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THE [Pg 513]

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Contents

WITH THE BIRDS.

Not in the spirit of exact science, but rather with the freedom of love and old acquaintance, would I celebrate some of the minstrels of the field and forest,—these accredited and authenticated poets of Nature.

All day, while the rain has pattered and murmured, have I heard the notes of the Robin and the Wood-Thrush; the Red-Eyed Flycatcher has pursued his game within a few feet of my window, darting with a low, complacent warble amid the dripping leaves, looking as dry and unruffled as if a drop of rain had never touched him; the Cat-Bird has flirted and attitudinized on my garden-fence; the House-Wren stopped a moment between the showers, and indulged in a short, but spirited, rehearsal under a large leaf in the grape-arbor; the King-Bird advised me of his proximity, as he went by on his mincing flight; and the Chimney-Swallows have been crying the child's riddle of "*Chippy, chippy, cherryo*," about the house-top.

With these angels and ministers of grace thus to attend me, even in the seclusion of my closet, I am led more than ever to expressions of love and admiration. I understand the enthusiasm of Wilson and Audubon, and see how one might forsake house and home and go and live with them the free life of the woods.

To the dissecting, classifying scientist a bird may be no more perfect or lovable than a squirrel or a fish; yet to me it seems that all the excellences of the animal creation converge and centre in this nymph of the air; a warbler seems to be the finishing stroke.

First, there is its light, delicate, aërial organization,—consequently, its vivacity, its high temperature, the depth and rapidity of its inspirations, and likewise the intense, gushing, lyrical character of its life. How hot he is! how fast he lives!—as if his air had more oxygen than ours, or his body less clay. How slight a wound kills him! how exquisite his sensations! how perfect his nervous system! and hence how large his brain! Why, look at the cerebral development of this tiny songster,—almost a third larger, in proportion to the size of its body, than that of Shakspeare even! Does it mean nothing? You may observe that a warbler has a much larger brain and a much finer cerebral organization throughout [Pg 514] than a bird of prey, or any of the Picus family even. Does it signify nothing? I gaze into the eyes of the Gazelle,—eyes that will admit of no epithet or comparison,—and the old question of preëxistence and transmigration rises afresh in my mind, and something like a dim recognition of kinship passes. I turn this Thrush in my hand,—I remember its strange ways, the curious look it gave me, its ineffable music, its freedom, and its ecstasy,—and I tremble lest I have slain a being diviner than myself.

And then there is its freedom, its superior powers of locomotion, its triumph over time and space. The reptile measures its length upon the ground; the quadruped enjoys a more complete liberation, and is related to the earth less closely; man more still; and the bird most of all. Over our heads, where our eyes travel, but our bodies follow not,—in the free native air,—is his home. The trees are his temples and his dwellings, and the breezes sing his lullaby. He needs no sheltering; for the rain does not wet him. He need fear no cold;

for the tropics wait upon his wings. He is the nearest visible representation of a spirit I know of. He *flies*,—the superlative of locomotion; the poet in his most audacious dreams dare confer no superior power on flesh and blood. Sound and odor are no more native to the air than is the Swallow. Look at this marvellous creature! He can reverse the order of the seasons, and almost keep the morning or the sunset constantly in his eye, or outstrip the west-wind cloud. Does he subsist upon air or odor, that he is forever upon the wing, and never deigns to pick a seed or crumb from the earth? Is he an embodied thought projected from the brain of some mad poet in the dim past, and sent to teach us a higher geometry of curves and spirals? See him with that feather high in air, dropping it and snapping it up again in the very glee of superabundant vitality, and in his sudden evolutions and spiral gambollings seeming more a creature of the imagination than of actual sight!

And, again, their coming and going, how curious and suggestive! We go out in the morning, and no Thrush or Vireo is to be heard; we go out again, and every tree and grove is musical; yet again, and all is silent. Who saw them come? who saw them depart? This pert little Winter-Wren, for instance, darting in and out the fence, diving under the rubbish here and coming up yards away,—how does he manage with those little circular wings to compass degrees and zones, and arrive always in the nick of time? Last August I saw him in the remotest wilds of the Adirondack, impatient and inquisitive as usual; a few weeks later, on the Potomac, I was greeted by the same hardy little busybody. Does he travel by easy stages from bush to bush and from wood to wood? or has that compact little body force and courage to brave the night and the upper air, and so achieve leagues at one pull? And yonder Bluebird, with the hue of the Bermuda sky upon his back, as Thoreau would say, and the flush of its dawn upon his breast,—did he come down out of heaven on that bright March morning when he told us so softly and plaintively, that, if we pleased, spring had come?

About the middle of September I go out in the woods, and am attracted by a faint piping and lisping in the tops of the Oaks and Chestnuts. Tiny figures dart to and fro so rapidly that it pains the eye to follow them, and I discover that the Black-Poll Warbler is paying me a return visit. Presently I likewise perceive a troop of Redstarts, or Green-Backed Warblers, or Golden and Ruby-Crowned Wrens, flashing through the Chestnut-branches, or hanging like jewels on the Cedar-sprays. A week of two later, and my darlings are gone, another love is in my heart, and other voices fill my ears. But so unapparent and mysterious are the coming and going, that I look upon each as a special Providence, and value them as visitants from another sphere. [Pg 515]

The migration of the Pigeons, Ducks, and Geese is obvious enough; we see them stream across the heavens, or hear their *clang* in the night; but these minstrels of the field and forest add to their other charms a shade of mystery, and pique the imagination by their invisible and unknown journeyings. To be sure, we know they follow the opening season north and the retreating summer south; but who will point to the parallels that mark the limits of their wandering, or take us to their most secret haunts?

What greater marvel than this simple gift of music? What beside birds and the human species sing? It is the crowning gift; through it the field and forest are justified. Nature said, "These rude forms and forces must have a spokesman of their own nursing; here are flowers and odor, let there be music also." I suspect the subtile spirit of the meadow took form in the Bobolink, that the high pasture-lands begot the Vesper-Sparrow, and that from the imprisoned sense and harmony of the forests sprang the Wood-Thrush.

From the life of birds being on a more intense and vehement scale than that of other animals result their musical gifts and their holiday expression of joy. How restless and curious they are! Their poise and attitudes, how various, rapid, and graceful! They are a study for an artist, especially as exhibited in the Warblers and Flycatchers: their looks of alarm, of curiosity, of repose, of watchfulness, of joy, so obvious and expressive, yet as impossible of reproduction as their music. Even if the naturalist were to succeed in imparting all their wild extravagances of poise and motion to their inanimate forms, his

birds, to say the least, would have a very theatrical or melodramatic aspect, and seem unreal in proportion to their fidelity to Nature. I have seen a Blue Jay alone, saluting and admiring himself in the mirror of a little pool of water from a low overhanging branch, assume so many graceful, novel, as well as ridiculous and fantastic attitudes, as would make a taxidermist run mad to attempt to reproduce; and the rich medley of notes he poured forth at the same time—chirping, warbling, cooing, whistling, chattering, revealing rare musical and imitative powers—would have been an equally severe test to the composer who should have aspired to report them; and the indignant air of outraged privacy he assumed, on finding himself discovered, together with his loud, angry protest, as, with crown depressed and plumage furled, he rapidly ascended to the topmost branch of a tall Birch, the better to proclaim my perfidy to the whole world, would have excited the interest and applause of the coolest observer.

So much in a general sense; but let me discriminate; "for my purpose holds" to call my favorites by name, and point them out to you, as the tuneful procession passes.

Every stage of the advancing season gives prominence to certain birds as to certain flowers. The Dandelion tells me when to look for the Swallow, and I know the Thrushes will not linger when the Orchis is in bloom. In my latitude, April is emphatically the month of the Robin. In large numbers they scour the fields and groves. You hear their piping in the meadow, in the pasture, on the hillside. Walk in the woods, and the dry leaves rustle with the whir of their wings, the air is vocal with their cheery call. In excess of joy and vivacity, they run, leap, scream, chase each other through the air, diving and sweeping among the trees with perilous rapidity.

In that free, fascinating, half-work and half-play pursuit,—sugar-making,—a pursuit which still lingers in many parts of New York, as in New England, the Robin is one's boon companion. When the day is sunny and the ground bare, you meet him at all points and hear him at all hours. At sunset, on the tops of the tall Maples, with look heavenward, and in a spirit of utter abandonment, he carols his simple strain. And sitting thus amid the stark, silent trees, above the wet, cold earth, with the chill of winter still in the air, there is no fitter or sweeter songster in the whole round year. It is in keeping with the scene and [Pg 516] the occasion. How round and genuine the notes are, and how eagerly our ears drink them in! The first utterance, and the spell of winter is thoroughly broken and the remembrance of it afar off.

Robin is one of the most native and democratic of our birds; he is one of the family, and seems much nearer to us than those rare, exotic visitants, as the Orchard-Starling or Rose-Breasted Grosbeak, with their distant, high-bred ways. Hardy, noisy, frolicsome, neighborly and domestic in his ways, strong of wing and bold in spirit, he is the pioneer of the Thrush family, and well worthy of the finer artists whose coming he heralds and in a measure prepares us for.

I could wish Robin less native and plebeian in one respect,—the building of his nest. Its coarse material and rough masonry are creditable neither to his skill as a workman nor to his taste as an artist. I am the more forcibly reminded of his deficiency in this respect from observing yonder Humming-Bird's nest, which is a marvel of fitness and adaptation, a proper setting for this winged gem,—the body of it composed of a white, felt-like substance, probably the down of some plant or the wool of some worm, and toned down in keeping with the branch on which it sits by minute tree-lichens, woven together by threads as fine and frail as gossamer. From Robin's good looks and musical turn we might reasonably predict a domicil of equal fitness and elegance. At least I demand of him as clean and handsome a nest as the King-Bird's, whose harsh jingle, compared with Robin's evening melody, is as the clatter of pots and kettles beside the tone of a flute. I love his note and ways better even than those of the Orchard-Starling or the Baltimore Oriole; yet his nest, compared with theirs, is a half-subterranean hut contrasted with a Roman villa. There is something courtly and poetical in a pensile nest. Next to a castle in the air is a dwelling suspended to the slender branch of a tall tree, swayed and rocked forever by the wind. Why need wings be afraid of falling? Why build only where boys can climb? After

all, we must set it down to the account of Robin's democratic turn; he is no aristocrat, but one of the people; and therefore we should expect stability in his workmanship, rather than elegance.

Another April bird, which makes her appearance sometimes earlier and sometimes later than Robin, and whose memory I fondly cherish, is the Ph[oe]be-Bird, (*Muscicapa nunciola*,) the pioneer of the Flycatchers. In the inland farming districts, I used to notice her, on some bright morning about Easter-day, proclaiming her arrival with much variety of motion and attitude, from the peak of the barn or hay-shed. As yet, you may have heard only the plaintive, homesick note of the Bluebird, or the faint trill of the Song-Sparrow; and Ph[oe]be's clear, vivacious assurance of her veritable bodily presence among us again is welcomed by all ears. At agreeable intervals in her lay she describes a circle or an ellipse in the air, ostensibly prospecting for insects, but really, I suspect, as an artistic flourish, thrown in to make up in some way for the deficiency of her musical performance. If plainness of dress indicates powers of song, as it usually does, then Ph[oe]be ought to be unrivalled in musical ability, for surely that ashen-gray suit is the superlative of plainness; and that form, likewise, though it might pass for the "perfect figure" of a bird, measured by Joe Gargery's standard, to a fastidious taste would present exceptionable points. The seasonableness of her coming, however, and her civil, neighborly ways, shall make up for all deficiencies in song and plumage, and remove any suspicions we may have had, that, perhaps, from some cause or other, she was in some slight disfavor with Nature. After a few weeks Ph[oe]be is seldom seen, except as she darts from her moss-covered nest beneath some bridge or shelving cliff.

Another April comer, who arrives shortly after Robin-Redbreast, with whom he associates both at this season and in the autumn, is the Golden-Winged Woodpecker, *alias*, "High-Hole," *alias*, "Flicker," *alias*, "Yarup." He is an old favorite of my boyhood, and his note to me means very much. He announces his arrival by a long, loud call, repeated from the dry branch of some tree, or a stake in the fence,—a thoroughly melodious April sound. I think how Solomon finished that beautiful climax on Spring, "And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land," and see that a description of Spring in this farming country, to be equally characteristic, should culminate in like manner, —"And the call of the High-Hole comes up from the wood." [Pg 517]

It is a loud, strong, sonorous call, and does not seem to imply an answer, but rather to subserve some purpose of love or music. It is "Yarup's" proclamation of peace and good-will to all. On looking at the matter closely, I perceive that most birds, not denominated songsters, have, in the spring, some note or sound or call that hints of a song, and answers imperfectly the end of beauty and art. As a "brighter iris comes upon the burnished dove," and the fancy of the young man turns lightly to thoughts of his pretty cousin, so the same renewing spirit touches the "silent singers," and they are no longer dumb; faintly they lisp the first syllables of the marvellous tale. Witness the clear, sweet whistle of the Gray-Crested Titmouse,—the soft, nasal piping of the Nuthatch,—the amorous, vivacious warble of the Bluebird,—the long, rich note of the Meadow-Lark,—the whistle of the Quail,—the drumming of the Partridge,—the animation and loquacity of the Swallows, and the like. Even the Hen has a homely, contented carol; and I credit the Owls with a desire to fill the night with music. All birds are incipient or would-be songsters in the spring. I find corroborative evidence of this even in the crowing of the Cock. The flowering of the Maple is not so obvious as that of the Magnolia; nevertheless, there is actual inflorescence. Neither Wilson nor Audubon, I believe, awards any song to that familiar little Sparrow, the *Socialis*; yet who that has observed him sitting by the wayside, and repeating, with devout attitude, that fine sliding chant, does not recognize the neglect? Who has heard the Snow-Bird sing? Not the ornithologist, it seems; yet he has a lisping warble very savory to the ear, I have heard him indulge in it even in February.

Even the Cow-Bunting feels the musical tendency, and aspires to its expression, with the rest. Perched upon the topmost branch beside his mate or mates,—for he is quite a polygamist, and usually has two or three demure little ladies in faded black beside him,—

generally in the early part of the day, he seems literally to vomit up his notes. Apparently with much labor and effort, they gurgle and blubber up out of him, falling on the ear with a peculiar subtile ring, as of turning water from a glass jug, and not without a certain pleasing cadence.

Neither is the common Woodpecker entirely insensible to the wooing of the spring, and, like the Partridge, testifies his appreciation of melody after quite a primitive fashion. Passing through the woods, on some clear, still morning in March, while the metallic ring and tension of winter are still in the earth and air, the silence is suddenly broken by long, resonant hammering upon a dry limb or stub. It is Downy beating a reveille to Spring. In the utter stillness and amid the rigid forms we listen with pleasure, and as it comes to my ear oftener at this season than at any other, I freely exonerate the author of it from the imputation of any gastronomic motives, and credit him with a genuine musical performance.

It is to be expected, therefore, that "Yellow-Hammer" will respond to the general tendency, and contribute his part to the spring chorus. His April call is his finest touch, his most musical expression.

I recall an ancient Maple standing sentry to a large Sugar-Bush, that, year after year, afforded protection, to a brood of Yellow-Hammers in its decayed heart. A week or two [Pg 518] before the nesting seemed actually to have begun, three or four of these birds might be seen, on almost any bright morning, gambolling and courting amid its decayed branches. Sometimes you would hear only a gentle, persuasive cooing, or a quiet, confidential chattering,—then that long, loud call, taken up by first one, then another, as they sat about upon the naked limbs,—anon, a sort of wild, rollicking laughter, intermingled with various cries, yelps, and squeals, as if some incident had excited their mirth and ridicule. Whether this social hilarity and boisterousness is in celebration of the pairing or mating ceremony, or whether it is only a sort of annual "house-warming" common among High-Holes on resuming their summer quarters, is a question upon which I reserve my judgment.

Unlike most of his kinsmen, the Golden-Wing prefers the fields and the borders of the forest to the deeper seclusion of the woods,—and hence, contrary to the habit of his tribe, obtains most of his subsistence from the ground, boring for ants and crickets. He is not quite satisfied with being a Woodpecker. He courts the society of the Robin and the Finches, abandons the trees for the meadow, and feeds eagerly upon berries and grain. What may be the final upshot of this course of living is a question worthy the attention of Darwin. Will his taking to the ground and his pedestrian feats result in lengthening his legs, his feeding upon berries and grains subdue his tints and soften his voice, and his associating with Robin put a song into his heart?

Indeed, what would be more interesting than the history of our birds for the last two or three centuries? There can be no doubt that the presence of man has exerted a very marked and friendly influence upon them, since they so multiply in his society. The birds of California, it is said, were mostly silent till after its settlement, and I doubt if the Indians heard the Wood-Thrush as we hear him. Where did the Bobolink disport himself before there were meadows in the North and rice-fields in the South? Was he the same blithe, merry-hearted beau then as now? And the Sparrow, the Lark, and the Goldfinch, birds that seem so indigenous to the open fields and so averse to the woods,—we cannot conceive of their existence in a vast wilderness and without man. Did they grow, like the flowers, when the conditions favorable to their existence were established?

But to return. The Bluebird and Song-Sparrow, these universal favorites and firstlings of the spring, come before April, and their names are household words.

May is the month of the Swallows and the Orioles. There are many other distinguished arrivals, indeed nine tenths of the birds are here by the last week in May, yet the Swallows and Orioles are the most conspicuous. The bright plumage of the latter seems really like an arrival from the tropics. I see them flash through the blossoming trees, and

all the forenoon hear their incessant warbling and wooing. The Swallows dive and chatter about the barn, or squeak and build beneath the eaves; the Partridge drums in the fresh unfolding woods; the long, tender note of the Meadow-Lark comes up from the meadow; and at sunset, from every marsh and pond come the ten thousand voices of the Hylas. May is the transition month, and exists to connect April and June, the root with the flower.

With June the cup is full, our hearts are satisfied, there is no more to be desired. The perfection of the season, among other things, has brought the perfection of the song and plumage of the birds. The master artists are all here; and the expectations excited by the Robin and the Song-Sparrow are fully justified. The Thrushes have all come; and I sit down upon the first rock, with hands full of the pink Azalea, to listen. With me, the Cuckoo does not arrive till June; and often the Goldfinch, the King-Bird, the Scarlet Tanager delay their coming till then. In the meadows the Bobolink is in all his glory; in [Pg 519] the high pastures the Field-Sparrow sings his breezy vesper-hymn; and the woods are unfolding to the music of the Thrushes.

The Cuckoo is one of the most solitary birds of our forests, and is strangely tame and quiet, appearing equally untouched by joy or grief, fear or anger. Is he an exile from some other sphere, and are his loneliness and indifference the result of a hopeless, yet resigned soul? Or has he passed through some terrible calamity or bereavement, that has overpowered his sensibilities, rendering him dreamy and semi-conscious? Something remote seems ever weighing upon his mind. He deposits his eggs in the nests of other birds, having no heart for work or domestic care. His note or call is as of one lost or wandering, and the farmer says is prophetic of rain. Amid the general joy and the sweet assurance of things, I love to listen to this strange clairvoyant call. Heard a quarter of a mile away, coming up from the dark bosom of the forest or out from the sombre recesses of the mountain, like the voice of a muezzin calling to prayer in the Oriental twilight, it has a peculiar fascination. He wanders from place to place,

> "An invisible thing,
> A voice, a mystery."

You will probably hear him a score of times to seeing him once. I rarely discover him in the woods, except when on a protracted stay; but when in June he makes his gastronomic tour of the garden and orchard, regaling himself upon canker-worms, he is quite noticeable. Since food of some kind is a necessity, he seems resolved to burden himself as little as possible with the care of obtaining it, and so devours these creeping horrors with the utmost matter-of-course air. At this time he is one of the tamest birds in the orchard, and will allow you to approach within a few yards of him. I have even come within a few feet of one without seeming to excite his fear or suspicion. He is quite unsophisticated, or else royally indifferent.

Without any exception, his plumage is the richest brown I am acquainted with in Nature, and is unsurpassed in the qualities both of firmness and fineness. Notwithstanding the disparity in size and color, he has certain peculiarities that remind one of the Passenger-pigeon. His eye, with its red circle, the shape of his head, and his motions on alighting and taking flight, quickly suggest the resemblance; though in grace and speed, when on the wing, he is far inferior. His tail seems disproportionately long, like that of the Red Thrush, and his flight among the trees is very still, contrasting strongly with the honest clatter of the Robin or Pigeon.

