he did so, a dark form, unseen by him or his second vision, glided along the passage noiselessly and was lost in the darkness.

"Now for it!'" exclaimed Madame Filomel, taking up her fat black bottle. "Herr Hippe, prepare your manikins!"

The Wondersmith took the little dolls out, one by one, and set them upon the table. Such an array of villanous countenances was never seen. An army of Italian bravos, seen through the wrong end of a telescope, or a hand of prisoners at the galleys in Liliput, will give some faint idea of the appearance they presented. While Madame Filomel uncorked the black bottle, Herr Hippe covered the dolls over with a species of linen tent, which he took also from the box. This done, the fortune-teller held the mouth of the bottle to the door of the tent, gathering the loose cloth closely round the glass neck. Immediately, tiny noises were heard inside the tent. Madame Filomel removed the bottle, and the Wondersmith lifted the covering in which he had enveloped his little people.

A wonderful transformation had taken place. Wooden and inflexible no longer, the crowd of manikins were now in full motion. The beadlike eyes turned, glittering, on all sides; the thin, wicked lips quivered with bad passions; the tiny hands sheathed and unsheathed the little swords and daggers. Episodes, common to life, were taking place in every direction. Here two martial manikins paid court to a pretty sly-faced female, who smiled on each alternately, but gave her hand to be kissed to a third manikin, an ugly little scoundrel, who crouched behind her back. There a pair of friendly dolls walked arm in arm, apparently on the best terms, while, all the time, one was watching his opportunity to stab the other in the back.

"I think they'll do," said the Wondersmith, chuckling, as he watched these various incidents. "Treacherous, cruel, bloodthirsty. All goes marvellously well. But stay! I will put the grand test to them."

So saying, he drew a gold dollar from his pocket, and let it fall on the table in the very midst of the throng of manikins. It had hardly touched the table, when there was a pause on all sides. Every head was turned towards the dollar. Then about twenty of the little creatures rushed

towards the glittering coin. One, fleeter than the rest, leaped upon it, and drew his sword. The entire crowd of little people had now gathered round this new centre of attraction. Men and women struggled and shoved to get nearer to the piece of gold. Hardly had the first Liliputian mounted upon the treasure, when a hundred blades flashed back a defiant answer to his, and a dozen men, sword in hand, leaped upon the yellow platform and drove him off at the sword's point. Then commenced a general battle. The miniature faces were convulsed with rage and avarice. Each furious doll tried to plunge dagger or sword into his or her neighbor, and the women seemed possessed by a thousand devils.

"They will break themselves into atoms," cried Filomel, as she watched with eagerness this savage _melee_. "You had better gather them up, Herr Hippe. I will exhaust my bottle and suck all the souls back from them."

"Oh, they are perfect devils! they are magnificent little demons!" cried the Frenchman, with enthusiasm. "Hippe, you are a wonderful man. Brother Oaksmith, you have no such man as Hippe among your English gypsies."

"Not exactly," answered Oaksmith, rather sullenly, "not exactly. But we have men there who can make a twelve-year-old horse look like a four-year-old,--and who can take you and Herr Hippe up with one hand, and throw you over their shoulders."

"The good God forbid!" said the little Frenchman. "I do not love such play. It is incommodious."

While Oaksmith and Kerplonne were talking, the Wondersmith had placed the linen tent over the struggling dolls, and Madame Filomel, who had been performing some mysterious manipulations with her black bottle, put the mouth once more to the door of the tent. In an instant the confused murmur within ceased. Madame Filomel corked the bottle quickly. The Wondersmith withdrew the tent, and, lo! the furious dolls were once more wooden-jointed and inflexible; and the old sinister look was again frozen on their faces.

"They must have blood, though," said Herr Hippe, as he gathered them up and put them into their box. "Mr. Pippel, the bird-fancier, is asleep. I have a key that opens his door. We will let them loose among the birds; it will be rare fun."

"Magnificent!" cried Kerplonne. "Let us go on the instant. But first let me gather up my eye."

The Frenchman pocketed his eye, after having given it a polish with the silk handkerchief; Herr Hippe extinguished the lamp; Oaksmith took a last bumper of Port; and the four gypsies departed for Mr. Pippel's, carrying the box of manikins with them.

III.

SOLON.

The shadow that glided along the dark corridor, at the moment that Monsieur Kerplonne deposited his sentinel eye outside the door of the Wondersmith's apartment, sped swiftly through the passage and ascended

the stairs to the attic. Here the shadow stopped at the entrance to one of the chambers and knocked at the door. There was no reply.

"Zonela, are you asleep?" said the shadow, softly.

"Oh, Solon, is it you?" replied a sweet low voice from within. "I thought it was Herr Hippe. Come in."

The shadow opened the door and entered. There were neither candles nor lamp in the room; but through the projecting window, which was open, there came the faint gleams of the starlight, by which one could distinguish a female figure seated on a low stool in the middle of the floor.

"Has he left you without light again, Zonela?" asked the shadow, closing the door of the apartment. "I have brought my little lantern with me, though."

"Thank you, Solon," answered she called Zonela; "you are a good fellow. He never gives me any light of an evening, but bids me go to bed. I like to sit sometimes and look at the moon and the stars,--the stars more than all; for they seem all the time to look right back into my face, very sadly, as if they would say, 'We see you, and pity you, and would help you, if we could.' But it is so mournful to be always looking at such myriads of melancholy eyes! and I long so to read those nice books that you lend me, Solon!"

By this time the shadow had lit the lantern and was a shadow no longer. A large head, covered with a profusion of long blonde hair, which was cut after that fashion known as a _l'enfants d'Edouard;_ a beautiful pale face, lit with wide, blue, dreamy eyes; long arms and slender hands, attenuated legs, and--an enormous hump;--such was Solon, the shadow. As soon as the humpback had lit the lamp, Zonela arose from the low stool on which she had been seated, and took Solon's hand affectionately in hers.

Zonela was surely not of gypsy blood. That rich auburn hair, that looked almost black in the lamp-light, that pale, transparent skin, tinged with an under-glow of warm rich blood, the hazel eyes, large and soft as those of a fawn, were never begotten of a Zingaro. Zonela was seemingly about sixteen; her figure, although somewhat thin and angular, was full of the unconscious grace of youth. She was dressed in an old cotton print, which had been once of an exceedingly boisterous pattern, but was now a mere suggestion of former splendor; while round her head was twisted, in fantastic fashion, a silk handkerchief of green ground spotted with bright crimson. This strange headdress gave her an elfish appearance.

"I have been out all day with the organ, and I am so tired, Solon!--not sleepy, but weary, I mean. Poor Furbelow was sleepy, though, and he's gone to bed."

"I'm weary, too, Zonela;--not weary as you are, though, for I sit in my little book-stall all day long, and do not drag round an organ and a monkey and play old tunes for pennies,--but weary of myself, of life, of the load that I carry on my shoulders"; and, as he said this, the poor humpback glanced sideways, as if to call attention to his deformed person.

"Well, but you ought not to be melancholy amidst your books, Solon. Gracious! If I could only sit in the sun and read as you do, how happy I should be! But it's very tiresome to trudge round all day with that nasty organ, and look up at the houses, and know that you are annoying the people inside; and then the boys play such bad tricks on poor Furbelow, throwing him hot pennies to pick up, and burning his poor little hands; and oh! sometimes, Solon, the men in the street make me so afraid,--they speak to me and look at me so oddly!--I'd a great deal rather sit in your book-stall and read."

"I have nothing but odd volumes in my stall," answered the humpback. "Perhaps that's right, though; for, after all, I'm nothing but an odd volume myself."

"Come, don't be melancholy, Solon. Sit down and tell me a story. I'll bring Furbelow to listen."

So saying, she went to a dusk corner of the cheerless attic-room, and returned with a little Brazilian monkey in her arms,--a poor, mild, drowsy thing, that looked as if it had cried itself to sleep. She sat down on her little stool, with Furbelow in her lap, and nodded her head to Solon, as much as to say, "Go on; we are attentive."

"You want a story, do you?" said the humpback, with a mournful smile. "Well, I'll tell you one. Only what will your father say, if he catches me here?"

"Herr Hippe is not my father," cried Zonela, indignantly. "He's a gypsy, and I know I'm stolen; and I'd run away from him, if I only knew where to run to. If I were his child, do you think that he would treat me as he does? make me trudge round the city, all day long, with a barrel-organ and a monkey,--though I love poor dear little Furbelow,--and keep me up in a garret, and give me ever so little to eat? I know I'm not his child, for he hates me."

"Listen to my story, Zonela, and well talk of that afterwards. Let me sit at your feet";--and, having coiled himself up at the little maiden's feet, he commenced:--

"There once lived in a great city, just like this city of New York, a poor little hunchback. He kept a second-hand book-stall, where he made barely enough money to keep body and soul together. He was very sad at times, because he knew scarce any one, and those that he did know did not love him. He had passed a sickly, secluded youth. The children of his neighborhood would not play with him, for he was not made like them; and the people in the streets stared at him with pity, or scoffed at him when he went by. Ah! Zonela, how his poor heart was wrung with bitterness when he beheld the procession of shapely men and fine women that every day passed him by in the thoroughfares of the great city! How he repined and cursed his fate as the torrent of fleet-footed firemen dashed past him to the toll of the bells, magnificent in their overflowing vitality and strength! But there was one consolation left him,--one drop of honey in the jar of gall, so sweet that it ameliorated all the bitterness of life. God had given him a deformed body, but his mind was straight and healthy. So the poor hunchback shut himself into the world of books, and was, if not happy, at least contented. He kept company with courteous paladins, and romantic heroes, and beautiful women; and this society was of such excellent breeding that it never so much as once noticed his poor crooked back or his lame walk. The love

of books grew upon him with his years. He was remarked for his studious habits; and when, one day, the obscure people that he called father and mother--parents only in name--died, a compassionate book-vendor gave him enough stock in trade to set up a little stall of his own. Here, in his book-stall, he sat in the sun all day, waiting for the customers that seldom came, and reading the fine deeds of the people of the ancient time, or the beautiful thoughts of the poets that had warmed millions of hearts before that hour, and still glowed for him with undiminished fire. One day, when he was reading some book, that, small as it was, was big enough to shut the whole world out from him, he heard some music in the street. Looking up from his book, he saw a little girl, with large eyes, playing an organ, while a monkey begged for alms from a crowd of idlers who had nothing in their pockets but their hands. The girl was playing, but she was also weeping. The merry notes of the polka were ground out to a silent accompaniment of tears. She looked very sad, this organ-girl, and her monkey seemed to have caught the infection, for his large brown eyes were moist, as if he also wept. The poor hunchback was struck with pity, and called the little girl over to give her a penny,--not, dear Zonela, because he wished to bestow alms, but because he wanted to speak with her. She came, and they talked together. She came the next day,--for it turned out that they were neighbors,--and the next, and, in short, every day. They became friends. They were both lonely and afflicted, with this difference, that she was beautiful, and he--was a hunchback."

"Why, Solon," cried Zonela, "that's the very way you and I met!"

"It was then," continued Solon, with a faint smile, "that life seemed to have its music. A great harmony seemed to the poor cripple to fill the world. The carts that took the flour-barrels from the wharves to the store-houses seemed to emit joyous melodies from their wheels. The hum of the great business-streets sounded like grand symphonies of triumph. As one who has been travelling through a barren country without much heed feels with singular force the sterility of the lands he has passed through when he reaches the fertile plains that lie at the end of his journey, so the humpback, after his vision had been freshened with this blooming flower, remembered for the first time the misery of the life that he had led. But he did not allow himself to dwell upon the past. The present was so delightful that it occupied all his thoughts. Zonela, he was in love with the organ-girl."

"Oh, that's so nice!" said Zonela, innocently,--pinching poor Furbelow, as she spoke, in order to dispel a very evident snooze that was creeping over him. "It's going to be a love-story."

"Ah! but, Zonela, he did not know whether she loved him in return. You forget that he was deformed."

"But," answered the girl, gravely, "he was good."

A light like the flash of an aurora illuminated Solon's face for an instant. He put out his hand suddenly, as if to take Zonela's and press it to his heart; but an unaccountable timidity seemed to arrest the impulse, and he only stroked Furbelow's head,--upon which that individual opened one large brown eye to the extent of the eighth of an inch, and, seeing that it was only Solon, instantly closed it again, and resumed his dream of a city where there were no organs and all the copper coin of the realm was iced.

"He hoped and feared," continued Solon, in a low, mournful voice; "but at times he was very miserable, because he did not think it possible that so much happiness was reserved for him as the love of this beautiful, innocent girl. At night, when he was in bed, and all the world was dreaming, he lay awake looking up at the old books that hung against the walls, thinking how he could bring about the charming of her heart. One night, when he was thinking of this, with his eyes fixed upon the mouldy backs of the odd volumes that lay on their shelves, and looked back at him wistfully, as if they would say,--'We also are like you, and wait to be completed,'--it seemed as if he heard a rustle of leaves. Then, one by one, the books came down from their places to the floor, as if shifted by invisible hands, opened their worm-eaten covers, and from between the pages of each the hunchback saw issue forth a curious throng of little people that danced here and there through the apartment. Each one of these little creatures was shaped so as to bear resemblance to some one of the letters of the alphabet. One tall, long-legged fellow seemed like the letter A; a burly fellow, with a big head and a paunch, was the model of B; another leering little chap might have passed for a Q; and so on through the whole. These fairies--for fairies they were--climbed upon the hunchback's bed, and clustered thick as bees upon his pillow. 'Come!' they cried to him, 'we will lead you into fairy-land.' So saying, they seized his hand, and he suddenly found himself in a beautiful country, where the light did not come from sun or moon or stars, but floated round and over and in everything like the atmosphere. On all sides he heard mysterious melodies sung by strangely musical voices. None of the features of the landscape were definite; yet when he looked on the vague harmonies of color that melted one into another before his sight, he was filled with a sense of inexplicable beauty. On every side of him fluttered radiant bodies which darted to and fro through the illumined space. They were not birds, yet they flew like birds; and as each one crossed the path of his vision, he felt a strange delight flash through his brain, and straightway an interior voice seemed to sing beneath the vaulted dome of his temples a verse containing some beautiful thought. The little fairies were all this time dancing and fluttering around him, perching on his head, on his shoulders, or balancing themselves on his finger-tips. 'Where am I?' he asked, at last, of his friends, the fairies. 'Ah! Solon,' he heard them whisper, in tones that sounded like the distant tinkling of silver bells, 'this land is nameless; but those whom we lead hither, who tread its soil, and breathe its air, and gaze on its floating sparks of light, are poets forevermore!' Having said this, they vanished, and with them the beautiful indefinite land, and the flashing lights, and the illumined air; and the hunchback found himself again in bed, with the moonlight quivering on the floor, and the dusty books on their shelves, grim and mouldy as ever."

"You have betrayed yourself. You called yourself Solon," cried Zonela. "Was it a dream?"

"I do not know," answered Solon; "but since that night I have been a poet."

"A poet?" screamed the little organ-girl,--"a real poet, who makes verses which every one reads and every one talks of?"

"The people call me a poet," answered Solon, with a sad smile. "They do not know me by the name of Solon, for I write under an assumed title; but they praise me, and repeat my songs. But, Zonela, I can't sing this load off of my back, can I?"

"Oh, bother the hump!" said Zonela, jumping up suddenly. "You're a poet, and that's enough, isn't it? I'm so glad you're a poet, Solon! You must repeat all your best things to me, won't you?"

Solon nodded assent.

"You don't ask me," he said, "who was the little girl that the hunchback loved."

Zonela's face flushed crimson. She turned suddenly away, and ran into a dark corner of the room. In a moment she returned with an old hand-organ in her arms.

"Play, Solon, play!" she cried. "I am so glad that I want to dance. Furbelow, come and dance in honor of Solon the Poet."

It was her confession. Solon's eyes flamed, as if his brain had suddenly ignited. He said nothing; but a triumphant smile broke over his countenance. Zonela, the twilight of whose cheeks was still rosy with the setting blush, caught the lazy Furbelow by his little paws; Solon turned the crank of the organ, which wheezed out as merry a polka as its asthma would allow, and the girl and the monkey commenced their fantastic dance. They had taken but a few steps when the door suddenly opened, and the tall figure of the Wondersmith appeared on the threshold. His face was convulsed with rage, and the black snake that quivered on his upper lip seemed to rear itself as if about to spring upon the hunchback.

IV

THE MANIKINS AND THE MINOS.

The four gypsies left Herr Hippe's house cautiously, and directed their steps towards Mr. Pippel's bird-shop. Golosh Street was asleep. Nothing was stirring in that tenebrous slum, save a dog that savagely gnawed a bone which lay on a dust-heap, tantalizing him with the flavor of food without its substance. As the gypsies moved stealthily along in the darkness, they had a sinister and murderous air that would not have failed to attract the attention of the policeman of the quarter, if that worthy had not at the moment been comfortably ensconced in the neighboring "Rainbow" bar-room, listening to the improvisations of that talented vocalist, Mr. Harrison, who was making impromptu verses on every possible subject, to the accompaniment of a cithern which was played by a sad little Italian in a large cloak, to whom the host of the "Rainbow" gave so many toddies and a dollar for his nightly performance.

Mr. Pippel's shop was but a short distance from the Wondersmith's house. A few moments, therefore, brought the gypsy party to the door, when, by aid of a key which Herr Hippe produced, they silently slipped into the entry. Here the Wondersmith took a dark-lantern from under his cloak, removed the cap that shrouded the light, and led the way into the shop, which was separated from the entry only by a glass door, that yielded, like the outer one, to a key which Hippe took from his pocket. The four gypsies now entered the shop and closed the door behind them.

It was a little world of birds. On every side, whether in large or small

cages, one beheld balls of various-colored feathers standing on one leg and breathing peacefully. Love-birds, nestling shoulder to shoulder, with their heads tucked under their wings and all their feathers puffed out, so that they looked like globes of malachite; English bullfinches, with ashen-colored backs, in which their black heads were buried, and corselets of a rosy down; Java sparrows, fat and sleek and cleanly; troupials, so glossy and splendid in plumage that they looked as if they were dressed in the celebrated armor of the Black Prince, which was jet, richly damascened with gold; a cock of the rock, gleaming, a ball of tawny fire, like a setting sun; the Campanero of Brazil, white as snow, with his dilatable tolling-tube hanging from his head, placid and silent;--these, with a humbler crowd of linnets, canaries, robins, mocking-birds, and phoebes, slumbered calmly in their little cages, that were hung so thickly on the wall as not to leave an inch of it visible.

"Splendid little morsels, all of them!" exclaimed Monsieur Kerplonne. "Ah we are going to have a rare beating!" "So Pippel does not sleep in his shop," said the English gypsy, Oaksmith.

"No. The fellow lives somewhere up one of the avenues," answered Madame Filomel. "He came, the other evening, to consult me about his fortune. I did not tell him," she added, with a laugh, "that he was going to have so distinguished a sporting party on his premises."

"Come," said the Wondersmith, producing the box of manikins, "get ready with souls, Madame Filomel. I am impatient to see my little men letting out lives for the first time."

Just at the moment that the Wondersmith uttered this sentence, the four gypsies were startled by a hoarse voice issuing from a corner of the room, and propounding in the most guttural tones the intemperate query of "What'll you take?" This sottish invitation had scarce been given, when a second extremely thick voice replied from an opposite corner, in accents so rough that they seemed to issue from a throat torn and furrowed by the liquid lava of many bar-rooms, "Brandy and water."

"Hollo! who's here?" muttered Herr Hippe, flashing the light of his lantern round the shop.

Oaksmith turned up his coat-cuffs, as if to be ready for a fight; Madame Filomel glided, or rather rolled, towards the door; while Kerplonne put his hand into his pocket, as if to assure himself that his supernumerary optic was all right.

"What'll you take?" croaked the voice in the corner, once more.

"Brandy and water," rapidly replied the second voice in the other corner. And then, as if by a concerted movement, a series of bibular invitations and acceptances were rolled backwards and forwards with a volubility of utterance that threw Patter _versus_ Clatter into the shade.

"What the Devil can it be?" muttered the Wondersmith, flashing his lantern here and there. "Ah! it is those Minos."

So saying, he stopped under one of the wicker cages that hung high up on the wall, and raised the lantern above his head, so as to throw the light upon that particular cage. The hospitable individual who had been extending all these hoarse invitations to partake of intoxicating

beverages was an inhabitant of the cage. It was a large Mino-bird, who now stood perched on his cross-bar, with his yellowish orange bill sloped slightly over his shoulder, and his white eye cocked knowingly upon the Wondersmith. The respondent voice in the other corner came from another Mino-bird, who sat in the dusk in a similar cage, also attentively watching the Wondersmith. These Mino-birds, I may remark, in passing, have a singular aptitude for acquiring phrases.

"What'll you take?" repeated the Mino, cocking his other eye upon Herr Hippe.

"_Mon Dieu!_ what a bird!" exclaimed the little Frenchman. "He is, in truth, polite."

"I don't know what I'll take," said Hippe, as if replying to the Mino-bird; "but I know what you'll get, old fellow! Filomel, open the cage-doors, and give me the bottle."

Filomel opened, one after another, the doors of the numberless little cages, thereby arousing from slumber their feathered occupants, who opened their beaks, and stretched their claws, and stared with great surprise at the lantern and the midnight visitors.

By this time the Wondersmith had performed the mysterious manipulations with the bottle, and the manikins were once more in full motion, swarming out of their box, sword and dagger in hand, with their little black eyes glittering fiercely, and their white teeth shining. The little creatures seemed to scent their prey. The gypsies stood in the centre of the shop, watching the proceedings eagerly, while the Liliputians made in a body towards the wall and commenced climbing from cage to cage. Then was heard a tremendous fluttering of wings, and faint, despairing "quirks" echoed on all sides. In almost every cage there was a fierce manikin thrusting his sword or dagger vigorously into the body of some unhappy bird. It recalled the antique legend of the battles of the Pygmies and the Cranes. The poor love-birds lay with their emerald feathers dabbled in their hearts' blood, shoulder to shoulder in death as in life. Canaries gasped at the bottom of their cages, while the water in their little glass fountains ran red. The bullfinches wore an unnatural crimson on their breasts. The mocking-bird lay on his back, kicking spasmodically, in the last agonies, with a tiny sword-thrust cleaving his melodious throat in twain, so that from the instrument which used to gush with wondrous music only scarlet drops of blood now trickled. The manikins were ruthless. Their faces were ten times wickeder than ever, as they roamed from cage to cage, slaughtering with a fury that seemed entirely unappeasable. Presently the feathery rustlings became fewer and fainter, and the little pipings of despair died away; and in every cage lay a poor murdered minstrel, with the song that abode within him forever quenched;--in every cage but two, and those two were high up on the wall; and in each glared a pair of wild, white eyes; and an orange beak, tough as steel, pointed threateningly down. With the needles which they grasped as swords all wet and warm with blood, and their beadlike eyes flashing in the light of the lantern, the Liliputian assassins swarmed up the cages in two separate bodies, until they reached the wickets of the habitations in which the Minos abode. Mino saw them coming,--had listened attentively to the many death-struggles of his comrades, and had, in fact, smelt a rat. Accordingly he was ready for the manikins. There he stood at the barbican of his castle, with formidable beak couched like a lance. The manikins made a gallant charge. "What'll you take?" was rattled out

by the Mino, in a deep bass, as with one plunge of his sharp bill he scattered the ranks of the enemy, and sent three of them flying to the floor, where they lay with broken limbs. But the manikins were brave automata, and again they closed and charged the gallant Mino. Again the wicked white eyes of the bird gleamed, and again the orange bill dealt destruction. Everything seemed to be going on swimmingly for Mino, when he found himself attacked in the rear by two treacherous manikins, who had stolen upon him from behind, through the lattice-work of the cage. Quick as lightning the Mino turned to repel this assault, but all too late; two slender quivering threads of steel crossed in his poor body, and he staggered into a corner of the cage. His white eyes closed, then opened; a shiver passed over his body, beginning at his shoulder-tips and dying off in the extreme tips of the wings; he gasped as if for air, and then, with a convulsive shudder, which ruffled all his feathers, croaked out feebly his little speech, "What'll you take?" Instantly from the opposite corner came the old response, still feebler than the question,--a mere gurgle, as it were, of "Brandy and water." Then all was silent. The Mino-birds were dead.

"They spill blood like Christians," said the Wondersmith, gazing fondly on the manikins. "They will be famous assassins."

V.

TIED UP.

Herr Hippe stood in the doorway, scowling. His eyes seemed to scorch the poor hunchback, whose form, physically inferior, crouched before that baneful, blazing glance, while his head, mentally brave, reared itself, as if to redeem the cowardice of the frame to which it belonged. So the attitude of the serpent: the body pliant, yielding, supple; but the crest thrown aloft, erect, and threatening. As for Zonela, she was frozen in the attitude of motion;--a dancing nymph in colored marble; agility stunned; elasticity petrified.

Furbelow, astonished at this sudden change, and catching, with all the mysterious rapidity of instinct peculiar to the lower animals, at the enigmatical character of the situation, turned his pleading, melancholy eyes from one to another of the motionless three, as if begging that his humble intellect (pardon me, naturalists, for the use of this word "intellect" in the matter of a monkey!) should be enlightened as speedily as possible. Not receiving the desired information, he, after the manner of trained animals, returned to his muttons; in other words, he conceived that this unusual entrance, and consequent dramatic _tableau_, meant "shop." He therefore dropped Zonela's hand and pattered on his velvety little feet over towards the grim figure of the Wondersmith, holding out his poor little paw for the customary copper. He had but one idea drilled into him,--soulless creature that he was,--and that was, alms, But I have seen creatures that professed to have souls, and that would have been indignant, if you had denied them immortality, who took to the soliciting of alms as naturally as if beggary had been the original sin, and was regularly born with them, and never baptized out of them. I will give these Bandits of the Order of Charity this credit, however, that they knew the best highways and the richest founts of benevolence,--unlike to Furbelow, who, unreasoning and undiscriminating, begged from the first person that was near. Furbelow, owing to this intellectual inferiority

to the before-mentioned Alsatians, frequently got more kicks than coppers, and the present supplication which he indulged in towards the Wondersmith was a terrible confirmation of the rule. The reply to the extended pleading paw was what might be called a double-barrelled kick, --a kick to be represented by the power of two when the foot touched the object, multiplied by four when the entire leg formed an angle of 45 deg. with the spinal column. The long, nervous leg of the Wondersmith caught the little creature in the centre of the body, doubled up his brown, hairy form, till he looked like a fur driving-glove, and sent him whizzing across the room into a far corner, where he dropped senseless and flaccid.

This vengeance which Herr Hippe executed upon Furbelow seemed to have operated as a sort of escape-valve, and he found voice. He hissed out the question, "Who are you?" to the hunchback; and in listening to that essence of sibillation, it really seemed as if it proceeded from the serpent that curled upon his upper lip.

"Who are you? Deformed dog, who are you? What do you here?"

"My name is Solon," answered the fearless head of the hunchback, while the frail, cowardly body shivered and trembled inch by inch into a corner.

"So you come to visit my daughter in the night-time, when I am away?" continued the Wondersmith, with a sneering tone that dropped from his snake-wreathed mouth like poison. "You are a brave and gallant lover, are you not? Where did you win that Order of the Curse of God that decorates your shoulders? The women turn their heads and look after you in the street, when you pass, do they not? lost in admiration of that symmetrical figure, those graceful limbs, that neck pliant as the stem that moors the lotus! Elegant, conquering, Christian cripple, what do you here in my daughter's room?"

Can you imagine Jove, limitless in power and wrath, hurling from his vast grasp mountain after mountain upon the struggling Enceladus,--and picture the Titan sinking, sinking, deeper and deeper into the earth, crushed and dying, with nothing visible through the superincumbent masses of Pelion and Ossa, but a gigantic head and two flaming eyes, that, despite the death which is creeping through each vein, still flash back defiance to the divine enemy? Well, Solon and Herr Hippe presented such a picture, seen through the wrong end of a telescope,--reduced in proportion, but alike in action. Solon's feeble body seemed to sink into utter annihilation beneath the horrible taunts that his enemy hurled at him, while the large, brave brow and unconquered eyes still sent forth a magnetic resistance.

Suddenly the poor hunchback felt his arm grasped. A thrill seemed to run through his entire body. A warm atmosphere, invigorating and full of delicious odor, surrounded him. It appeared as if invisible bandages were twisted all about his limbs, giving him a strange strength. His sinking legs straightened. His powerless arms were braced. Astonished, he glanced round for an instant, and beheld Zonela, with a world of love burning in her large lambent eyes, wreathing her round white arms about his humped shoulders. Then the poet knew the great sustaining power of love. Solon reared himself boldly.

"Sneer at my poor form," he cried, in strong vibrating tones, flinging out one long arm and one thin finger at the Wondersmith, as if he would

have impaled him like a beetle. "Humiliate me, if you can. I care not. You are a wretch, and I am honest and pure. This girl is not your daughter. You are like one of those demons in the fairy tales that held beauty and purity locked in infernal spells. I do not fear you, Heir Hippe. There are stories abroad about you in the neighborhood, and when you pass, people say that they feel evil and blight hovering over their thresholds. You persecute this girl. You are her tyrant. You hate her. I am a cripple. Providence has cast this lump upon my shoulders. But that is nothing. The camel, that is the salvation of the children of the desert, has been given his hump in order that he might bear his human burden better. This girl, who is homeless as the Arab, is my appointed load in life, and, please God, I will carry her on this back, hunched though it may be. I have come to see her, because I love her,--because she loves me. You have no claim on her; so I will take her from you."

Quick as lightning, the Wondersmith had stridden a few paces, and grasped the poor cripple, who was yet quivering with the departing thunder of his passion. He seized him in his bony, muscular grasp, as he would have seized a puppet, and held him at arm's length gasping and powerless; while Zonela, pale, breathless, entreating, sank half-kneeling on the floor.

"Your skeleton will be interesting to science when you are dead, Mr. Solon," hissed the Wondersmith. "But before I have the pleasure of reducing you to an anatomy, which I will assuredly do, I wish to compliment you on your power of penetration, or sources of information; for I know not if you have derived your knowledge from your own mental research or the efforts of others. You are perfectly correct in your statement, that this charming young person, who day after day parades the streets with a barrel-organ and a monkey,--the last unhappily indisposed at present,--listening to the degrading jokes of ribald boys and depraved men,--you are quite correct, Sir, in stating that she is not my daughter. On the contrary, she is the daughter of an Hungarian nobleman who had the misfortune to incur my displeasure. I had a son, crooked spawn of a Christian!--a son, not like you, cankered, gnarled stump of life that you are,--but a youth tall and fair and noble in aspect, as became a child of one whose lineage makes Pharaoh modern,--a youth whose foot in the dance was as swift and beautiful to look at as the golden sandals of the sun when he dances upon the sea in summer. This youth was virtuous and good; and being of good race, and dwelling in a country where his rank, gypsy as he was, was recognized, he mixed with the proudest of the land. One day he fell in with this accursed Hungarian, a fierce drinker of that Devil's blood called brandy. My child until that hour had avoided this bane of our race. Generous wine he drank, because the soul of the sun our ancestor palpitated in its purple waves. But brandy, which is fallen and accursed wine, as devils are fallen and accursed angels, had never crossed his lips, until in an evil hour he was seduced by this Christian hog, and from that day forth his life was one fiery debauch, which set only in the black waves of death. I vowed vengeance on the destroyer of my child, and I kept my word. I have destroyed _his_ child,--not compassed her death, but blighted her life, steeped her in misery and poverty, and now, thanks to the thousand devils, I have discovered a new torture for her heart. She thought to solace her life with a love-episode! Sweet little epicure that she was! She shall have her little crooked lover, shan't she? Oh, yes! She shall have him, cold and stark and livid, with that great, black, heavy hunch, which no back, however broad, can bear, Death, sitting between his shoulders!"

There was something so awful and demoniac in this entire speech and the manner in which it was delivered, that it petrified Zonela into a mere inanimate figure, whose eyes seemed unalterably fixed on the fierce, cruel face of the Wondersmith. As for Solon, he was paralyzed in the grasp of his foe. He heard, but could not reply. His large eyes, dilated with horror to far beyond their ordinary size, expressed unutterable agony.

The last sentence had hardly been hissed out by the gypsy when he took from his pocket a long, thin coil of whipcord, which he entangled in a complicated mesh around the cripple's body. It was not the ordinary binding of a prisoner. The slender lash passed and repassed in a thousand intricate folds over the powerless limbs of the poor humpback. When the operation was completed, he looked as if he had been sewed from head to foot in some singularly ingenious species of network.

"Now, my pretty lop-sided little lover," laughed Herr Hippe, flinging Solon over his shoulder, as a fisherman might fling a net-full of fish, "we will proceed to put you into your little cage until your little coffin is quite ready. Meanwhile we will lock up your darling beggar-girl to mourn over your untimely end."

So saying, he stepped from the room with his captive, and securely locked the door behind him.

When he had disappeared, the frozen Zonela thawed, and with a shriek of anguish flung herself on the inanimate body of Furbelow.

VI.

THE POISONING OF THE SWORDS.

It was New Year's Eve, and eleven o'clock at night. All over this great land, and in every great city in the land, curly heads were lying on white pillows, dreaming of the coming of the generous Santa Claus. Innumerable stockings hung by countless bedsides. Visions of beautiful toys, passing in splendid pageantry through myriads of dimly lit dormitories, made millions of little hearts palpitate in sleep. Ah! what heavenly toys those were that the children of this soil beheld, that mystic night, in their dreams! Painted cars with orchestral wheels, making music more delicious than the roll of planets. Agile men of cylindrical figure, who sprang unexpectedly out of meek-looking boxes, with a supernatural fierceness in their crimson cheeks and fur-whiskers. Herds of marvellous sheep, with fleeces as impossible as the one that Jason sailed after; animals entirely indifferent to grass and water and "rot" and "ticks." Horses spotted with an astounding regularity, and furnished with the most ingenious methods of locomotion. Slender foreigners, attired in painfully short tunics, whose existence passed in continually turning heels over head down a steep flight of steps, at the bottom of which they lay in an exhausted condition with dislocated limbs, until they were restored to their former elevation, when they went at it again as if nothing had happened. Stately swans, that seemed to have a touch of the ostrich in them; for they swam continually after a piece of iron which was held before them, as if consumed with a ferruginous hunger. Whole farm-yards of roosters, whose tails curled the wrong way,--a slight defect, that was, however, amply atoned for by the size and brilliancy of their scarlet combs, which, it would appear,

Providence had intended for pen-wipers. Pears, that, when applied to youthful lips, gave forth sweet and inspiring sounds. Regiments of soldiers, that performed neat, but limited evolutions on cross-jointed contractile battle-fields. All these things, idealized, transfigured, and illuminated by the powers and atmosphere and colored lamps of Dreamland, did the millions of dear sleeping children behold, the night of the New Year's Eve of which I speak.

It was on this night, when Time was preparing to shed his skin and come out young and golden and glossy as ever,--when, in the vast chambers of the universe, silent and infallible preparations were making for the wonderful birth of the coming year,--when mystic dews were secreted for his baptism, and mystic instruments were tuned in space to welcome him,--it was at this holy and solemn hour that the Wondersmith and his three gypsy companions sat in close conclave in the little parlor before mentioned.

There was a fire roaring in the grate. On a table, nearly in the centre of the room, stood a huge decanter of Port wine, that glowed in the blaze which lit the chamber like a flask of crimson fire. On every side, piled in heaps, inanimate, but scowling with the same old wondrous scowl, lay myriads of the manikins, all clutching in their wooden hands their tiny weapons. The Wondersmith held in one hand a small silver bowl filled with a green, glutinous substance, which he was delicately applying, with the aid of a camel's-hair brush, to the tips of tiny swords and daggers. A horrible smile wandered over his sallow face,--a smile as unwholesome in appearance as the sickly light that plays above reeking graveyards.

"Let us drink great draughts, brothers," he cried, leaving off his strange anointment for a while, to lift a great glass, filled with sparkling liquor, to his lips. "Let us drink to our approaching triumph. Let us drink to the great poison, Macousha. Subtle seed of Death,--swift hurricane that sweeps away Life,--vast hammer that crushes brain and heart and artery with its resistless weight,--I drink to it."

"It is a noble decoction, Duke Balthazar," said the old fortune-teller and midwife, Madame Filomel, nodding in her chair as she swallowed her wine in great gulps. "Where did you obtain it?"

"It is made," said the Wondersmith, swallowing another great goblet-full of wine ere he replied, "in the wild woods of Guiana, in silence and in mystery. But one tribe of Indians, the Macoushi Indians, know the secret. It is simmered over fires built of strange woods, and the maker of it dies in the making. The place, for a mile around the spot where it is fabricated, is shunned as accursed. Devils hover over the pot in which it stews; and the birds of the air, scenting the smallest breath of its vapor from far away, drop to earth with paralyzed wings, cold and dead."

"It kills, then, fast?" asked Kerplonne, the artificial eyemaker,--his own eyes gleaming, under the influence of the wine, with a sinister lustre, as if they had been fresh from the factory, and were yet untarnished by use.

"Kills?" echoed the Wondersmith, derisively; "it is swifter than thunderbolts, stronger than lightning. But you shall see it proved before we let forth our army on the city accursed. You shall see a wretch die, as if smitten by a falling fragment of the sun."

"What? Do you mean Solon?" asked Oaksmith and the fortune-teller together.

"Ah! you mean the young man who makes the commerce with books?" echoed Kerplonne. "It is well. His agonies will instruct us."

"Yes! Solon," answered Hippe, with a savage accent. "I hate him, and he shall die this horrid death. Ah! how the little fellows will leap upon him, when I bring him in, bound and helpless, and give their beautiful wicked souls to them! How they will pierce him in ten thousand spots with their poisoned weapons, until his skin turns blue and violet and crimson, and his form swells with the venom,--until his hump is lost in shapeless flesh! He hears what I say, every word of it. He is in the closet next door, and is listening. How comfortable he feels! How the sweat of terror rolls on his brow! How he tries to loosen his bonds, and curses all earth and heaven when he finds that he cannot! Ho! ho! Handsome lover of Zonela, will she kiss you when you are livid and swollen? Brothers, let us drink again,--drink always. Here, Oaksmith, take these brushes,--and you, Filomel,--and finish the anointing of these swords. This wine is grand. This poison is grand. It is fine to have good wine to drink, and good poison to kill with; is it not?" and, with flushed face and rolling eyes, the Wondersmith continued to drink and use his brush alternately.

The others hastened to follow his example. It was a horrible scene: those four wicked faces; those myriads of tiny faces, just as wicked; the certain unearthly air that pervaded the apartment; the red, unwholesome glare cast by the fire; the wild and reckless way in which the weird company drank the red-illumined wine.

The anointing of the swords went on rapidly, and the wine went as rapidly down the throats of the four poisoners. Their faces grew more and more inflamed each instant; their eyes shone like rolling fireballs; their hair was moist and dishevelled. The old fortune-teller rocked to and fro in her chair, like those legless plaster figures that sway upon convex loaded bottoms. All four began to mutter incoherent sentences, and babble unintelligible wickednesses. Still the anointing of the swords went on.

"I see the faces of millions of young corpses," babbled Herr Hippe, gazing, with swimming eyes, into the silver bowl that contained the Macousha poison,--"all young, all Christians,--and the little fellows dancing, dancing, and stabbing, stabbing. Filomel, Filomel, I say!"

"Well, Grand Duke," snored the old woman, giving a violent lurch.

"Where's the bottle of souls?"

"In my right-hand pocket, Herr Hippe"; and she felt, so as to assure herself that it was there. She half drew out the black bottle, before described in this narrative, and let it slide again into her pocket,--let it slide again, but it did not completely regain its former place. Caught by some accident, it hung half out, swaying over the edge of the pocket, as the fat midwife rolled backwards and forwards in her drunken efforts at equilibrium.

"All right," said Herr Hippe, "perfectly right! Let's drink."

He reached out his hand for his glass, and, with a dull sigh, dropped on the table, in the instantaneous slumber of intoxication. Oaksmith soon fell back in his chair, breathing heavily. Kerplonne followed. And the heavy, stertorous breathing of Filomel told that she slumbered also; but still her chair retained its rocking motion, and still the bottle of souls balanced itself on the edge of her pocket.

VII.

LET LOOSE.

Sure enough, Solon heard every word of the fiendish talk of the Wondersmith. For how many days he had been shut up, bound in the terrible net, in that dark closet, he did not know; but now he felt that his last hour was come. His little strength was completely worn out in efforts to disentangle himself. Once a day a door opened, and Herr Hippe placed a crust of bread and a cup of water within his reach. On this meagre fare he had subsisted. It was a hard life; but, bad as it was, it was better than the horrible death that menaced him. His brain reeled with terror at the prospect of it. Then, where was Zonela? Why did she not come to his rescue? But she was, perhaps, dead. The darkness, too, appalled him. A faint light, when the moon was bright, came at night through a chink far up in the wall; and the only other hole in the chamber was an aperture through which, at some former time, a stove-pipe had been passed. Even if he were free, there would have been small hope of escape; but, laced as it were in a network of steel, what was to be done? He groaned and writhed upon the floor, and tore at the boards with his hands, which were free from the wrists down. All else was as solidly laced up as an Indian papoose. Nothing but pride kept him from shrieking aloud, when, on the night of New Year's Eve, be heard the fiendish Hippe recite the programme of his murder.

While he was thus wailing and gnashing his teeth in darkness and torture, he heard a faint noise above his head. Then something seemed to leap from the ceiling and alight softly on the floor. He shuddered with terror. Was it some new torture of the Wondersmith's invention? The next moment, he felt some small animal crawling over his body, and a soft, silky paw was pushed timidly across his face. His heart leaped with joy.

"It is Furbelow!" he cried. "Zonela has sent him. He came through the stove-pipe hole."

It was Furbelow, indeed, restored to life by Zonela's care, and who had come down a narrow tube, that no human being could have threaded, to console the poor captive. The monkey nestled closely into the hunchback's bosom, and as he did so, Solon felt something cold and hard hanging from his neck. He touched it. It was sharp. By the dim light that struggled through the aperture high up in the wall, he discovered a knife, suspended by a bit of cord. Ah! how the blood came rushing through the veins that crossed over and through his heart, when life and liberty came to him in this bit of rusty steel! With his manacled hands he loosened the heaven-sent weapon; a few cuts were rapidly made in the cunning network of cord that enveloped his limbs, and in a few seconds he was free!--cramped and faint with hunger, but free!--free to move, to use the limbs that God had given him for his preservation,--free to fight,--to die fighting, perhaps,--but still to die free. He ran to the door. The bolt was a weak one, for the Wondersmith had calculated more

surely on his prison of cords than on any jail of stone,--and more; and with a few efforts the door opened. He went cautiously out into the darkness, with Furbelow perched on his shoulder, pressing his cold muzzle against his cheek. He had made but a few steps when a trembling hand was put into his, and in another moment Zonela's palpitating heart was pressed against his own. One long kiss, an embrace, a few whispered words, and the hunchback and the girl stole softly towards the door of the chamber in which the four gypsies slept. All seemed still; nothing but the hard breathing of the sleepers, and the monotonous rocking of Madame Filomel's chair broke the silence. Solon stooped down and put his eye to the keyhole, through which a red bar of light streamed into the entry. As he did so, his foot crushed some brittle substance that lay just outside the door; at the same moment a howl of agony was heard to issue from the room within. Solon started; nor did he know that at that instant he had crushed into dust Monsieur Kerplonne's supernumerary eye, and the owner, though wrapt in a drunken sleep, felt the pang quiver through his brain.

While Solon peeped through the keyhole, all in the room was motionless. He had not gazed, however, for many seconds, when the chair of the fortune-teller gave a sudden lurch, and the black bottle, already hanging half out of her wide pocket, slipped entirely from its resting-place, and, falling heavily to the ground, shivered into fragments.

Then took place an astonishing spectacle. The myriads of armed dolls, that lay in piles about the room, became suddenly imbued with motion. They stood up straight, their tiny limbs moved, their black eyes flashed with wicked purposes, their thread-like swords gleamed as they waved them to and fro. The villanous souls imprisoned in the bottle began to work within them. Like the Liliputians, when they found the giant Gulliver asleep, they scaled in swarms the burly sides of the four sleeping gypsies. At every step they took, they drove their thin swords and quivering daggers into the flesh of the drunken authors of their being. To stab and kill was their mission, and they stabbed and killed with incredible fury. They clustered on the Wondersmith's sallow cheeks and sinewy throat, piercing every portion with their diminutive poisoned blades. Filomel's fat carcass was alive with them. They blackened the spare body of Monsieur Kerplonne. They covered Oaksmith's huge form like a cluster of insects.