Have you heard the song of the Field-Sparrow? If you have lived in a pastoral country with broad upland pastures, you could hardly have missed him. Wilson, I believe, calls him the Grass-Finch, and was evidently unacquainted with his powers of song. The two white lateral quills in his tail, and his habit of running and skulking a few yards in advance of you as you walk through the fields, are sufficient to identify him. Not in meadows or orchards, but in high, breezy pasture-grounds, will you look for him. His song is most noticeable after sundown, when other birds are silent; for which reason he

has been aptly called the Vesper-Sparrow. The farmer following his team from the field at dusk catches his sweetest strain. His song is not so brisk and varied as that of the Song-Sparrow, being softer and wilder, sweeter and more plaintive. Add the best parts of the lay of the latter to the sweet, vibrating chant of the Wood-Sparrow, and you have the evening hymn of the Vesper-Bird,—the poet of the plain, unadorned pastures. Go to those broad, smooth, up-lying fields where the cattle and sheep are grazing, and sit down in the twilight on one of those warm, clean stones, and listen to this song. On every side, near and remote, from out the short grass which the herds are cropping, the strain rises. Two or three long, silver notes of peace and rest, ending in some subdued trills and quavers, [Pg 520] constitute each separate song. Often you will catch only one or two of the bars, the breeze having blown the minor part away. Such unambitious, quiet, unconscious melody! It is one of the most characteristic sounds in Nature. The grass, the stones, the stubble, the furrow, the quiet herds, and the warm twilight among the hills are all subtilely expressed in this song; this is what they are at last capable of.

The female builds a plain nest in the open field, without so much as a bush or thistle or tuft of grass to protect it or mark its site; you may step upon it, or the cattle may tread it into the ground. But the danger from this source, I presume, the bird considers less than that from another. Skunks and foxes have a very impertinent curiosity, as Finchie well knows,—and a bank or hedge, or a rank growth of grass or thistles, that might promise protection and cover to mouse or bird, these cunning rogues would be apt to explore most thoroughly. The Partridge is undoubtedly acquainted with the same process of reasoning; for, like the Vesper-Bird, she, too, nests in open, unprotected places, avoiding all show of concealment,—coming from the tangled and almost impenetrable parts of the forest, to the clean, open woods, where she can command all the approaches and fly with equal ease in any direction.

One of the most marvellous little songsters whose acquaintance I claim is the White-Eyed Flycatcher. He seems to have been listened to by unappreciative ears, for I know no one who has made especial mention of him. His song is not particularly sweet and soft; on the contrary, it is a little hard and shrill, like that of the Indigo-Bird or Oriole; but for fluency, volubility, execution, and power of imitation, he is unsurpassed (and in the last-named particular unequalled) by any of our Northern birds. His ordinary note is forcible and emphatic, but, as stated, not especially musical: *Chick-a-re'r-chick*, he seems to say, hiding himself in the low, dense undergrowth, and eluding your most vigilant search, as if playing some part in a game. But in July or August, if you are on good terms with the sylvan deities, you may listen to a far more rare and artistic performance. Your first impression will be that that cluster of Azalea or that clump of Swamp-Huckleberry conceals three or four different songsters, each vying with the others to lead the chorus. Such a medley of notes, snatched from half the songsters of the field and forest, and uttered with the utmost clearness and rapidity, I am sure you cannot hear short of the haunts of the genuine Mocking-Bird. If not fully and accurately repeated, there are at least suggested the notes of the Robin, Wren, Cat-Bird, High-Hole, Goldfinch, and Song-Sparrow. The *pip, pip*, of the last is produced so accurately that I verily believe it would deceive the bird herself,—and the whole uttered in such rapid succession that it seems as if the movement that gives the concluding note of one strain must form the first note of the next. The effect is very rich, and, to my ear, entirely unique. The performer is very careful not to reveal himself in the mean time; yet there is a conscious air about the strain that impresses one with the idea that his presence is understood and his attention courted. A tone of pride and glee, and, occasionally, of bantering jocoseness, is discernible. I believe it is only rarely, and when he is sure of his audience, that he displays his parts in this manner. You are to look for him, not in tall trees or deep forests, but in low, dense shrubbery about wet places, where there are plenty of gnats and mosquitoes.

The Winter-Wren is another marvellous songster, in speaking of whom it is difficult to avoid superlatives. He is not so conscious of his powers and so ambitious of effect as the White-Eyed Flycatcher, yet you will not be less astonished and delighted on hearing him. He possesses the fluency, volubility, and copiousness for which the Wrens are noted, and besides these qualities, and what is rarely found conjoined with them, a wild, sweet,

rhythmical cadence that holds you entranced. I shall not soon forget that perfect June day, [Pg 521] when, loitering in a low, ancient Hemlock, in whose cathedral aisles the coolness and freshness seemed perennial, the silence was suddenly broken by a strain so rapid and gushing, and touched with such a wild, sylvan plaintiveness, that I listened in amazement. And so shy and coy was the little minstrel, that I came twice to the woods before I was sure to whom I was listening. In summer, he is one of those birds of the deep Northern forests, that, like the Speckled Canada Warbler and the Hermit-Thrush, only the privileged ones hear.

The distribution of plants in a given locality is not more marked and defined than that of the birds. Show a botanist a landscape, and he will tell you where to look for the Lady's-Slipper, the Columbine, or the Harebell. On the same principles the ornithologist will direct you where to look for the Hooded Warbler, the Wood-Sparrow, or the Chewink. In adjoining counties, in the same latitude, and equally inland, but possessing a different geological formation and different forest-timber, you will observe quite a different class of birds. In a country of the Beech and Maple I do not find the same songsters that I know where thrive the Oak, Chestnut, and Laurel. In going from a district of the Old Red Sandstone to where I walk upon the old Plutonic Rock, not fifty miles distant, I miss in the woods the Veery, the Hermit-Thrush, the Chestnut-Sided Warbler, the Blue-Backed Warbler, the Green-Backed Warbler, the Black and Yellow Warbler, and many others,—and find in their stead the Wood-Thrush, the Chewink, the Redstart, the Yellow-Throat, the Yellow-Breasted Flycatcher, the White-Eyed Flycatcher, the Quail, and the Turtle-Dove.

In my neighborhood here in the Highlands the distribution is very marked. South of the village I invariably find one species of birds,—north of it, another. In only one locality, full of Azalea and Swamp-Huckleberry, I am always sure of finding the Hooded Warbler. In a dense undergrowth of Spice-Bush, Witch-Hazel, and Alder, I meet the Worm-Eating Warbler. In a remote clearing, covered with Heath and Fern, with here and there a Chestnut and an Oak, I go to hear in July the Wood-Sparrow, and returning by a stumpy, shallow pond, I am sure to find the Water-Thrush.

Only one locality within my range seems to possess attractions for all comers. Here one may study almost the entire ornithology of the State. It is a rocky piece of ground, long ago cleared, but now fast relapsing into the wildness and freedom of Nature, and marked by those half-cultivated, half-wild features which birds and boys love. It is bounded on two sides by the village and highway, crossed at various points by carriage-roads, and threaded in all directions by paths and by-ways, along which soldiers, laborers, and truant schoolboys are passing at all hours of the day. It is so far escaping from the axe and the bushwhack as to have opened communication with the forest and mountain beyond by straggling lines of Cedar, Laurel, and Blackberry. The ground is mainly occupied with Cedar and Chestnut, with an undergrowth, in many places, of Heath and Bramble. The chief feature, however, is a dense growth in the centre, consisting of Dog-wood, Water-Beech, Swamp-Ash, Alder, Spice-Bush, Hazel, etc., with a network of Smilax and Frost-Grape. A little zig-zag stream, the draining of a swamp beyond, which passes through this tangle-wood, accounts for many of its features and productions, if not for its entire existence. Birds that are not attracted by the Heath or the Cedar and Chestnut are sure to find some excuse for visiting this miscellaneous growth in the centre. Most of the common birds literally throng this inclosure; and I have met here many of the rarer species, such as the Great-Crested Flycatcher, the Solitary Warbler, the Blue-Winged Swamp-Warbler, the Worm-Eating Warbler, the Fox-Sparrow, etc. The absence of all birds of prey, and the great number of flies and insects, both the result of proximity to the [Pg 522] village, are considerations which no Hawk-fearing, peace-loving minstrel passes over lightly: hence the popularity of the resort.

But the crowning glory of all these Robins, Flycatchers, and Warblers is the Wood-Thrush. More abundant than all other birds, except the Robin and Cat-Bird, he greets you from every rock and shrub. Shy and reserved when he first makes his appearance in May, before the end of June he is tame and familiar, and sings on the tree over your head, or on

the rock a few paces in advance. A pair even built their nest and reared their brood within ten or twelve feet of the piazza of a large summer-house in the vicinity. But when the guests commenced to arrive and the piazza to be thronged with gay crowds, I noticed something like dread and foreboding in the manner of the mother-bird; and from her still, quiet ways, and habit of sitting long and silently within a few feet of the precious charge, it seemed as if the clear creature had resolved, if possible, to avoid all observation.

The Hermit-Thrush, the Wood-Thrush, and the Veery (*Turdus Wilsonii*) are our peers of song. The Mocking-Bird undoubtedly possesses the greatest range of mere talent, the most varied executive ability, and never fails to surprise and delight one anew at each hearing; but being mostly an imitator, he never approaches the serene beauty and sublimity of the Hermit-Thrush. The word that best expresses my feelings, on hearing the Mocking-Bird, is admiration, though the first emotion is one of surprise and incredulity. That so many and such various notes should proceed from one throat is a marvel, and we regard the performance with feelings akin to those we experience on witnessing the astounding feats of the athlete or gymnast,—and this, notwithstanding many of the notes imitated have all the freshness and sweetness of the original. The emotions excited by the songs of these Thrushes belong to a higher order, springing as they do from our deepest sense of the beauty and harmony of the world.

The Wood-Thrush is worthy of all, and more than all, the praises he has received; and considering the number of his appreciative listeners, it is not a little surprising that his relative and superior, the Hermit-Thrush, should have received so little notice. Both the great ornithologists, Wilson and Audubon, are lavish in their praises of the former, but have little or nothing to say of the song of the latter. Audubon says it is sometimes agreeable, but evidently has never heard it. Nuttall, I am glad to find, is more discriminating, and does the bird fuller justice. Professor Baird, of the Smithsonian Institution, a more recent authority, and an excellent observer, tells me he regards it as preëminently our finest songster.

It is quite a rare bird, of very shy and secluded habits, being found in the Middle and Eastern States, during the period of song, only in the deepest and most remote forests, usually in damp and swampy localities. On this account the people in the Adirondack region call it the "Swamp Angel." Its being so much of a recluse accounts for the comparative ignorance that prevails in regard to it.

The cast of its song is so much like that of the Wood-Thrush, that an enthusiastic admirer of the latter bird, as all admirers are, would be quite apt to mistake it for the strain of his favorite, observing only how unusually well he sings. I myself erred in this manner, and not till I had shot the bird in the midst of his solemn hymn—a hard thing to do, I assure you—was I aware that my Wood-Thrush had a superior. I believe so good an observer as Thoreau has confounded the songs of the two birds, as he speaks of having heard the Wood-Thrush in the forests of Northern Maine, where the law of geographical distribution would lead one to look for only the Hermit.

The song of this Thrush is of unparalleled sweetness and sublimity. There is a calmness and solemnity about it that suggests in Nature perpetual Sabbath and perennial joy. How [Pg 523] vain seem our hurry and ambition! Clear and serene, strong and melodious, falling softly, yet flowing far, these notes inspire me with a calm, sacred enthusiasm. I hear him most in the afternoon, but occasionally at nightfall he "pours his pure soprano,"

> "Deepening the silence with diviner calm."

I have known one to sit for hours in the upper branches of a tall Maple in an opening in a remote wood, and sing till all other birds seemed as if pausing to listen. Attempting to approach him at such times, I have called to my aid numerous devices,—such as keeping the range of a tree, skulking close to the ground, carrying a large bush in front of me,—but all to no purpose. Suddenly the strain would cease, and while waiting for him to commence again, I would see him dart off to a lower tree, or into a thick undergrowth of Witch-Hazel. When I had withdrawn, he would resume his perch and again take up his

song. At other times I have come abruptly upon him while singing on a low stump, without his seeming to notice me at all.

I think his song, in form and manner, is precisely that of the Wood-Thrush,—differing from it in being more wild and ethereal, as well as stronger and clearer. It is not the execution of the piece so much as the tone of the instrument that is superior. In the subdued trills and quavers that occur between the main bars, you think his tongue must be more resonant and of finer metal. In uttering the tinkling, bead-like *de, de, de*, he is more facile and exquisite; in the longer notes he possesses greater compass and power, and is more prodigal of his finer tones. How delicately he syllables the minor parts, weaving, as it were, the finest of silver embroideries to the main texture of his song!

Those who have heard only the Wood-Thrush commit a very pardonable error in placing him first on the list of our songsters. He is truly a royal minstrel, and, considering his liberal distribution throughout our Atlantic seaboard, perhaps contributes more than any other bird to our sylvan melody. One may object, that he spends a little too much time in tuning his instrument, yet his careless and uncertain touches reveal its rare compass and power.

He is the only songster of my acquaintance, excepting the Canary, that displays different degrees of proficiency in the exercise of his musical gifts. Not long since, while walking one Sunday in the edge of an orchard adjoining a wood, I heard one that so obviously and unmistakably surpassed all his rivals, that my companion, though slow to notice such things, remarked it wonderingly; and with one accord we threw ourselves upon the grass and drank in the bounteous melody. It was not different in quality so much as in quantity. Such a flood of it! Such magnificent copiousness! Such long, trilling, deferring, accelerating preludes! Such sudden, ecstatic overtures would have intoxicated the dullest ear. He was really without a compeer, a master artist. Twice afterward I was conscious of having heard the same bird.

The Wood-Thrush is the handsomest species of this family. In grace and elegance of manner he has no equal. Such a gentle, high-bred air, and such inimitable ease and composure in his flight and movement! He is a poet in very word and deed. His carriage is music to the eye. His performance of the commonest act, as catching a beetle or picking a worm from the mud, pleases like a stroke of wit or eloquence. Was he a prince in the olden time, and do the regal grace and mien still adhere to him in his transformation? What a finely proportioned form! How plain, yet rich his color,—the bright russet of his back, the clear white of his breast, with the distinct heart-shaped spots! It may be objected to Robin that he is noisy and demonstrative; he hurries away or rises to a branch with an angry note, and flirts his wings in ill-bred suspicion. The Mavis, or Red Thrush, sneaks and skulks like a culprit, hiding in the densest Alders; the Cat-Bird [Pg 524] is a coquette and a flirt, as well as a sort of female Paul Pry; and the Chewink shows his inhospitality by espying your movements like a Japanese. The Wood-Thrush has none of these under-bred traits. He regards me unsuspiciously, or avoids me with a noble reserve, —or, if I am quiet and incurious, graciously hops toward me, as if to pay his respects, or to make my acquaintance. Pass near his nest, under the very branch, within a few feet of his mate and brood, and he opens not his beak; he concedes you the right to pass there, if it lies in your course; but pause an instant, raise your hand toward the defenceless household, and his anger and indignation are beautiful to behold.

What a noble pride he has! Late one October, after his mates and companions had long since gone South, I noticed one for several successive days in the dense part of this next-door wood, flitting noiselessly about, very grave and silent, as if doing penance for some violation of the code of honor. By many gentle, indirect approaches, I perceived that part of his tail-feathers were undeveloped. The sylvan prince could not think of returning to court in this plight,—and so, amid the falling leaves and cold rains of autumn, was patiently biding his time.

The soft, mellow flute of the Veery fills a place in the chorus of the woods that the song of the Vesper-Sparrow fills in the chorus of the fields. It has the Nightingale's habit of

singing in the twilight, and possesses, I believe, all of the Nightingale's mellowness and serenity. Walk out toward the forest in the warm twilight of a June day, and when fifty rods distant you will hear their soft, reverberating notes, repeated and prolonged with exquisite melodiousness, rising from a dozen different throats.

It is one of the simplest strains to be heard,—as simple as the curve in form, and mellower than the tenderest tones of the flute,—delighting from the pure element of harmony and beauty it contains, and not from any novel or fantastic modulation of it,—thus contrasting strongly with such rollicking, hilarious songsters as the Bobolink, in whom we are chiefly pleased with the tintinnabulation, the verbal and labial excellence, and the evident conceit and delight of the performer.

I hardly know whether I am more pleased or annoyed with the Cat-Bird. Perhaps she is a little too common, and her part in the general chorus a little too conspicuous. If you are listening for the note of another bird, she is sure to be prompted to the most loud and protracted singing, drowning all other sounds; if you sit quietly down to observe a favorite or study a new comer, her curiosity knows no bounds, and you are scanned and ridiculed from every point of observation. Yet I would not miss her; I would only subordinate her a little, make her less conspicuous.

She is the parodist of the woods, and there is ever a mischievous, bantering, half-ironical undertone in her lay, as if she were conscious of mimicking and disconcerting some envied songster. Ambitious of song, practising and rehearsing in private, she yet seems the least sincere and genuine of the sylvan minstrels, as if she had taken up music only to be in the fashion, or not to be outdone by the Robins and Thrushes. In other words, she seems to sing from some outward motive, and not from inward joyousness. She is a good versifier, but not a great poet. Vigorous, rapid, copious, not without fine touches, but destitute of any high, serene melody, her performance, like that of Thoreau's squirrel, always implies a spectator.

There is a certain air and polish about her strain, however, like that in the vivacious conversation of a well-bred lady of the world, that commands respect. Her maternal instinct, also, is very strong, and that simple structure of dead twigs and dry grass is the centre of much anxious solicitude. Not long since, while strolling through the woods, my attention was attracted to a small, densely grown swamp, hedged in with Eglantine, [Pg 525] Brambles, and the everlasting Smilax, from which proceeded loud cries of distress and alarm, indicating that some terrible calamity was threatening my sombre-colored minstrel. On effecting an entrance, which, however, was not accomplished till I had doffed coat and hat, so as to diminish the surface exposed to the thorns and brambles, and looking around me from a square yard of terra firma, I found myself the spectator of a loathsome, yet fascinating scene. Three or four yards from me was the nest, beneath which, in long festoons, rested a huge black snake; a bird, two thirds grown, was slowly disappearing between his expanded jaws. As they seemed unconscious of my presence, I quietly observed the proceedings. By slow degrees he compassed the bird about with his elastic mouth; his head flattened, his neck writhed and swelled, and two or three undulatory movements of his glistening body finished the work. Then, with marvellous ease, he cautiously raised himself up, his tongue flaming from his mouth the while, curved over the nest, and, with wavy, subtle motions, explored the interior. I can conceive of nothing more overpoweringly terrible to an unsuspecting family of birds than the sudden appearance above their domicile of the head and neck of this arch-enemy. It is enough to petrify the blood in their veins. Not finding the object of his search, he came streaming down from the nest to a lower limb, and commenced extending his researches in other directions, sliding stealthily through the branches, bent on capturing one of the parent birds. That a legless, wingless creature should move with such ease and rapidity where only birds and squirrels are considered at home, lifting himself up, letting himself down, running out on the yielding boughs, and traversing with marvellous celerity the whole length and breadth of the thicket, was truly surprising. One thinks of the great myth, of the Tempter and the "cause of all our woe," and wonders if the Arch One is not now playing off some of his pranks before him. Whether we call it snake or devil matters

little. I could but admire his terrible beauty, however, his black, shining folds, his easy, gliding movement, head erect, eyes glistening, tongue playing like subtile flame, and the invisible means of his almost winged locomotion.

The parent birds, in the mean while, kept up the most agonizing cry,—at times fluttering furiously about their pursuer, and actually laying hold of his tail with their beaks and claws. On being thus attacked, the snake would suddenly double upon himself and follow his own body back, thus executing a strategic movement that at first seemed almost to paralyze his victim and place her within his grasp. Not quite, however. Before his jaws could close upon the coveted prize the bird would tear herself away, and, apparently faint and sobbing, retire to a higher branch. His reputed powers of fascination availed him little, though it is possible that a more timid and less combative bird might have been held by the fatal spell. Presently, as he came gliding down the slender body of a leaning Alder, his attention was attracted by a slight movement of my arm; eying me an instant, with that crouching, utter, motionless gaze which I believe only snakes and devils can assume, he turned quickly,—a feat which necessitated something like crawling over his own body,—and glided off through the branches, evidently recognizing in me a representative of the ancient parties he once so cunningly ruined. A few moments after, as he lay, carelessly disposed in the top of a rank Alder, trying to look as much like a crooked branch as his supple, shining form would admit, the old vengeance overtook him. I exercised my prerogative, and a well-directed missile in the shape of a stone, brought him looping and writhing to the ground. After I had completed his downfall, and quiet had been partially restored, a half-fledged member of the bereaved household came out from his hiding-place, and, jumping upon a decayed branch, chirped vigorously, no [Pg 526] doubt in celebration of the victory. What the emotions of the parent birds were, on seeing their destroyer's head so thoroughly bruised, and a part of their little ones at least spared to them, I can only conjecture; but I imagined the news spread immediately, and that my praises as the deliverer were sung in that neighborhood ever after.