Overcome completely with the fumes of wine, these tiny wounds did not for a few moments awaken the sleeping victims. But the swift and deadly poison Macousha, with which the weapons had been so fiendishly anointed, began to work. Herr Hippe, stung into sudden life, leaped to his feet, with a dwarf army clinging to his clothes and his hands,--always stabbing, stabbing, stabbing. For an instant, a look of stupid bewilderment clouded his face; then the horrible truth burst upon him. He gave a shriek like that which a horse utters when he finds himself fettered and surrounded by fire,--a shriek that curdled the air for miles and miles.

"Oaksmith! Kerplonne! Filomel! Awake! awake! We are lost! The souls have got loose! We are dead! poisoned! Oh, accursed ones! Oh, demons, ye are slaying me! Ah! fiends of Hell!"

Aroused by these frightful howls, the three gypsies sprang also to their feet, to find themselves stung to death by the manikins. They raved, they shrieked, they swore. They staggered round the chamber. Blinded in

the eyes by the ever-stabbing weapons,--with the poison already burning in their veins like red-hot lead,--their forms swelling and discoloring visibly every moment,--their howls and attitudes and furious gestures made the scene look like a chamber in Hell.

Maddened beyond endurance, the Wondersmith, half-blind and choking with the venom that had congested all the blood-vessels of his body, seized dozens of the manikins and dashed them into the fire, trampling them down with his feet.

"Ye shall die too, if I die," he cried, with a roar like that of a tiger. "Ye shall burn, if I burn. I gave ye life,--I give ye death. Down!--down!--burn!--flame! Fiends that ye are, to slay us! Help me, brothers! Before we die, let us have our revenge!"

On this, the other gypsies, themselves maddened by approaching death, began hurling manikins, by handfuls, into the fire. The little creatures, being wooden of body, quickly caught the flames, and an awful struggle for life took place in miniature in the grate. Some of them escaped from between the bars and ran about the room, blazing, writhing in agony, and igniting the curtains and other draperies that hung around. Others fought and stabbed one another in the very core of the fire, like combating salamanders. Meantime, the motions of the gypsies grew more languid and slow, and their curses were uttered in choked guttural tones. The faces of all four were spotted with red and green and violet, like so many egg-plants. Their bodies were swollen to a frightful size, and at last they dropped on the floor, like overripe fruit shaken from the boughs by the winds of autumn.

The chamber was now a sheet of fire. The flames roared round and round, as if seeking for escape, licking every projecting cornice and sill with greedy tongues, as the serpent licks his prey before he swallows it. A hot, putrid breath came through the keyhole and smote Solon and Zonela like a wind of death. They clasped each other's hands with a moan of terror, and fled from the house.

The next morning, when the young Year was just unclosing its eyes, and the happy children all over the great city were peeping from their beds into the myriads of stockings hanging near by, the blue skies of heaven shone through a black network of stone and charred rafters. These were all that remained of the habitation of Herr Hippe, the Wondersmith.

ROBA DI ROMA

[Continued.]

CHAPTER IV.

Lent.

The gay confusion of Carnival is over, with its mad tossing of flowers and _bonbons_, its showering of _confetti_, its brilliantly draped balconies running over with happy faces, its barbaric races, its rows of joyous _contadine_, its quaint masquerading, and all the glad folly of its Saturnalia. For Saturnalia it is, in most respects just like the

festa of the Ancient Romans, with its _Saturni septem dies_, its uproar of "_Io Saturnalia!_" in the streets, and all its mad frolic. In one point it materially differs, however; for on the ancient _festa_ no criminal could be punished; but in modern times it is this gay occasion that the government selects to execute (_giustiziare_) any poor wretch who may have been condemned to death, so as to strike a wholesome terror into the crowd. Truly, the ways of the Church are as wonderful as they are infallible! But all is over now. The last _moccoletti_ are extinguished, that flashed and danced like myriad fire-flies from window and balcony and over the heads of the roaring tide of people that ebbed and flowed in stormy streams of wild laughter through the streets. The Corso has become sober and staid, and taken in its draperies. The fun is finished. The masked balls, with their _belle maschere_, are over. The theatres are all closed. Lent has come, bringing its season of sadness; and the gay world of strangers is flocking down to Naples.

Eh, Signore! Finito il nostro carnovale. Adesso e il carnovale dei preti:--"Our carnival is over, and that of the priests has come." All the _frati_ are going round to every Roman family, high and low, from the prince in his palace to the boy in the _caffe_, demanding "_una santa elemosina,--un abbondante santa elemosina,--ma abbondante_,"--and willingly pocketing any sum, from a half-_baiocco_ upwards. The parish priest is now making his visits in every ward of the city, to register the names of the Catholics in all the houses, so as to insure a confession from each during this season of penance. And woe to any wight who fails to do his duty!--he will soon be brought to his marrow-bones. His name will be placarded in the church, and he will be punished according to circumstances,--perhaps by a mortification to the pocket, perhaps by the penance of the convent; and perhaps his fate will be worse, if he be obstinate. So nobody is obstinate, and all go to confession like good Christians, and confess what they please, for the sake of peace, if not of absolution. The Francescani march more solemnly up and down the alleys of their cabbage-garden, studiously with books in their hands, which they pretend to read; now and then taking out their snuff-stained bandanna and measuring it from corner to corner, in search of a feasible spot for its appropriate function, and then rolling it carefully into a little round ball and returning it to the place whence it came. Whatever penance they do is not to Father Tiber or Santo Acquedotto, excepting by internal ablutions,--the exterior things of this world being ignored. There is no meat-eating now, save on certain festivals, when a supply is laid in for the week. But opposites cure opposites, (contrary to the homoeopathic rule,) and their _magro_ makes them _grasso_. Two days of festival, however, there are in the little church of San Patrizio and Isidoro, when the streets are covered with sand, and sprigs of box and red and yellow hangings flaunt before the portico, and scores of young boy-priests invade their garden, and, tucking up their long skirts, run and scream among the cabbages; for boydom is an irrepressible thing, even under the extinguisher of a priest's black dress.

Daily you will hear the tinkle of a bell and the chant of alto child-voices in the street, and, looking out, you will see two little boys clad in some refuse of the Church's wardrobe, one of whom carries a crucifix or a big black cross, while the other rings a bell and chants as he loiters along; now stopping to chaff with other boys of a similar age, nay, even at times laying down his cross to dispute or struggle with them, and now renewing the appeal of the bell. This is to call together the children of the parish to learn their Dottrina or Catechism,--from which the Second Commandment is, however, carefully

expurgated, lest to their feeble minds the difference between bowing down to graven images, or likenesses of things in the earth, and what they do daily before the images and pictures of the Virgin and Saints may not clearly appear. Indeed, let us cheerfully confess, in passing, that, by a strange forgetfulness, this same Commandment is not reestablished in its place even in the catechism for older persons,--of course through inadvertence. However, it is of no consequence, as the real number of Ten Commandments is made up by the division of the last into two; so that there really are ten. And in a country where so many pictures are painted and statues made, perhaps this Second Commandment might be open to misconstruction, if not prohibited by the wise and holy men of the Church. [A]

[Footnote A: This is a fact,--denied, of course, by some of the Roman Catholics, in argument; for what will they not deny? But it is, nevertheless, a fact. I have now before me a little Catechism, from which the Second Commandment is omitted, and the Tenth divided into two; and I have examined others in which the same omission is made. I cannot say that all are in the same category; for the Catholic Church is everything to everybody; but I can assert it of all I have seen, and especially of _La Dottrina Xtiana, compilata per Ordine dell Eminentissinto Cardinale_ GONZAGA MEMBRINI, _Vescovo di Ancona, per l'Uso delict Citta e Diocesi_, published in 1830, which I mention because it is a compilation of authority, made under the superintendence of the Cardinal Bishop of Ancona,--and of the _Catechismo per i Fanciulll, ad Uso delle Citta e Diocesi di Cortona, Chiuso, Pienza, Pistoia, Prato e Colle_, published in 1786, under the auspices and with the approval of the bishops of all these cities and dioceses.]

Meantime the snow is gradually disappearing from Monte Gennaro and the Sabine Mountains. Picnic parties are spreading their tables under the Pamfili Doria pines, and drawing St. Peter's from the old wall near by the ilex avenue,--or making excursions to Frascati, Tusculum, and Albano,--or spending a day in wandering among the ruins of the Etruscan city of Veii, lost to the world so long ago that even the site of it was unknown to the Caesars,--or strolling by the shore at Ostia, or under the magnificent _pineta_ at Castel Fusano, whose lofty trees repeat, as in a dream, the sound of the blue Mediterranean that washes the coast at half a mile distant. There is no lack of places that Time has shattered and strewn with relics, leaving Nature to festoon her ruins and heal her wounds with tenderest vines and flowers, where one may spend a charming day and dream of the old times.

Spring--_prima vera_, the first true thing, as the Italians call it--has come. The nightingales already begin to bubble into song under the Ludovisi ilexes and in the Barberini Gardens. Daisies have snowed all over the Campagna,--periwinkles star the grass,--crocuses and anemones impurple the spaces between the rows of springing grain along the still brown slopes. At every turn in the streets baskets-full of _mammole_, the sweet-scented Parma violet, are offered you by little girls and boys; and at the corner of the Condotti and Corso is a splendid show of camelias, set into beds of double violets, and sold for a song. Now and then one meets huge baskets filled with these delicious violets, on their way to the confectioners and caffes, where they will be made into syrup; for the Italians are very fond of this _bibite_, and prize it not only for its flavor, but for its medicinal qualities. Violets seem to rain over the villas in the spring,--acres are purple with them, and the air all around is sweet with their fragrance. Every day, scores of carriages are driving about the Borghese grounds, which are open to the public, and hundreds of

children are running about, plucking flowers and playing on the lovely slopes and in the shadows of the noble trees, while their parents stroll at a distance and wait for them in the shady avenues. At the Pamfili Doria villa the English play their national game of cricket, on the flower-enamelled green, which is covered with the most wondrous anemones; and there is a _matinee_ of friends who come to chat and look on. This game is rather "slow" at Rome, however, and does not rhyme with the Campagna. The Italians lift their hands and wonder what there is in it to fascinate the English; and the English in turn call them a lazy, stupid set, because they do not admire it. But those who have seen _pallone_ will not, perhaps, so much wonder at the Italians, nor condemn them for not playing their own game, when they remember that the French have turned them out of their only amphitheatre adapted for it, and left them only _pazienza_.

If one drives out at any of the gates, he will see that spring is come. The hedges are putting forth their leaves, the almond-trees are in full blossom, and in the vineyards the _contadini_ are setting cane-poles and trimming the vines to run upon them. Here and there, along the slopes, the rude old plough of the Georgics, dragged by great gray oxen, turns up the rich loam, that "needs only to be tickled to laugh out in flowers and grain." In the olive-orchards, the farmers are carefully pruning away the decayed branches and loosening the soil about their old roots. Here and there, the smoke of distant bonfires, burning heaps of useless stubble, shows against the dreamy purple hills like the pillar of cloud that led the Israelites. One smells the sharp odor of these fires everywhere, and hears them crackle in the fields.

"Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis."

On _festa_-days the way-side _osterias (con cucina)_ are crowded by parties who come out to sit under the _frascati_ of vines and drink the wine grown on the very spot, and regale themselves with a _frittata_ of eggs and chopped sausages, or a slice of _agnello_, and enjoy the delicious air that breathes from the mountains. The old cardinals descend from their gilded carriages, and, accompanied by one of their household and followed by their ever-present lackeys in harlequin liveries, totter along on foot with swollen ankles, lifting their broad red hats to the passers-by who salute them, and pausing constantly in their discourse to enforce a phrase or take a pinch of snuff. Files of scholars from the Propaganda stream along, now and then, two by two, their leading-strings swinging behind them, and in their ranks all shades of physiognomy, from African and Egyptian to Irish and American. Scholars, too, from the English College, and Germans, in red, go by in companies. All the schools, too, will be out,--little boys, in black hats, following the lead of their priest-master, (for all masters are priests,) and orphan girls in white, convoyed by Sisters of Charity, and the deaf and dumb with their masters. Scores of _ciocciari_, also, may be seen in faded scarlets, with their wardrobes of wretched clothes, and sometimes a basket with a baby in it, on their heads. The _contadini_, who have been to Rome to be hired for the week to labor on the Campagna, come tramping along too, one of them often mounted on a donkey, and followed by a group carrying their tools with them; while hundreds of the middle classes, husbands and wives with their children, and _paini_ and _paine_, with all their jewelry on, are out to take their _festa_ stroll, and to see and be seen.

Once in a while, the sadness of Lent is broken by a Church festival, when all the fasters eat prodigiously and make up for their usual Lenten fare. One of the principal days is that of the 19th of March, dedicated

to San Giuseppe, (the most ill-used of all the saints,) when the little church in Capo le Case, dedicated to him, is hung with brilliant draperies, and the pious flock thither in crowds to say their prayers. The great curtain is swaying to and fro constantly as they come and go, and a file of beggars is on the steps to relieve you of _baiocchi_. Beside them stands a fellow who sells a print of the Angel appearing to San Giuseppe in a dream, and warning him against the sin of jealousy. Four curious lines beneath the print thus explain it:--

"Qual sinistro pensier l'alma ti scuote?
Se il sen fecondo di Maria tu vedi,
Giuseppe, non temer; calmati, e credi
Ch' opra e sol di colui che tutto puote."

Whether Joseph is satisfied or not with this explanation, it would be difficult to determine from his expression. He looks rather haggard and bored than persuaded, and certainly has not that cheerful acquiescence of countenance which one is taught to expect.

During all Lent, a sort of bun, called _maritozze_, which is filled with the edible kernels of the pine-cone, made light with oil, and thinly crusted with sugar, is eaten by the faithful,--and a very good Catholic "institution" it is. But in the festival days of San Giuseppe, gayly ornamented booths are built at the corner of many of the streets, especially near the church in Capo le Case, in the Borgo, and at San Eustachio, which are adorned with great green branches as large as young trees, and hung with red and gold draperies, where the "_Frittelle di San Giuseppe_" are fried in huge caldrons of boiling oil and served out to the common people. These _frittelle_, which are a sort of delicate doughnut, made of flour mixed sometimes with rice, are eaten by all good Catholics, though one need not be a Catholic to find them excellent eating. In front of the principal booths are swung "_Sonetti_" in praise of the Saint, of the cook, and of the doughnuts,--some of them declaring that Mercury has already descended from Olympus at the command of the gods to secure a large supply of the _frittelle_, and praying all believers to make haste, or there would be no more left. The latter alternative seems little probable, when one sees the quantity of provision laid in by the vendors. Their prayer, however, is heeded by all; and a gay scene enough it is,--especially at night, when the great cups filled with lard are lighted, and the shadows dance on the crowd, and the light flashes on the tinsel-covered festoons that sway with the wind, and illuminates the great booth, while the smoke rises from the great caldrons which flank it on either side, and the cooks, all in white, ladle out the dripping _frittelle_ into large polished platters, and laugh and joke, and laud their work, and shout at the top of their lungs, "_Ecco le belle, ma belle frittelle_!" For weeks this frying continues in the streets; but after the day of San Giuseppe, not only the sacred _frittelle_ are made, but thousands of minute fishes, fragments of cauliflower, _broccoli_, cabbage, and _carciofi_ go into the hissing oil, and are heaped all "_dorati_" upon the platters and vases. For all sorts of fries the Romans are justly celebrated. The sweet olive-oil, which takes the place of our butter and lard, makes the fry light, delicate, and of a beautiful golden color; and spread upon the snowy tables of these booths, their odor is so appetizing and their look so inviting, that I have often been tempted to join the crowds who fill their plates and often their pocket-handkerchiefs (_con rispetto_) with these golden fry, "_fritti dorati_," as they are called, and thus do honor to the Saint, and comfort their stomachs with holy food, which quells the devil of hunger within.[A]

[Footnote A: This festival of San Giuseppe, which takes place on the 19th of March, bears a curious resemblance to the _Liberalia_ of the ancient Romans, a festival in honor of Bacchus, which was celebrated every year on the 17th of March, when priests and priestesses, adorned with garlands of ivy, carried through the city wine, honey, cakes, and sweetmeats, together with a portable altar, in the middle of which was a small fire-pan, (_foculus_,) in which, from time to time, sacrifices were burnt. The altar has now become a booth, the _foculus_ a caldron, the sacrifices are of little fishes as well as of cakes, and San Giuseppe has taken the place of Bacchus, Liber Pater; but the festivals, despite these differences, have such grotesque points of resemblance that the latter looks like the former, just as one's face is still one's face, however distortedly reflected in the bowl of a spoon; and, perhaps, if one remembers the third day of the Anthesteria, when cooked vegetables were offered in honor of Bacchus, by putting it together with the Liberalia, we shall easily get the modern _festa_ of San Giuseppe.]

But not only at this time and at these booths are good _fritti_ to be found. It is a favorite mode of cooking in Rome; and a mixed fry (_fritta mista_) of bits of liver, brains, cauliflower, and _carciofi_ is a staple dish, always ready at every restaurant. At any _osteria con cucina_ on the Campagna one is also sure of a good omelet and salad; and, sitting under the vines, after a long walk, I have made as savory a lunch on these two articles as ever I found in the most glittering restaurant in the Palais Royal. If one add the background of exquisite mountains, the middle distance of flowery slopes, where herds of long-haired goats, sheep, and gray oxen are feeding among the skeletons of broken aqueducts, ruined tombs, and shattered mediaeval towers, and the foreground made up of picturesque groups of peasants, who lounge about the door, and come and go, and men from the Campagna, on horseback, with their dark, capacious cloak and long ironed staff, who have come from counting their oxen and superintending the farming, and _carrettieri_, stopping in their hooded wine-carts or ringing along the road,--there is, perhaps, as much to charm the artist as is to be seen while sipping beer or _eau gazeuse_ on the hot Parisian _asphalte_, where the _grisette_ studiously shows her clean ankles, and the dandy struts in his patent-leather boots.

One great _festa_ there is during Lent at the little town of Grotta-Ferrata, about fourteen miles from Rome. It takes place on the 25th of March, and sometimes is very gay and picturesque, and always charming to one who has eyes to see and has shed some of his national prejudices. By eight o'clock in the morning open carriages begin to stream out of the Porta San Giovanni, and in about two hours the old castellated monastery may be seen at whose feet the little village of Grotta-Ferrata stands. As we advance through noble elms and planetrees, crowds of _contadini_ line the way, beggars scream from the banks, donkeys bray, _carretti_ rattle along, until at last we arrive at a long meadow which seems alive and crumbling with gayly dressed figures that are moving to and fro as thick as ants upon an ant-hill. Here are gathered peasants from all the country-villages within ten miles, all in their festal costumes; along the lane which skirts the meadow and leads through the great gate of the old fortress, donkeys are crowded together, and keeping up a constant and outrageous concert; _saltimbanci_, in harlequin suits, are making faces or haranguing from a platform, and inviting everybody into their penny-show. From inside their booths is heard the sound of the invariable pipes and drum, and

from the lifted curtain now and then peers forth a comic face, and then disappears with a sudden scream and wild gesticulation. Meantime the closely packed crowd moves slowly along in both directions, and on we go through the archway into the great court-yard. Here, under the shadow of the monastery, booths and benches stand in rows, arrayed with the produce of the country-villages,--shoes, rude implements of husbandry, the coarse woven fabrics of the _contadini_, hats with cockades and rosettes, feather brooms and brushes, and household things, with here and there the tawdry pinchbeck ware of a peddler of jewelry, and little _quadretti_ of Madonna and saints. Extricating ourselves from the crowd, we ascend by a stone stairway to the walk around the parapets of the walls, and look down upon the scene. How gay it is! Around the fountain, which is spilling in the centre of the court, a constantly varying group is gathered, washing, drinking, and filling their flasks and vases.
Near by, a charlatan, mounted on a table, with a huge canvas behind him painted all over with odd cabalistic figures, is screaming, in loud and voluble tones, the virtues of his medicines and unguents, and his skill in extracting teeth. One need never have a pang in tooth, ear, head, or stomach, if one will but trust his wonderful promises. In one little bottle he has the famous water which renews youth; in another, the lotion which awakens love, or cures jealousy, or changes the fright into the beauty. All the while he plays with his tame serpents, and chatters as if his tongue went of itself, while the crowd of peasants below gape at him, laugh with him, and buy from him. Listen to him, all who have ears!

Udite, udite, O rustici!
Attenti, non fiatate!
Io gia suppongo e immagino
Che al par di me sappiate
Che io son quel gran medico
Dottore Enciclopedico
Chiamato Dulcamara,
La cui virtu preclara
E i portenti infiniti
Son noti in tutto il mondo--_e in altri siti_.

Benefattor degli uomini,
Reparator dei mali,
In pochi giorni io sgombrero.
Io spazzo gli spedali
E la salute a vendere
Per tutto il mondo io vo.
Compratela, compratela,--
Per poco io ve la do.

E questo l'odontalgico,
Mirabile liquore,
De' topi e dei cimici
Possente distruttore,
I cui certificati
Autentici, bollati,
Toccar, vedere, e leggere,
A ciaschedun faro.
Per questo mio specifico
Simpatico, prolifico,
Un uom settuagenario
E valetudinario
Nonno di dieci bamboli

Ancora divento.

O voi matrona rigide,
Ringiovanir bramate?
Le vostre rughe incomode
Con esso cancellate.
Volete, voi donzelle,
Ben liscia aver la pelle?
Voi giovani galanti,
Per sempre avere amanti,
Comprate il mio specifico,--
Per poco io ve lo do.

Ei move i paralitici,
Spedisce gli apopletici,
Gli asmatici, gli asfitici,
Gli isterici, e disbetici;
Guarisce timpanitidi
E scrofoli e rachitidi;
E fino il mal di fegato,
Che in moda divento.
Comprate il mio specifico,--
Per poco io ve lo do.

And so on and on and on. There is never an end of that voluble gabble. Nothing is more amusing than the Italian _ciarlatano_, wherever you meet him; but, like many other national characters, he is vanishing, and is seen more and more rarely every year. Perhaps he has been promoted to an office in the Church or government, and finds more pickings there than at the fairs; and if not, perhaps he has sold out his profession and good-will to his confessor, who has mounted, by means of it into a gilded carriage, and wears silk stockings, whose color, for fear of mistake, I will not mention.

But to return to the fair and our station on the parapets at Grotta-Ferrata. Opposite us is a penthouse, (where nobody peaks and pines,) whose jutting _fraschi_-covered eaves and posts are adorned with gay draperies; and under the shadow of this is seated a motley set of peasants at their lunch and dinner. Smoking plates come in and out of the dark hole of a door that opens into kitchen and cellar, and the _camerieri_ cry constantly, "_Vengo subito_" "_Eccomi qua_"--whether they come or not. Big-bellied flasks of rich Grotta-Ferrata wine are filled and emptied; and bargains are struck for cattle, donkeys, and clothes; and healths are pledged and _brindisi_ are given. But there is no riot and no quarrelling. If we lift our eyes from this swarm below, we see the exquisite Campagna with its silent, purple distances stretching off to Rome, and hear the rush of a wild torrent scolding in the gorge below among the stones and olives.

But while we are lingering here, a crowd is pushing through into the inner court, where mass is going on in the curious old church. One has now to elbow his way to enter, and all around the door, even out into the middle court, _contadini_ are kneeling. Besides this, the whole place reeks intolerably with garlic, which, mixed with whiff of incense from the church within and other unmentionable smells, makes such a compound that only a brave nose can stand it. But stand it we must, if we would see Domenichino's frescoes in the chapel within; and as they are among the best products of his cold and clever talent, we gasp and push on,--the most resolute alone getting through. Here in this old

monastery, as the story goes, he sought refuge from the fierce Salvator Rosa, by whom his life was threatened, and here he painted his best works, shaking in his shoes with fear. When we have examined these frescoes, we have done the fair of Grotta-Ferrata; and those of us who are wise and have brought with us a well-packed hamper stick in our hat one of the red artificial roses which everybody wears, take a charming drive to the Villa Conti, Muti, or Falconieri, and there, under the ilexes, forget the garlic, finish the day with a picnic, and return to Rome when the western sun is painting the Alban Hill.

And here, in passing, one word on the onions and garlic, whose odor issues from the mouths of every Italian crowd, like the fumes from the maw of Fridolin's dragon. Everybody eats them in Italy; the upper classes show them to their dishes to give them a flavor, and the lower use them not only as a flavor, but as a food. When only a formal introduction of them is made to a dish, I confess that the result is far from disagreeable; but that close, intimate, and absorbing relation existing between them and the lowest classes is frightful. _Senza complimenti_, it is "tolerable and not to be endured." When a poor man can procure a raw onion and a hunch of black bread, he does not want a dinner; and towards noon many and many a one may be seen sitting like a king upon a door-step, or making a statuesque finish to a _palazzo portone_, cheerfully munching this spare meal, and taking his siesta after it, full-length upon the bare pavement, as calmly as if he were in the perfumed chambers of the great,

"Under the canopies of costly state,
And lulled with sounds of sweetest melody."

And, indeed, so he is; for the canopy of the soft blue sky is above him, and the plashing fountains lull him to his dreams. Nor is he without ancient authority for his devotion to those twin saints, Cipolla and Aglio. There is an "odor of sanctity" about them, turn up our noses as we may. The Ancient Egyptians offered them as firstfruits upon the altars of their gods, and employed them also in the services for the dead; and such was their attachment to them, that the followers of Moses hankered after them despite the manna, and longed for "the leeks and the onions and the garlic which they did eat in Egypt freely." Nay, even the fastidious Greeks not only used them as a charm against the Evil Eye, but ate them with delight. And in the "Banquet" of Xenophon, Socrates specially recommends them. On this occasion, several curious reasons for their use are adduced, of which we who despise them should not be ignorant. Niceratus says that they relish well with wine, citing Homer in confirmation of his opinion; Callias affirms that they inspire courage in battle; and Charmidas clenches the matter by declaring that they are most useful in "deceiving a jealous wife, who, finding her husband return with his breath smelling of onions, would be induced to believe he had not saluted any one while from home." Despise them not, therefore, O Saxon! for as "their offence is rank," their pedigree is long, and they are sacred plants that "smell to heaven." Happily for you, if these reasons do not persuade you against your will, there is a certain specific against them,--_Eat them yourself_, and you will smell them no longer.

The time of the church processions is now coming, and one good specimen takes place on the 29th of March, from the Santa Maria in Via, which may stand with little variations for all the others. These processions, which are given by every church once a year, are in honor of the Madonna, or some saint specially reverenced in the particular church.

They make the circuit of the parish limits, passing through all its principal streets, and every window and balcony is decorated with yellow and crimson hangings, and with crowds of dark eyes. The front of the church, the steps, and the street leading to it, are spread with yellow sand, over which are scattered sprigs of box. After the procession has been organized in the church, they "come unto the yellow sands," preceded by a band of music, which plays rather jubilant, and what the uncopious would call profane music, polkas and marches, and airs from the operas. Next follow great lanterns of strung glass drops, accompanied by soldiers; then an immense gonfalon representing the Virgin at the Cross, which swings backwards and forwards, borne by the _confraternita_ of the parish, with blue capes over their white dresses, and all holding torches. Then follows a huge wooden cross, garlanded with golden ivy-leaves, and also upheld by the _confraternita_, who stagger under its weight. Next come two crucifixes, covered, as the body of Christ always is during Lent and until Resurrection-Day, with cloth of purple, (the color of passion,) and followed by the _frati_ of the church in black, carrying candles and dolorously chanting a hymn. Then comes the bishop in his mitre, his yellow stole upheld by two principal priests, (the curate and subcurate,) and to him his acolytes waft incense, as well as to the huge figure of the Madonna which follows. This figure is of life-size, carved in wood, surrounded by gilt angels, and so heavy that sixteen stout _facchini_, whose shabby trousers show under their improvised costume, are required to bear it along. With this the procession comes to its climax. Immediately after follow the guards, and a great concourse of the populace closes the train.

As Holy Week approaches, pilgrims begin to flock to Rome with their oil-cloth capes, their scallop-shell, their long staffs, their rosaries, and their dirty hands held out constantly for "_una santa elemosina pel povero pellegrino_." Let none of my fair friends imagine that she will find a Romeo among them, or she will be most grievously disappointed. There is something to touch your pity in their appearance, though not the pity akin to love. They are, for the most part, old, shabby, and soiled, and inveterate mendicants,--and though, some time or other, some one or other may have known one of them for her true-love, "by his cockle hat and staff, and his sandal shoon," that time has been long forbye, unless they are wondrously disguised. Besides these pilgrims, and often in company with them, bands of peasants, with their long staffs, may be met on the road, making a pilgrimage to Rome for the Holy Week, clad in splendid _ciocciari_ dresses, carrying their clothes on their heads, and chanting a psalm as they go. Among these may be found many a handsome youth and beautiful maid, whose faces will break into the most charming of smiles as you salute them and wish them a happy pilgrimage. And of all smiles, none is so sudden, open, and enchanting as a Roman girl's; and breaking over their dark, passionate faces, black eyes, and level brows, it seems like a burst of sunlight from behind a cloud. There must be noble possibilities in any nation which, through all its oppression and degradation, has preserved the childlike frankness of the Italian smile. Still another indication of the approach of Holy Week is the Easter egg, which now makes its appearance, and warns us of the solemnities to come. Sometimes it is stained yellow, purple, red, green, or striped with various colors; sometimes it is crowned with paste-work, representing, in a most primitive way, a hen,--her body being the egg, and her pastry-head adorned with a disproportionately tall feather. These eggs are exposed for sale at the corners of the streets and bought by everybody, and every sort of ingenious device is resorted to, to attract customers and render them attractive. This custom is probably derived from the East, where the egg

is the symbol of the primitive state of the world and of the creation of things. The new year formerly began at the spring equinox, at about Easter; and at that period of the renewal of Nature, a festival was celebrated in the new moon of the month Phamenoth, in honor of Osiris, when painted and gilded eggs were exchanged as presents, in reference to the beginning of all things. The transference of the commencement of the year to January deprived the Paschal egg of its significance. Formerly in France, and still in Russia as in Italy, it had a religious significance, and was never distributed until it had received a solemn benediction. On Good Friday, a priest, with his robes and an attendant, may be seen going into every door in the street to bless the house, the inhabitants, and the eggs. The last, colored and arranged according to the taste of the individual, are spread upon a table, which is decorated with box, flowers, and whatever ornamental dishes the family possesses. The priest is received with bows at the door, and when the benediction is over he is rewarded with the gratuity of a _paul_ or a _scudo_, according to the piety and purse of the proprietor; while into the basket of his attendant is always dropped a _pagnotta_, a couple of eggs, a _baiocco_, or some such trifle. [Footnote: Beside the blessing of the eggs and house, it is the custom in some parts of Italy, (and I have particularly observed it in Siena,) for the priest, at Easter, to affix to the door of the chief _palazzi_ and villas a waxen cross, or the letter M in wax, so as to guard the house from evil spirits. But only the houses of the rich are thus protected; for the priests bestow favors only "for a consideration," which the poor cannot so easily give.]

It is on this day, too, that the customary Jew is converted, recants, and is baptized; and there are not wanting evil tongues which declare that there is a wonderful similarity in his physiognomy every year. However this may be, there is no doubt that some one is annually dug out of the Ghetto, which is the pit of Judaism here in Rome; and if he fall back again, after receiving the temporal reward, and without waiting for the spiritual, he probably finds it worth his while to do so, in view of the zeal of the Church, and in remembrance of the fifteenth verse of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, if he ever reads that portion of the Bible. It is in the great basaltic vase in the baptistery of St. John Lateran, the same in which Rienzi bathed in 1347, before receiving the insignia of knighthood, that the converted Jew, and any other infidel who can be brought over, receives his baptism when he is taken into the arms of the Church.

It is at this season, too, that the _pizzicarolo_ shops are gayly dressed in the manner so graphically described by Hans Andersen in his "Improvisatore." No wonder, that, to little Antonio, the interior of one of these shops looked like a realization of Paradise; for they are really splendid; and when glittering with candles and lamps at night, the effect is very striking. Great sides of bacon and lard are ranged endwise in regular bars all around the interior, and adorned with stripes of various colors, mixed with golden spangles and flashing tinsel; while over and under them, in reticulated work, are piled scores upon scores of brown cheeses, in the form of pyramids, columns, towers, with eggs set into their interstices. From the ceiling, and all around the doorway, hang wreaths and necklaces of sausages, or groups of the long gourd-like _cacio di cavallo_, twined about with box, or netted wire baskets filled with Easter eggs, or great bunches of white candles gathered together at the wicks. Seen through these, at the bottom of the shop, is a picture of the Madonna, with scores of candles burning about it, and gleaming upon the tinsel hangings and spangles with which it

is decorated. Underneath this, there is often represented an elaborate _presepio_,--or, when this is not the case, the animals may be seen mounted here and there on the cheeses. Candelabra of eggs, curiously bound together, so as to resemble bunches of gigantic white grapes, swung from the centre of the ceiling, and cups of colored glass, with a taper in them, or red paper lanterns, and _terra-cotta_ lamps, of the antique form, show here and there their little flames among the flitches of bacon and cheeses; while, in the midst of all this splendor, the figure of the _pizzicarolo_ moves to and fro, like a high-priest at a ceremony. Nor is this illumination exclusive. The doors, often of the full width of the shop, are thrown wide open, and the glory shines upon all passers-by. It is the apotheosis of ham and cheese, at which only the Hebraic nose, doing violence to its natural curve, turns up in scorn; while true Christians crowd around it to wonder and admire, and sometimes to venture in upon the almost enchanted ground. May it be long before this pleasant custom dies out!

At last comes Holy Week, with its pilgrims that flock from every part of the world. Every hotel and furnished apartment is crowded,--every carriage is hired at double and treble its ordinary fare,--every door, where a Papal ceremony is to take place, is besieged by figures in black with black veils. The streets are filled with Germans, English, French, Americans, all on the move, coming and going, and anxiously inquiring about the _funzioni_, and when they are to take place, and where,--for everything is kept in a charming condition of perfect uncertainty, from the want of any public newspaper or journal, or other accurate means of information. So everybody asks everybody, and everybody tells everybody, until nobody knows anything, and everything is guesswork. But, nevertheless, despite impatient words, and muttered curses, and all kinds of awkward mistakes, the battle goes bravely on. There is terrible fighting at the door of the Sistine Chapel, to hear the _Miserere_, which is sure to be Baini's when it is said to be Allegri's, as well as at the railing of the Chapel, where the washing of the feet takes place, and at the supper-table, where twelve country-boors represent the Apostolic company, and are waited on by the Pope, in a way that shows how great a sham the whole thing is. The air is close to suffocation in this last place. Men and women faint and are carried out. Some fall and are trodden down. Sometimes, as at the table this year, some unfortunate pays for her curiosity with her life. It is "Devil take the hindmost!" and if any one is down, he is leaped over by men and women indiscriminately, for there is no time to be lost. In the Chapel, when once they are in, all want to get out. Shrieks are heard as the jammed mass sways backward and forward,--veils and dresses are torn in the struggle,--women are praying for help. Meantime the stupid Swiss keep to their orders with a literalness which knows no parallel; and all this time, the Pope, who has come in by a private door, is handing round beef and mustard and bread and potatoes to the gormandizing Apostles, who put into their pockets what their stomachs cannot hold, and improve their opportunities in every way. At last, those who have been through the fight return at nightfall, haggard and ghastly with fear, hunger, and fatigue; and, after agreeing that they could never counsel any one to such an attempt, set off the next morning to attack again some shut door behind which a "function" is to take place.

All this, however, is done by the strangers. The Romans, on these high festivals, do not go to Saint Peter's, but perform their religious services at their parish churches, calmly and peacefully; for in Saint Peter's all is a spectacle. "How shall I, a true son of the Holy Church," asks Pasquin, "obtain admittance to her services?" And Marforio

answers, "Declare you are an Englishman, and swear you are a heretic."

The Piazza is crowded with carriages during all these days, and a hackman will look at nothing under a _scudo_ for the smallest distance, and, to your remonstrances, he shrugs his shoulders and says, "_Eh, signore, bisogna vivere; adesso e la nostra settimana, e poi niente._ Next week I will take you anywhere for two _pauls_,--now for fifteen." Meluccio, (the little old apple,) the aged boy in the Piazza San Pietro, whose sole occupation it has been for years to open and shut the doors of carriages--and hold out his hand for a _mezzo-baiocco_, is in great glee. He runs backwards and forwards all day long,--hails carriages like mad,--identifies to the bewildered coachmen their lost fares, whom he never fails to remember,--points out to bewildered strangers the coach they are hopelessly striving to identify, having entirely forgotten coachman and carriage in the struggle they have gone through. He is everywhere, screaming, laughing, and helping everybody. It is his high festival as well as the Pope's, and grateful strangers drop into his hand the frequent _baiocco_ or half-_paul_, and thank God and Meluccio as they sink back in their carriages and cry, "_A casa_."

Finally comes Easter Sunday, the day of the Resurrection; and at twelve on the Saturday previous all the bells are rung, and the crucifixes uncovered, and the Pope, cardinals, and priests change their mourning-vestments for those of rejoicing. Easter has come. You may know it by the ringing bells, and the sound of trumpets in the street, and the jar of long trains of cannon going down to the Piazza San Pietro, to guard the place and join in the dance, in case of a row or rising among the populace; for the right arm of the Church is the cannon, and Christ's doctrines are always protected by the bayonet, and Peter's successor "making broad his phylacteries," and his splendid _cortege_ "enlarging the borders of their garments" and going up to "the chief seats in the synagogues" "in purple and fine linen" to make their "long prayers," crave the protection of bristling arms and drawn swords.

By twelve o'clock Mass in Saint Peter's is over, and the Piazza is crowded with people to see the Benediction,--and a grand and imposing spectacle it is! Out over the great balcony stretches a huge white awning, where priests and attendants are collected, and where the Pope will soon be seen. Below, the Piazza is alive with moving masses. In the centre are drawn up long lines of soldiery, with yellow and red pompons and glittering helmets and bayonets. These are surrounded by crowds on foot, and at the outer rim are packed carriages filled and overrun with people mounted on the seats and boxes. There is a half-hour's waiting while we can look about, a steady stream of carriages all the while pouring in, and, if one could see it, stretching out a mile behind, and adding thousands of impatient spectators to those already there. What a sight it is!--above us the great dome of Saint Peter's, and below, the grand embracing colonnade, and the vast space, in the centre of which rises the solemn obelisk thronged with masses of living beings. Peasants from the Campagna and the mountains are moving about everywhere. Pilgrims in oil-cloth cape and with iron staff demand charity. On the steps are rows of purple, blue, and brown umbrellas; for there the sun blazes fiercely. Everywhere cross forth the white hoods of Sisters of Charity, collected in groups, and showing, among the party-colored dresses, like beds of chrysanthemums in a garden. One side of the massive colonnade casts a grateful shadow over the crowd beneath, that fill up the intervals of its columns; but elsewhere the sun burns down and flashes everywhere. Mounted on the colonnade are masses of people leaning over, beside the colossal statues. Through all the heat is heard

the constant plash of the two superb fountains, that wave to and fro their veils of white spray. At last the clock strikes. In the far balcony are seen the two great snowy peacock fans, and between them a figure clad in white, that rises from a golden chair, and spreads his great sleeves like wings as he raises his arms in benediction. That is the Pope, Pius the Ninth. All is dead silence, and a musical voice, sweet and penetrating, is heard chanting from the balcony;--the people bend and kneel; with a cold, gray flash, all the bayonets gleam as the soldiers drop to their knees, and rise to salute as the voice dies away, and the two white wings are again waved;--then thunder the cannon,--the bells dash and peal,--a few white papers, like huge snowflakes, drop wavering from the balcony;--these are Indulgences, and there is an eager struggle for them below;--then the Pope again rises, again gives his benediction, waving to and fro his right hand, three fingers open, and making the sign of the cross,--and the peacock fans retire, and he between them is borne away,--and Lent is over.

As Lent is ushered in by the dancing lights of the _moccoletti_, so it is ushered out by the splendid illumination of Saint Peter's, which is one of the grandest spectacles in Rome. The first illumination is by means of paper lanterns, distributed everywhere along the architectural lines of the church, and from the steps beneath its portico to the cross above its dome. These are lighted before sunset, and against the blaze of the western light are for some time completely invisible; but as twilight thickens, and the shadows deepen, and a gray pearly veil is drawn over the sky, the distant basilica begins to glow against it with a dull furnace-glow, as of a wondrous coal fanned by a constant wind; looking not so much lighted from without as reddening from an interior fire. Slowly this splendor grows, until the mighty building at last stands outlined against the dying twilight as if etched there with a fiery burin. As the sky darkens into intense blue behind it, the material part of the basilica seems to vanish, until nothing is left to the eye but a wondrous, magical, visionary structure of fire. This is the silver illumination; watch it well, for it does not last long. At the first hour of night, when the bells sound all over Rome, a sudden change takes place. From the lofty cross a burst of flame is seen, and instantly a flash of light whirls over the dome and drum, climbs the smaller cupolas, descends like a rain of fire down the columns of the _facade_, and before the great bell of Saint Peter's has ceased to toll twelve peals, the golden illumination has succeeded to the silver. For my own part, I prefer the first illumination; it is more delicate, airy, and refined, though the second is more brilliant and dazzling. One is like the Bride of the Church, the other like the Empress of the World. In the second lighting, the Church becomes more material; the flames are like jewels, and the dome seems a gigantic triple crown of Saint Peter's. One effect, however, is very striking. The outline of fire, which before was firm and motionless, now wavers and shakes as if it would pass away, as the wind blows the flames back and forth from the great cups by which it is lighted. From near and far the world looks on,--from the Piazza beneath, where carriages drive to and fro in its splendor, and the band plays and the bells toll,--from the windows and _loggias_ of the city, wherever a view can be caught of this superb spectacle,--and from the Campagna and mountain towns, where, far away, alone and towering above everything, the dome is seen to blaze. Everywhere are ejaculations of delight, and thousands of groups are playing the game of "What is it like?" One says, it is like a hive covered by a swarm of burning bees; others, that it is the enchanted palace in the gardens of Gul in the depths of the Arabian nights,--like a gigantic tiara set with wonderful diamonds, larger than those which

Sinbad found in the roc's valley,--like the palace of the fairies in the dreams of childhood,--like the stately pleasure-dome of Kubla Khan in Xanadu, and twenty other whimsical things. At nearly midnight, when we go to bed, we take a last look at it. It is a ruin, like the Colosseum,--great gaps of darkness are there, with broken rows of splendor. The lights are gone on one side the dome,--they straggle fitfully here and there down the other and over the _facade_, fading even as we look. It is melancholy enough. It is a bankrupt heiress, an old and wrinkled beauty, that tells strange tales of its former wealth and charms, when the world was at its feet. It is the once mighty Catholic Church, crumbling away with the passage of the night,--and when morning and light come, it will be no more.

[To be continued.]

LA MALANOTTE.

One morning in Naples, in the spring of ----, I was practising over some operas of Rossini with a musical friend. He had known the great _maestro_ personally, and his intelligence on musical matters, his numberless anecdotes and reminiscences, made him a charming companion; he was a living, talking Scudo article, full of artistic _mots_ and _ana_. We had just finished looking over the "Tancredi," and, as I sat down to rest in an arm-chair near the window, he leaned back in the deep window-embrasure, and looked down into the fine old garden below, from which arose the delicious odor of orange and young grape blossoms.

"I was in Venice," he said, "when this opera was composed, in 1813. _Mon Dieu_! how time flies! Rossini wrote it for one of the loveliest women God ever made, Adelaide Montresor. I knew her very well. She was the wife of a French gentleman, a friend of mine, M. Montresor, at one time very prosperous in fortune. Adelaide was a Veronese, of good family, and had studied music only _en amateur_. Her maiden name was Malanotte. Oh, yes, of course, you have heard of her. She was famous, poor child, in her day, which was a short one."