Till the middle of July there is a general equilibrium; the tide stands poised; the holiday-spirit is unabated. But as the harvest ripens beneath the long, hot days, the melody gradually ceases. The young are out of the nest and must be cared for, and the moulting season is at hand. After the Cricket has commenced to drone his monotonous refrain beneath your window, you will not, till another season, hear the Wood-Thrush in all his matchless eloquence. The Bobolink has become careworn and fretful, and blurts out snatches of his song between his scolding and upbraiding, as you approach the vicinity of his nest, oscillating between anxiety for his brood and solicitude for his musical reputation. Some of the Sparrows still sing, and occasionally across the hot fields, from a tall tree in the edge of the forest, comes the rich note of the Scarlet Tanager. This tropical-colored bird loves the hottest weather, and I hear him more in dog-days than at any other time.

The remainder of the summer is the carnival of the Swallows and Flycatchers. Flies and insects, to any amount, are to be had for the catching; and the opportunity is well improved. See that sombre, ashen-colored Pewee on yonder branch. A true sportsman he, who never takes his game at rest, but always on the wing. You vagrant Fly, you purblind Moth, beware how you come within his range! Observe his attitude. You might think him studying the atmosphere or the light, for he has an air of contemplation and not of watchfulness. But step closer; observe the curious movement of his head, his "eye in a fine frenzy rolling, glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven." His sight is microscopic and his aim sure. Quick as thought he has seized his victim and is back to his perch. There is no strife, no pursuit,—one fell swoop and the matter is ended. That little Sparrow, as you will observe, is less skilled. It is the *Socialis*, and he finds his subsistence properly in various seeds and the larvae of insects, though he occasionally has higher aspirations, and seeks to emulate the Pewee, commencing and ending his career as a Flycatcher by an awkward chase after a Beetle or "Miller." He is hunting around in the grass now, I suspect, with the desire to indulge this favorite whim. There!—the opportunity is afforded him. Away goes a little cream-colored Meadow-Moth in the most tortuous course he is capable of, and away goes *Socialis* in pursuit. The contest is quite

comical, though I dare say it is serious enough to the Moth. The chase continues for a few yards, when there is a sudden rushing to cover in the grass,—then a taking to wing again, when the search has become too close, and the Moth has recovered his wind. *Socialis* chirps angrily, and is determined not to be beaten. Keeping, with the slightest effort, upon the heels of the fugitive, he is ever on the point of halting to snap him up, but never quite does it,—and so, between disappointment and expectation, is soon disgusted, and returns to pursue his more legitimate means of subsistence.

In striking contrast to this serio-comic strife of the Sparrow and the Moth, is the Pigeon-Hawk's pursuit of the Sparrow or the Goldfinch. It is a race of surprising speed and agility. It is a test of wing and wind. Every muscle is taxed, and every nerve strained. Such cries of terror and consternation on the part of the bird, tacking to the right and left, and making the most desperate efforts to escape, and such silent determination on the part of the Hawk, pressing the bird so closely, flashing and turning and timing his movements with those of the pursued as accurately and as inexorably as if the two constituted one body, excite feeling of a deep interest. You mount the fence or rush out of your way to [Pg 527] see the issue. The only salvation for the bird is to adopt the tactics of the Moth, seeking instantly the cover of some tree, bush, or hedge, where its smaller size enables it to move about more rapidly. These pirates are aware of this, and therefore prefer to take their prey by one fell swoop. You may see one of them prowling through an orchard, with the Yellowbirds hovering about him, crying, *Pi-ty, pi-ty*, in the most desponding tone; yet he seems not to regard them, knowing, as do they, that in the close branches they are as safe as if in a wall of adamant.

August is the month of the high-sailing Hawks. The Hen-Hawk is the most noticeable. He likes the haze and the calm of these long, warm days. He is a bird of leisure, and seems always at his ease. How beautiful and majestic are his movements! So self-poised and easy, such an entire absence of haste, such a magnificent amplitude of circles and spirals, such a haughty, imperial grace, and, occasionally, such daring aërial evolutions!

With slow, leisurely movement, rarely vibrating his pinions, he mounts and mounts in an ascending spiral till he appears a mere speck against the summer sky; then, if the mood seizes him, with wings half-closed, like a bent bow, he will cleave the air almost perpendicularly, as if intent on dashing himself to pieces against the earth; but on nearing the ground, he suddenly mounts again on broad, expanded wing, as if rebounding upon the air, and sails leisurely away. It is the sublimest feat of the season. One holds his breath till he sees him rise again. Sometimes a squirrel or bird or an unsuspecting barn-fowl is scathed and withered beneath this terrible visitation.

If inclined to a more gradual and less precipitous descent, he fixes his eye on some distant point in the earth beneath him, and thither bends his course. He is still almost meteoric in his speed and boldness. You see his path down the heavens, straight as a line; if near, you hear the rush of his wings; his shadow hurtles across the fields, and in an instant you see him quietly perched upon some low tree or decayed stub in a swamp or meadow, with reminiscences of frogs and mice stirring in his maw.

When the south-wind blows, it is a study to see three or four of these air-kings at the head of the valley far up toward the mountain, balancing and oscillating upon the strong current: now quite stationary, except a slight tremulous motion like the poise of a rope-dancer, then rising and falling in long undulations, and seeming to resign themselves passively to the wind; or, again, sailing high and level far above the mountain's peak,—no bluster and haste, but, as stated, occasionally a terrible earnestness and speed. Fire at him as he sails overhead, and, unless wounded badly, he will not change his course or gait.

His flight is a perfect picture of repose in motion. He might sleep dream in that level, effortless, aimless sail. It strikes the eye as more surprising than the flight of the Pigeon and Swallow even, in that the effort put forth is so uniform and delicate as to escape observation, giving to the movement an air of buoyancy and perpetuity, the effluence of power rather than the conscious application of it.

The calmness and dignity of this Hawk, when attacked by Crows or the King-Bird, are well worthy of him. He seldom deigns to notice his noisy and furious antagonists, but deliberately wheels about in that aërial spiral, and mounts and mounts till his pursuers grow dizzy and return to earth again. It is quite original, this mode of getting rid of an unworthy opponent, rising to heights where the braggart is dazed and bewildered and loses his reckoning! I am not sure but it is worthy of imitation.

But summer wanes, and autumn approaches. The songsters of the seed-time are silent at the reaping of the harvest. Other minstrels take up the strain. It is the heyday of insect life. The day is canopied with musical sound. All the songs of the spring and summer [Pg 528] appear to be floating, softened and refined, in the upper air. The birds, in a new, but less holiday suit, turn their faces southward. The Swallows flock and go; the Bobolinks flock and go; silently and unobserved, the Thrushes go. Autumn arrives, bringing Finches, Warblers, Sparrows, and Kinglets from the North. Silently the procession passes. Yonder Hawk, sailing peacefully away till he is lost in the horizon, is a symbol of the closing season and the departing birds.

GOLD EGG.—A DREAM-FANTASY.

HOW A STUDENT IN SEARCH OF THE BEAUTIFUL FELL ASLEEP OVER HERR PROFESSOR DOCTOR VISCHER'S "WISSENSCHAFT DES SCHÖNEN," AND WHAT CAME THEREOF.

1.

I swam with undulation soft,
  Adrift on Vischer's ocean,
And, from my cockboat up aloft,
Sent down my mental plummet oft,
  In hope to reach a notion.

2.

But from the metaphysic sea
  No bottom was forthcoming,
And all the while (so drowsily!)
In one eternal note of B
  My German stove kept humming.

3.

What's Beauty? mused I. Is it told
  By synthesis? analysis?
Have you not made us lead of gold?
To feed your crucible, not sold
  Our temple's sacred chalices?

4.

Then o'er my senses came a change:
  My book seemed all traditions,
Old legends of profoundest range,
Diablerie, and stories strange
  Of goblins, elves, magicians.

5.

Truth was, my outward eyes were closed,
Although I did not know it;
Deep into Dreamland I had dozed,
And found me suddenly transposed
From proser into poet.

[Pg 529]

6.

So what I read took flesh and blood
And turned to living creatures;
The words were but the dingy bud
That bloomed, like Adam from the mud,
To human forms and features.

7.

I saw how Zeus was lodged once more
By Baucis and Philemon;
The text said, "Not alone of yore,
But every day at every door
Knocks still the masking Demon."

8.

DAIMON 't was printed in the book;
And as I read it slowly,
The letters moved and changed and took
Jove's stature, the Olympian look
Of painless melancholy.

9.

He paused upon the threshold worn:—
"With coin I cannot pay you;
Yet would I fain make some return,—
You will not the gift's cheapness spurn,—
Accept this fowl, I pray you.

10.

"Plain feathers wears my Hemera,
And has from ages olden;
She makes her nest in common hay;
And yet, of all the birds that lay,
Her eggs alone are golden."

11.

He turned and could no more be seen.
Old Baucis stared a moment,
Then tossed poor partlet on the green,
And with a tone half jest, half spleen,
Thus made her housewife's comment:

12.

"The stranger had a queerish face,
His smile was most unpleasant;

And though he meant it for a grace,
Yet this old hen of barnyard race
  Was but a stingy present.

[Pg 530]

13.

"She's quite too old for laying eggs,
  Nay, even to make a soup of;
It only needs to see her legs,—
You might as well boil down the pegs
  I made the brood-hen's coop of!

14.

"More than three hundred such do I
  Raise every year, her sisters;
Go, in the woods your fortune try,
All day for one poor earth-worm pry,
  And scratch your toes to blisters!"

15.

Philemon found the rede was good;
  And turning on the poor hen,
He clapped his hands, he stamped, hallooed,
Hunting the exile toward the wood,
  To house with snipe and moor-hen.

16.

A poet saw and cried,—"Hold! hold!
  What are you doing, madman?
Spurn you more wealth than can be told,
The fowl that lays the eggs of gold,
  Because she's plainly clad, man?"

17.

To him Philemon,—"I'll not balk
  Thy will with any shackle;
Wilt add a burden to thy walk?
Then take her without further talk;
  You're both but fit to cackle!"

18.

But scarce the poet touched the bird,
  It rose to stature regal;
And when her cloud-wide wings she stirred,
A whisper as of doom was heard,—
  'T was Jove's bolt-bearing eagle.

19.

As when from far-off cloudbergs springs
  A crag, and, hurtling under,
From cliff to cliff the rumor flings,
So she from flight-foreboding wings
  Shook out a murmurous thunder.

[Pg 531]

20.

She gripped the poet to her breast,
And ever upward soaring,
Earth seemed a new-moon in the West,
And then one light among the rest
Where squadrons lie at mooring.

21.

How know I to what o'er-world seat
The eagle bent her courses?
The waves that seem its base to beat,
The gales that round it weave and fleet,
Are life's creative forces.

22.

Here was the bird's primeval nest,
High on a promontory
Star-pharosed, where she takes her rest,
And broods new æons 'neath her breast,
The future's unfledged glory.

23.

I knew not how, but I was there,
All feeling, hearing, seeing;
It was not wind that stirred my hair,
But living breath, the essence rare
Of unembodied being.

24.

And in the nest an egg of gold
Lay wrapt in its own lustre,
Gazing whereon, what depths untold
Within, what wonders manifold
Seemed silently to muster!

25.

Do visions of such inward grace
Still haunt our life benighted?
It glowed as when St. Peter's face,
Illumed, forgets its stony race,
And seems to throb self-lighted.

26.

One saw therein the life of man,—
Or so the poet found it;
The yolk and white, conceive who can,
Were the glad earth, that, floating, span
In the soft heaven around it.

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27.

I knew this as one knows in dream,

Where no effects to causes
Are chained as in our work-day scheme,
And then was wakened by a scream
Sent up by frightened Baucis.

28.

"Bless Zeus!" she cried, "I'm safe below!"
First pale, then red as coral;
And I, still drowsy, pondered slow,
And seemed to find, but hardly know,
Something like this for moral.

29.

Each day the world is born anew
For him who takes it rightly;
Not fresher that which Adam knew,
Not sweeter that whose moonlit dew
Dropped on Arcadia nightly.

30.

Rightly?—that's simply: 't is to see
Some substance casts these shadows
Which we call Life and History,
That aimless seem to chase and flee
Like wind-gleams over meadows.

31.

Simply?—that's nobly: 't is to know
That God may still be met with,
Nor groweth old, nor doth bestow
This sense, this heart, this brain aglow,
To grovel and forget with.

32.

Beauty, Herr Doctor, trust in me,
No chemistry will win you;
Charis still rises from the sea:
If you can't find her, *might* it be
The trouble was within you?

OUT OF THE SEA.

[Pg 533]

A raw, gusty afternoon: one of the last dragging breaths of a nor'easter, which swept, in the beginning of November, from the Atlantic coast to the base of the Alleghanies. It lasted a week, and brought the winter,—for autumn had lingered unusually late that year; the fat bottom-lands of Pennsylvania, yet green, deadened into swamps, as it passed over them: summery, gay bits of lakes among the hills glazed over with muddy ice; the forests had been kept warm between the western mountains, and held thus late even their summer's strength and darker autumn tints, but the fierce ploughing winds of this storm and its cutting sleet left them a mass of broken boughs and rotted leaves. In fact, the sun had loitered so long, with a friendly look back-turned into these inland States, that people

forgot that the summer had gone, and skies and air and fields were merry-making together, when they lent their color and vitality to these few bleak days, and then suddenly found that they had entertained winter unawares.

Down on the lee coast of New Jersey, however, where the sea and wind spend the year making ready for their winter's work of shipwreck, this storm, though grayer and colder there than elsewhere, toned into the days and nights as a something entirely matter-of-course and consonant. In summer it would have been at home there. Its aspect was different, also, as I said. But little rain fell here; the wind lashed the ocean into fury along the coast, and then rolled in long, melancholy howls into the stretches of barren sand and interminable pine forest; the horizon contracted, though at all times it is narrower than anywhere else, the dome of the sky wider,—clouds and atmosphere forming the scenery, and the land but a round, flat standing-place: but now the sun went out; the air grew livid, as though death were coming through it; solid masses of gray, wet mist moved, slower than the wind, from point to point, like gigantic ghosts gathering to the call of the murderous sea.

"Yonder go the shades of Ossian's heroes," said Mary Defourchet to her companion, pointing through the darkening air.

They were driving carefully in an old-fashioned gig, in one of the lulls of the storm, along the edge of a pine wood, early in the afternoon. The old Doctor,—for it was MacAulay, (Dennis,) from over in Monmouth County, she was with,—the old man did not answer, having enough to do to guide his mare, the sleet drove so in his eyes. Besides, he was gruffer than usual this afternoon, looking with the trained eyes of an old water-dog out to the yellow line of the sea to the north. Miss Defourchet pulled the oil-skin cloth closer about her knees, and held her tongue; she relished the excitement of this fierce fighting the wind, though; it suited the nervous tension which her mind had undergone lately.

It was a queer, lonesome country, the lee coast,—never so solitary as now, perhaps; older than the rest of the world, she fancied,—so many of Nature's voices, both of bird and vegetable, had been entirely lost out of it: no wonder it had grown unfruitful, and older and dumber and sad, listening for ages to the unremorseful, cruel cries of the sea; these dead bodies, too, washed up every year on its beaches, must haunt it, though it was not guilty. She began to say something of this to Doctor Dennis, tired of being silent.

"Your country seems to me always to shut itself out from the world," she said; "from the time I enter that desolate region on its border of dwarf oaks and gloomy fires of the charcoal-burners, I think of the old leper and his cry of 'Unclean! unclean!'"

MacAulay glances anxiously at her, trying to keep pace with her meaning.

"It's a lonesome place enough," he said, slowly. "There be but the two or three farm- [Pg 534]
keepers; and the places go from father to son, father to son. The linen and carpet-mats in that house you're in now come down from the times before Washington. Stay-at-home, quiet people,—only the men that follow the water, in each generation. There be but little to be made from these flats of white sand. Yes, quiet enough: the beasts of prey aren't scaret out of these pine forests yet, I heard the cry of a panther the other night only, coming from Tom's River: close by the road it was: sharp and sorrowful, like a lost child. —As for ghosts," he continued, after a thoughtful pause, "I don't know any that would have reason for walking, without it was Captain Kidd. His treasure's buried along-shore here."

"Ay?" said Mary, looking up shrewdly into his face.

"Yes," he answered, shaking his head slowly, and measuring his whip with one eye. "Along here, many's the Spanish half-dollar I've picked up myself among the kelp. They do say they're from a galleon that went ashore come next August thirty years ago, but I don't know that."

"And the people in the hamlet?" questioned Mary, nodding to a group of scattered, low-roofed houses.

"Clam-fishers, the maist o' them. There be quite a many wrackers, but they live farther on, towards Barnegat. But a wrack draws them, like buzzards to a carcass."

Miss Defourchet's black eye kindled, as if at the prospect of a good tragedy.

"Did you ever see a wreck going down?" she asked, eagerly.

"Yes,"—shutting his grim lips tighter.

"That emigrant ship last fall? Seven hundred and thirty souls lost, they told me."

"I was not here to know, thank God," shortly.

"It would be a sensation for a lifetime,"—cuddling back into her seat, with no hopes of a story from the old Doctor.

MacAulay sat up stiffer, his stern gray eye scanning the ocean-line again, as the mare turned into the more open plains of sand sloping down to the sea. It was up-hill work with him, talking to this young lady. He was afraid of a woman who had lectured in public, nursed in the hospitals, whose blood seemed always at fever heat, and whose æsthetic taste could seek the point of view from which to observe a calamity so horrible as the emigrant ship going down with her load of lives. "She's been fed on books too much," he thought. "It's the trouble with young women nowadays." On the other hand, for himself, he had lost sight of the current of present knowledges,—he was aware of that, finding how few topics in common there were between them; but it troubled the self-reliant old fellow but little. Since he left Yale, where he and this girl's uncle, Doctor Bowdler, had been chums together, he had lived in this out-of-the-way corner of the world, and many of the rough ways of speaking and acting of the people had clung to him, as their red mud to his shoes. As he grew older, he did not care to brush either off.

Miss Defourchet had been a weight on his mind for a week or more. Her guardian, Doctor Bowdler, had sent her down to board in one of the farm-houses. "The sea-air will do her good, physically," he said in a note to his old chum, with whom he always had kept up a lingering intercourse; "she's been over-worked lately,—sick soldiers, you know. Mary went into the war *con amore*, like all women, or other happy people who are blind of one eye. Besides, she is to be married about Christmas, and before she begins life in earnest it would do her good to face something real. Nothing like living by the sea, and with those homely, thorough-blood Quakers, for bringing people to their simple, natural selves. By the way, you have heard of Dr. Birkenshead, whom she marries? though he is a surgeon,—not exactly in your profession. A surprisingly young man to have gained his reputation. I'm glad Mary marries a man of so much mark; she has pulled alone so long, she needs a master." So MacAulay had taken pains to drive the young lady out, as to-day, [Pg 535] and took a general fatherly sort of charge of her, for his old friend's sake.

Doctor Bowdler had frankly told his niece his reasons for wishing her to go down to the sea-shore. They nettled her more than she chose to show. She was over thirty, an eager humanitarian, had taught the freedmen at Port Royal, gone to Gettysburg and Antietam with sanitary stores,—surely, she did not need to be told that she had yet to begin life in earnest! But she was not sorry for the chance to rest and think. After she married she would be taken from the quiet Quaker society in Philadelphia, in which she always had moved, to one that would put her personal and mental powers to a sharp proof; for Birkenshead, by right of his professional fame, and a curiously attractive personal eccentricity, had gradually become the nucleus of one of the best and most brilliant circles in the country, men and women alike distinguished for their wit and skill in extracting the finest tones from life while they lived. The quiet Quaker girl was secretly on her mettle,—secretly, too, a little afraid. The truth was, she knew Doctor Birkenshead only in the glare of public life; her love for him was, as yet, only a delicate intellectual appreciation that gave her a keen delight. She was anxious that in his own world he

should not be ashamed of her. She was glad he was to share this breathing-space with her; they could see each other unmasked. Doctor Bowdler and he were coming down from New York on Ben Van Note's lumber-schooner. It was due yesterday, but had not yet arrived.

"You are sure," MacAulay said to her, as they rode along, "that they will come with Ben?"