The old gentleman sighed, and threw the end of his cigar out of the window. I handed him another; for his age and charming conversation entitled him to such indulgences. He remained silent a little while, puffing away at his cigar until it was well lighted; then he continued:--

"I think I'll tell you poor Adelaide's story. She was a delicious young creature when Montresor married her,--scarcely more than a child. For some years they lived delightfully; they had plenty of money, and were very fond of each other. She had two charming little children; one was my godson and namesake, Ettore. Montresor, her husband, was surely one of the happiest of men.

"They were both musical. Montresor had a clever barytone voice, and sang with sufficient grace and memory for an amateur. Adelaide was more remarkable than her husband; she had genius more than culture, and sang good old music with an unconscious creative grace. At their house we used to get up 'Il Matrimonio Segreto,' _scenas_ from 'Don Giovanni,' and many other passages from favorite operas; and Adelaide was always our admired _prima donna_; for she, as Fetis says of genius, 'invented

forms, imposed them as types, and obliged us not only to acknowledge, but to imitate them.'

"I had to go to Russia in 1805, and leave my home and friends for an indefinite period of time. When I bade the Montresors good-bye, I wondered what sorrow could touch them, they seemed so shielded by prosperity from every accident; but some one has said very justly of prosperity, that it is like glass,--it shines brightest just before shivering. A year after I left, Montresor, who had foolishly entered into some speculations, lost all his fortune. In a fortnight after the event, Veronese society was electrified by the public announcement of Madame Montresor's first appearance in public as an opera-singer. I forget what her opening piece was. She wrote to me about it, telling me that her _debut_ was successful, but that she felt she needed more preparation, and should devote the following year to studies necessary to insure success in her profession. Her letters had no murmurs in them about the lost fortune, no moans over the sacrifice of her social position. She possessed true genius, and felt most happy in the exercise of her music, even if it took sorrow, toil, and poverty to develop it. Her whole thoughts were on the plan of studies laid down for her. Now she could be an artist conscientiously. She had obtained the rare advantage of lessons from some famous retired singer at Milan,--Marchesi, I think,--and her letters were filled with learned and enthusiastic details of her master's method, her manner of study, regimen, and exercise,--enough to make ten Catalanis, I saucily wrote back to her.

"Once in a while she would send me a notice of her success at some concert or minor theatre. At last, in 1813, seven years after her girlish _debut_ at Verona, she received an engagement at Venice. At that time I obtained _conge_ for a few months, and, on my home-journey, stopped a few weeks at Venice, to see some relatives living there, and my old friends, the Montresors. The seven-years' hard study and public life had developed the pretty _petite_ girl-matron into a charming woman and fine artist. She was as _naive_ and frank as in her girlish days, though not so playful,--more self-possessed, and completely engrossed with her art. Her domestic life was gone; she lived and breathed only in the atmosphere of her profession, and happily her husband sympathized with her, and generously regarded her triumphs as his own. The first morning I saw her, I was struck with her excited air; a deep crimson spot was on each cheek, which made her eyes, formerly so soft in their expression, painfully sharp in their brilliancy.

"'I sang for Rossini last night,' she said, in a quick tone, after our first greeting was over; then continued, with her old, frank _naivete_, 'I did not know he was in the theatre. I am so glad! for otherwise I might not have done myself justice.'

"'He was pleased, of course,' I replied.

"'Yes; he was here this morning. He is a charming person,--so graceful and complaisant! Montresor and I were delighted with him. He is to compose an opera for me.'

"Her whole form seemed to dilate with pride. She walked up and down the _salon_ with unconscious restlessness while she talked, went to a stand of flowers, and, leaning her burning face over the fragrant blossoms, drew in sharp, rapid breaths of their odors. She plucked off a white tea-rose, and pressed its yellow core against her cheeks, as if she

fancied the fresh white color of the flower would cool them. Every look, every movement, every expression that shot rapidly over her varying face, as quickly as the ripples on water under the hot noonday sunlight, spoke more plainly than words her intense longing. As I recall my beautiful friend, so possessed as I saw her then with this intense desire for the fame of a great artist, I think of two lines in a little song I have heard you sing--

"'To let the new life in, we know
Desire must ope the portal.'

"And, surely, her earnest spirit was beating with feverish haste on that portal of her future for her new life.

"Of course we did not meet so constantly, and therefore not so familiarly as formerly. When we did meet, she was as frank and friendly as ever; but she was always preoccupied. She was studying daily with the great young _maestro_ himself, then just rising to the full zenith of his fame, and her whole thoughts were filled with the music of the new opera he was writing, which she called glorious.

"'So grand and heroic,' she said, with enthusiasm, one morning, when describing it, 'and yet so original and fresh! The melodies are graceful, and the accompaniments as sparkling as these diamonds in their brilliancy.'

"At _caffes_, where silly young men murder reputations, it was said that Rossini was madly in love with the beautiful _prima donna;_ and of course he was; for he could not help being in love, in his way, with every brilliant woman he met. Numberless stories were told of the bewitching tyranny '_La Malanotte_,' as she was called, loved to exercise over her distinguished admirer, which were interpreted by the uncharitable as the caprice of a mistress in the first flush of her loving power. I had to listen in silence to such stories, and feel grateful that Montresor did not hear them also.

"'It is one of the penalties one always has to pay for a woman's fame,' I said to myself, one day, as I sat sipping my chocolate, while I was forced to overhear from a neighboring alcove an insolent young dandy tell of various scenes, betraying passionate love on both sides, which he had probably manufactured to make himself of consequence. One story he told I felt sure was false, and yet I would rather it had been true than the others; he declared he had been present at the theatre when it had taken place, which had been the morning previous,--the morning after the first representation of this famous opera. La Malanotte, he said, was dissatisfied with her opening _cavatina_, and at rehearsal had presented the _maestro_ with the MS. of that passage torn into fifty atoms, declaring in a haughty tone that she would never sing it again. This was too unlike Adelaide to be true; but I tried to swallow my vexation in silence, and with difficulty restrained myself from insulting the addle-pated young puppy. I had heard her say she did not like the passage so well as the rest of the opera, and felt sure that the whole story had been founded on this simple expression of disapprobation.

"I swallowed my chocolate, put on my hat, and sauntered leisurely along to Montresor's apartments. It was late in the afternoon; the servant admitted me, saying Madame was alone in the _salon_. The apartments were several rooms _en suite;_ the music-room was divided from the _salon_ by

curtains. I entered the _salon_ unannounced; for the _valet de chambre_ was an old family-servant, and having known me for so many years as _garcon de famille_, he let me proceed through the antechamber unaccompanied. The heavy curtains over the music-room were dropped; but as I entered, I heard a low murmur of voices coming from it. The thick Turkey carpet which lay on the inlaid ivory floor of the _salon_ gave back no sound of my footsteps. I did not think of committing any indiscretion; I concluded that Adelaide was busy studying; so I took up a book and seated myself comfortably, feeling as well off there as at home.

"Presently I heard a brilliant preluding passage on the piano, then Adelaide's glorious voice pronounced that stirring recitative, _'O Patria.'_ This was the passage alluded to by the young dandies in the _caffe_. I laid down my book, and leaned forward to listen. The recitative over, then followed that delicious 'hymn of youth and love,' as Scudo calls it, '_Tu che accendi_' followed by the 'Di _tanti palpiti_.' Can you imagine the sensations produced by hearing for the first time such a passage? If you can, pray do, for I cannot describe them;--just fancy that intoxicating '_Ti revedro_' soaring up, followed by the glittering accompaniment,--and to hear it, as I did, just fresh from its source, the aroma from this bright-beaded goblet of youth and love! Heigho! Adelaide repeated it again and again, and the _enivrement_ seemed as great in the music-room as in my brain and heart. Then the low talking recommenced, and from some words that reached my ears I began to think I might be committing an indiscretion; so I left the room as I entered it, unannounced.

"That night I was at the theatre, and witnessed the wild, frantic reception of this _cavatina_, and also saw the point Scudo alludes to, which Adelaide made that night for the first time, in the duo between Tancredi and Argirio, '_Ah, se de' mali miei_,' in the passage at the close of '_Ecco la tromba_,' at the repeat of '_Al campo_.' She looked superbly, and, as that part of the duo ended, she advanced a step, drew up her fine form to its full height, flashed her sword with a gesture of inspiration, and exclaimed, in clear, musical diction, '_Il vivo lampo di questa spada_.' The effect was electric. The duet could not proceed for the cries and shouts of enthusiasm; the whole theatre rose in one mass, and shouted aloud their ecstasy in one voice, as if they had but one common ear and heart.

"The instant the cries lessened, Adelaide gave the sign to Argirio, and they took up the duo, '_Splenda terribile_,' before the orchestra, equally electrified with the audience, were prepared for it, so that Adelaide's clear ringing '_Mi_' soared out like a mellow violoncello note, and she sang the three following measures unaccompanied. The short symphony which follows this little bit was not heard for the cries of applause, which were silenced only by the grand finale, '_Se il ciel mi guida_.'

"_Gran Dio!_ the bare memory of that night is a joy," said my friend, walking rapidly up and down the room.

"I had to leave for my Russian home a few days after that, and saw Adelaide only once; it was the morning of my departure. Her _salon_ was crowded, and she was leaning on her husband's arm, looking very proud and happy. 'Who could have been in that music-room?' I asked myself, while I looked at them; then in an instant I felt reproached at my suspicions, as the thought flashed across my mind, that it might have

been her husband. What more likely? I bade her good-bye, and told her, laughingly, as she gave me a cordial grasp of her hand, that I hoped to renew our friendship in St. Petersburg.

"She never wrote to me after that. Marked differences in pursuits and a continued separation will dissolve the outward bonds of the truest friendships. Adelaide's time was now completely occupied; it was one round of brilliant success for the poor woman. 'Such triumphs! such intoxication!' as Scudo says; but the glory was that of a shooting star. In eight short years after that brilliant season at Venice, Adelaide Montresor, better known as 'La Malanotte,' the idol of the European musical public, the short-lived infatuation and passion of the celebrated Rossini, was a hopeless invalid, and worse, _presque folle_.

"I received the news, strange to say, one evening at the opera in St. Petersburg, while I was listening to the music of 'Tancredi.' Two gentlemen were talking behind me, and one was telling the other his recollection of that brilliant scene I have just recounted. Then followed the account of her illness; and I could not restrain myself, as I had in the _caffe_ at Venice; for I had known Adelaide as a girl, and loved her as a brother. I presented myself, explaining the cause of my interest in their conversation, and found the news was only too true. The gentlemen had just come from Southern Europe, and knew the Montresors personally. He said that her mind was gone, even more hopelessly than her health. She lingered eleven years in this sad state, and then, happily for herself, died."

"And Rossini," I asked,--"how did he take her illness?"

"Oh, three years after his Venetian infatuation, he was off here in Naples, worshipping the Spanish beauty, a little _passee_ to be sure, of La Colbrand. She, however, possessed more lasting attractions than mere physical ones. She had amassed a large fortune in a variety of ways. Rossini was not over-nice; he wanted money most of all things, and he carried off La Colbrand from her _cher ami_, the Neapolitan director of San Carlo, and married her. It was a regular elopement, as if of a young miss from her papa. Do not look so shocked. Rossini could not help his changeability. You women always throw away a real gem, and receive, nine times out of ten, a mock one in return. But the fault lies not with us, but with you; you almost invariably select the wrong person. Now such men as Montresor and I knew how to return a real gem for Adelaide's heart-gift; but such men as Rossini have no real feelings in their hearts."

"And you think she loved him?"

"I try to think otherwise, for I cannot bear to remember Adelaide Montresor as an unworthy woman; and when the unwelcome thought will thrust itself in, I think of her youth, her beauty, her genius, and the sudden blinding effect that rapid prosperity and brilliant success produce on an enthusiastic, warm temperament--Good-morning; to-morrow let me come again, and we will go over 'Tancredi,' and I will sing with you the '_Ah, se de' mali miei_.'"

My friend left me alone. I sat by the window, watching the waving of the tasselled branches of the acacia, and the purple fiery vapor that arose from the overflowing Vesuvius; and I thought of Adelaide Malanotte, and wondered at the strange, fatal necessity attendant on genius, its spiritual labor and pain. Like all things beautiful in Art, made by

human hands, it must proceed from toil of brain or heart. It takes fierce heat to purify the gold, and welding beats are needed to mould it into gracious shapes; the sharp chisel must cut into the marble, to fashion by keen, driving blows the fair statue; the fine, piercing instrument, "the little diamond-pointed ill," it is that traces the forms of beauty on the hard onyx. There had been sorrow in the tale of my friend, temptation at least, if not sinful yielding, labor and pain, which had broken down the fair mind itself,--but it had all created a gracious form for the memory to dwell on, an undying association with the "Tancredi," as beautiful, instructive, and joy-giving as the "Divino Amore" of Raphael, the exquisite onyx heads in the "Cabinet of Gems," or that divine prelude the Englishman was at that moment pouring out from his piano in a neighboring _palazzo_, in a flood of harmony as golden and rich as the wine of Capri, every note of which, we know, had been a life-drop wrung from the proud, breaking heart of Chopin, when he sat alone, that solemn, stormy midnight, in the old convent-chamber at Majorca. But the toil and suffering are forgotten in the enjoyment of creation, and genius itself, when going down into the fiery baptism of sorrow, or walking over the red-hot ploughshares of temptation, would rather take all its suffering and peril than not be itself;--and well it may; for it is making, what poor heart-broken Keats sung,

"A thing of beauty--a joy forever."

THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

WHAT HE SAID, WHAT HE HEARD, AND WHAT HE SAW.

Iris, her Book.

I pray thee by the soul of her that bore thee,
By thine own sister's spirit I implore thee,
Deal gently with the leaves that lie before thee!

For Iris had no mother to infold her,
Nor ever leaned upon a sister's shoulder,
Telling the twilight thoughts that Nature told her.

She had not learned the mystery of awaking
Those chorded keys that soothe a sorrow's aching,
Giving the dumb heart voice, that else were breaking.

Yet lived, wrought, suffered. Lo, the pictured token!
Why should her fleeting day-dreams fade unspoken,
Like daffodils that die with sheaths unbroken?

She knew not love, yet lived in maiden fancies,--
Walked simply clad, a queen of high romances,
And talked strange tongues with angels in her trances.

Twin-souled she seemed, a twofold nature wearing,--
Sometimes a flashing falcon in her daring,
Then a poor mateless dove that droops despairing.

Questioning all things: Why her Lord had sent her?
What were these torturing gifts, and wherefore lent her?

Scornful as spirit fallen, its own tormentor.

And then all tears and anguish: Queen of Heaven,
Sweet Saints, and Thou by mortal sorrows riven,
Save me! oh, save me! Shall I die forgiven?

And then--Ah, God! But nay, it little matters:
Look at the wasted seeds that autumn scatters
The myriad germs that Nature shapes and shatters!

If she had--Well! She longed, and knew not wherefore.
Had the world nothing she might live to care for?
No second self to say her evening prayer for?

She knew the marble shapes that set men dreaming,
Yet with her shoulders bare and tresses streaming
Showed not unlovely to her simple seeming.

Vain? Let it be so! Nature was her teacher.
What if a lonely and unsistered creature
Loved her own harmless gift of pleasing feature,

Saying, unsaddened,--This shall soon be faded,
And double-hued the shining tresses braided,
And all the sunlight of the morning shaded?

--This her poor book is full of saddest follies
Of tearful smiles and laughing melancholies,
With summer roses twined and wintry hollies.

In the strange crossing of uncertain chances,
Somewhere, beneath some maiden's tear-dimmed glances
May fall her little book of dreams and fancies.

Sweet sister! Iris, who shall never name thee,
Trembling for fear her open heart may shame thee,
Speaks from this vision-haunted page to claim thee.

Spare her, I pray thee! If the maid is sleeping,
Peace with her! she has had her hour of weeping.
No more! She leaves her memory in thy keeping.

These verses were written in the first leaves of the locked volume. As I turned the pages, I hesitated for a moment. Is it quite fair to take advantage of a generous, trusting impulse to read the unsunned depths of a young girl's nature, which I can look through, as the balloon-voyagers tell us they see from their hanging-baskets through the translucent waters which the keenest eye of such as sail over them in ships might strive to pierce in vain? Why has the child trusted _me_ with such artless confessions,--self-revelations, which might be whispered by trembling lips, under the veil of twilight, in sacred confessionals, but which I cannot look at in the light of day without a feeling of wronging a sacred confidence?

To all this the answer seemed plain enough after a little thought. She did not know how fearfully she had disclosed herself; she was too profoundly innocent. Her soul was no more ashamed than the fair shapes that walked in Eden without a thought of over-liberal loveliness. Having nobody to tell her story to,--having, as she said in her verses, no

musical instrument to laugh and cry with her,--nothing, in short, but the language of pen and pencil,--all the veinings of her nature were impressed on these pages, as those of a fresh leaf are transferred to the blank sheets which inclose it. It was the same thing which I remember seeing beautifully shown in a child of some four or five years we had one day at our boarding-house. This child was a deaf mute. But its soul had the inner sense that answers to hearing, and the shaping capacity which through natural organs realizes itself in words. Only it had to talk with its face alone; and such speaking eyes, such rapid alternations of feeling and shifting expressions of thought as flitted over its face, I have never seen in any other human countenance.

I wonder if something of spiritual _transparency_ is not typified in the golden-_blonde_ organization. There are a great many little creatures,--many small fishes, for instance,--that are literally transparent, with the exception of some of the internal organs. The heart can be seen beating as if in a case of clouded crystal. The central nervous column with its sheath runs as a dark stripe through the whole length of the diaphanous muscles of the body. Other little creatures are so darkened with pigment that we can see only their surface. Conspirators and poisoners are painted with black, beady eyes and swarthy hue; Judas, in Leonardo's picture, is the model of them all.

However this may be, I should say there never had been a book like this of Iris,--so full of the heart's silent language, so transparent that the heart itself could be seen beating through it. I should say there never could have been such a book, but for one recollection, which is not peculiar to myself, but is shared by a certain number of my former townsmen. If you think I overcolor this matter of the young girl's book, hear this, which there are others, as I just said, besides myself, will tell you is strictly true.

The Book of the Three Maiden Sisters.

In the town called Cantabridge, now a city, water-veined and gas-windpiped, in the street running down to the Bridge, beyond which dwelt Sally, told of in a book of a friend of mine, was of old a house inhabited by three maidens. They left no near kinsfolk, I believe; if they did, I have no ill to speak of them; for they lived and died in all good report and maidenly credit. The house they lived in was of the small, gambrel-roofed cottage pattern, after the shape of Esquires' houses, but after the size of the dwellings of handicraftsmen. The lower story was fitted up as a shop. Specially was it provided with one of those half-doors now so rarely met with, which are to whole doors as spencers worn by old folk are to coats. They speak of limited commerce united with a social or observing disposition on the part of the shopkeeper,--allowing, as they do, talk with passers-by, yet keeping off such as have not the excuse of business to cross the threshold. On the door-posts, at either side, above the half-door, hung certain perennial articles of merchandise, of which my memory still has hanging among its faded photographs a kind of netted scarf and some pairs of thick woollen stockings. More articles, but not very many, were stored inside; and there was one drawer, containing children's books, out of which I once was treated to a minute quarto ornamented with handsome cuts. This was the only purchase I ever _knew_ to be made at the shop kept by the three maiden ladies, though it is probable there were others. So long as I remember the shop, the same scarf and, I should say, the same stockings

hung on the door-posts.--[You think I am exaggerating again, and that shopkeepers would not keep the same article exposed for years. Come to me, the Professor, and I will take you in five minutes to a shop in this city where I will show you an article hanging now in the very place where more than _thirty years ago_ I myself inquired the price of it of the present head of the establishment.]

The three maidens were of comely presence, and one of them had had claims to be considered a Beauty. When I saw them in the old meeting-house on Sundays, as they rustled in through the aisles in silks and satins, not gay, but more than decent, as I remember them, I thought of My Lady Bountiful in the history of "Little King Pippin," and of the Madame Blaize of Goldsmith (who, by the way, may have taken the hint of it from a pleasant poem, "Monsieur de la Palisse," attributed to De la Monnoye, in the collection of French songs before me). There was some story of an old romance in which the Beauty had played her part. Perhaps they all had had lovers; for, as I said, they were shapely and seemly personages, as I remember them; but their lives were out of the flower and in the berry at the time of my first recollections.

One after another they all three dropped away, objects of kindly attention to the good people round, leaving little or almost nothing, and nobody to inherit it. Not absolutely nothing, of course. There must have been a few old dresses,--perhaps some bits of furniture, a Bible, and the spectacles the good old souls read it through, and little keepsakes, such as make us cry to look at, when we find them in old drawers;--such relics there must have been. But there was more. There was a manuscript of some hundred pages, closely written, in which the poor things had chronicled for many years the incidents of their daily life. After their death it was passed round somewhat freely, and fell into my hands. How I have cried and laughed and colored over it! There was nothing in it to be ashamed of, perhaps there was nothing in it to laugh at, but such a picture of the mode of being of poor simple good old women I do believe was never drawn before. And there were all the smallest incidents recorded, such as do really make up humble life, but which die out of all mere literary memoirs, as the houses where the Egyptians or the Athenians lived crumble and leave only their temples standing. I know, for instance, that on a given day of a certain year, a kindly woman, herself a poor widow, now, I trust, not without special mercies in heaven for her good deeds,--for I read her name on a proper tablet in the churchyard a week ago,--sent a fractional pudding from her own table to the Maiden Sisters, who, I fear, from the warmth and detail of their description, were fasting, or at least on short allowance, about that time. I know who sent them the segment of melon, which in her riotous fancy one of them compared to those huge barges to which we give the ungracious name of mudscows. But why should I illustrate further what it seems almost a breach of confidence to speak of? Some kind friend, who could challenge a nearer interest than the curious strangers into whose hands the book might fall, at last claimed it, and I was glad that it should be henceforth sealed to common eyes. I learned from it that every good and, alas! every evil act we do may slumber unforgotten even in some earthly record. I got a new lesson in that humanity which our sharp race finds it so hard to learn. The poor widow, fighting hard to feed and clothe and educate her children, had not forgotten the poorer ancient maidens. I remembered it the other day, as I stood by her place of rest, and I felt sure that it was remembered elsewhere. I know there are prettier words than _pudding_, but I can't help it,--the pudding went upon the record, I feel sure, with the mite which was cast into the treasury by that other poor widow whose deed the world shall

remember forever, and with the coats and garments which the good women cried over, when Tabitha, called by interpretation Dorcas, lay dead in the upper chamber, with her charitable needlework strewed around her.