"Quite sure. They preferred it to the cars for the novelty of the thing, and the storm lulled the day they were to sail. Could the schooner make this inlet in a sea like that?"

Doctor Dennis, stooping to arrange the harness, pretended not to hear her.

"Ben, at least," he thought, "knows that to near the bar to-day means death."

"One would think," he added aloud, "that Dick Bowdler's gray hairs and thirty years of preaching would have sobered his love of adventure. He was a foolhardy chap at college."

Miss Defourchet's glance grew troubled, as she looked out at the gathering gloom and the crisp bits of yellow foam blown up to the carriage-wheels. Doctor Dennis turned the mare's head, thus hiding the sea from them; but its cry sounded for miles inland to-day,—an awful, inarticulate roar. All else was solemn silence. The great salt marshes rolled away on one side of the road, lush and rank,—one solitary dead tree rising from them, with a fish-hawk's uncouth nest lumbering its black trunk; they were still as the grave; even the ill-boding bird was gone long ago, and kept no more its lonely vigil on the dead limb over wind and wave. She glanced uneasily from side to side: high up on the beach lay fragments of old wrecks; burnt spars of vessels drifted ashore to tell, in their dumb way, of captain and crew washed, in one quick moment, by this muddy water of the Atlantic, into that sea far off whence no voyager has come back to bring the tidings. Land and sea seemed to her to hint at this thing,—this awful sea, cold and dark beyond. What did the dark mystery in the cry of the surf mean but that? That was the only sound. The heavy silence without grew intolerable to her: it foreboded evil. The cold, yellow light of day lingered long. Overhead, cloud after cloud rose from the far watery horizon, and drove swiftly and silently inland, bellying dark as it went, carrying the storm. As the horse's hoofs struck hard on the beach, a bird rose out of the marsh and trailed through the air, its long legs dragging behind it, and a blaze of light feathers on its breast catching a dull glow in the fading evening.

"The blue heron flies low," said the Doctor. "That means a heavier storm. It scents a wreck as keenly as a Barnegat pirate." [Pg 536]

"It is fishing, maybe?" said Mary, trying to rouse herself.

"It's no a canny fisher that," shaking his head. "The fish you'd find in its nest come from the deep waters, where heron never flew. Well, they do say," in answer to her look of inquiry, "that on stormy nights it sits on the beach with a phosphoric light under its wing, and so draws them to shore."

"How soon will the storm be on us?" after a pause.

"In not less than two hours. Keep your heart up, child. Ben Van Note is no fool. He'd keep clear of Squan Beach as he would of hell's mouth, such a night as this is going to be. Your friends are all safe. We'll drive home as soon as we've been at the store to see if the mail's brought you a letter."

He tucked in his hairy overcoat about his long legs, and tried to talk cheerfully as they drove along, seeing how pale she was.

"The store" for these two counties was a large, one-roomed frame building on the edge of the great pine woods, painted bright pink, with a wooden blue lady, the old figure-head of some sloop, over the door. The stoop outside was filled with hogsheads and boxes; inside

was the usual stock of calicoes, chinaware, molasses-barrels, and books; the post-office, a high desk, on which lay half a dozen letters. By the dingy little windows, on which the rain was now beating sharply, four or five dirty sailors and clam-diggers were gathered, lounging on the counter and kegs, while one read a newspaper aloud slowly. They stopped to look at Miss Defourchet, when she came in, and waited by the door for the Doctor. The gloomy air and forlorn-looking shop contrasted and threw into bright relief her pretty, delicate little figure, and the dainty carriage-dress she wore. All the daylight that was in the store seemed at once to cling to and caress the rare beauty of the small face, with its eager blue eyes and dark brown curls. There was one woman in the store, sitting on a beer-cask, a small, sharp-set old wife, who drew her muddy shoes up under her petticoats out of Mary's way, but did not look at her. Miss Defourchet belonged to a family to whom the ease that money gives and a certain epicureanism of taste were natural. She stood there wondering, not unkindly, what these poor creatures did with their lives, and their dull, cloddish days; what could they know of the keen pains, the pleasures, the ambitions, or loves, that ennobled wealthier souls?

"This be yer papper, Doctor," said one; "but we've not just yet finished it."

"All right, boys; Jem Dexter can leave it to-night, as he goes by. Any mail for me, Joe? But you're waiting, Mother Phebe?"—turning with a sudden gentleness to the old woman near Mary.

"Yes, I be. But it don't matter. Joseph, serve the Doctor,"—beating a tattoo on the counter with her restless hands.

The Doctor did not turn to take his letters, however, nor seem to heed the wind which was rising fitfully each moment without, but leaned leisurely on the counter.

"Did you expect a letter to-day?"—in the same subdued voice.

She gave a scared look at the men by the window, and then in a whisper,—

"From my son, Derrick,—yes. The folks here take Derrick for a joke,—an' me. But I'm expectin'. He said he'd come, thee sees?"

"So he did."

"Well, there's none from Derrick to-day, Mother Phebe," said the burly storekeeper, taking his stubby pipe out of his mouth.

She caught her breath.

"Thee looked carefully, Joseph?"

He nodded. She began to unbutton a patched cotton umbrella,—her lips moving as people's do sometimes in the beginning of second childhood.

"I'll go home, then. I'll be back mail-day, Wednesday, Joseph. Four days that is,—Wednesday."

"Lookee here now, Gran!" positively, laying down the pipe to give effect to his words; "you're killin' yerself, you are. Keep a-trottin' here all winter, an' what sort of a report of yerself'll yer make to Derrick by spring? When that 'ere letter comes, if come it do, I've said I'd put on my cut an' run up with it. See there!"—pulling out her thin calico skirt before the Doctor,—"soaked, she is." [Pg 537]

"Thee's kind, Joseph, but thee don't know,"—drawing her frock back with a certain dignity. "When my boy's handwrite comes, I must be here. I learned writin' on purpose that I might read it first,"—turning to Mary.

"How long has your boy been gone?" asked Miss Defourchet, heedless of Joseph's warning "Hush-h!"

"Twenty years, come Febuary," eagerly volunteered one or two voices by the window. "She's never heerd a word in that time, an' she never misses a mail-day, but she's expectin'," added one, with a coarse laugh.

"None o' that, Sam Venners," said Joe, sharply. "If so be as Dirk said he'd come, be it half-a-hunder' years, he'll stan' to 't. I knowed Dirk. Many's the clam we toed out o' th' inlet yonner. He's not the sort to hang round, gnawin' out the old folk's meat-pot, as some I cud name. He"——

"I'll go, if thee'll let me apast," said the old woman, humbly curtsying to the men, who now jammed up the doorway.

"It's a cussed shame, Venners," said Joe, when she was out. "Why can't yer humor the old gran a bit? She's the chicken-heartedest woman ever I knowed," explanatory to Miss Defourchet, "an' these ten years she's been mad-like, waitin' for that hang-dog son of hers to come back."

Mary followed her out on the stoop, where she stood, her ragged green umbrella up, her sharp little face turned anxiously to the far sea-line.

"Bad! bad!" she muttered, looking at Mary.

"The storm? Yes. But you ought not to be out in such weather," kindly, putting her furred hand on the skinny arm.

The woman smiled,—a sweet, good-humored smile it was, in spite of her meagre, hungry old face.

"Why, look there, young woman,"—pulling up her sleeve, and showing the knotted tendons and thick muscles of her arm. "I'm pretty tough, thee sees. There's not a boatman in Ocean County could pull an oar with me when I was a gell, an' I'm tough yet,"—hooking her sleeve again.

The smile haunted Miss Defourchet; where had she seen it before?

"Was Derrick strongly built?"—idly wishing to recall it.

"Thee's a stranger; maybe thee has met my boy?"—turning on her sharply. "No, that's silly,"—the sad vagueness coming back into the faded eyes. After a pause,—"Derrick, thee said? He was short, the lad was,—but with legs and arms as tender and supple as a wild-cat's. I loss much of my strength when he was born; it was wonderful, for a woman, before; I giv it to him. I'm glad of that! I thank God that I giv it to him!"—her voice sinking, and growing wilder and faster. "Why! why!"

Mary took her hand, half-scared, looking in at the store-door, wishing Doctor Dennis would come.

The old woman tottered and sat down on the lower rung of a ladder standing there. Mary could see now how the long sickness of the hope deferred had touched the poor creature's brain, gentle and loving at first. She pushed the wet yellow sun-bonnet back from the gray hair; she thought she had never seen such unutterable pathos or tragedy as in this little cramped figure, and this old face, turned forever watching to the sea.

"Thee doesn't know; how should thee?"—gently, but not looking at her. "Thee never had a son; an' when thee has, it will be born in wedlock. Thee's rich, an' well taught. I was jess a clam-fisher, an' knowed nothin' but my baby. His father was a gentleman: come in spring, an' gone in th' fall, an' that was the last of him. That hurt a bit, but I had Derrick. *Oh, Derrick! Derrick!*"—whispering, rocking herself to and fro as if she held a baby, cooing over the uncouth name with an awful longing and tenderness in the sound. [Pg 538]

Miss Defourchet was silent. Something in all this awed her; she did not understand it.

"I mind," she wandered on, "when the day's work was done, I'd hold him in my arms,—so,—and his sleepy little face would turn up to mine. I seemed to begin to loss him after he was a baby,"—with an old, worn sigh. "He went with other boys. The Weirs and Hallets took him up; they were town-bred people, an' he soon got other notions from mine, an' talked of things I'd heerd nothin' of. I was very proud of my Derrick; but I knowed I'd loss him all the same. I did washin' an' ironin' by nights to keep him dressed like the others,—an' kep' myself out o' their way, not to shame him with his mother."

"And was he ashamed of you?" said Mary, her face growing hot.

"Thee did not know my little boy,"—the old woman stood up, drawing herself to her full height. "His wee body was too full of pluck an' good love to be shamed by his mother. I mind the day I come on them suddint, by the bridge, where they were standin', him an' two o' the Hallets. I was carryin' a basket of herrings. The Hallets they flushed up, an' looked at him to see what he'd do; for they never named his mother to him, I heerd. The road was deep with mud; an' as I stood a bit to balance myself, keepin' my head turned from him, before I knew aught, my boy had me in his arms, an' carried me t' other side. I'm not a heavy weight, thee sees, but his face was all aglow with the laugh.

"'There you are, dear,' he says, puttin' me down, the wind blowin' his brown hair.

"One of the Hallets brought my basket over then, an' touched his hat as if I'd been a lady. That was the last time my boy had his arms about me: next week he went away. That night I heerd him in his room in the loft, here an' there, here an' there, as if he couldn't sleep, an' so for many nights, comin' down in the mornin' with his eye red an' swollen, but full of the laugh an' joke as always. The Hallets were with him constant, those days, Judge Hallet, their father, were goin' across seas, Derrick said. So one night, I'd got his tea ready, an' were waitin' for him by the fire, knittin',—when he come in an' stood by the mantel-shelf, lookin' down at me, steady. He had on his Sunday suit of blue, Jim Devines giv him.

"'Where be yer other clothes, my son?' I said.

"'They're not clean,' says he. 'I've been haulin' marl for Springer this week. He paid me to-night; the money's in the kitchen-cupboard.'

"I looked up at that, for it was work I'd never put him to.

"'It'll buy thee new shoes,' said I.

"'I did it for you, mother,' he says, suddint, puttin' his hand over his eyes. 'I wish things were different with you.'

"'Yes, Derrick.'

"I went on with my knittin'; for I never talked much to him, for the shame of my bad words, since he'd learned better. But I wondered what he meant; for wages was high that winter, an' I was doin' well.

"'If ever,' he says, speakin' low an' faster, 'if ever I do anything that gives you pain, you'll know it was for love of you I did it. Not for myself, God knows! To make things different for you.'

"'Yes, Derrick,' I says, knittin' on, for I didn't understan' thin. Afterwards I did. The room was dark, an' it were dead quiet for a bit; then the lad moved to the door.

"'Where be thee goin', Derrick?' I said.

"He come back an' leaned on my chair.

"'Let me tell you when I come back,' he said. 'You'll wait for me?' stoopin' down an' kissin' me.

"I noticed that, for he did not like to kiss,—Derrick. An' his lips were hot an' dry.

"'Yes, I'll wait, my son,' I said. 'Thee'll not be gone long?'

"He did not answer that, but kissed me again, an' went out quickly. [Pg 539]

"I sat an' waited long that night, an' searched till mornin'. There's been a many nights an' days since, but I've never found him. The Hallets all went that night, an' I heerd Derrick went as waiter-boy, so's to get across seas. It's twenty years now. But I think he'll come,"—looking up with a laugh.

Miss Defourchet started; where had she known this woman? The sudden flicker of a smile, followed by a quick contraction of the eyelids and mouth, was peculiar and curiously sensitive and sad; somewhere, in a picture maybe, she had seen the same.

Doctor Dennis, who had waited purposely, came out now on the stoop. Miss Defourchet looked up. The darkness had gathered while they stood there; the pine woods, close at the right, began to lower distant and shapeless; now and then the wind flapped a raw dash of rain in their faces, and then was suddenly still. Behind them, two or three tallow candles, just lighted in the store, sputtered dismal circles of dingy glare in the damp fog; in front, a vague slope of wet night, in which she knew lay the road and the salt marshes; and far beyond, distinct, the sea-line next the sky, a great yellow phosphorescent belt, apparently higher than their heads. Nearer, unseen, the night-tide was sent in: it came with a regular muffled throb that shook the ground. Doctor Dennis went down, and groped about his horse, adjusting the harness.

"The poor beast is soaked to the marrow: it's a dull night: d'ye hear how full the air is of noises?"

"It be the sea makin' ready," said Joe, in a whisper, as if it were a sentient thing and could hear. He touched the old woman on the arm and beckoned her inside to one of the candles.

"There be a scrap of a letter come for you; but keep quiet. Ben Van Note's scrawl of a handwrite, think."

The letters were large enough,—printed, in fact: she read it but once.

"Your Dirk come Aboord the Chief at New York. I knowed him by a mark on his wrist—the time jim hallet cut him' you mind. he is aged and Differentt name. I kep close. we sail to-day and Ill Breng him Ashor tomorrer nite plese God. be on Handd."

She folded the letter, crease by crease, and put it quietly in her pocket. Joe watched her curiously.

"D' Ben say when the Chief ud run in?"

"To-night."

"Bah-h! there be n't a vessel within miles of this coast,—without a gale drives 'm in."

She did not seem to hear him: was feeling her wet petticoats and sleeves. She would shame Derrick, after all, with this patched, muddy frock! She had worked so long to buy the black silk, gown and white neckercher that was folded in the bureau-drawer to wear the day he'd come back!

"When he come back!"

Then, for the first time, she realized what she was thinking about. *Coming to-night!*

Presently Miss Defourchet went to her where she was sitting on a box in the dark and rain.

"Are you sick?" said she, putting her hand out.

"Oh, no, dear!" softly, putting the fingers in her own, close to her breast, crying and sobbing quietly. "Thee hand be a'most as soft as a baby's foot," after a while, fancying the little chap was creeping into her bosom again, thumping with his fat feet and fists as he used to do. Her very blood used to grow wild and hot when he did that, she loved him so. And her heart to-night was just as warm and light as then. He was coming back, her boy: maybe he was poor and sick, a worn-out man; but in a few hours he would be here, and lay his tired head on her breast, and be a baby again.

Joe went down to the Doctor with a lantern.

"Van Note meant to run in the Chief to-night,"—in an anxious, inquiring whisper.

"He's not an idiot!"

"No,—but, bein' near, the wind may drive 'em on the bar. Look yonder."

"See that, too, Joe?" said bow-legged Phil, from Tom's River, who was up that night. [Pg 540]

"That yellow line has never been in the sky since the night the James Frazier—*Ach-h! it's come!*"

He had stooped to help Doctor Dennis with his harness, but now fell forward, clapping his hands to his ears. A terrible darkness swept over them; the whole air was filled with a fierce, risping crackle; then came a sharp concussion, that seemed to tear the earth asunder. Miss Defourchet cried aloud: no one answered her. In a few moments the darkness slowly lifted, leaving the old yellow lights and fogs on sea and land. The men stood motionless as when the tornado passed, Doctor Dennis leaning on his old mare, having thrown one arm about her as if to protect her, his stern face awed.

"There's where it went," said Joe, coolly, drawing his hands from his pockets, and pointing to a black gap in the pine woods. "The best farms in this Jersey country lie back o' that. I told you there was death in the pot, but I didn't think it ud 'a' come this fashion."

"When will the storm be on us?" asked Mary, trembling.

Joe laughed sardonically.

"Haven't ye hed enough of it?"

"There will be no rain after a gust like that," said MacAulay. "I'll try and get you home now. It has done its worst. It will take years to wipe out the woe this night has worked."

The wind had fallen into a dead silence, frightened at itself. And now the sudden, awful thunder of the sea broke on them, shaking the sandy soil on which they stood.

"Thank God that Van Note is so trusty a sailor as you say!" said Mary, buttoning her furs closer to her throat. "They're back in a safe harbor, I doubt not."

Joe and Doctor Dennis exchanged significant glances as they stood by the mare, and then looked again out to sea.

"Best get her home," said Joe, in a whisper.

Doctor Dennis nodded, and they made haste to bring the gig up to the horse-block.

Old Phebe Trull had been standing stirless since the gust passed. She drew a long breath when Mary touched her, telling her to come home with them.

"That was a sharp blow. I'm an old Barnegat woman, an' I've known no such cutters as that. But he'll come. I'm expectin' my boy to-night, young woman. I'm goin' to the beach now to wait for him,—for Derrick."

In spite of the queer old face peering out from the yellow sun-bonnet, with its flabby wrinkles and nut-cracker jaws, there was a fine, delicate meaning in the smile with which

she waved her hand down to the stormy beach.

"What's that?" said Doctor Dennis, starting up, and holding his hand behind his ear. His sandy face grew pale.

"I heard nothing," said Mary.

The next moment she caught a dull thud in the watery distance, as if some pulse of the night had throbbed feverishly.

Bow-legged Phil started to his feet.

"It's the gun of the Chief! Van Note's goin' down!" he cried, with a horrible oath, and hobbled off, followed by the other men.

"His little brother Benny be on her," said Joe. "May God have mercy on their souls!"

He had climbed like a cat to the rafters, and thrown down two or three cables and anchors, and, putting them over his shoulders, started soberly for the beach, stopping to look at Miss Defourchet, crouched on the floor of the store.

"You'd best see after her, Doctor. Ropes is all we can do for 'em. No boat ud live in that sea, goin' out."

Going down through the clammy fog, his feet sinking in the marsh with the weight he carried, he could see red lights in the mist, gathering towards shore.

"It's the wrackers goin' down to be ready for mornin'."

And in a few moments stood beside them a half-dozen brawny men, with their legs and chests bare. The beach on which they stood glared white in the yellow light, giving the effect of a landscape in Polar seas. One or two solitary headlands loomed gloomily up, covered with snow. In front, the waters at the edge of the sea broke at their feet in long, solemn, monotonous swells, that reverberated like thunder,—a death-song for the work going on in the chaos beyond. [Pg 541]

"Thar's no use doin' anything out thar," said one of the men, nodding gloomily to a black speck in the foaming hell. "She be on the bar this ten minutes, an' she 's a mean-built craft, that Chief."

"Couldn't a boat run out from the inlet?" timidly ventured an eager, blue-eyed little fellow.

"No, Snap," said Joe, letting his anchor fall, and clearing his throat. "Well, there be the end of old Ben, hey? Be yer never tired, yer cruel devil?" turning with a sudden fierceness to the sly foam creeping lazily about his feet.

There was a long silence.

"Bowlegs tried it, but his scow stud still, an' the breakers came atop as if it war a clam-shell. He warn't five yards from shore. His Ben's aboard." Another peal of a gun from the schooner broke through the dark and storm.

"God! I be sick o' sittin' on shor', an' watchin' men drownin' like rats on a raft," said Joe, wiping the foam from his thick lips, and trotting up and down the sand, keeping his back to the vessel.

Some of the men sat down, their hands clasped about their knees, looking gravely out.

"What cud we do, Joey?" said one. "Thar be Hannah an' the children; we kin give Hannah a lift. But as for Ben, it 's no use thinkin' about Ben no more."

The little clam-digger Snap was kindling a fire out of the old half-burnt wrecks of vessels.

"It's too late to give 'em warnin'," he said; "but it'll let 'em see we're watchin' 'em at the last. One ud like friends at the last."

The fire lighted up the shore, throwing long bars of hot, greenish flame up the fog.

"Who be them, Joe?" whispered a wrecker, as two dim figures came down through the marsh.

"She hev a sweetheart aboord. Don't watch her."

The men got up, and moved away, leaving Miss Defourchet alone with Doctor Dennis. She stood so quiet, her eyes glued on the dull, shaking shadow yonder on the bar, that he thought she did not care. Two figures came round from the inlet to where the water shoaled, pulling a narrow skiff.

"Hillo!" shouted Doctor Dennis. "Be you mad?"

The stouter of the figures hobbled up. It was Bowlegs. His voice was deadened in the cold of the fog, but he wiped the hot sweat from his face.

"In God's name, be thar none of ye ull bear a hand with me? Ud ye sit here an' see 'em drown? Benny's thar,—my Ben."

Joe shook his head.

"My best friend be there," said the old Doctor. "But what can ye do? Your boat will be paper in that sea, Phil."

"That's so," droned out one or two of the wreckers, dully nodding.

"Curses on ye for cowards, then!" cried Bowlegs, as he plunged into the surf, and righted his boat. "Look who's my mate, shame on ye!"

His mate shoved the skiff out with an oar into the seething breakers, turning to do it, and showed them, by the far-reaching fire-light, old Phebe Trull, stripped to her red woollen chemise and flannel petticoat, her yellow, muscular arms and chest bare. Her peaked old face was set, and her faded blue eye aflame. She did not hear the cry of horror from the wreckers.

"Ye've a better pull than any white-liver of 'em, from Tom's to Barnegat," gasped Bowlegs, struggling against the surf.

She was wrestling for life with Death itself; but the quiet, tender smile did not leave her face. [Pg 542]

"My God! ef I cud pull as when I was a gell!" she muttered. "Derrick, I'm comin'! I'm comin', boy!"

The salt spray wet their little fire of logs, beside which Snap sat crying,—put it out at last, leaving a heap of black cinders. The night fell heavier and cold; boat and schooner alike were long lost and gone in outer darkness. As they wandered up and down, chilled and hopeless, they could not see each other's faces,—only the patch of white sand at their feet. When they shouted, no gun or cry answered them again. All was silence, save the awful beat of the surf upon the shore, going on forever with its count, count of the hours until the time when the sea shall at last give up its dead.

Ben Van Note did not run the Chief in near shore purposely; but the fog was dense, and Ben was a better sailor than pilot. He took the wheel himself about an hour before they struck,—the two or three other men at their work on deck, with haggard, anxious faces, and silent: it is not the manner of these Jersey coast-men to chatter in heavy weather.

Philbrick, Doctor Bowdler's boy, lounged beside Ben, twisting a greasy lantern: "a town-bred fellow," Ben said; "put him in mind of young, rank cheese."

"You'd best keep a sharp eye, Van Note," he said; "this is a dirty bit of water, and you've two great men aboard: one patcher of the body, t' other of the soul."

"I vally my own neck more than either," growled Ben, and after a while forced himself to add, "*He*'s no backbone,—the little fellow with your master, I mean."

"Umph!" superciliously, "I'd like to see the 'little fellow' making neat bits out of that carcass of yours! His dainty white fingers carve off a fellow's legs and arms, caring no more than if they were painting flowers. He is a neat flower-painter, Dr. Birkenshead; moulds in clay, too."

He stared as Van Note burst into a coarse guffaw.

"Flower-painter, eh? Well, well, young man. You'd best go below. It's dirtier water than you think."

Doctors Bowdler and Birkenshead were down in the little cabin, reading by the dull light of a coal-oil lamp. When the vessel began to toss so furiously, the elder man rose and paced fussily to and fro, rubbing his fingers through his iron-gray hair. His companion was too much engrossed by his paper to heed him. He had a small, elegantly shaped figure,—the famous surgeon,—a dark face, drawn by a few heavy lines; looking at it, you felt, that, in spite of his womanish delicacies of habit, which lay open to all, never apologized for, he was a man whom you could not approach familiarly, though he were your brother born. He stopped reading presently, slowly folding the newspaper straight, and laying it down.

"That is a delicious blunder of the Administration," with a little gurgling laugh of thorough relish. "You remember La Rochefoucauld's aphorism, 'One is never so easily deceived as when one seeks to deceive others'?"

Doctor Bowdler looked uncomfortable.

"A selfish French Philister, La Rochefoucauld!" he blurted out. "I feel as if I had been steeped in meanness and vulgarity all my life, when I read him."

"He knew men," said the other, coolly, resetting a pocket set of chessmen on the board where they had been playing,—"Frenchmen," shortly.

"Doctor Birkenshead," after a pause, "you appear to have no sympathies with either side, in this struggle for the nation's life. You neither attack nor defend our government."

"In plain English, I have no patriotism? Well, to be honest, I don't comprehend how any earnest seeker for truth can have. If my country has truth, so far she nourishes me, and I am grateful; if not,—why, the air is no purer nor the government more worthy of reverence because I chanced to be born here." [Pg 543]

"Why, Sir," said the Doctor, stopping short and growing red, "you could apply such an argument as that to a man's feeling for his wife or child or mother!"

"So you could," looking closely at the queen to see the carving.

Doctor Bowdler looked at him searchingly, and then began his angry walk again in silence. What was the use of answering? No wonder a man who talked in that way was famed in this country and in Europe for his coolness and skill in cutting up living bodies. And yet—remorsefully, looking furtively at him—Birkenshead was not a hard fellow, after all. There was that pauper-hospital of his; and he had known him turn sick when operating on children, and damn the people who brought them to him.

Doctor Bowdler was a little in dread of this future husband of his niece, feeling there was a great gulf between them intellectually, the surgeon having a rare power in a line of life

of which he knew nothing. Besides, he could not understand him,—not his homely, keen little face even. The eyes held their own thought, and never answered yours; but on the mouth there was a forlorn depression sometimes, like that of a man who, in spite of his fame, felt himself alone and neglected. It rested there now, as he idly fingered the chessmen.

"Mary will kiss it away in time, maybe,"—doubting, as he said it, whether Mary did not come nearer the man's head than his heart. He stopped, looking out of the hole by the ladder that served the purpose of a window.

"It grows blacker every minute. I shall begin to repent tempting you on such a harebrained expedition, Doctor."

"No. This Van Note seems a cautious sailor enough," carelessly.

"Yes. He's on his own ground, too. We ought to run into Squan Inlet by morning. Did you speak?"

Birkenshead shook his head; the Doctor noticed, however, that his hand had suddenly stopped moving the chessmen; he rested his chin in the other.

"Some case he has left worries him," he thought. "He's not the man to relish this wild-goose chase of mine. It's bad enough for Mary to jar against his quiet tastes with her reforming whims, without my"——

"I would regret bringing you here," he said aloud, "if I did not think you would find a novelty in this shore and people. This coast is hardly 'canny,' as MacAulay would say. It came, literally, out of the sea. Sometime, ages ago, it belonged to the bed of the ocean, and it never has reconciled itself to the life of the land; its Flora is different from that of the boundaries; if you dig a few feet into its marl, you find layers of shells belonging to deep soundings, sharks' teeth and bones, and the like. The people, too, have a 'marvellously fishy and ancient smell.'"

The little man at the table suddenly rose, pushing the chessmen from him.

"What is there to wonder at?"—with a hoarse, unnatural laugh. "That's Nature. You cannot make fat pastures out of sea-sand, any more than a thorough-blood *gentilhomme* out of a clam-digger. The shark's teeth will show, do what you will." He pulled at his whiskers nervously, went to the window, motioning Doctor Bowdler roughly aside. "Let me see what the night is doing."

The old gentleman stared in a grave surprise. What had he said to startle Birkenshead so utterly out of himself? The color had left his face at the first mention of this beach; his very voice was changed, coarse and thick, as if some other man had broken out through him. At that moment, while Doctor Bowdler stood feebly adjusting his watch-chain, and eying his companion's back, like one who has found a panther in a domestic cat, and knows not when he will spring, the tornado struck the ocean a few feet from their side, cleaving a path for itself into deep watery walls. There was an instant's reeling and intense darkness, then the old Doctor tried to gather himself up, bruised and sick, from [Pg 544] the companion-way, where he had been thrown.

"Better lie still," said Birkenshead, in the gentle voice with which he was used to calm a patient.

The old gentleman managed to sit up on the floor. By the dull glare of the cabin-lantern he could see the surgeon sitting on the lower rung of the ladder, leaning forward, holding his head in his hands.

"Strike a light, can't you, Birkenshead? What has happened? Bah! this is horrible! I have swallowed the sea-water! Hear it swash against the sides of the boat! Is the boat going to pieces?"

"And there met us 'a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon,'" said Birkenshead, looking up with a curious smile.

"Did there?"—rubbing his shoulder. "I've kept clear of the sea so far, and I think in future —Hark! what's that?" as through the darkness and the thunderous surge of the water, and the short, fierce calls of the men on board, came a low shivering crack, distinct as a human whisper. "What is it, Birkenshead?" impatiently, when the other made no answer.

"The schooner has struck the bar. She is going to pieces."

The words recalled the old servant of Christ from his insane fright to himself.

"That means death! does it not?"

"Yes."

The two men stood silent,—Doctor Bowdler with his head bent and eyes closed. He looked up presently.

"Let us go on deck now and see what we can do,"—turning cheerfully. "No, there are too many there already."

There was an old tin life-preserver hanging on a hook by the door; the surgeon climbed up to get it, and began buckling it about the old man in spite of his remonstrances. The timbers groaned and strained, the boat trembled like some great beast in its death-agony, settled heavily, and then the beams on one side of them parted. They stood on a shelving plank floor, snapped off two feet from them, the yellow sky overhead, and the breakers crunching their footing away.

"O God!" cried Bowdler, when he looked out at the sea. He was not a brave man; and he could not see it, when he looked; there was but a horror of great darkness, a thunder of sound, and a chilly creeping of salt-water up his legs, as if the great monster licked his victim with his lifeless tongue. Straight in front of them, at the very edge of the horizon, he thought the little clam-digger's fire opened a tunnel of greenish light into the night, "dull and melancholy as a scene in Hades." They saw the men sitting around the blaze with their hands clasped about their knees, the woman's figure alone, and watching.

"Mary!" cried the old man, in the shrill extremity of his agony.

His companion shivered.

"Take this from me, boy!" cried Doctor Bowdler, trying to tear off the life-preserver. "It's a chance. I've neither wife nor child to care if I live or die. You're young; life's beginning for you. I've done with it. Ugh! this water is deadly cold. Take it, I say."

"No," said the other, quietly restraining him.

"Can you swim?"

"In this sea?"—with a half-smile, and a glance at the tossing breakers.

"You'll swim? Promise me you'll swim! And if I come to shore and see Mary?"

Birkenshead had regained the reticent tone habitual to him.

"Tell her, I wish I had loved her better. She will understand. I see the use of love in this last hour."

"Is there any one else?"

"There used to be some one. Twenty years ago I said I would come, and I'm coming now."

"I don't hear you."

Birkenshead laughed at his own thought, whatever it was. The devil who had tempted him might have found in the laugh an outcry more bitter than any agony of common men.

The planks beneath their feet sank inch by inch. They were shut off from the larboard side of the vessel. For a time they had heard oaths and cries from the other men, but now all was silent. [Pg 545]

"There is no help coming from shore,"—(the old man's voice was weakening,)—"and this footing is giving way."

"Yes, it's going. Lash your arms to me by your braces, Doctor. I can help you for a few moments."

So saying, Birkenshead tore off his own coat and waistcoat; but as he turned, the coming breaker dashed over their heads, he heard a faint gasp, and when his eyes were clear of the salt, he saw the old man's gray hair in the midst of a sinking wave.

"I wish I could have saved him," he said,—then made his way as best he could by feet and hands to a bulk of timber standing out of the water, and sitting down there, clutched his hands about his knees, very much as he used to do when he was a clam-digger and watched the other boys bringing in their hauls.

"Twenty years ago I said I'd come, and I'm coming," he went on repeating.

Derrick Trull was no coward, as boy or man, but he made no effort to save himself; the slimy water washed him about like a wet rag. He was alone now, if never before in those twenty years; his world of beautiful, cultured, graceful words and sights and deeds was not here, it was utterly gone out; there was no God here, that he thought of; he was quite alone: so, in sight of this lee coast, the old love in that life dead years ago roused, and the mean crime dragged on through every day since gnawed all the manliness and courage out of him.

She would be asleep now, old Phebe Trull,—in the room off the brick kitchen, her wan limbs curled up under her check nightgown, her pipe and noggin of tea on the oven-shelf; he could smell the damp, musty odor of the slop-sink near by. What if he could reach shore? What if he were to steal up to her bed and waken her?

"It's Derrick, back, mother," he would say. How the old creature would skirl and cry over her son Derrick!—Derrick! he hated the name. It belonged to that time of degradation and stinting and foulness.

Doctor Birkenshead lifted himself up. Pish! the old fish-wife had long since forgotten her scapegrace son,—thought him dead. *He was dead*. He wondered—and this while every swash of the salt-water brought death closer up to his lips—if Miss Defourchet had seen "Mother Phebe." Doubtless she had, and had made a sketch of her to show him;—but no, she was not a picturesque pauper,—vulgar, simply. The water came up closer; the cold of it, and the extremity of peril, or, maybe, this old gnawing at the heart, more virulent than either, soon drew the strength out of his body: close study and high living had made the joints less supple than Derrick Trull's: he lay there limp and unable,—his brain alert, but fickle. It put the watery death out of sight, and brought his familiar every-day life about him: the dissecting-room; curious cases that had puzzled him; drawing-rooms, beautiful women; he sang airs from the operas, sad, broken little snatches, in a deep, mellow voice, finely trained,—fragments of a litany to the Virgin. Birkenshead's love of beauty was a hungry monomania; his brain was filled with memories of the pictures of the Ideal Mother and her Son. One by one they came to him now, the holy woman-type which for ages supplied to the world that tenderness and pity which the Church had stripped from God. Even in his delirium the man of fastidious instincts knew this was what he craved; even now he remembered other living mothers he had known, delicate, nobly born women, looking on their babes with eyes full of all gracious and pure thoughts. With the sharp contrast of a dream came the old clam-digger, barefoot in the mud, her basket of soiled clothes on her shoulder,—her son Derrick, a vulgar lad, aping gentility, behind her.

Closer and closer came the waters; a shark's gray hide glittered a few feet from him. Death, sure of his prey, nibbled and played with it; in a little while he lay supine and unconscious. [Pg 546]

Reason came back to him like an electric shock; for all the parts of Dr. Birkenshead's organization were instinctive, nervous, like a woman's. When it came, the transient delirium had passed; he was his cool, observant self. He lay on the wet floor of a yawl skiff, his head resting on a man's leg; the man was rowing with even, powerful strokes, and he could feel rather than see in the darkness a figure steering. He was saved. His heart burned with a sudden glorious glow of joy, and genial, boyish zest of life,—one of the excesses of his nature. He tried to speak, but his tongue was stiff, his throat dry; he could have caressed the man's slimy sleeve that touched his cheek, he was so glad to live. The boatman was in no humor for caresses; he drew his labored breath sharply, fighting the waves, rasping out a sullen oath when they baffled him. The little surgeon had tact enough to keep silent; he did not care to talk, either. Life rose before him a splendid possibility, as never before. From the silent figure at the helm came neither word nor motion. Presently a bleak morning wind mingled with the fierce, incessant nor'easter; the three in the yawl, all sea-bred, knew the difference.

"Night ull break soon," said Bowlegs.

It did break in an hour or two into a ghastly gray dawn, bitter cold,—the slanting bars of sharp light from beyond the sea-line falling on the bare coast, on a headland of which moved some black, uneasy figures.

"Th' wrackers be thar."

There was no answer.

"Starboard! Hoy, Mother Phebe!"

She swayed her arms round, her head still fallen on her breast. Doctor Birkenshead, from his half-shut eyes, could see beside him the half-naked, withered old body, in its dripping flannel clothes, God! it had come, then, the time to choose! It was she who had saved, him! she was here,—alive!

"Mother!" he cried, trying to rise.

But the word died in his dry throat; his body, stiff and icy cold, refused to move.

"What ails ye?" growled the man, looking at her. "Be ye giv' out so near land? We've had a jolly seinin' together," laughing savagely, "ef we did miss the fish we went for, an' brought in this herrin'."

"Thee little brother's safe, Bowlegs," said the old woman, in a feeble, far-off voice. "My boy ull bring him to shore."

The boatman gulped back his breath; it sounded like a cry, but he laughed it down.

"You think yer Derrick ull make shore, eh? Well, I don't think that ar way o' Ben. Ben's gone under. It's not often the water gets a ten-year-older like that. I raised him. It was I sent him with Van Note this run. That makes it pleasanter now!" The words were grating out stern and sharp.

"Thee knows Derrick said he'd come," the woman said simply.

She stooped with an effort, after a while, and, thrusting her hand under Doctor Birkenshead's shirt, felt his chest.

"It's a mere patchin' of a body. He's warm yet. Maybe," looking closely into the face, "he'd have seen my boy aboord, an' could say which way he tuk. A drop of raw liquor ull bring him round."

Phil glanced contemptuously at the surgeon's fine linen, and the diamond *solitaire* on the small, white hand.

"It's not likely that chap ud know the deck-hands. It's the man Doctor Dennis was expectin'."

"Ay?" vaguely.

She kept her hand on the feebly beating heart, chafing it. He lay there, looking her straight in the eyes; in hers—dull with the love and waiting of a life—there was no instinct of recognition. The kind, simple, blue eyes, that had watched his baby limbs grow and strengthen in her arms! How gray the hair was! but its bit of curl was in it yet. The same dear old face that he used to hurry home at night to see! Nobody had loved him [Pg 547] but this woman,—never; if he could but struggle up and get his head on her breast! How he used to lie there when he was a big boy, listening to the same old stories night after night,—the same old stories! Something homely and warm and true was waking in him to-night that had been dead for years and years; this was no matter of æsthetics or taste, it was real, *real*. He wondered if people felt in this way who had homes, or those simple folk who loved the Lord.

Inch by inch, with hard, slow pulls, they were gaining shore. Mary Defourchet was there. If he came to her as the clam-digger's bastard son, owning the lie he had practised half his life,—what then? He had fought hard for his place in the world, for the ease and culture of his life,—most of all, for the society of thorough-bred and refined men, his own kindred. What would they say to Derrick Trull, and the mother he had kept smothered up so long? All this with his eyes fixed on hers. The cost was counted. It was to give up wife and place and fame,—all he had earned. It had not been cheaply earned. All Doctor Birkenshead's habits and intellect, the million nervous whims of a sensitive man, rebelled against the sacrifice. Nothing to battle them down but—what?

"Be ye hurt, Mother Phebe? What d'yer hold yer breath for?"

She evaded him with a sickly smile.

"We're gamin', Bowlegs. It's but a few minutes till we make shore. He'll be there, if—if he be ever to come."

"Yes, Gran," with a look of pity.

The wind stood still; it held its breath, as though with her it waited. The man strained against the tide till the veins in his brawny neck stood out purple. On the bald shore, the dim figures gathered in a cluster, eagerly watching. Old Phebe leaned forward, shading her eyes with her hand, peering from misty headland to headland with bated breath. A faint cheer reached them from land.

"Does thee know the voices, Bowlegs?"—in a dry whisper.

"It be the wreckers."

"Oh!—Derrick," after a pause, "would be too weak to cheer; he'd be worn with the swimmin'. Thee must listen sharp. Did they cry my name out? as if there was some 'ut for me?"

"No, Mother," gruffly. "But don't ye lose heart after twenty years' waitin'."

"I'll not."

As he pulled, the boatman looked over at her steadily.

"I never knowed what this was for ye, till now I've loss Ben," he said, gently. "It's as if you'd been lossin' him every day these twenty years."

She did not hear him; her eyes, straining, scanned the shore; she seemed to grow blind as they came nearer; passed her wet sleeve over them again and again.

"Thee look for me, Bowlegs," she said, weakly.

The yawl grated on the shallow waters of the bar; the crowd rushed down to the edge of the shore, the black figures coming out distinct now, half a dozen of the wreckers going into the surf and dragging the boat up on the beach. She turned her head out to sea, catching his arm with both hands.

"Be there any strange face to shore? Thee didn't know him. A little face, full o' th' laugh an' joke, an' brown curls blown by the wind."

"The salt's in my eyes. I can't rightly see, Mother Phebe."

The surgeon saw Doctor Bowdler waiting, pale and haggard, his fat little arms outstretched: the sea had spared him by some whim, then. When the men lifted him out, another familiar face looked down on him: it was Mary. She had run into the surf with them, and held his head in her arms.

"I love you! I love you!" she sobbed, kissing his hand.