* * * * *

----Such was the Book of the Maiden Sisters. You will believe me more readily now when I tell you that I found the soul of Iris in the one that lay open before me. Sometimes it was a poem that held it, sometimes a drawing,--angel, arabesque, caricature, or a mere hieroglyphic symbol of which I could make nothing. A rag of cloud on one page, as I remember, with a streak of red zigzagging out of it across the paper as naturally as a crack runs through a China bowl. On the next page a dead bird,--some little favorite, I suppose; for it was worked out with a special love, and I saw on the leaf that sign with which once or twice in my life I have had a letter sealed,--a round spot where the paper is slightly corrugated, and, if there is writing there, the letters are somewhat faint and blurred. Most of the pages were surrounded with emblematic traceries. It was strange to me at first to see how often she introduced those homelier wild-flowers which we call _weeds_,--for it seemed there was none of them too humble for her to love, and none too little cared for by Nature to be without its beauty for her artist eye and pencil. By the side of the garden-flowers,--of Spring's curled darlings, the hyacinths, of rosebuds, dear to sketching maidens, of flower-de-luces and morning-glories,--nay, oftener than these, and more tenderly caressed by the colored brush that rendered them,--were those common growths that fling themselves to be crushed under our feet and our wheels, making themselves so cheap in this perpetual martyrdom that we forget each of them is a ray of the Divine beauty.

Yellow japanned buttercups and star-disked dandelions,--just as we see them lying in the grass, like sparks that have leaped from the kindling sun of summer; the profuse daisy-like flower which whitens the fields, to the great disgust of liberal shepherds, yet seems fair to loving eyes, with its button-like mound of gold set round with milk-white rays; the tall-stemmed succory, setting its pale blue flowers aflame, one after another, sparingly, as the lights are kindled in the candelabra of decaying palaces when the heirs of dethroned monarchs are dying out; the red and white clovers; the broad, flat leaves of the plantain,--"the white man's foot," as the Indians called it,--the wiry, jointed stems of that iron creeping plant which we call "knot-_grass_" and which loves its life so dearly that it is next to impossible to murder it with a hoe, as it clings to the cracks of the pavement;--all these plants, and many more, she wove into her fanciful garlands and borders.--On one of the pages were some musical notes. I touched them from curiosity on a piano belonging to one of our boarders. Strange! There are passages that I have heard before, plaintive, full of some hidden meaning, as if they were gasping for words to interpret them. She must have heard the strains that have so excited my curiosity, coming from my neighbor's chamber. The illuminated border she had traced round the page that held these notes took the place of the words they seemed to be aching for. Above, a long, monotonous sweep of waves, leaden-hued, anxious and jaded and sullen, if you can imagine such an expression in water. On one side an Alpine _needle_, as it were, of black basalt, girdled with snow. On the other a threaded waterfall. The red morning-tint that shone in the drops had something fearful,--one would say the cliff was bleeding;--perhaps she did not mean it. Below, a stretch of sand, and a solitary bird of prey, with his wings spread over some unseen object.--And on the very next page a procession wound along, after the

fashion of that on the title-page of Fuller's "Holy War," in which I recognized without difficulty every boarder at our table in all the glory of the most resplendent caricature,--three only excepted,--the Little Gentleman, myself, and one other.

I confess I did expect to see something that would remind me of the girl's little deformed neighbor, if not portraits of him.--There is a left arm again, though;--no,--that is from the "Fighting Gladiator,"--the "_Jeune Heros combatiant_" of the Louvre;--there is the broad ring of the shield. From a cast, doubtless. [The separate casts of the "Gladiator's" arm look immense; but in its place the limb looks light, almost slender,--such is the perfection of that miraculous marble. I never felt as if I touched the life of the old Greeks until I looked on that statue.]--Here is something very odd, to be sure. An Eden of all the humped and crooked creatures! What could have been in her head when she worked out such a fantasy? She has contrived to give them all beauty or dignity or melancholy grace. A Bactrian camel lying under a palm. A dromedary flashing up the sands,--spray of the dry ocean sailed by the "ship of the desert." A herd of buffaloes, uncouth, shaggy-maned, heavy in the forehand, light in the hind-quarter. [The buffalo is the _lion_ of the ruminants.] And there is a Norman horse, with his huge, rough collar, echoing, as it were, the natural form of the other beast. And here are twisted serpents; and stately swans, with answering curves in their bowed necks, as if they had snake's blood under their white feathers; and grave, high-shouldered herons, standing on one foot like cripples, and looking at life round them with the cold stare of monumental effigies.--A very odd page indeed! Not a creature in it without a curve or a twist, and not one of them a mean figure to look at. You can make your own comment; I am fanciful, you know. I believe she is trying to idealize what we vulgarly call deformity, which she strives to look at in the light of one of Nature's eccentric curves, belonging to her system of beauty, as the hyperbola and parabola belong to the conic sections, though we cannot see them as symmetrical and entire figures, like the circle and ellipse. At any rate, I cannot help referring this paradise of twisted spines to some idea floating in her head connected with her friend whom Nature has warped in the moulding.--That is nothing to another transcendental fancy of mine. I believe her soul thinks itself in his little crooked body at times,--if it does not really get freed or half freed from her own. Did you ever see a case of catalepsy? You know what I mean,--transient loss of sense, will, and motion; body and limbs taking any position in which they are put, as if they belonged to a lay-figure. She had been talking with him and listening to him one day when the boarders moved from the table nearly all at once. But she sat as before, her cheek resting on her hand, her amber eyes wide open and still. I went to her,--she was breathing as usual, and her heart was beating naturally enough,--but she did not answer. I bent her arm; it was as plastic as softened wax, and kept the place I gave it.--This will never do, though,--and I sprinkled a few drops of water on her forehead. She started and looked round.--I have been in a dream,--she said;--I feel as if all my strength were in this arm;--give me your hand!--She took my right hand in her left, which looked soft and white enough, but--Good Heaven! I believe she will crack my bones! All the nervous power in her body must have flashed through those muscles; as when a crazy lady snaps her iron window-bars,--she who could hardly glove herself when in her common health. Iris turned pale, and the tears came to her eyes;--she saw she had given pain. Then she trembled, and might have fallen but for me;--the poor little soul had been in one of those trances that belong to the spiritual pathology of higher natures, mostly those of women.

To come back to this wondrous book of Iris. Two pages faced each other which I took for symbolical expressions of two states of mind. On the left hand, a bright blue sky washed over the page, specked with a single bird. No trace of earth, but still the winged creature seemed to be soaring upward and upward. Facing it, one of those black dungeons such as Piranesi alone of all men has pictured. I am sure she must have seen those awful prisons of his, out of which the Opium-Eater got his nightmare vision, described by another as "cemeteries of departed greatness, where monstrous and forbidden things are crawling and twining their slimy convolutions among mouldering bones, broken sculpture, and mutilated inscriptions." Such a black dungeon faced the page that held the blue sky and the single bird; at the bottom of it something was coiled,--what, and whether meant for dead or alive, my eyes could not make out.

I told you the young girl's soul was in this book. As I turned over the last leaves I could not help starting. There were all sorts of faces among the arabesques which laughed and scowled in the borders that ran round the pages. They had mostly the outline of childish or womanly or manly beauty, without very distinct individuality. But at last it seemed to me that some of them were taking on a look not wholly unfamiliar to me; there were features that did not seem new.--Can it be so? Was there ever such innocence in a creature so full of life? She tells her heart's secrets as a three-years-old child betrays itself without need of being questioned! This was no common miss, such as are turned out in scores from the young-lady-factories, with parchments warranting them accomplished and virtuous,--in case anybody should question the fact. I began to understand her;--and what is so charming as to read the secret of a real _femme incomprise_?-for such there are, though they are not the ones who think themselves uncomprehended women.

Poets are never young, in one sense. Their delicate ear hears the far-off whispers of eternity, which coarser souls must travel towards for scores of years before their dull sense is touched by them. A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience. I have frequently seen children, long exercised by pain and exhaustion, whose features had a strange look of advanced age. Too often one meets such in our charitable institutions. Their faces are saddened and wrinkled, as if their few summers were three-score years and ten.

And so, many youthful poets have written as if their hearts were old before their time; their pensive morning twilight has been as cool and saddening as that of evening in more common lives. The profound melancholy of those lines of Shelley,

> "I could lie down like a tired child
> And weep away the life of care
> Which I have borne and yet must bear,"

came from a heart, as he says, "too soon grown old,"--at _twenty-six years_, as dull people count time, even when they talk of poets.

I know enough to be prepared for an exceptional nature, only this gift of the hand in rendering every thought in form and color, as well as in words, gives a richness to this young girl's alphabet of feeling and imagery that takes me by surprise. And then besides, and most of all, I am puzzled at her sudden and seemingly easy confidence in me. Perhaps I owe it to my ------ Well, no matter! How one must love the editor who

first calls him the _venerable_ So-and-So!

--I locked the book and sighed as I laid it down. The world is always ready to receive talent with open arms. Very often it does not know what to do with genius. Talent is a docile creature. It bows its head meekly while the world slips the collar over it. It backs into the shafts like a lamb. It draws its load cheerfully, and is patient of the bit and of the whip. But genius is always impatient of its harness; its wild blood makes it hard to train.

Talent seems, at first, in one sense, higher than genius,--namely, that it is more uniformly and absolutely submitted to the will, and therefore more distinctly human in its character. Genius, on the other hand, is much more like those instincts which govern the admirable movements of the lower creatures, and therefore seems to have something of the lower or animal character. A goose flies by a chart which the Royal Geographical Society could not mend. A poet, like the goose, sails without visible landmarks to unexplored regions of truth, which philosophy has yet to lay down on its atlas. The philosopher gets his track by observation; the poet trusts to his inner sense, and makes the straighter and swifter line.

And yet, to look at it in another light, is not even the lowest instinct more truly divine than any voluntary human act done by the suggestion of reason? What is a bee's architecture but an _un_obstructed divine thought?--what is a builder's approximative rule but an obstructed thought of the Creator, a mutilated and imperfect copy of some absolute rule Divine Wisdom has established, transmitted through a human soul as an image through clouded glass?

Talent is a very common family-trait; genius belongs rather to individuals;--just as you find one giant or one dwarf in a family, but rarely a whole brood of either. Talent is often to be envied, and genius very commonly to be pitied. It stands twice the chance of the other of dying in a hospital, in jail, in debt, in bad repute. It is a perpetual insult to mediocrity; its every word is a trespass against somebody's vested ideas,--blasphemy against somebody's _O'm_, or intangible private truth.

----What is the use of my weighing out antitheses in this way, like a rhetorical grocer?--You know twenty men of talent, who are making their way in the world; you may, perhaps, know one man of genius, and very likely do not want to know any more. For a divine instinct, such as drives the goose southward and the poet heavenward, is a hard thing to manage, and proves too strong for many whom it possesses. It must have been a terrible thing to have a friend like Chatterton or Burns. And here is a being who certainly has more than talent, at once poet and artist in tendency, if not yet fairly developed,--a woman, too;--and genius grafted on womanhood is like to overgrow it and break its stem, as you may see a grafted fruit-tree spreading over the stock which cannot keep pace with its evolution.

I think now you know something of this young person. She wants nothing but an atmosphere to expand in. Now and then one meets with a nature for which our hard, practical New England life is obviously utterly incompetent. It comes up, as a Southern seed, dropped by accident in one of our gardens, finds itself trying to grow and blow into flower among the homely roots and the hardy shrubs that surround it. There is no question that certain persons who are born among us find themselves many

degrees too far north. Tropical by organization, they cannot fight for life with our eastern and northwestern breezes without losing the color and fragrance into which their lives would have blossomed in the latitude of myrtles and oranges. Strange effects are produced by suffering any living thing to be developed under conditions such as Nature had not intended for it. A French physiologist confined some tadpoles under water in the dark, removed from the natural stimulus of light, they did not develop legs and arms at the proper period of their growth, and so become frogs; they swelled and spread into gigantic tadpoles. I have seen a hundred colossal _human_ tadpoles,--overgrown _larvae_ or embryos; nay, I am afraid we Protestants should look on a considerable proportion of the Holy Father's one hundred and thirty-nine millions as spiritual _larvae_, sculling about in the dark by the aid of their caudal extremities, instead of standing on their legs, and breathing by gills, instead of taking the free air of heaven into the lungs made to receive it. Of course _we_ never try to keep young souls in the tadpole state, for fear they should get a pair or two of legs by-and-by and jump out of the pool where they have been bred and fed! Never! Never. Never?

Now to go back to our plant. You may know, that, for the earlier stages of development of almost any vegetable, you only want warmth, air, light, and water. But by-and-by, if it is to have special complex principles as a part of its organization, they must be supplied by the soil;--your pears will crack, if the root of the tree gets no iron,--your asparagus-bed wants salt as much as you do. Just at the period of adolescence, the mind often suddenly begins to come into flower and to set its fruit. Then it is that many young natures, having exhausted the spiritual soil round them of all it contains of the elements they demand, wither away, undeveloped and uncolored, unless they are transplanted.

Pray for these dear young souls! This is the second _natural_ birth;--for I do not speak of those peculiar religious experiences which form the point of transition in many lives between the consciousness of a general relation to the Divine nature and a special personal relation. The litany should count a prayer for them in the list of its supplications; masses should be said for them as for souls in purgatory; all good Christians should remember them as they remember those in peril through travel or sickness or in warfare.

I would transport this child to Rome at once, if I had my will. She should ripen under an Italian sun. She should walk under the frescoed vaults of palaces, until her colors deepened to those of Venetian beauties, and her forms were perfected into rivalry with the Greek marbles, and the east wind was out of her soul. Has she not exhausted this lean soil of the elements her growing nature requires?

I do not know. The magnolia grows and comes into full flower on Cape Ann, many degrees out of its proper region. I was riding once along that delicious road between the hills and the sea, when we passed a thicket where there seemed to be a chance for finding it. In five minutes I had fallen on the trees in full blossom, and filled my arms with the sweet, resplendent flowers. I could not believe I was in our cold, northern Essex, which, in the dreary season when I pass its slate-colored, unpainted farmhouses, and huge, square, windy, 'squire-built "mansions," looks as brown and unvegetating as an old rug with its patterns all trodden out and the colored fringe worn from all its border.

If the magnolia can bloom in northern New England, why should not a poet or a painter come to his full growth here just as well? Yes, but if the gorgeous tree-flower is rare, and only as if by a freak of Nature springs up in a single spot among the beeches and alders, is there not as much reason to think the perfumed flower of imaginative genius will find it hard to be born and harder to spread its leaves in the clear, cold atmosphere of our ultra-temperate zone of humanity?

Take the poet. On the one hand, I believe that a person with the poetical faculty finds material everywhere. The grandest objects of sense and thought are common to all climates and civilizations. The sky, the woods, the waters, the storms, life, death, love, the hope and vision of eternity,--these are images that write themselves in poetry in every soul which has anything of the divine gift.

On the other hand, there is such a thing as a lean, impoverished life, in distinction from a rich and suggestive one. Which our common New England life might be considered, I will not decide. But there are some things I think the poet missed in our western Eden. I trust it is not unpatriotic to mention them in this point of view, as they come before us in so many other aspects.

There is no sufficient flavor of humanity in the soil out of which we grow. At Cantabridge, near the sea, I have once or twice picked up an Indian arrowhead in a fresh furrow. At Canoe Meadow, in the Berkshire Mountains, I have found Indian arrowheads. So everywhere Indian arrowheads. Whether a hundred or a thousand years old, who knows? who cares? There is no history to the red race,--there is hardly an individual in it;--a few instincts on legs and holding a tomahawk,--there is the Indian of all time. The story of one red ant is the story of all red ants. So, the poet, in trying to wing his way back through the life that has kindled, flitted, and faded along our watercourses and on our southern hillsides for unknown generations, finds nothing to breathe; he "meets

> A vast vacuity! all unawares,
> Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops
> Ten thousand fathom deep."

But think of the Old World,--that part of it which is the seat of ancient civilization! The stakes of the Britons' stockades are still standing in the bed of the Thames. The ploughman turns up an old Saxon's bones, and beneath them is a tessellated pavement of the time of the Caesars. In Italy, the works of mediaeval Art seem to be of yesterday,--Rome, under her kings, is but an intruding new-comer, as we contemplate her in the shadow of the Cyclopean walls of Fiesole or Volterra. It makes a man human to live on these old humanized soils. He cannot help marching in step with his kind in the rear of such a procession. They say a dead man's hand cures swellings, if laid on them. There is nothing like the dead cold hand of the Past to take down our tumid egotism and lead us into the solemn flow of the life of our race. Rousseau came out of one of his sad self-torturing fits, as he cast his eye on the arches of the old Roman aqueduct, the Pont du Gard.

I am far from denying that there is an attraction in a thriving railroad village. The new "depot," the smartly-painted pine houses, the spacious brick hotel, the white meeting-house, and the row of youthful and leggy trees before it, _are_ exhilarating. They speak of progress, and the time when there shall be a city, with a His Honor the Mayor, in the

place of their trim but transient architectural growths. Pardon me, if I prefer the pyramids. They seem to me crystals formed from a stronger solution of humanity than the steeple of the new meeting-house. I may be wrong, but the Tiber has a voice for me, as it whispers to the piers of the Pons Aelius, even more full of meaning than my well-beloved Charles eddying round the piles of West Boston Bridge.

Then, again, we Yankees are a kind of gypsies,--a mechanical and migratory race. A poet wants a home. He can dispense with an apple-parer and a reaping-machine. I feel this more for others than for myself, for the home of my birth and childhood has been as yet exempted from the change which has invaded almost everything around it.

----Pardon me a short digression. To what small things our memory and our affections attach themselves! I remember, when I was a child, that one of the girls planted some Star-of-Bethlehem bulbs in the southwest corner of our front-yard. Well, I left the paternal roof and wandered in other lands, and learned to think in the words of strange people. But after many years, as I looked on the little front-yard again, it occurred to me that there used to be some Stars-of-Bethlehem in the southwest corner. The grass was tall there, and the blade of the plant is very much like grass, only thicker and glossier. Even as Tully parted the briers and brambles when he hunted for the sphere-containing cylinder that marked the grave of Archimedes, so did I comb the grass with my fingers for my monumental memorial-flower. Nature had stored my keepsake tenderly in her bosom; the glossy, faintly streaked blades were there; they are there still, though they never flower, darkened as they are by the shade of the elms and rooted in the matted turf.

Our hearts are held down to our homes by innumerable fibres, trivial as that I have just recalled; but Gulliver was fixed to the soil, you remember, by pinning his head a hair at a time. Even a stone with a white band crossing it, belonging to the pavement of the back-yard, insisted on becoming one of the talismans of memory. This intussusception of the ideas of inanimate objects, and their faithful storing away among the sentiments, are curiously prefigured in the material structure of the thinking centre itself. In the very core of the brain, in the part where Des Cartes placed the soul, is a small mineral deposit, consisting, as I have seen it in the microscope, of grape-like masses of crystalline matter.

But the plants that come up every year in the same place, like the Stars-of-Bethlehem, of all the lesser objects, give me the liveliest home-feeling. Close to our ancient gambrel-roofed house is the dwelling of pleasant old Neighbor Walrus. I remember the sweet honeysuckle that I saw in flower against the wall of his house a few months ago, as long as I remember the sky and stars. That clump of peonies, butting their purple heads through the soil every spring in just the same circle, and by-and-by unpacking their hard balls of buds in flowers big enough to make a double handful of leaves, has come up in just that place, Neighbor Walrus tells me, for more years than I have passed on this planet. It is a rare privilege in our nomadic state to find the home of one's childhood and its immediate neighborhood thus unchanged. Many born poets, I am afraid, flower poorly in song, or not at all, because they have been too often transplanted.

Then a good many of our race are very hard and unimaginative;--their voices have nothing caressing; their movements are as of machinery, without elasticity or oil. I wish it were fair to print a letter a young

girl, about the age of our Iris, wrote a short time since. "I am *** *** ***," she says, and tells her whole name outright. Ah!--said I, when I read that first frank declaration,--you are one of the right sort!--She was. A winged creature among close-clipped barn-door fowl. How tired the poor girl was of the dull life about her,--the old woman's "skeleton hand" at the window opposite, drawing her curtains,--"Ma'am----_shooing_ away the hens,"--the vacuous country eyes staring at her as only country eyes can stare,--a routine of mechanical duties,--and the soul's half-articulated cry for sympathy, without an answer! Yes,--pray for her, and for all such! Faith often cures their longings; but it is so hard to give a soul to heaven that has not first been trained in the fullest and sweetest human affections! Too often they fling their hearts away on unworthy objects. Too often they pine in a secret discontent, which spreads its leaden cloud over the morning of their youth. The immeasurable distance between one of these delicate natures and the average youths among whom is like to be her only choice makes one's heart ache. How many women are born too finely organized in sense and soul for the highway they must walk with feet unshod! Life is adjusted to the wants of the stronger sex. There are plenty of torrents to be crossed in its journey; but their stepping-stones are measured by the stride of man, and not of woman.

Women are more subject than men to _atrophy of the heart_. So says the great medical authority, Laennec. Incurable cases of this kind used to find their hospitals in convents. We have the disease in New England,--but not the hospitals. I don't like to think of it. I will not believe our young Iris is going to die out in this way. Providence will find her some great happiness, or affliction, or duty,--and which would be best for her, I cannot tell. One thing is sure: the interest she takes in her little neighbor is getting to be more engrossing than ever. Something is the matter with him, and she knows it, and I think worries herself about it. I wonder sometimes how so fragile and distorted a frame has kept the fiery spirit that inhabits it so long its tenant. He accounts for it in his own way.

The air of the Old World is good for nothing,--he said, one day.--Used up, Sir,--breathed over and over again. You must come to this side, Sir, for an atmosphere fit to breathe nowadays. Did not old Josselyn say that a breath of New England's air is better than a sup of Old England's ale? I ought to have died when I was a boy, Sir; but I couldn't die in this Boston air,--and I think I shall have to go to New York one of these days, when it's time for me to drop this bundle,--or to New Orleans, where they have the yellow fever,--or to Philadelphia, where they have so many doctors.