"There be a fire up by the bathing-houses, an' hot coffee," said old Doctor Dennis, with a kindly, shrewd glance at the famous surgeon. "Miss Defourchet and Snap made it for you. *She* knew you, lying in the yawl." [Pg 548]

Birkenshead, keeping her hand, turned to the forlorn figure standing shivering alone, holding both palms pressed to her temples, her gray hair and clothes dripping.

"Thee don't tell me that he's here, Bowlegs," she said. "There might be some things the wrackers hes found up in the bathin'-houses. There might,—in the bathin'-houses. It's the last day,—it's twenty year"——

Doctor Birkenshead looked down at the beautiful flushed face pressed close to his side, then pushed it slowly from him. He went over to where the old woman stood, and kneeled beside her in the sand, drawing her down to him.

"Mother," he said, "it's Derrick, mother. Don't you know your boy?"

With the words the boy's true spirit seemed to come back to him,—Derrick Trull again, who went with such a hot, indignant heart to win money and place for the old mother at home. He buried his head in her knees, as she crouched over him, silent, passing her hands quickly and lightly over his face.

"God forgive me!" he cried. "Take my head in your arms, mother, as you used to do. Nobody has loved me as you did. Mother! mother!"

Phebe Trull did not speak one word. She drew her son's head close into her trembling old arms, and held it there motionless. It was an old way she had of caressing him.

Doctor Dennis drew the eager, wondering crowd away from them.

"I don't understand," said Doctor Bowdler, excitedly.

"I do," said his niece, and, sitting down in the sand, looked out steadfastly to sea.——

Bow-legged Phil drove the anchor into the beach, and pulled it idly out again.

"I've some 'ut here for you, Phil," said Joe, gravely. "The water washed it up."

The fellow's teeth chattered as he took it.

"Well, ye know what it is?" fiercely. "Only a bit of a Scotch cap,"—holding it up on his fist. "I bought it down at Port Monmouth, Saturday, for him. I was a-goin' to take him

home this week up to the old folks in Connecticut. I kin take *that* instead, an' tell 'em whar our Benny is."

"That's so," said Joe, his eye twinkling as he looked over Phil's shoulder.

A fat little hand slapped the said shoulder, and "Hillo, Bowlegs!" came in a small shout in his ear. Phil turned, looked at the boy from head to foot, gulped down one or two heavy breaths.

"Hi! you young vagabond, you!" he said, and went suddenly back to his anchor, keeping his head down on his breast for a long while.——

He had piled up the sand at her back to make her a seat while they waited for the wagons. Now he sat on her skirts, holding her hands to warm them. He had almost forgotten Mary and the Doctor. Nature or instinct, call it what you will, some subtile whim of blood called love, brought the old clam-digger nearer to him than all the rest of the world. He held the bony fingers tight, looked for an old ring she used to wear, tried to joke to bring out the flicker of a smile on her mouth, leaned near to catch her breath. He remembered how curiously sweet it used to be, like new milk.

The dawn opened clear and dark blue; the sun yet waited below the stormy sea. Though they sat there a long while, she was strangely quiet,—did not seem so much afraid of him as she used to be when he began to rise above her,—held his hand, with a bright, contented face, and said little else than "My boy! my boy!" under her breath. Her eyes followed every movement of his face with an insatiate hunger; yet the hesitation and quiet in her motions and voice were unnatural. He asked her once or twice if she were ill.

"Wait a bit, an' I'll tell thee, Derrick," she said. "Thee must remember I'm not as young as I was then," with a smile. "Thee must speak fast, my son. I'd like to hear of thee gran' home, if thee's willin'."

He told her, as he would to please a child, of the place and fame and wealth he had won; [Pg 549]
but it had not the effect he expected. Before he had finished, the look in her eyes grew vague and distant. Some thought in the poor clam-digger's soul made these things but of little moment. She interrupted him.

"There be one yonner that loves my boy. I'd like to speak a word to her before—Call her, Derrick."

He rose and beckoned to Miss Defourchet. When she came near, and saw the old woman's face, she hurried, and, stooping down quickly, took her head in her arms.

"Derrick has come back to you," she said. "Will you let him bring me with him to call you mother?"

"Mary?"

She did not look at him. Old Phebe pushed her back with a searching look.

"Is it true love you'll give my boy?"

"I'll try." In a lower voice,—"I never loved him so well as when he came back to you."

The old woman was silent a long time.

"Thee's right. It was good for Derrick to come back to me. I don't know what that big world be like where thee an' Derrick's been. The sea keeps talkin' of it, I used to think; it's kep' moanin' with the cries of it. But the true love at home be worth it all. I knowed that always. I kep' it for my boy. He went from it, but it brought him back. Out of the sea it brought him back."

He knew this was not his mother's usual habit of speech. Some great truth seemed coming closer to the old fish-wife, lifting her forever out of her baser self. She leaned on

the girl beside her, knowing her, in spite of blood and education, to be no truer woman than herself. The inscrutable meaning of the eyes deepened. The fine, sad smile came on the face, and grew fixed there. She was glad he had come,—that was all. Mary was a woman; her insight was quicker.

"Where are you hurt?" she said, softly.

"Hush! don't fret the boy. It was the pullin' last night, think. I'm not as strong as when I was a gell."

They sat there, watching the dawn break into morning. Over the sea the sky opened into deeps of silence and light. The surf rolled in, in long, low, grand breakers, like riders to a battle-field, tossing back their gleaming white plumes of spray when they touched the shore. But the wind lulled as though something more solemn waited on the land than the sea's rage or the quiet of the clouds.

"Does thee mind, Derrick," said his mother, with a low laugh, "how thee used to play with this curl ahint my ear? When thee was a bit baby, thee begun it. I've kep' it ever since. It be right gray now."

"Yes, mother."

He had crept closer to her now. In the last half-hour his eyes had grown clearer. He dared not look away from her. Joe and Bowlegs had drawn near, and Doctor Bowdler. They stood silent, with their hats off. Doctor Bowdler felt her pulse, but her son did not touch it. His own hand was cold and clammy; his heart sick with a nameless dread. Was he, then, just too late?

"Yes, I did. I kep' it for thee, Derrick. I always knowed thee'd come,"—in a lower voice. "There's that dress, too. I'd like thee to've seen me in that; but"——

"Take her hands in yours," whispered Mary.

"Is it thee, my son?"—with a smile. After a long pause,—"I kep' it, an' I kep' true love for thee, Derrick. God brought thee back for 't, I think. It be the best, after all. He'll bring thee to me for 't at th' last, my boy,—my boy!"

As the faint voice lingered and died upon the words, the morning sun shone out in clear, calm glory over the still figures on the beach. The others had crept away, and left the three alone with God and His great angel, in whose vast presence there is no life save Love, no future save Love's wide eternity.

MY STUDENT LIFE AT HOFWYL.

[Pg 550]

There flourished, in the heart of the Swiss Republic, during some twenty or twenty-five years, commencing about the year 1810, an educational institution, in the nature of a private college, which, though it attracted much public attention at the time, being noticed with commendation, as I remember, in a report made by the Count Capo d'Istria to the Emperor Alexander of Russia, yet has never, I think, been appreciated at its full deserts, nor generally recognized for the admirable institution it was,—unparalleled, in the character of the spirit which pervaded it, and in many of the practical results obtained, by any establishment for learning that has ever come under my observation.

I was educated there, from the age of sixteen or seventeen to twenty. Passing into its tranquil scenes from the quiet of home and the hands of a private tutor, with the sunny hopes and high ideal and scanty experience of youth, much that I found there appeared to me at the time but natural and in the ordinary course of things, which now, by the light of a life's teachings, and by comparison with the realities as I have found them, seems to

me, as I look back, rather in the nature of a dream of fancy, tinged with the glamour of optimism, than like the things one really meets with in the work-a-day world. I say this, after making what I think due allowance for the Claude-Lorraine tints in which youth is wont to invest its early recollections.

It was one of several public institutions for education founded by the benevolent enterprise of a very remarkable man. EMANUEL VON FELLENBERG was born of a patrician family of Bern. His father had been a member of the Swiss Government, and a friend of the celebrated Pestalozzi,—a friendship which descended to the son. His mother was a descendant of the stout Van Tromp, the Dutch admiral, who was victor in more than thirty engagements, and whose spirit and courage she is said to have inherited. To this noble woman young Fellenberg owed ideas of liberty and philanthropy beyond the age in which he lived and the aristocratic class to which he belonged.

Educated at Colmar and Tübingen, the years immediately succeeding his college life were spent in travels, which brought him, at the age of twenty-three, and just after the death of Robespierre, to Paris, where he had an opportunity of studying men in the subsiding tumult of a terrible revolution.

The result appears to have been a conviction that the true element of human progress was to be found less in correction of the adult than in training of the youth. His mind imbued with the two great ideas of freedom and education, he returned to his native Bern; but taking part there against the French, he was banished, remaining in Germany an exile for several years, and during that period planning emigration, with several friends, to the United States. This intention he abandoned, on being recalled to his native country, and there offered important diplomatic and military service. In the latter capacity he quelled an insurrection of the peasantry in the Oberland; but, prompted by that sympathy for the laboring classes which was a strong element in his character, he granted these people terms so liberal that his Government refused to ratify them, whereupon he threw up his commission, recurring to his favorite educational projects, and serving for a time on the Board of Education in Bern.

But it soon became apparent that the ideas of his colleagues and himself differed too widely to permit united action. They were thinking of the commonplace routine of school instruction,—reading, writing, arithmetic, and the like. He looked to education as the regenerating agent of the world,—that agent without the aid of which liberty runs into license, and the rule of the many, as he had witnessed it in terror-stricken France, may [Pg 551] become one of the worst forms of despotism. He looked beyond mere pedagogical routine or formal learning, to the living spirit,—to the harmonious development of every human faculty and affection, intellectual, moral, spiritual.

Resigning his situation on the Bernese Board of Education, Fellenberg expended a large fortune in the purchase of the estate of HOFWYL, about two leagues from Bern, and the erection there of the building necessary to carry into effect his own peculiar views.

It was a favorite idea of his, that society can be most effectually influenced for good by training its extremes in social position: those, on the one hand, who are born to wealth and station, whence are usually chosen lawgivers, statesmen, leaders of public opinion; and those, on the other hand, born to a heritage of ignorance and neglect, and too often trained even from tender age to vice and violence. He sought to bring these extremes of European society into harmonious relation with each other,—to raise the one from hereditary dependence and degradation, to imbue the other with healthy ideas of true nobility in place of the morbid prejudices of artificial rank. In both these efforts he was eminently successful,—in the latter, more so, in my judgment, than any educator of his age.

The establishments of Hofwyl proper[A] were, accordingly, two in number, quite distinct from each other: the *Vehrli-Knaben*, (Vehrli's boys,) as they were called, from the name of their admirable young teacher, Vehrli, essentially an agricultural school, on the manual-labor principle; and the college, of which it is my chief object to sketch the plan

and its results. To this latter institution, in consequence of the numerous and expensive branches taught and the great number of professors employed, (about one to each four students,) those only, with few exceptions, could obtain admission whose parents possessed ample means,—the exceptions being the sons of a few of Fellenberg's Swiss friends, in moderate circumstances, whom, when they showed great promise, he admitted with little or no charge. It was by associating these with his own children in their studies that the nucleus of this college was originally formed.

From their very inception, these projects met with discouragement and opposition, especially from the patrician class, to which Fellenberg belonged. Even in republican Switzerland, these men held that their rank exonerated them from any occupation that savored much of utility; and it was with a feeling almost of dishonor to their order that they saw one of their number stoop (it was thus they phrased it) to the ignoble task of preceptor. It need hardly be said that Fellenberg held on his way, undisturbed by the idle noise of prejudice like this.

Into the Vehrli school were received destitute orphans, foundlings, and those whose parents were too indigent to provide for their education. Their time was divided nearly equally between the labors of the field and the lessons of the school. They were trained as farmers and teachers. Besides the ordinary branches, they were well grounded in botany and drawing, and made great proficiency in vocal music. Vehrli devoted himself, heart and soul, to the instruction of these children. He worked with them, studied with them, wore the same homely dress, partook of the same plain fare, slept in the same dormitory, —in short, spent his life wholly among them. After a time his pupils were in great request throughout Europe, both as teachers and as agricultural superintendents. I found one of them, when many years since I visited Holland, intrusted with the care of a public seminary supported by the Dutch Government, and his employers highly appreciated his character and abilities. The children remained till they were of age, repaying by their [Pg 552] labor in the latter years a portion of the expenses of their early education. Ultimately this school became nearly self-supporting.

Between Vehrli's children, as we used to call them, and ourselves there was not much communication. We met occasionally only; but when we did meet, there existed the most friendly relations between us. I saw but little of the internal arrangements of that establishment, and am unable, at this distance of time, to furnish detailed information regarding it. I proceed to give some account of the college, of which, for three years, I was a student.

Of that little republic it can truly be said, that its tranquillity was never disturbed by one dividing prejudice of rank, of country, or of religion. We had among our number (usually amounting to one hundred students) dukes and princes, some of them related to crowned heads; and we had the recipients, already alluded to, of Fellenberg's bounty; but not in word or bearing was there aught to mark difference of artificial rank. We had Swiss, Germans, Russians, Prussians, Dutch, French, Italians, English, and I know not what other nationalities; but not one unkindly sentiment or illiberal prejudice arose among us on account of birthplace. We had Protestants, Catholics, members of the Greek Church, and members of no church at all; but never, in language or feeling, did I perceive any shade of coldness or aversion that had its rise in theological differences. Fellenberg had succeeded in instilling into our little community his own noble principles of republican dignity, cosmopolitan amity, and religious toleration.

No one was addressed by his title; and to the tuft-hunters of English universities it will appear scarcely credible that I lived several weeks as a student at Hofwyl before I accidentally learned who were the princes and other nobles, and who the objects of M. de Fellenberg's charity. It was, I think, some six weeks or two months after my arrival that I was conversing with a good-natured fellow-student, with whom I had become well acquainted under his familiar nickname of *Stösser*. I remarked to him that before I reached Hofwyl I had heard that there were several noblemen there, and I asked what had become of them.

"Why," said he, smiling, "they are here still."

"Indeed!" said I; "which are they?"

He requested me to guess. I named several of the students who had appeared to me to have the greatest consideration among their fellows. He shook his head, and laughed. "These are all merchants and commoners. Try again." I did so, but with no better success; and at last he named, to my surprise, several young men who had seemed to me to have but an indifferent share of influence or respect,—among the rest, one who was slightingly treated, and avoided rather than sought, by his companions. He was the nephew of the King of Würtemberg.

A day or two afterwards I chanced to learn that the young man whom I had thus questioned was himself a Russian prince, grandson of the noted Suwaroff,—Catharine's Suwaroff. He had charge of our flock of goats, of which I shall by-and-by have occasion to speak; and he took to the office very kindly.

In like manner, it might have puzzled me, after a three-years' residence, to call to mind whether those with whom I was as intimate as with my own brother were Protestants or Catholics or neither; and at this distance of time I have forgotten. The reason is simple: we never debated on theological subjects at all. M. de Fellenberg read to us occasional lectures on religion; but they were practical, not doctrinal,—embracing those essentials which belong to all Christian sects, thus suiting Protestant and Catholic alike. The Catholics, it is true, had from time to time a priest to confess them, who doubtless enjoined the regular weekly fast; yet we of the Protestant persuasion used, I believe, to [Pg 553] eat as much fish and as many frogs on Fridays as they.

A striking feature in our system of instruction was the absence of all punishment, except such as was self-inflicted, under a code of laws of our own, hereafter to be noticed. Twice, or perhaps three times, during the term of my residence, one of the pupils, on account of repeated inattention, or for similar venial cause, was requested by the professor, during the course of the recitation, to leave the room. But this was quite an event, to be talked of for a week, so contrary was it to the regular, quiet, uncoercing routine of the institution. No expulsion ever occurred. I do not myself remember to have received, either from M. de Fellenberg or from any of his professors, one harsh word during the three happy years I spent at Hofwyl.

The mildness with which the students were treated by their instructors reacted upon them in their intercourse with each other. Duels, so common among the students of German universities, were an unheard-of absurdity, though we had a fencing-master, and took regular lessons in the use of the small sword, skill in the management of which was considered an indispensable item in the education of a gentleman. Quarrels such as elsewhere terminate in blows were scarcely known among us. I recall but two, both of which were immediately arrested by the spectators, who felt their college dishonored by such an exhibition of evil passion and violence. One of these was commenced by a youth coming only two weeks before from an English school. The other occurred, one evening when a small party of us had assembled in a private room, between a fiery young Prussian count and a sturdy, unbending Swiss. The dispute grew warm, and was about to proceed to extremities, when we who were by-standers made no scruple to terminate it in our own way. We pounced upon the disputants without warning, carried them off, each to his own room, on our shoulders, and there, with a hearty laugh at their folly, set them down to cool. All this was done so suddenly and so good-naturedly that they themselves could not refrain from joining in the merriment which so whimsical a conclusion to their quarrel had elicited.

I have heard and read much of the pluck and manliness that are supposed to grow out of the English habit of settling school quarrels by boxing, after the fashion of prize-fighters in the ring. But I do not think it would have been a very safe experiment for one of these pugilistic young gentlemen to offer an insult to a Hofwyl student, even though the manhood of this latter had never been tested by pounding another's face with his fist.

Brutality and cowardice are often close allies; and his anger, when roused, is most to be dreaded, who so bears himself as to give no one just cause of offence. Boxing-matches and duels are becoming, as they ought to be, like the ordeal by combat, antiquated modes of testing the courage or settling the disputes whether of boys or men, among the civilized portion of mankind.

But though little prone to quarrel, our indignation, I must confess, was sometimes readily enough roused, when occasion called it forth. I remember an instance in which, perhaps, the conservative portion of my readers may think we carried matters somewhat to an extreme.

It happened that three officers of distinction from the Court of Würtemberg arrived, one day, on a visit to M. de Fellenberg. They desired to see their sovereign's nephew, the same Prince Alexander of Würtemberg to whom I have already alluded as being no favorite among us. He was accordingly sent for; and the interview took place in an open space in front of M. de Fellenberg's *Schloss*, where four or five students, of whom I was one, happened to be at the time, not more than eight or ten steps distant. The officers, as they approached the Prince, uncovered, and stood, during the conversation which ensued, with their plumed hats in their hands. The young man, on the contrary, whose silly airs [Pg 554] had been a chief cause of his unpopularity among us, did not remove the little student-cap he wore, but remained covered, without any intimation to his visitors to resume their hats.

This was too much for us. "Do look!" said one of our group,—"if there isn't that fellow Alexander standing with his cap on, and letting these officers talk to him bareheaded!" And then, raising his voice so as to be heard by the parties concerned, he said,—"Alexander, take off your cap!"

But the cap did not stir. We took a step or two nearer, and another of our party said,—

"Alexander, if you don't take that cap off, yourself, I'll come and take it off for you."

This time the admonition had effect. The cap was slowly removed, and we remained to make sure that it was not resumed, until the officers, bowing low, took their leave,—carrying, I fear, to their royal master no very favorable report touching the courtly manners of Hofwyl.

It was small marvel that an institution of practice so democratically heterodox should awaken the jealousy of European legitimacy. And it was probably with feelings more of sorrow than surprise, that Fellenberg, about the year 1822, received from the Austrian authorities a formal intimation that no Austrian subject would thereafter be allowed to enter the college, and an order that those who were then studying there should instantly return home. Than this tyrannical edict of the Austrian autocrat,[B] the same who did not blush to declare "that he desired to have loyal subjects, not learned men, in his dominions," no greater compliment could have been paid to Fellenberg or his institutions.

The course of instruction pursued at Hofwyl included the study of the Greek, Latin, French, and German languages, the last of which was the language of our college,—history, geography, chemistry, mechanics,—mathematics, in a thorough course, embracing the highest branches,—drawing, and music, vocal and instrumental,—and, finally, riding, fencing, and gymnastics. The recitations (*Stunden*, that is, *hours*, we called them, for each lasted a single hour only) were essentially conversational. The lessons in drawing, however, extended to two consecutive hours, and included copying from the antique. There was a riding-school and a considerable stud attached to the college; and the highest class were in the habit of riding out once a week with M. de Fellenberg, many of whose practical life-lessons, given as I rode by his side during these pleasant excursions, I well remember yet.

The number of professors was large, compared to that of the taught, being from twenty-five to thirty, though the college seldom contained more than one hundred students. The number in each class was small, usually from ten to fifteen.