This was some time ago; but of late he has seemed, as I have before said, to be ailing. An experienced eye, such as I think I may call mine, can tell commonly whether a man is going to die, or not, long before he or his friends are alarmed about him. I don't like it.

Iris has told me that the Scottish gift of second-sight runs in her family, and that she is afraid she has it. Those who are so endowed look upon a well man and see a shroud wrapt about him. According to the degree to which it covers him, his death will be near or more remote. It is an awful faculty; but science gives one too much like it. Luckily for our friends, most of us who have the scientific second-sight school ourselves not to betray our knowledge by word or look.

Day by day, as the Little Gentleman comes to the table, it seems to me that the shadow of some approaching change falls darker and darker over

his countenance. Nature is struggling with something, and I am afraid she is under in the wrestling-match. You do not care much, perhaps, for my particular conjectures as to the nature of his difficulty. I should say, however, from the sudden flushes to which he is subject, and certain other marks which, as an expert, I know how to interpret, that his heart was in trouble; but then he presses his hand to the _right_ side, as if there were the centre of his uneasiness.

When I say difficulty about the heart, I do not mean any of those sentimental maladies of that organ which figure more largely in romances than on the returns which furnish our Bills of Mortality. I mean some actual change in the organ itself, which may carry him off by slow and painful degrees, or strike him down with one huge pang and only time for a single shriek,--as when the shot broke through the brave Captain Nolan's breast, at the head of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, and with a loud cry he dropped dead from his saddle.

I thought it only fair to say something of what I apprehended to some who were entitled to be warned. The landlady's face fell when I mentioned my fears.

Poor man!--she said.--And will leave the best room empty! Hasn't he got any sisters or nieces or anybody to see to his things, if he should be took away? Such a sight of cases, full of everything! Never thought of his failin' so suddin. A complication of diseases, she expected. Liver-complaint one of 'em?

After this first involuntary expression of the too natural selfish feelings, (which we must not judge very harshly, unless we happen to be poor widows ourselves, with children to keep filled, covered, and taught,--rents high,--beef eighteen to twenty cents per pound,)--after this first squeak of selfishness, followed by a brief movement of curiosity, so invariable in mature females, as to the nature of the complaint which threatens the life of a friend or any person who may happen to be mentioned as ill,--the worthy soul's better feelings struggled up to the surface, and she grieved for the doomed invalid, until a tear or two came forth and found their way down a channel worn for them since the early days of her widowhood.

Oh, this dreadful, dreadful business of being the prophet of evil! Of all the trials which those who take charge of others' health and lives have to undergo, this is the most painful. It is all so plain to the practised eye!--and there is the poor wife, the doting mother, who has never suspected anything, or at least has clung always to the hope which you are just going to wrench away from her!--I must tell Iris that I think her poor friend is in a precarious state. She seems nearer to him than anybody.

I did tell her. Whatever emotion it produced, she kept a still face, except, perhaps, a little trembling of the lip.--Could I be certain that there was any mortal complaint?--Why, no, I could not be certain; but it looked alarming to me.--He shall have some of my life,--she said.

I suppose this to have been a fancy of hers, of a kind of magnetic power she could give out;--at any rate, I cannot help thinking she _wills_ her strength away from herself, for she has lost vigor and color from that day. I have sometimes thought he gained the force she lost; but this may have been a whim, very probably.

One day she came suddenly to me, looking deadly pale. Her lips moved, as if she were speaking; but I could not hear a word. Her hair looked strangely, as if lifting itself, and her eyes were full of wild light. She sunk upon a chair, and I thought was falling into one of her trances. Something had frozen her blood with fear; I thought, from what she said, half audibly, that she believed she had seen a shrouded figure.

That night, at about eleven o'clock, I was sent for to see the Little Gentleman, who was taken suddenly ill. Bridget, the servant, went before me with a light. The doors were both unfastened, and I found myself ushered, without hindrance, into the dim light of the mysterious apartment I had so longed to enter.

I found these stanzas in the young girl's book, among many others. I give them as characterizing the tone of her sadder moments.

UNDER THE VIOLETS.

Her hands are cold; her face is white;
No more her pulses come and go;
Her eyes are shut to life and light;--
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow.
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,
To plead for tears with alien eyes:
A slender cross of wood alone
Shall say, that here a maiden lies
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And gray old trees of hugest limb
Shall wheel their circling shadows round
To make the scorching sunlight dim
That drinks the greenness from the ground,
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,
And through their leaves the robins call,
And, ripening in the autumn sun,
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,
Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing
Its matins from the branches high,
And every minstrel-voice of spring,
That trills beneath the April sky,
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,
Her little mourners, clad in black,
The crickets, sliding through the grass,
Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees
Shall find the prison where she lies,
And bear the buried dust they seize

In leaves and blossoms to the skies.
So may the soul that warmed it rise!

If any, born of kindlier blood,
Should ask, What maiden lies below?
Say only this: A tender bud,
That tried to blossom in the snow,
Lies withered where the violets blow.

REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

The Collier-folio Shakespeare. Is it an imposture?

When the Lady Bab of "High Life below Stairs," having laid the forgetfulness which causes her tardy appearance at the elegant entertainment given in Mr. Lovel's servant's hall to the fascination of her favorite author, "Shikspur," is asked, "Who wrote Shikspur?" she replies, with that promptness which shows complete mastery of a subject, "Ben Jonson." In later days, another lady has, with greater prolixity, it is true, but hardly less confidence, and, it must be confessed, equal reason, answered to the same query, "Francis Bacon." This question must, then, be regarded as still open to discussion; but, assuming, for the nonce, that the Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies in a certain folio volume published at London in 1623 were written by William Shakespeare, gentleman, sometime actor at the Black Friars Theatre and a principal proprietor therein, we apply ourselves to the brief examination of another, somewhat related to it, and at least as complicated:--the question as to the authorship of certain marginal manuscript readings in a copy of a later folio edition of the same works,--that published in 1632,--which readings Mr. Payne Collier discovered and brought before the world with all the weight of his reputation and influence in favor of their authority and value. We write for those who are somewhat interested in this subject, and must assume that our readers are not entirely without information upon it; but it is desirable, if not necessary, that in the beginning we should call to mind the following dates and circumstances.

According to Mr. Collier's account, this folio was bought by him "in the spring of 1849," of Mr. Thomas Rodd, an antiquarian bookseller, well known in London. For a year and more he hardly looked at it; but his attention being directed particularly to it as he was packing it away to be taken into the country, he found that "there was hardly a page which did not represent, _in a handwriting of the time_, some emendations in the pointing or in the text." He then subjected it to "a most careful scrutiny," and became convinced of the great value of its manuscript readings. He talked about it to his literary friends, and took it to a meeting of the Council of the Shakespeare Society, and to two or three meetings of the Society of Antiquaries, as we know by the reports of those meetings in the London "Times." He wrote letters in the summer of 1852 to the London "Athenaeum," setting forth the character of the volume, and giving some of its most noteworthy changes of Shakespeare's text. He published, at last, in 1853, his volume of "Notes and Emendations to the Text of Shakespeare's Plays from _Early Manuscript Corrections_ in a Copy of the Folio of 1632," etc.; and in 1854, he published an edition of Shakespeare, in the text of which these manuscript readings were embodied. In 1856, he added to a Shakespearian

volume a "List of all the Emendations" in his folio, remarking in the preface to the book, (p. lxxix.,) that he had "_often gone over_ the thousands of marks of all kinds in its [the folio's] margins," and that, for the purpose of making the list in question, he had "recently _reexamined every line and letter_ of the folio." He had previously printed for private circulation a few fac-simile copies of eighteen corrected passages in the folio; and with the volume last mentioned, his publications, and, we believe, all others,--of which more anon,--upon the subject, ceased. Mr. Collier, it should be borne in mind, has been for forty years a professed student of Elizabethan literature, and is a man of hitherto unquestioned honor.

But he is now upon trial. Certain officers of the British Museum, among them men of high professional reputation and personal standing, men who occupy, and who confess that they occupy, "a judicial position" on such questions, charge, after careful investigation, that a great fraud has been committed in this folio; that its marginal readings, instead of being as old as they seem, and as Mr. Collier has asserted them to be, are modern fabrications, and that, consequently, Mr. Collier is either an impostor or a dupe. The charge is not a new one. The weight that it carries, and the impression that it has produced, are owing to the position of the men who make it, and the evidence which they have published in its support. It was made, however, six years ago,--but vaguely. For, although there was on every side a disposition to welcome with all heartiness the manuscript readings, the antiquity and value of which Mr. Collier had so positively announced, the poetic sense of the world recoiled from the mass of them when they appeared; and although a few, a very few, of the readings peculiar to this folio were accepted by Shakespearian editors and commentators, they were opposed as a whole with determination, and in one or two instances with unbecoming heat, by Mr. Collier's fellow-laborers. Prominent among these was Mr. Singer, a man of moderate capacity and undisciplined powers, but extensive reading in early English literature,--known, too, for the bitterness with which he habitually wrote. In opposing Mr. Collier's folio, he did not hesitate to insinuate broadly that he believed it to be an imposition. But as he based his suspicion solely upon the very numerous coincidences between the marginal readings in that volume and the conjectural readings of the editors and critics of the last century,--coincidences which, however, affect the character of a very large proportion of the noticeable changes in the folio,--he failed to accomplish his conservative purpose at the expense of Mr. Collier's reputation. But although this insinuation of the spurious character Of the writing in Mr. Collier's folio fell to the ground, such antiquity as would give its readings the consequence due to their having been introduced by a contemporary of Shakespeare was shown not to pertain to them, in the course of two articles which appeared in "Putnam's Magazine" for October and November, 1853, and which, it may be as well to say, were from the same hand that writes this reference to them. They effected this by exhibiting the corrector's ignorance of the meaning of words in common use twenty years after Shakespeare's death, and his introduction of stage directions which could not have been complied with until half a century after that event, and which were at variance with the very text itself to which they were applied. That the argument which they embodied was conclusive has been admitted by all the English editors and commentators, including even Mr. Collier himself. But this conclusion only brought down the date of these marginal readings to a period somewhat later than the Restoration of the British Monarchy, and it did not put in question the good faith either of their author or their discoverer.

The attack now made upon them is directed solely against their genuineness, and is based altogether upon external, or, we may properly say, physical evidence. The accusers are Mr. N.E.S.A. Hamilton, an assistant in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, (whose chief, Sir Frederick Madden, the Keeper of that Department, is understood to support him,) and Mr. Nevil Story Maskelyne, Keeper of the Mineraloglcal Department. Of the alphabetical Mr. Hamilton we know something. He is one of the ablest palaeographists of his years in England, and the possessor of a pair of eyes of such microscopic powers that he can decipher manuscript which to ordinary sight seems obliterated by time, or even fire: a man of worth, too, as we hear, and one who has borne himself in this affair with mingled confidence and modesty. He says, that, of the corrections originally made on the margins of this folio, the number which have been wholly or partially "obliterated.....with a penknife or the employment of chymical agency" "are almost as numerous as those suffered to remain"; that, of the corrections allowed to stand, many have been "tampered with, touched up, or painted over, a modern character being dexterously altered, by touches of the pen, into a more antique form"; and that the margins are "covered with an infinite number of faint pencil-marks, in obedience to which the supposed old corrector has made his emendations"; and that these pencilled memorandums "have not even the pretence of antiquity in character or spelling, but are written in a bold hand of the present century"; and with regard to the incongruities of spelling, he especially mentions the instances, "'body,' 'offals,' in pencil, 'bodie,' 'offals,' in ink."

Mr. Maskelyne, having examined many of the margins of the folio with the microscope, confirms entirely the evidence of Mr. Hamilton's eyes. He found the pencilled memorandums "plentifully distributed down the margins," and "the particles of plumbago in the hollows of the paper" in every instance that he has examined. He found, also, that what seems to be ink is not ink, but "a paint, removable, with the exception of a slight stain, by mere water,"--which "paint, formed perhaps of sepia," would enable an impostor, it need hardly be observed, to simulate ink faded by time; and in several cases in which "the ink word, in a quaint, antique-looking writing, and the pencil word, in a modern-looking hand, occupy the same ground, and are one over the other," the pencil-marks being obscured or obliterated, Mr. Maskelyne found, on washing off the ink, that at first "the pencil-marks became much plainer than before, and even when as much of the ink-stain as possible was removed, the pencil still runs through the ink line in unbroken, even continuity." These points established, Mr. Maskelyne's conclusion, that in the examples which he tested "the pencil underlies the ink, that is to say, was antecedent to it in its date," is unavoidable. But does it follow upon this conclusion that the manuscript changes in the readings of this folio are of spurious and modern date,--made, for instance, within the last fifty years, and with the intention of deceiving the world as to their age? Perhaps; but, for reasons which we are about to give, we venture to think, not certainly.

First, however, as to the very delicate and unpleasant position in which Mr. Collier is placed by these discoveries. For, although the age of the manuscript readings of his folio must be fixed by that of the pencilled memorandums over which they are written, the question as to whether he has not been uncandid or unwise enough to suppress an important part of the truth in describing that volume is entirely independent of this problem in paleography. For these numberless partially erased pencilled

memorandums, to which Mr. Collier has made no allusion whatever, must have been written upon the margins of that folio either before Mr. Collier bought it, in the spring of 1849, or since. If before, is it possible that he could have subjected it to "a most careful scrutiny" in 1850, that he could have studied it for three years for the purpose of preparing his "Notes and Emendations,"--an octavo volume of five hundred pages,--which appeared in 1853, and that after having, for various purposes, "often gone over the thousands of marks _of all kinds_" on its margins, he could again, after the lapse of three years more, have "reexamined every line and letter" on those margins for the purpose of making the list of the readings which he published in 1856, without having discovered, in the course of all this close scrutiny, extending through so many years, the pencil-marks which at once became visible when the volume went to the British Museum? And if these pencil-marks, that underlie the simulated ink corrections, were made after the spring of 1849----! Here is a dilemma, either horn of which has a very ugly look.

But out of this trial we hope, nay, we confidently believe, that Mr. Collier will come unscathed. We hope it for the sake of the profession of literature,--for the sake of one who has been honorably known among men of letters for almost half a century, and who has borne into the vale of years a hitherto untarnished name. We believe it, because a contrary supposition would be entirely at variance with Mr. Collier's conduct about this folio ever since his first announcement of its discovery. It is true, that, in the course of the controversy which the publication of his "Notes and Emendations" inevitably brought upon him, Mr. Collier has not always shown that delicacy and consideration for candid opponents which he could have afforded to show, and which would have sat so gracefully upon him. It is true, that, in noticing, and, in his enthusiastic partiality, much exaggerating, the admissions of a volume in which, as he must have seen, he was first defended against Mr. Singer's repeated insinuations of forgery, [Footnote: See _Shakespeare's Scholar_, p. 71.] and in availing himself again and again of those not always discreet admissions, he was uncourteous enough not to mention the name even of the work in question, not to say that of its author. It is true, that, on the appearance of an edition of Shakespeare's Works edited by the author of that volume, he hastened to accuse him publicly of misrepresentation, unwarily admitting at the same time that he did so upon a mere glance at the book, and before he had even "cut it open," and, in his haste, causing his accusation to recoil upon his own head.[1] [Footnote 1: See the London _Athenaeum_, of Nov. 20th, 1858, and Jan. 8th, 1859.] It is true, that, when, in his recent edition of Shakespeare's Works,[2] [Footnote 2: London, 1858, Vol. II, p. 181.] he abandoned one of the readings of his folio, ("she discourses, she _craves_," Merry Wives, I. 3,) which the same opponent had been the first to show not only untenable, but fatal to the authority and antiquity of the readings of that volume, he requited that opponent's defence of him by attributing his defeat on this point to an English editor, who only quoted the passage in question from "Shakespeare's Scholar," and with special mention of its authorship and its importance,[3] [Footnote 3: Rimbault's Edition of Overbury's Works, London, 1856, p. 50.]

Under the present circumstances, it may be well to let the reader see for himself exactly what Mr. Collier's course was in this little affair. Dr. Rimbault's note, published in 1856, is as follows:--

(-----"_her wrie little finger bewraies carving_, etc.) The passage in

the text sufficiently shows that _carving_ was a sign of intelligence made with the little finger, as the glass was raised to the mouth. See the prefatory letter to Mr. R. G. White's _Shakespeare's Scholar_, 8vo., New York, 1854, p. xxxiii. Mr. Hunter (_New Illustrations of Shakespeare_, i. 215), Mr. Dyce (_A Few Notes on Shakespeare_, 1853, p. 18), and Mr. Mitford (_Cursory Notes on Beaumont and Fletcher_, etc., 1856, p. 40), were unacquainted with this valuable illustration of a Shakespearian word given by Overbury."

And yet Mr. Collier, with this note before him, as it will be seen, could write as follows:--

"The Rev. Mr. Dyce ('Few Notes,' p. 18) and the Rev. Mr. Hunter ('New Illustrations,' i. p. 215) both adduce quotations [as to 'carves'], but they have missed the most apposite, _pointed out by Dr. Rimbault_ in his edition of Sir Thomas Overbury's Works, 8vo., 1856, p. 50."

The reader cannot estimate more lightly than we do the credit which Mr. Collier thought of consequence enough for him to do an unhandsome, not to say dishonorable, act to deprive an opponent of it. By referring to White's edition of Shakespeare, Vol. II. p. lx., another instance may be found of the same discourtesy on the part of Mr. Collier to Chalmers, with regard to a matter yet more trifling.] and that he thereby subjected himself self to open rebuke in his own country;[4] [Footnote 4: See Dyce's _Strictures_ etc., 1859, p. 28.] and he found, we suppose, his justification for this course in his seniority and his opponent's place of nativity. It is true, also, that, in the recently published edition of Shakespeare's Works, just alluded to, he has vengefully revived, in its worst form, the animosity which disgraced the pages of the editors and commentators of the last century, and has attacked the most eminent of critical English scholars, the Rev. Alexander Dyce, throughout that edition, bitterly and incessantly,[5] [Footnote 5: See the edition _passim_.] and also unfairly and upon forced occasion, as Mr. Dyce has conclusively shown, in a volume,[6] [Footnote 6: _Strictures on Collier's Shakespeare_, London, 1859.] the appearance of which from the pen of a man of Mr. Dyce's character and position we yet cannot but deplore, great as the provocation was. Mr. Collier has done these things, which would not be tolerated among such men of letters in America as are also gentlemen; and he has also made statements about his folio which have been proved to be so inaccurate that it is clear that his memory is not to be trusted on that matter; but, in spite of all this, we neither will nor can believe, that, in his testimony as to the manner in which he became possessed of this celebrated volume, or in his description of its peculiarities, he has, with the intention to deceive, either suppressed the true or asserted the false. Since his first announcement of the discovery of the manuscript readings in that volume, he has had no concealments about it; he has shown it freely to the very persons who would be most likely to detect a literary imposition; he has told all, and more than all, that he could have been expected to tell about it; he has left no stone unturned in his endeavor to trace its history; and, after finally putting all of its manuscript readings upon record, and confessing frankly that he had been in error with regard to some of them, and that there are many of them which are "innovations,--changes which had crept in from time to time, [upon the stage,] to make sense out of difficult passages, but which do not represent the authentic text of Shakespeare," he gives the volume away to the Duke of Devonshire, the owner of one of the most celebrated dramatic libraries in England, on whose shelves he knew it would be almost as subject to close examination as on those of the British

Museum. This is not the conduct of a literary forger in regard to the enduring witness of his forgery; and we may be sure, that, unless practice has made him reckless, and he is the very Merdle of Elizabethan scholarship, Mr. Collier has been in this matter as loyal as he has seemed to be.

But is the charge of forgery made out? It would seem that it is,--that the discovery of pencilled memorandums in a modern hand and in modern spelling, over which the readings in ink are written in an antique hand and antique spelling, leaves no doubt upon the question. Yet, assuming all that is charged at the British Museum to be established, we venture to withhold our assent from the conclusion of forgery against all the readings in question until the evidence in the case has been more thoroughly sifted. Our reasons we must state briefly; and they can as well be appreciated from a brief as a detailed statement.

And first, as to the "modern-looking hand" of the pencil-marks over which the "antique-looking writing" in ink is found. All the writing of even the early part of the seventeenth century was not done in the quaint, and, to us, strange and elaborate-seeming hand, sometimes called old chancery hand, specimens of which may be seen on the fac-simile published with Mr. Collier's "Notes and Emendations." This modern-looking hand, in which the pencil-marks appear, we venture to say may be that of a writer who lived long before the date (1632) of the volume on which his traces have been discovered, In support of this supposition, we might produce hundreds of instances within our reach. We must confine ourselves to one; and that, though somewhat more modern than others that we could produce, shall be from a volume easily accessible and well known to all Shakespearian scholars, and which naturally came before us in connection with our present subject. In Malone's "Inquiry, etc., into the Ireland Shakespeare Forgeries" (London: 8vo. 1796) are two fac-similes (Plate III.) of parts of letters from Shakespeare's friend, the Earl of Southampton. From the superscription to one of them, written in 1621 to the Lord-Keeper Williams, and preserved among the Harleian MSS., we give in fac-simile the following words:--

[Illustration: script text which reads "the right honorable"]

We select these words only because they happen to contain six of the letters most characteristic of the antique chancery hand of the seventeenth century,--_t_, _h_, _e_, _r_, _g_, and _b_,--within a space suited to the columns for which we write. The words themselves need none of ours added to them to set forth their modern look. They might have been written yesterday. The further to enforce our point, we add a fac-simile of some writing of forty years' later date. It is in a copy in our possession of Simon Lennard's translation of Charron "De la Sagesse," which (the translation) was not published until 1658. On an original fly-leaf, and evidently after the book had been subjected to some years' hard usage, an early possessor of the volume has entered his week's washing-account, in a hand of which the words following the date afford a fair specimen.

[Illustration: script text which is illegible]

Probably not many readers of the "Atlantic" can decipher the whole of this, although it is very neat, clear, and elegant. It is "Cloathes: 1. shirt"; [Footnote: This memorandum is characteristic. In full it is as follows:--

"Sept: the 9th: Cloathes: 1. Shirt: 3: bands: 8 handkecheirfs: 4 neckcloaths: 7: pa: cuffs: 1. bootes tops: 1 cap: an old towell: a Napkin."