Latin and Greek, though thoroughly taught, did not engross the same proportion of time which in many other colleges is devoted to them. Not more time was given to each than to ancient and modern history, and less than to mathematics. This last was a special object of study. It was taught, as was history, by extempore lectures, while the students took notes in short-hand; and we seldom employed any printed work to aid us, in the evening, in making out from recollection, aided by these notes, a written statement of the propositions and their solution, to be handed, next day, to the professor. This plan impressed on our minds, not indeed the exact form of words or the particular set of phrases of the books, but the essential principles of the science,—so that, when, in after years, amid the business of life, details and demonstrations had faded from my memory, I have never found difficulty in working these out afresh, and recalling and rearranging them, without aid from books. [Pg 555]

One little incident connected with my mathematical studies still comes back to me with a pleasant impression. My chief college friend was young De Saussure, grandson of the naturalist of that name, who, the first with a single exception, reached the summit of Mont Blanc. The subject of our lecture was some puzzling proposition in the differential calculus, and De Saussure propounded to the professor a knotty difficulty in connection with it. The professor replied unsatisfactorily. My friend still pressed his point, and the professor rejoined very learnedly and ingeniously, but without really meeting the case; whereupon De Saussure silently assented, as if quite satisfied.

"You were *not* satisfied with that explanation," said I to De Saussure, as we walked to our rooms.

"Of course not," was his reply; "but would you have had me before the class shame the good man who takes so much pains with us and is usually so clear-headed? We must work it out ourselves to-night."

This trifle may afford a glimpse of the relation between professor and student at Hofwyl. There was no antagonism between them. The former was regarded, not as a pedagogue, from whom to stand aloof,—not, because of his position of authority, as a natural enemy, to be resisted, so far as resistance was safe,—but as an elder friend, whom it was a privilege (and it was one often enjoyed) to converse with, out of college hours, in a familiar way. During the hours of recreation, the professors frequently joined in our games. Nor did I observe that this at all diminished the respect we entertained for them or the progress we made under their care.

Emulation was limited among us to that which naturally arises among young men prosecuting the same studies. It was not artificially excited. There were no prizes; there was no taking rank in classes; there was not even the excitement of public examinations. Many may think this a hazardous experiment. I am not sure whether classical proficiency did not, to a certain extent, suffer from it. I am not sure whether some sluggards did not, because of it, lag behind. Yet the general proficiency in learning was satisfactory; and the student, when he entered the world, missed no college excitants, but bore with him a love and a habit of study needing no spur, and which insured the continuance of education far beyond the term of his college years. For he had learned to seek knowledge for itself, for the pleasing occupation it brings, for the power it gives, for the satisfaction it leaves behind; and he required no more highly seasoned inducements to continue the search through life.

Yet it was not the peculiar mode of imparting instruction, nor yet the variety, the extent, and the utility of the knowledge acquired, that chiefly characterized the institution of the Swiss patriot. It was the noble spirit of freedom, the purity of motive, the independence of purpose, the honesty of conduct, the kindness of intercourse, the union and forbearance and high-spirited republicanism, pervading alike our hours of study, of amusement, and of social converse. These it was that distinguished Hofwyl; and these it is that still cause its former pupils to look back on the years spent within its peaceful precincts as the best and the happiest of their lives.

To such results there mainly contributed a remarkable feature in the economy of the institution I have been describing,—a feature, so far as I know, not adopted in any similar institution, at least to the extent to which it was carried by us.

I have said that reward and punishment by the college authorities, or by M. de Fellenberg, their head, were virtually excluded from this system. Considering the heterogeneous materials that were collected together from half the nations of the world, some having been nursed and petted in the lap of aristocracy, and others, probably, sent thither because their parents could not manage them at home,—considering, too, the [Pg 556] comparatively late age at which students enter such a college, many of them just from schools where severity was the rule and artificial reward the stimulant,—considering all this, I doubt whether the mild, uncoercing, paternal government of Hofwyl would have been a success, but for the peculiarity here referred to coming in aid of our teachers, and supplying motives and restraints to ourselves. It was in this wise.

Hofwyl was not only an institution for education, it was also an independent, self-governing community. It had its code of laws, its council of legislation, its court of judges, its civil and military officers, its public treasury. It had its annual elections, by ballot, at which each student had a vote,—its privileges, equally accessible to all,—its labors and duties, in which all took a share. It proposed and debated and enacted its own laws, from time to time modifying them, but not often nor radically. It acted independently of the professors, and of Fellenberg himself, except that our foster-father (*Pflegevater*, as we used to call him) retained a veto, which, however, like Queen Victoria, he never exercised. Never, I think, were laws framed with a more single eye to the public good, or more strictly obeyed by those who framed them.

Nor was this an unwilling obedience, an eye-service constrained by fear or force. It was given cheerfully, honestly. We had ourselves assisted in framing, and given our votes in enacting, our code of laws. We felt them to be our own, and as such it became a point of honor with us to conform to them in spirit as in letter.

I know not whether the idea of this juvenile self-regulating republic (*Verein*, we called it) originated with Fellenberg or with some of the students; but, whatever its origin, I believe it to have been the chief lever that raised the moral and social character of our college to the height it ultimately attained. It gave birth to public spirit, and to social and civic virtues. It nurtured a conscious independence, that submitted with pleasure to what it knew to be the will of the whole, and felt itself bound to submit to nothing else. It created young republicans, and awakened in them that devotion to the public welfare and that zeal for the public good, which we seek too often, alas, in vain, in older, but not wiser, communities.

When I said that we had no rewards at Hofwyl, I ought to have admitted that the annual election to the offices of our *Verein* acted indirectly as a powerful stimulus to industry and good conduct. At these elections was to be read, as on a moral thermometer, the graduated scale of public opinion. The result of each election informed us with certainty who had risen and who had fallen in the estimate of his fellows.

For it was felt that public opinion among us, enlightened and incorrupt, operated with strict justice. In that young commonwealth, to deserve well of the republic was to win its confidence and obtain testimonial of its approbation. There not one sinister motive swayed our votes,—neither favoritism, nor envy, nor any selfish inducement. There was not even canvassing for favorite candidates. There was quiet, dispassionate discussion of respective merits; but the one question which the elector asked himself or his neighbor was, "Who can fill most efficiently such or such an office?"—the answer to that question furnishing the motive for decision. I cannot call to mind a single instance, during the three years I passed at Hofwyl, in which even a suspicion of an electioneering cabal or other factious proceeding attached to an election among us. It can scarcely be said that there were candidates for any office. Preferment was, indeed, highly valued, as a testimonial of public confidence; but it was not sought, directly or indirectly, and was accepted rather as imposing duty than conferring privilege. The Lacedemonian, who,

when he lost his election as one of the Three Hundred, went away rejoicing that there were found in Sparta three hundred better men than he, is extolled as a model, of ideal virtue. Yet such virtue was matter of common occurrence and of little remark at Hofwyl. There were not only one or two, but many among us, who would have sincerely rejoiced to find others, more capable than themselves, preferred to office in their stead. [Pg 557]

All this sounds, I dare say, Utopian and extravagant. As I write, it seems to myself so widely at variance with a five-and-twenty years' experience of public life, that I should scruple at this distance of time to record it, had I not, thirty years ago, when my recollections were fresh, noted them down minutely and conscientiously. It avails nothing to tell me that such things cannot be,—for at Hofwyl they were. I describe a state of society which I witnessed, of which I was myself a part.

As partial explanation, I may state, that to office, among us, was attached no patronage and no salary.

The proceeds of our public treasury, (*Armenkasse*, we called it,) to which each contributed according to his means and inclination, went exclusively for the relief of the poor. We had a superintendent of the poor, and a committee whose duty it was to visit the indigent families in our neighborhood, ascertain their wants and their character, and afford them relief, especially in winter. This relief was given in the form sometimes of money, sometimes of food, clothing, or furniture; to some we furnished goats, selected when in milk from a flock we had, and which were left with them for a longer or shorter period. Our fund was ample, and I think judiciously dispensed.

The laws and regulations of our *Verein* extended to the police and the moral government of our little community. The students were divided into six circles, (*Kreise*,) and for the government of each of these we elected a guardian or councillor (*Kreisrath*). These were our most important officers,—their province embracing the social life and moral deportment of each member of the *Kreis*. This, one might imagine, would degenerate into an inquisitorial or intermeddling surveillance; but in practice it never did. Each *Kreis* was a band of friends, and its chief was the friend most valued and esteemed among them. It had its weekly meetings; and I remember, in all my life, no pleasanter gatherings than these. Myself a *Kreisrath* towards the close of my student life, I bore home with me no more valued memorial than a brief letter of farewell, expressive of affection and gratitude, signed by each member of the *Kreis*.

Our judiciary consisted of a bench of three judges, whose sessions were held in our principal hall with all due formality,—two sentinels, with swords drawn, guarding the doors. The punishments within its power to inflict were a vote of censure, fines, deprivation of the right of suffrage, declaration of ineligibility to office, and degradation from office. This last punishment was not inflicted on any student during my residence at Hofwyl. Trials were very rare; and I do not remember one, except for some venial offence. The offender usually pleaded his own cause; but, if he preferred it, he might procure a friend to act as his advocate.

The dread of public censure, thus declared by sentence after formal trial, was great and influential among us. Its power may be judged from the following example.

Two German princes, sons of a wealthy nobleman, the Prince of Tour and Taxis, having been furnished by their father with a larger allowance of pocket-money than they could legitimately spend at Hofwyl, conceived a somewhat irregular mode of disposing of part of it. They were in the habit of occasionally getting up late at night, after all their comrades had retired to rest, and proceeding to the neighboring village of Buchsee, there to spend an hour or two in a tavern, smoking and drinking *lager-bier*.

Now we had no strict college bounds, and no prohibition against entering a tavern, though we knew that M. de Fellenberg objected to our contracting the latter habit. Our practice on Sundays may illustrate this. That day was strictly kept and devoted to religious exercises until midday, when we dined. After dinner it was given up to [Pg 558]

recreation, and our favorite Sunday recreation was, to form into parties of two or three and sally forth, *Ziegenhainer* in hand, on excursions many miles into the beautiful and richly cultivated rolling country that surrounded us, usually ascending some eminence whence we could command a full view of the magnificent Bernese Alps, their summits covered with eternal snow. It sometimes happened that on these excursions we were overtaken by a storm, or perhaps, having wandered farther than we intended, were tired and hungry. In either case, we did not scruple to enter some country tavern and procure refreshments there. But whenever we did so, it was a custom—not a written law, but a custom sanctioned by all our college traditions—to visit, on our return, the professor who had charge of the domestic department of our institution,—a short, stout, middle-aged man, the picture of good-humor, but not deficient in decision and energy when occasion demanded,—it was our uniform custom to call upon this gentleman, Herr Lippe, and inform him that we *had* visited such or such a tavern, and the occasion of our doing so. A benignant smile, and his usual "It is very well, my sons," closed such interviews.

But the use of tobacco—passing strange, that, in a German college!—was forbidden by our rules; so also was a departure, after the usual hour of rest, from the college buildings, except for good reason shown. Thus Max and Fritz Taxis (so the youths were called) had become offenders, amenable to justice.

The irregularity of which they had been guilty, the only one of the kind I recollect, became known accidentally to one of our number. There existed among us not even the name of informer; it was considered a duty to give notice to the proper authorities of any breach of our laws. This was accordingly done in the present instance; and the brothers were officially notified that on the following day their case would be brought up, and they would be heard in their own defence. The elder of the two, Max, held some minor office; and the sentence would probably have been a vote of censure or a fine for both, and a forfeiture of the office in the case of the elder brother. But this was more than they could make up their minds to bear. Accordingly, the night previous to their trial, they decamped secretly, hired a carriage at a neighboring village, and, being well provided with money, returned to their parents.

We afterwards ascertained that M. de Fellenberg did not send after them, in pursuit or otherwise,—did not even write to their parents, but suffered the fugitives to tell their own story in their own way.

The result was, that in a few weeks the father came, bringing with him the runaways, and asking, as a favor, that M. de Fellenberg would once more make trial of them,—which he very willingly did. They were received by us with kindness, and no allusion was ever made to the cause of their absence. They remained several years, quiet and law-abiding members of our *Verein*, but neither attained to any office of trust again.

Our recreations consisted of public games, athletic exercises, gymnastics, and—what was prized above all—an annual excursion on foot, of about six weeks' duration.

One of our most favorite amusements in the way of athletic exercise was throwing the lance (*Lanzenwerfen*.) The weapons used were stout ashen spears, from six to seven feet long, heavily shod with iron, and sharp-pointed; the target, a squared log of hard wood firmly set in the ground, about six feet high,—the upper portion, or head, which it was the chief object to hit, a separate block, attached to the trunk by stout hinges. This exercise required great strength as well as skill. A dozen or more engaged in it at a time, divided into two sides of supposed equal force; and the points gained by each stroke were [Pg 559] reckoned according to its power and accuracy,—double, if the head was struck, and one point added whenever the spear remained fixed in the wood without touching the ground. We attained great skill in this exercise.

We had fencing-lessons twice a week; and there were many swordsmen in the elder classes who need not have feared any ordinary antagonist. Of this a fencing-master from a neighboring Canton, on occasion of a visit to our teacher, had one day tangible and somewhat mortifying proof.

Much has been said, sometimes in ridicule, sometimes in condemnation, of gymnastic exercises. We spent an hour a day, just before dinner, in the gymnasium. And my three-years' experience induces me to regard these exercises, judiciously conducted, not only as beneficial, but indispensable to a complete system of education. They are to the body what intellectual labors are to the mind. They produce a vigor, an agility, an address, a hardihood, a presence of mind in danger, which I have never seen attained to the same extent under any other circumstances. They fortify the health and strengthen the nerves. Their mental and moral influence, also, is great. My observation convinces me that they equalize the spirits, invigorate the intellect, and calm the temper. I am witness to the fact that no one among the Hofwyl students was injured by them in any way, and that very many acquired a strength and an address that astonished themselves. I myself had been in feeble health for several years before my arrival; yet I left Hofwyl, not only perfectly well, but athletic; and I have not had a serious illness since. I cannot believe, that, under a well-regulated system, gymnastics cause injury or expose to danger.

Our annual excursions, which were undertaken in the charming autumn of that bright and beautiful climate, by those among our students who, like myself, were too far from home to return thither during the holidays, were looked forward to, for weeks, with brilliant anticipations of pleasure, which, strange to say, were realized. Our favorite professor, Herr Lippe, accompanied us on these expeditions. Our number was commonly from thirty to thirty-five.

It was usually about the first of August, that, equipped in the plain student-costume of the college, with knapsack on shoulder, and long, iron-shod mountain-staff in hand, we went forth, an exultant party, on "the journey," as we called it. Previously to our departure, Herr Lippe, at a public meeting of the intended excursionists, had chalked out for us the proposed route; and when we found, as on two occasions land to the lakes of Northern Italy, our enthusiasm broke forth in bursts of applause.

Our usual day's journey was eighteen or twenty miles, sometimes twenty-five or even more. We breakfasted very early, walked till about midday, when we sought some shady nook where we could enjoy a lunch of bread and wine, with grapes, or goat's-milk cheese, when these luxuries could be procured. Then we despatched, in advance, some of our best pedestrians, as commissariat of the party, to order supper preparatory to our arrival. How joyfully we sat down to that evening meal! How we talked over the events of the day, the magnificent scenes we had passed through, the little adventures we had met with! The small country taverns seldom furnished more than six or eight beds; so that more than three fourths of our number usually slept in some barn well furnished with hay or straw. How soundly we slept, and how merry the awaking! There were among us, as among German students there always are, excellent musicians, well-trained to sing their stirring national airs, or gems from the best operas, or the like,—duets, trios, quartets. After our frugal noonday meal in the shade, or perhaps when we had surmounted some mountain-pass, and came suddenly, as we reached the verge of the descent, upon some magnificent expanse of valley or champaign scenery stretching out far beneath us, it was [Pg 560] our habit to call a halt for music. The fresh grass, dotted, perhaps, with Alpine roses, furnished seats; and our vocalists drawing from their knapsacks the slender *cahier* containing melodies expressly selected for the occasion and arranged in parts, we had, under the most charming circumstances, an impromptu concert. I have heard much better music since, but never any that I enjoyed more.

On one of these excursions we passed by Napoleon's wonderful road, the Simplon, into one of the most beautiful regions of Italy. The first night at Baveno was delicious. The soft Italian air,—the moonlight on the placid lake, on the softly rounded olive-clad hills, on the trellised vines, so picturesque, compared to the formal vineyards of France,—all in such contrast to the giant mountain-peaks of granite, snow-covered, cutting through the clouds, the vast glacier, bristling with ice-blocks, sliding-down, an encroacher on the valley's verdure,—in such marvellous contrast to all that region of rock and ice and mountain-torrent and rugged path, and grand, rude, wild majesty of aspect, it seemed like passing in a single day into another and a gentler world.

Then came the quiet excursions on the lakes,—Lugano, Maggiore, Como: such a rest to our blistered feet! Those blisters *were* a drawback; but what episode in human life has none? We strayed through the lime-groves of the Isola Bella, where I exchanged the few words of Italian of which I was master with a fair and courteous madonna who crossed our path,—ascended, by clambering up within one of the folds of the Saint's short mantle, the gigantic bronze statue of the holy Borromeo, sat down inside the head, and looked out through the eyebrows on the lake under whose waters lies buried the wide-brimmed shovel-hat which once covered the shaven crown, but was swept off by the storm-wind one winter night.

Throughout the term of these charming excursions the strictest order was observed. And herein was evinced the power of that honorable party-spirit prevalent among us, which imposed on every one of us a certain charge as to the good conduct of the whole,—making each, as it were, alive to the faults and responsible for the misconduct of our little community. Rude noise, unseemly confusion, the least approach to dissipation at a tavern, or any other violation of propriety on the road, would have been considered as an insult to the college. And thus it happened that we established throughout Switzerland a character for decorum such as no other institution ever obtained.

Nor did influences thus salutary cease with the term of our college life. So far as I know anything of the after fortunes of my college mates, they did honor to their alma mater,—if older and more learned foundations will not grudge our institution that name. As a body, they were distinguished for probity and excellent conduct; some attained eminence. Even that Alexander of Würtemberg, whom we so lightly esteemed, I afterwards heard spoken of as one of the most estimable young princes of the court he graced. Seven years ago I met at Naples (the first time since I left Hofwyl) our quondam Master of the Goats, now an officer of the Emperor of Russia's household, and governor of one of the Germano-Russian provinces. We embraced after the hearty German fashion,—still addressed each other, as of old, with the familiar *du* and *dich*,—sat down, forgetting the present, and were soon deep in college reminiscences, none the less interesting that they were more than thirty years old.

Over these old reminiscences I find myself lingering. Yet they have stretched already, perhaps, as far as may interest others. With me they have left a blessing,—a belief which existing abuses cannot shake nor worldly skepticisms destroy: an abiding faith in human virtue and in social progress.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] There was, besides, a primary school for boys up to the age of twelve of thirteen at Diemerswyl, some miles from Hofwyl; and there had been originally a normal school, which, though popular among the teachers of Switzerland, gave umbrage to the Government, and was merged in the Vehrli institution.

[B] Francis II., Metternich-led. His words were: "Je ne veux pas des savants dans mes États; je veux des bons sujets."

THE GRAVE BY THE LAKE.

[Pg 561]

Where the Great Lake's sunny smiles
Dimple round its hundred isles,
And the mountain's granite ledge
Cleaves the water like a wedge,
Ringed about with smooth, gray stones,

Rest the giant's mighty bones.

Close beside, in shade and gleam,
Laughs and ripples Melvin stream;
Melvin water, mountain-born,
All fair flowers its banks adorn;
All the woodland's voices meet,
Mingling with its murmurs sweet.

Over lowlands forest-grown,
Over waters island-strown,
Over silver-sanded beach,
Leaf-locked bay and misty reach,
Melvin stream and burial-heap,
Watch and ward the mountains keep.

Who that Titan cromlech fills?
Forest-kaiser, lord o' the hills?
Knight who on the birchen tree
Carved his savage heraldry?
Priest o' the pine-wood temples dim,
Prophet, sage, or wizard grim?

Rugged type of primal man,
Grim utilitarian,
Loving woods for hunt and prowl,
Lake and hill for fish and fowl,
As the brown bear blind and dull
To the grand and beautiful:

Not for him the lesson drawn
From the mountains smit with dawn.
Star-rise, moon-rise, flowers of May,
Sunset's purple bloom of day,—
Took his life no hue from thence,
Poor amid such affluence?

Haply unto hill and tree
All too near akin was he:
Unto him who stands afar
Nature's marvels greatest are;
Who the mountain purple seeks
Must not climb the higher peaks.

[Pg 562]

Yet who knows in winter tramp,
Or the midnight of the camp,
What revealings faint and far,
Stealing down from moon and star,
Kindled in that human clod
Thought of destiny and God?