The writer was evidently young, poor, and a dandy. His youth is shown by his wearing neckcloths, which were a new and youthful fashion at the date of this memorandum; his dandyism, by the number of his handkerchiefs, (a luxury in those days,) and of his cuffs, which answer to our wristbands, and by his lace boot-tops; his poverty, by his wearing three bands, four neckcloths, and seven pair of cuffs (probably one a day for the week) to one shirt. His having, in respect to the last garment, was probably like Poins'] and if the reader [Footnote: "one for superfluity and one other for use." The cap was probably that which he wore when he laid aside his wig. His hose, of colored silk, probably made only "semi-occasional" visits to the laundress.]

will examine the fac-simile in Mr. Collier's "Notes and Emendations," he will find that it is even older in appearance than the marginal readings there given. Clearly, then, if the pencil memorandums on the margins of the Collier folio had been made by a person who wrote as the Earl of Southampton (born in 1573) did in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and the ink readings were made to conform to them by a person who wrote as the profaner of Charron's "Wisdome" with his washing-bill did in the third quarter of that century, the pencilled guide would be "modern-looking," and the reading in ink written over it "antique-looking," although the former might have been half a century older than the latter. And that both pencil and ink readings are by the same hand remains to be proved. The presumption in our own mind is, that they are not. The margins of this folio, on the evidence of all who have examined it, Mr. Collier included, are full of proofs that there were many doubts and conjectures in the mind of its corrector, (shown by erasures, reinsertions, and change of manuscript readings,) before the work on it was abandoned; and is it not quite probable that some person who was or had been connected with the theatre made memoranda of such changes in the text as his memory suggested to him, and that these were passed upon (it is in evidence that some of them wore rejected) by the person who had undertaken to prepare the text for a new edition, or the performance of the plays by a new company? That even all the ink readings are by the same hand has not yet been established; and that the writing in pencil and that in ink are by one person is yet more uncertain. It is, in our opinion, more than doubtful. To assume it is to beg the question.

Next, as to the suspicious circumstance, that the pencil spelling is in some places modern, while that of the ink reading is old; as "body" in pencil, and "bodie" in ink. We wonder that such a fact was noticed by a man of Mr. Hamilton's knowledge; for it can be easily set aside; or rather, it need not be regarded, because there is nothing suspicious about it. For the spelling of the seventeenth century, like its syntax and its pronunciation, was irregular; and the fatal error of those who attempt to imitate it is that they always use double consonants, superfluous final e-s, and _ie_ for _y_. And even supposing that these pencilled words and the words in ink were written by the same person, the fact that the word, when written in pencil, is spelled with a _y_ or a single _l_, when written in ink with _ie_ or double _l_, is of not the least consequence. This will be made clear to those who do not already know it, by the following instances (the like of which might be produced by tens of thousands,) from "Euphues his England," ed. 1597, which

happened to lie on our table when we read Mr. Hamilton's first letter. "For that _Honnie_ taken excessiuelie, cloyeth the stomacke though it be _Honny_." (Sig. Aa3.) In this instance, "honey," spelled first in the old way, as to the last vowel sound, on its repetition, in the same sentence, is spelled in what is called the new way; but in the example which follows, the word "folly," which appears first as a catchword at the bottom of the page in modern spelling, is found in the ancient spelling on the turning of the leaf: "Things that are commonlie knowne it were foll_y_ foll_ie_ to repeate." (Sig. Aa.) English scholars may smile at the citation of passages to establish such a point; but we are writing for those who are too wise to read old books, and who have their English study done, as the Turk would have had his dancing, by others for them. And besides, Mr. Hamilton has shown that even an English professor of antiquarian literature can forget the point, or at least not see its bearing on the subject in hand.

The modern-looking hand and the modern spelling of the pencilled memorandums do not, then, compel the conclusion that there has been forgery, even although they underlie the antique-looking hand and the old spelling; but let us see if there is not other evidence to be taken into consideration. We have before us the privately-printed fac-similes of the eighteen passages in Mr. Collier's folio, above referred to. Perhaps they may help us to judge if the corrector's work is like that of a forger. From the first we take these four lines [_Tempest_, Act I, Sc. 2];--"Lend thy hand
And plueke my Magick garment from me: So [Sidenote: _Lay it downe._]
Lye there my Art: wipe thou thine eyes, have comfort,
The direfull spectacle," etc.

In those lines, the corrector, beside supplying the stage direction _Lay it downe_, has added a comma after "hand," substituted a period for the colon after "Art," and a capital for a small _w_ in "wipe." Would a forger do such minute and needless work as this, and do it so carelessly, too, as this one did? for, to make the colon a period, he merely strikes his pen lightly through the upper point; and, to make the small _w_ a capital, he merely lengthens its lines upward.

In the passage from "The Taming of the Shrew," we see, what Mr. Collier himself notices in his "Notes and Emendations," that the prefix to the tinker's speeches, which in the folios is invariably _Beg._ [Beggar], is changed to _Sly;_ and this is done in every instance. We have not counted _Sly's_ speeches; but they are numerous enough to force the unanswerable question, With what possible purpose could this task have been undertaken by a forger? for the change adds nothing to our knowledge of the interlocutors, and produces no variation in the reading.

In a passage given from "The Winter's Tale," Act IV. Sc. 3, we find these lines:--

"_Pol._ This is the pettiest Low-borne Lasse, that ever,
Ran on the greene-sord: Nothing she do's _or seemes,_"--

where "seems" is changed to "says," by striking out all but the first and last letters, and writing _ay_ in the margin. In a passage given from "Troilus and Cressida," Act V. Sc. 2, we have this line:--

"Good traders in the flesh, set this in your painted cloathes,"--

where the _a_ in the last word is struck out. In a speech of the Moor's, given from "Othello," Act IV. Sc. 1, we notice this sentence:--

"It is not words that shakes me thus, (pish)."

where the final _s_ is struck from "shakes." This is strange work for a forger of antique readings, a man who is supposed to be detected at his work by writing "bodie" in ink, when his pencil memorandum was "body." For, in these instances, he has _modernized the text_, and, except in the first, that is _all_ that he has done. If he had wished his text to look old, he would have left the last _e_ in "seemes," and read "sayes"; he would not have been at the trouble of striking out the _a_ in "painted cloathes;" [Footnote: See As You Like It, in the folio of 1623, p. 196, col. 2, "I answer you right painted _cloath_," and Henry VIII., _Idem_, p. 224, col. 2, "They that beare the _Cloath_ of Honour ouer her."] and he would have left the _s_ in "shakes," which superfluity is one of the most marked and best-known characteristics of English books published before the middle of the seventeenth century. Instances of this kind, in which a forger would have defeated his own purpose to gain nothing, must be countless upon the nine hundred and odd pages of the Collier folio, of which the eighteen fac-similes, from which we have quoted, do not give us as much as would fill a single page of the original.

Again, we find the author of these manuscript readings scrupulously leaving a mark of the antiquity of his work, which we must regard as a mark of its genuineness. (For a man can blow hot and blow cold, though satyrs have not sense enough to see the right and the reason of it.) In a passage given from "Timon of Athens," Act IV. Sc. 2, the first line is

"Who _wou_ld be so mock'd with glory, or to live."

Here, by a misprint both in the first and second folio, there is a syllable too much for rhythm; and the corrector properly abbreviates "Who would" into one syllable; but he does it, not by striking out all of "would" but the _d_, as a forger of modern days inevitably would have done: he scrupulously leaves the _l_, which was pronounced in Shakespeare's time, and for many years after; though this, we believe, was never remarked until the appearance of a work very recently published in this country!

To revert to some of the aimless work of this supposed forger. There are many passages in the Collier folio, some of a few lines, others of many, which are entirely stricken out; and of these there is not one that we have noticed which it could possibly have been intended to represent as spurious. What was a forger to gain by this? It could but serve to throw discredit on his work. And again, in these erased passages, and on erasures for new readings, the verbal and literal changes are still made, and made, too, in points of not the slightest moment as to the text, and which, in fact, produce no change in it, Take this instance, in a passage given from "Hamlet," Act V. Sc. 2:--

"_Hora_. Now cracks a Noble heart:
Good night sweet Prience," etc.

Here "sweet Prience" is struck out, and "be blest" substituted in the margin; but, previously to this change, the first e had been struck out in "Prience,"--a change of no more consequence than if the capital N in "Noble" had been changed to a small one. What, too, did the forger

propose to gain by putting, at great pains to himself, commas, in passages like this, from "Timon of Athens," Act IV. Sc. 2:--

"To have his pompe, and all state comprehends,
But onely painted like his varnisht Friends"?

where he inserts a comma after "painted," properly enough, but without at all changing the sense of the passage, or facilitating our comprehension of it in the slightest degree.

But enough, although we leave much unsaid. For we think that our readers can hardly fail to conclude with us, that proof far stronger and more complete than the discovery of modern-looking pencil-marks under antique-looking words in ink is required to prove Mr. Collier's folio a fabrication of the present day. This external physical evidence is, to say the least, far from conclusive, even on its own grounds; and the internal moral evidence, ever the higher and the weightier in such questions, is all against it. The forgery may be proved hereafter; but it has not been proved yet. The character of the ink is not clearly established in all the readings which have thus far been submitted to experiment, as Mr. Maskelyne admits; and that question is still to be determined. We await with interest the appearance of a pamphlet upon the subject, which is now in preparation at the British Museum. Meantime, upon this brief examination of the subject in a light as new to us as to our readers, we venture to repeat the opinion which we have before expressed, that many, if not all, of the corrections in this folio were made in the third quarter of the seventeenth century. The dropping of superfluous e-s, (as in "sayes,") and a-s, (as in "cloath,") and s-s, (as in "shakes,") points to as late a date as that; and the retention of the _l_ in the abbreviation of "would" indicates a period before the reign of William and Mary. We conjecture, that, possibly, some of the readings are spurious, and were added by a person who found the volume with many ancient corrections, and seized the opportunity to obtain the authority of age and the support of those corrections for others of later date. This, however, is but a conjecture, and upon a point of little consequence. Indeed, the chief importance of this investigation at the British Museum, to all the world but Mr. Collier, is, that, whether the pencil-marks, which the corrector chose in some cases to follow, in others to disregard, prove to be ancient or modern, the corrections are now deprived of all pretence to authority, and thrown upon their own merits; which is just the position in which all candid people desire to see them.

The Exploits and Triumphs in Europe of Paul Morphy, the Chess Champion; including an Historical Account of Clubs, Biographical Sketches of Famous Players, and Various Information and Anecdote relating to the Noble Game of Chess. By Paul Morphy's late Secretary. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 12mo. pp. 203.

The American Chess Congress, at New York, in October, 1857, by the wide-spread interest which it awakened, revealed what was not very generally suspected,--that the game of chess is played and studied in the New World more generally, and on the present occasion, we may say more thoroughly and successfully, than in the Old. This interest in chess the subsequent career of Paul Morphy, the prime hero of that grand encounter, has greatly widened and deepened; and to all who had the

chess-fever before his advent, or who have caught it since, this book will be welcome. It fulfils all the promises of its title-page, and tells the story of Paul Morphy's modestly achieved victories at home and abroad with authority and intimate knowledge. Chess-players, and all who take even an incidental interest in Mr. Morphy's adventures abroad, will be glad to find here a particular account of his engagements with Harrwitz, Anderssen, and especially of the match which he did not play with Mr. Stanton, and why he did not play it. The whole of the Stanton affair is recounted with much minuteness of date and circumstance, and a production of all the letters which passed upon the subject; and we must say, that upon the facts, (about which there appears to be no room for dispute,) aside from any color given to them by the writer's manner of stating them, the case has a very bad aspect for the English champion. How much better would Mr. Stanton now be standing before his brother chess-players, and, so much attention has the affair attracted, before the world, had he been fairly beaten, like Professor Anderssen! His reputation as a chess-player would have suffered no diminution by such a result of an encounter with Mr. Morphy; that would only have shown, that, well as Stanton played, Morphy played better,--as to which the world is as well satisfied now as then it would have been. And as to his reputation as a man,--what need to say a word about it? This chess-flurry has been fraught with good lessons by example. The frankness, the entire candor, and simple manliness of Professor Anderssen, who went from Breslau to Paris for the purpose of meeting Mr. Morphy and there contending for the belt of the chess-ring, and who played his games as if he and his opponent were two brothers, playing for a chance half-hour's amusement, is charming, and has won him regard the world over. Such generosity is truly noble, and it appears yet nobler by contrast with the endeavors of Harrwitz to worry and tire his opponent into defeat, and his final contrivance to avoid a confession that he was beaten. Mr. Stanton's conduct is a warning that cannot be entirely lost upon men not utterly depraved, who are tempted into petty duplicity to serve petty ends; and in the midst of all, how Paul Morphy's modesty, dignity of carriage, generosity, and entire honesty of purpose shine out and make us proud to call him countryman!

Mr. Morphy, in the speeches which he has been compelled to make since his return from Europe, has spoken lightly of chess, as a mere amusement. It became him to do so; and yet chess would seem to have its value as a discipline upon natures amenable to discipline. We--that is, the present writer, not all the contributors to the "Atlantic"--sat by the side of Mr. Morphy when he won from Mr. Paulsen the decisive game at the Chess Tournament in New York,--that game in which all the others of that encounter culminated. The game was evidently approaching its termination. Mr. Paulsen, who generally thinks out to its last result his every move, deliberated half an hour and moved, and then, with a slight flush upon his face, sat quietly awaiting the consequences. Morphy, pale, collected, yet with a look of restrained--though entirely restrained--nervousness, looked steadily at the board for about one minute, after which his hand opened very far back, so that the knuckles were much the lowest part of it, poised over a piece for a second or two, and then swooped quickly down and moved it somewhat decidedly, which is his usual way of moving. He remained looking intently upon the board, which Paulsen studied for a few minutes, equally absorbed. Looking up at last, the latter quietly said to his opponent,--"I don't see how I can prevent the mate." Paul Morphy smiled, waved his hand deprecatingly, and the tournament was won. The checkmate was about five moves off, if we remember rightly. Restraint of this kind seems to be imposed by a thorough study of this noble game, and its moral discipline

is quite as valuable as the sharpening of the intellectual faculties which it accompanies.

But even those who have a sincere admiration of Mr. Morphy, and have a sufficient knowledge of chess to appreciate his absolute mastery of the game, must be unpleasantly affected by the public and extravagant manner in which he has been lionized since his return from Europe. It was well that the chess-players of New York should present him with a chessboard so splendid that he can never use it; well that the cleverest men in Boston should have him to dine with them; but what need of such blatant publicity? what justification for such interminable and such miserable speeches as were made at him in Gotham? Why did not one compliment in each town suffice? and why must he be persecuted with watches and run down by crowds? Why, except because some people are allowed to pamper their silly vanity by means of other people's silly curiosity? Good sense and good taste revolted at these exhibitions; but good sense and good taste are undemonstrative, while folly and vulgarity are bold and carry the day. In all such matters, we of this country allow ourselves to be misrepresented by a comparatively few impudent people, with their own ends to serve. This book is somewhat open to like objections. Its title is too pretentious; its style is braggart, and tainted with the vulgarity of an English flash reporter; and yet this is tempered by a certain constraint, as if the writer could not but occasionally think how ill such a style was suited to his subject. The portrait is wretched, and a certain likeness to Mr. Morphy adds to its offensiveness.

Summer Pictures. From Copenhagen to Venice. By HENRY M. FIELD, Author of "The Irish Confederates and the Rebellion of 1798." New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1859.

The unpretending title to this neat volume expresses the modest purpose of the writer. Escaping from care and responsibility, he has made a rapid tour through parts of Europe, some of which are rarely frequented;--from London to Normandy; thence to Paris, Holland, Denmark; through the Baltic to Berlin, Dresden, Prague, and Vienna; thence to the Adriatic, Venice, Milan, and so round again to Paris.

To see all this with new eyes, and to present the world with a perfectly fresh book of "Travels in Europe," requires a rare man and a rare audacity; and we congratulate Mr. Field that he has not attempted the doubtful task. But, in his rapid run, he has gathered a flower here, a specimen there, a bit of history, a sight of a man, a pebble from the Baltic, a moss from Venice, a sigh from the heart of Italy, a word of hope and happiness from the domestic life of France. He has seen the cloud rising in Italy, and ventures to hope, almost against possibility. He has seen the firesides and _homes_ of France, and assures us that in Paris, too, exist honest and warm and pure hearts, and generous and holy souls, and that all France is not a den in which liars and charlatans only struggle and tear one another. Mr. Field looks at things with somewhat of a professional eye, and draws what encouragement he can for the future of the Protestant religion. His facts and speculations will thus interest a large and valuable class of readers, while to some few of another class a certain suspicion of prosiness will be distasteful. The volume is well prepared, and we are sure that the manly, generous sentiments of the writer will be welcomed by a large number of personal friends, and by a discriminating public.

Adam Bede. By GEORGE ELLIOT, Author of "Scenes of Clerical Life." New York: Harper & Brothers. 12mo. pp. 496.

As Nature will have it, Great Unknowns are out of the question in any other branch of the world's business than the writing of books. If, through sponsorial neglect or cruelty, the name of our butcher or baker or candlestick-maker happens to be John, with the further and congenial addition of Smith, JOHN SMITH it is on sign-board, pass book, and at the top, and sometimes at the bottom, of the monthly bills, in living and familiar characters. But in the matter of authorship, the world is yet far short of the Scriptural standard; in a variety of instances it has found itself unable to know men by their works; and, in deference to this short-sightedness of their fellows, merchants and lawyers and doctors have their cards, and clergymen, at least once in every twelvemonth, make the personal circuit of their congregations, so that no sheep shall wander into darkness through ignorance of the shepherd. We believe that no pursuit should be marked by greater frankness and fairness than the literary. It is a question, at least, of kindness; and it is not kind to set good people on an uneasy edge of curiosity; it is not kind to bring down upon the care-bowed heads of editors storms of communications, couched in terms of angry disputation; it is not kind to establish a perennial root of bitterness, to give an unhealthy flavor to the literary waters of unborn generations, as "Junius" did, and Scott would have done, had he been able.

"Adam Bede" is remarkable, not less for the unaffected Saxon style which upholds the graceful fabric of the narrative, and for the naturalness of its scenes and characters, so that the reader at once feels happy and at home among them, than for the general perception of those universal springs of action which control all society, the patient unfolding of those traits of humanity with which commonplace writers get out of temper and rudely dispense. The place and the people are of the simplest, and the language is of the simplest; and what happens from day to day, and from year to year, in the period of the action, might happen in any little village where the sun shines.

We do not know where to look, in the whole range of contemporary fictitious literature, for pictures in which the sober and the brilliant tones of Nature blend with more exquisite harmony than in those which are set in every chapter of "Adam Bede." Still life--the harvest-field, the polished kitchens, the dairies with a concentrated cool smell of all that is nourishing and sweet, the green, the porches that have vines about them and are pleasant late in the afternoon, and deep woods thrilling with birds--all these were never more vividly, and yet tenderly depicted. The characters are drawn with a free and impartial hand, and one of them is a creation for immortality. Mrs. Poyser is a woman with an incorrigible tongue, set firmly in opposition to the mandates of a heart the overflows of whose sympathy and love keep the circle of her influence in a state of continual irrigation. Her epigrams are aromatic, and she is strong in simile, but never ventures beyond her own depth into that of her author.

The Poetical Works of Edgar A. Poe. With an Original Memoir. Redfield, New York.

This pocket edition of the Poetical Works of Edgar A. Poe is illustrated with a very much idealized portrait of the author. The poems are introduced by an original memoir, which, without eulogy or anathema, gives a clear and succinct account of that singular and wayward genius. The copies of verses are many in number, and most of them are chiefly remarkable for their art, rather than for their power of awakening either pleasing or profound emotion. It is one poem alone which makes an edition of these works emphatically called for. That poem, it is nearly superfluous to mention, is "The Raven," and truly it is unforgetable. In this weird and wonderful creation, art holds equal dominion with feeling. The form not only never yields to the sweep of the thought, but that thought, touching and fearful as is its tone, is made to turn and double fantastically, almost playfully, in many of the lines. The croak of the raven is taken up and moulded into rhyme by a nimble, if not a mocking spirit; and, fascinating as is the rhythmic movement of the verse, it appears like the dancing of the daughter of Herodias. This looks incongruous; and so do the words of the fool which Shakspeare has intermingled with the agonies and imprecations of Lear. In the tragedy, this is held to be a consummate stroke of art, and certainly the reader is grateful for the relief. Had Poe a similar design? Closely analyzed, this song seems the very ecstasy of fancy; as if the haunting apparition inspired the poet more than it appalled the man. We can call to mind no one who has ever played with an inexplicable horror more daintily or more impressively; and, whether premeditated or spontaneous, it is an epitome of the life of the writer, for the marked traits of his character are there, and almost the prevailing expression of his . . . .

* * * * *

It becomes the sad duty of the editors of the "ATLANTIC" to record the death of its founder, MR. M.D. PHILLIPS. It indicates no ordinary force of character, that a man, dying at the age of forty-six, should have worked himself, solely by his own talents and integrity, to the head of one of the largest publishing-houses of the country. But it was not merely by strength and tenacity of purpose, and by clearness of judgment, that Mr. Phillips was distinguished. He had also a generous ambition, and aims which transcended the sphere of self and the limits of merely commercial success. Showing, as he did, a rare courage (and that of the best kind, for it was a courage based upon experience and qualified by discretion) in beginning the publication of the "Atlantic" during the very storm and stress of the financial revulsion of 1857, it was by no means as a mere business speculation that he undertook what seemed a doubtful enterprise. His wish and hope were, that the "Atlantic" should represent what was best in American thought and letters; and while he had no doubt of ultimate pecuniary profit, his chief motive was the praiseworthy ambition to associate his name with an undertaking which should result in some good to letters and some progress in ideas and principles which were dear to him.

We speak of him as we saw him. He would not have wished a garrulous eulogy or a cumbrous epitaph. A character whose outline was simple and bold, and which was marked by certain leading and high qualities, demands few words, if only they be sincere. It is less painful to say that good word for the dead, which it is the instinct of human nature to offer, when we can say, as of Mr. Phillips, that his mind was strong and clear, that it was tenacious of experience, and therefore both rapid and safe in decision, that he was courageous and constant, and acted under the inspiration of desires and motives which he can carry with him into

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