Stateliest forest patriarch,
Grand in robes of skin and bark,
What sepulchral mysteries,
What weird funeral-rites, were his?
What sharp wail, what drear lament,
Back scared wolf and eagle sent?

Now, whate'er he may have been,

Low he lies as other men;
On his mound the partridge drums,
There the noisy blue-jay comes;
Rank nor name nor pomp has he
In the grave's democracy.

Part thy blue lips, Northern lake!
Moss-grown rocks, your silence break!
Tell the tale, thou ancient tree!
Thou, too, slide-worn Ossipee!
Speak, and tell us how and when
Lived and died this king of men!

Wordless moans the ancient pine;
Lake and mountain give no sign;
Vain to trace this ring of stones;
Vain the search of crumbling bones:
Deepest of all mysteries,
And the saddest, silence is.

Nameless, noteless, clay with clay
Mingles slowly day by day;
But somewhere, for good or ill,
That dark soul is living still;
Somewhere yet that atom's force
Moves the light-poised universe.

Strange that on his burial-sod
Harebells bloom, and golden-rod,
While the soul's dark horoscope
Holds no starry sign of hope!
Is the Unseen with sight at odds?
Nature's pity more than God's?

Thus I mused by Melvin side,
While the summer eventide
Made the woods and inland sea
And the mountains mystery;
And the hush of earth and air [Pg 563]
Seemed the pause before a prayer,—

Prayer for him, for all who rest,
Mother Earth, upon thy breast,—
Lapped on Christian turf, or hid
In rock-cave or pyramid:
All who sleep, as all who live,
Well may need the prayer, "Forgive!"

Desert-smothered caravan,
Knee-deep dust that once was man,
Battle-trenches ghastly piled,
Ocean-floors with white bones tiled,
Crowded tomb and mounded sod,
Dumbly crave that prayer to God.

Oh, the generations old
Over whom no church-bells tolled,
Christless, lifting up blind eyes
To the silence of the skies!

For the innumerable dead
Is my soul disquieted.

Where be now these silent hosts?
Where the camping-ground of ghosts?
Where the spectral conscripts led
To the white tents of the dead?
What strange shore or chartless sea
Holds the awful mystery?

Then the warm sky stooped to make
Double sunset in the lake;
While above I saw with it,
Range on range, the mountains lit;
And the calm and splendor stole
Like an answer to my soul.

Hear'st thou, O of little faith,
What to thee the mountain saith,
What is whispered by the trees?—
"Cast on God thy care for these;
Trust Him, if thy sight be dim:
Doubt for them is doubt of Him.

"Blind must be their close-shut eyes
Where like night the sunshine lies,
Fiery-linked the self-forged chain
Binding ever sin to pain,
Strong their prison-house of will,
But without He waiteth still.

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"Not with hatred's undertow
Doth the Love Eternal flow;
Every chain that spirits wear
Crumbles in the breath of prayer;
And the penitent's desire
Opens every gate of fire.

"Still Thy love, O Christ arisen,
Yearns to reach these souls in prison!
Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of Thy cross!
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that cross could sound!"

Therefore well may Nature keep
Equal faith with all who sleep,
Set her watch of hills around
Christian grave and heathen mound,
And to cairn and kirkyard send
Summer's flowery dividend.

Keep, O pleasant Melvin stream,
Thy sweet laugh in shade and gleam!
On the Indian's grassy tomb
Swing, O flowers, your bells of bloom!
Deep below, as high above,
Sweeps the circle of God's love.

ICE AND ESQUIMAUX.

CHAPTER V.

TERRA INCOGNITA.

Labrador, geologists tell us, is the oldest portion of the American Continent. It was also, and aside from the visits of the Scandinavians, the first to be discovered by Europeans,—the Cabots having come to land here more than a year before Columbus found the tropic mainland on his third voyage. And to-day it is that part of the continent which has been least explored. No one, to my knowledge, has ever crossed it: perhaps no one could do so. I am not aware that any European has penetrated it deeply. Hinds pushed up some hundred and fifty miles from the Gulf coast, and thought this feat one which deserved two octavos of commemoration. The coast, for some four hundred miles in extent, is visited annually by hosts of fishermen; but twenty miles from tide-water it is as little known to them as to the Bedouins.

We are now, however, able to affirm that the interior is all one immense elevated plateau. Information which I obtained from an elderly missionary at Hopedale, together with numerous indications that an intelligent naturalist would know how to construe, enabled P—— to determine this fact with confidence. It is a table-land "varying from five to twenty-five hundred feet in height." Here not a tree grows, not a blade of grass, only [Pg 565] lichens and moss, What a vast and terrible waste it must be! Where else upon the earth are all the elements of desolation so combined? The missionary in question had penetrated to the borders of this *cold* desert and looked out over it. "No up *und* down," he said. "No dree. Notting grow. All level."

Within some one hundred and fifty miles of the coast this terrible table-land breaks up into wild hills, separated by valleys that plunge down suddenly, in rocky steeps, from the heights, more gorges than valleys. These hills are all fearfully scarred. One sees in them abundant record of the Titanic old-time warfare between rock and ice. A prodigious contest it was. Sometimes the top of a hill—clean, live rock—was sliced off, as with a knife. "Like the tops of our conical cheeses, when they came to the table," said P——

The valleys are wooded with fir, spruce, larch, and, more to the south, with birch. At a distance from the sea and in favorable situations these trees grow to good forest size, even beyond the middle latitudes of Labrador. In latitude 53° a resident told me that trees were found eighteen inches in diameter. This statement was derided when I told it on board, and the witty Judge kept the table in a roar for half an hour with pleasantries about it. But at Hopedale, two and a half degrees farther north, we learned that sticks of timber fifty feet in length were often brought to the station; while one had found its way there which was fifty-six feet long and ten inches in diameter at the smaller end.

Toward the sea these forests dwindle, till on the immediate coast they wholly disappear. At Caribou Island, which, the reader will remember, is *south* of the Strait of Belle Isle, I found in a ravine some sadly stunted spruces, firs, and larches, not more than three feet high,—melancholy, wind-draggled, frightened-looking shrubs, which had wondrously the air of lifelong ill-usage. The tangled tops were mostly flattened and pressed over to one side, and altogether they seemed so piteous, that one wished to say, "Nobody shall do so to you any more, poor things!" Excepting these, the immediate coast, for five or six hundred miles that we skirted it, was absolutely treeless.

Up in the bays, however, trees were found, and, curiously enough, they were larger and more plentiful in high latitudes than farther south. This puzzled me much at first. Evidently, however, it was due in part to the nature of the rock. At Sleupe Harbor, latitude 51°, this was granite;[C] farther on it was sienite; then the sienite showed a strong

predominance of feldspar; then it became an impure Labradorite; then passed into gneiss; the gneiss became soft, stratified, and frequently intersected by trap;—and with every softer quality of rock there was an improvement in vegetation. This was particularly observable at L'Anse du Loup, where there is a red sandstone formation extending some miles along the sea and a mile or two inland. Here we seemed suddenly transported to a Southern climate, so soft was the scenery, so green the surface. The effect was enhanced by the aspect of the sandstone cliff, which, in alternating horizontal shades of red, fronts the sea, with a vertical height of three hundred feet for the whole extent of this formation, —so ruddy and glowing under the sunshine, as we sailed past, that one felt warmed by the sight, But a little farther back rose the same old hard-hearted hills, cold, broken, and bare as ever.

But the difference in soil does not wholly explain the difference in vegetation. In the mission-garden at Caribou Island next to nothing will grow; in the garden at Hopedale, four degrees farther north, though the rock here is very hard, I found half an acre of potatoes in blossom, the tops about six inches high, together with beets, carrots, cabbages, onions, nice currant-bushes, and rhubarb growing luxuriantly. These are all started under cover, and are not set out in the garden until toward the end of June, and a great deal of Esquimaux labor must go to their production; yet it is doubtful whether the same pains would bring about the same result at the Caribou station. [Pg 566]

It is the sea that dooms Labrador, and the relation of the coast to this does much to determine its fertility, or rather its barrenness. Half way across the ocean, in latitude 54°, Captain Linklater found the temperature of the water 54°, Fahrenheit; near the Labrador coast, in the same latitude, the temperature was but 34°, two degrees only above the freezing point! It is in facts like this that one gets a key to the climate not only of Labrador, but of Eastern North America. Out of the eternal ice of the North the current presses down along the coast, chilling land and air wherever it touches. Where the coast retreats somewhat, and is well barricaded with islands, the rigor of the climate is mitigated; where it lies fully exposed to the Arctic current, even though much farther south, the life is utterly chilled out of it. Now Hopedale lies behind a rampart of islands twenty miles deep; while the portion of the Arctic current which splits off at the head of Newfoundland, and pushes down through the strait, presses close past Caribou Island. This explains the sterility of the latter.

The Arctic current varies much in different years, not only in the amount of ice it brings, but also in its direction. Unexpected effects depend upon this variation. It will be remembered that in 1863 several ships were wrecked on Cape Race, owing to some "unaccountable" disturbance of the currents. The Gulf Stream, it was found at length, ran thirty miles farther north than usual. *Was* this unaccountable? When Captain Handy, our whaling Mentor, was penetrating Hudson's Strait in June, 1863, he found vast headlands of floe ice resting against the land, and pushing far out to sea.

"Mr. Bailey," said he to his mate, "there will be many wrecks on Cape Race this year."

The prediction was fulfilled. Do you see why it should be?

The floe ice rose ten feet above the water; it therefore extended near one hundred feet beneath. At this depth it acted upon the current precisely as if it were land, pushing the former far to the east. The current, therefore, did not meet and repel the Gulf Stream at the usual point; and the latter was thus at liberty to press on beyond its custom to the north. Captain Handy not only saw the facts before him, but reasoned upon them. Even when these immense bodies of ice do not rest upon the land, they produce the same effect. At the depth of a hundred feet they go below the current into the still water or counter current beneath, and thus still resist the surface flow.

The coast of Labrador has no fellow for sternness and abruptness on the earth. Huge headlands, stubborn cliffs, precipitous hills rise suddenly from the sea, bold, harsh, immitigable, yet softened by their aspect of gray endurance. Hacked and scored, tossed, fissured, and torn, weather-beaten and bleached, their bluntness becomes grave, their

hardness pathetic. About their caverned bases the billow thunders in perpetual assault, proclaiming the purpose of the sea to reclaim what it has lost. Above, the frost inserts its potent lever, and flings down from time to time some bellowing fragment to its ally below. The shores, as if to escape from this warfare, hurry down, and plunge to quiet depths of ocean, where the surge never heaves, nor frost, even by the deep ploughshare of its icebergs, can reach. It is, indeed, a terrible coast, and remains to represent that period in Nature when her powers were all Titanic, untamed,—playing their wild game, with hills for toss-coppers and seas for soap-bubbles, or warring with the elements themselves for weapons.

The harbors are very deep. In some twenty that we visited there was but a single exception. In fact, it is commonly only in little coves boxed up by high walls of rock, [Pg 567] where one side threatens the ship's bowsprit and the other her stern, that an ordinary cable will reach bottom. You anchor in a granite tub, where one hardly dares lean over the rail for fear of bumping his head against the cliffs, and see half your chain spin out before ground is touched. Jack sometimes wonders, as the cable continues to rush through the hawse-hole, whether he has not dropped anchor into a hole through the earth, and speculates upon the probability of fishing up a South-Sea island when he shall again heave at the windlass.

A Labrador summer has commonly a brief season during which the heat seems to Englishmen "intense," and even to an American noticeable. Captain French, the old pilot, told me that he had been at Indian Harbor (far to the north) when for three weeks an awning over the deck was absolutely necessary, and when a fish left in the sun an hour would be spoiled. Last summer, however, was the coldest and rainiest known for many years. Once the thermometer rose to 73°, Fahrenheit, once again to 70°, but five days in six it did not at nine in the morning vary more than two or three degrees from 42°, and half the time the mercury would be found precisely at this mark. The lowest temperature observed was 34°. This was on the 28th and 29th of July, when we had a furious snow-storm, which lasted twenty-four hours, with twelve hours of wild rain, sleet, and hail interposed. In consequence of this rain and of the constant melting, there remained on the steep hillsides only three inches' depth of snow when the storm ceased, though in the hollows it was found a foot deep. In the deeper ravines the snow of winter lasts through the year, and was found by us in the middle of August.

We were, however, treated to a few days which left no room for a wish: for the best day of a Labrador summer is the best day of all summers whatsoever. Herodotus says that Ionia was allowed to possess the finest climate of all the world; and in Smyrna I believed him, for there were May days when each breath seemed worth one's being born to enjoy. But all days yield to those of Labrador when the better genius of its climate prevails. Then one feels the serenity of power, then all his blood is exalted and pure, and the globules sail through his veins like rich argosies before trade-winds. Then an irritable haste and a weak lassitude are alike impossible; one's nerves are made of a metal finer than steel, and he becomes truly a lord in Nature.

It was on such a day that we ran some fifty miles through a passage, resembling a river, between islands and the main. The wind blew warm and vigorous from the land,—sometimes, when it came to us without passing over considerable spaces of water, seeming positively hot, as if it came from an oven; yet in such an atmosphere one felt that he could live forever, either in an oven or in the case of an iceberg, and wish only to live there forever! A great fleet of schooners was pushing swiftly along this passage, on its way to fishing-grounds in the North; and as we flew past one and another, while the astonished crews gathered at the side to stare at our speed, our schooner seemed the very genius of Victory, and our wishes to be supreme powers. I have never elsewhere experienced so *cool* and perfect an exhilaration,—physical exhilaration, that is.

In the early afternoon a dense haze filled the sky. The sun, seen through this, became a globe of glowing ruby, and its glade on the sea looked as if the water had been strown, almost enough to conceal it, with a crystalline ruby dust, or with fine mineral *spiculæ* of

vermilion bordering upon crimson. The peculiarity of this ruddy dust was that it seemed to possess *body*, and, while it glowed, did not in the smallest degree dazzle,—as if the brilliancy of each ruby particle came from the heart of it rather than from the surface. The effect was in truth indescribable, and I try to suggest it with more sense of helplessness than I have felt hitherto in preparing these papers. It was beautiful *beyond* expression,— [Pg 568] any expression, at least, which is at my command.

Such a spectacle, I suppose, one might chance to see anywhere, though the chance certainly never occurred to me before. It could scarcely have escaped me through want of attention, for I could well believe myself a child of the sun, so deep an appeal to my feeling is made by effects of light and color: light before all.

But the atmosphere of Labrador has its own secret of beauty, and charms the eye with aspects which one may be pardoned for believing incomparable in their way. The blue of distant hills and mountains, when observed in clear sunshine, is subtile and luminous to a degree that surpasses admiration. I have seen the Camden Heights across the waters of Penobscot Bay when their blue was equally profound; for these hills, beheld over twenty miles or more of sea, do a wonderful thing in the way of color, lifting themselves up there through all the long summer days, a very marvel of solemn and glorious beauty. The Ægean Sea has a charm of atmosphere which is wanting to Penobscot Bay, but the hue of its heights cannot compare with that of the Camden Hills. Those of Labrador, however, maintain their supremacy above even these,—above all. They look like frozen sky. Or one might fancy that a vast heart or core of amethyst was deeply overlaid with colorless crystal, and shone through with a softened, lucent ray. Such transparency, such *intense* delicacy, such refinement of hue! Sometimes, too, there is seen in the deep hollows, between the lofty billows of blue, a purple that were fit to clothe the royalty of immortal kings, while the blue itself is flecked as it were with a spray of white light, which one might guess to be a precipitate of sunshine.

This was wonderful; but more wonderful and most wonderful was to come. It was given me once and once again to look on a vision, an enchantment, a miracle of all but impossible beauty, incredible until seen, and even when seen scarcely to be credited, save by an act of faith. We had sailed up a deep bay, and cast anchor in a fine large harbor of the exactest horseshoe shape. It was bordered immediately by a gentle ridge some three hundred feet high, which was densely wooded with spruce, fir, and larch. Beyond this ridge, to the west, rose mountainous hills, while to the south, where was the head of the harbor, it was overlooked immediately by a broad, noble mountain. It had been one of those white-skied days, when the heavens are covered by a uniform filmy fleece, and the light comes as if it had been filtered through milk. But just before sunset this fleece was rent, and a river of sunshine streamed across the ridge at the head of the harbor, leaving the mountain beyond, and the harbor itself, with its wooded sides, still in shadow. And where that shine fell, the foliage changed from green to a glowing, luminous red-brown, expressed with astonishing force,—not a trace, not a hint of green remaining! Beyond it, the mountain preserved its whited gray; nearer, on either side, the woods stood out in clear green; and separated from these by the sharpest line, rose this ridge of enchanted forest. You will incline to think that one might have seen through this illusion by trying hard enough. But never were the colors in a paint-pot more definite and determined.

This was but the beginning. I had turned away, and was debating with myself whether some such color, seen on the Scotch and English hills, had not given the hint for those uniform browns which Turner in his youth copied from his earlier masters. When I looked back, the sunshine had flooded the mountain, and was bathing it all in the purest rose-red. Bathing it? No, the mountain was solidly converted, transformed to that hue! The power, the simplicity, the translucent, shining depth of the color were all that you can imagine, if you make no abatements, and task your imagination to the utmost. This roseate hue no rose in the garden of Orient or Occident ever surpassed. Small spaces were seen where the color became a pure ruby, which could not have been more lustrous [Pg 569] and intense, had it proceeded from a polished ruby gem ten rods in dimension. Color could go no farther. Yet if the eye lost these for a moment, it was compelled somewhat to

search for them,—so powerful, so brilliant was the rose setting in which they were embosomed.

One must remember how near at hand all this was,—not more than a mile or two away. Rock, cavern, cliff, all the details of rounded swell, rising peak, and long descending slope, could be seen with entire distinctness. The mountain rose close upon us, broad, massive, real,—but all in this glorious, this truly ineffable transformation. It was not distance that lent enchantment here. It was not *lent*; it was real as rock, as Nature; it confronted, outfaced, overwhelmed you; for, enchantment so immediate and on such a scale of grandeur and gorgeousness,—who could stand up before it?

In sailing out of the bay, next day, we saw this and the neighbor mountain under noon sunshine. (Lat. 55° 20'.) They were the handsomest we saw, apparently composed in part of some fine mineral, perhaps pure Labradorite. In the full light of day these spaces shone like polished silver. My first impression was that they must be patches of snow, but a glance at real spots of snow corrected me. These last, though more distinctly white, had not the high, soft, silver shine of the mineral. Doubtless it was these mountain-gems which, under the magic touch of sunset light, had the evening before appeared like vast rubies, blazing amidst the rose which surrounded them.

And this evening the spectacle of the preceding one was repeated, though more distantly and on a larger scale. Ph—— thought it the finer of the two. Far away the mountain height towered, a marvel of aërial blue, while broad spurs reaching out on either side were clothed, the one in shiny rose-red, the other in ethereal roseate tints super-imposed upon azure; and farther away, to the southeast, a mountain range lay all in solid carmine along the horizon, as if the earth blushed at the touch of heaven.

"I invite and announce the mountains which possess pure brightness, which have much brightness, created by Mazda, pure, lords of purity." So sang the Zarathustrian priest, chanting the Vispereds of the Avesta,—deep-hearted child of the world, himself now shining on the far-away horizon of human history.

All the wildness and waste, all the sternest desolations of the whole earth, brought together to wed and enhance each other, and then relieved by splendor without equal, perhaps, in the world,—that is Labrador.

I have dreamed that it was created on this wise. Ahriman, having long been defeated in his evil purposes by Ormuzd, fled away secretly to a distant part of the world, and there in silence made a land which should be utterly his own. He brought together every element of dread and terror,—barrenness, brokenness, dreariness, fearful cold, blinding fog, crushing ice, sudden savage change. And when it was completed, he rejoiced in his heart and said, "This is perfect in badness, it cannot be redeemed, it is wholly and forever mine, it is mine!" Then Ormuzd, lord of light, heard the voice of that accursed joy, and, looking, beheld the evil work. And he saw that it could not be redeemed, that it was fixed forever in its evil state. Then he came to it, and, seeking to change nothing, uplifted over it a token of immortal, unutterable beauty, that even this land might bear witness to his celestial sovereignty.

But these waste lands have use as well as beauty. At Sleupe Harbor dwelt one Michael Cantè, the patriarch of the neighborhood, if neighborhood it were to be called, where were only three houses within a space of as many miles. His years were now threescore and ten, but he was hale as a pine forest and sweet as maple sap. A French Canadian, he spoke English, not only like a native, but like a well-bred native,—was not ignorant of [Pg 570] thoughts and books,—and altogether seemed a man superior to most in nature, intelligence, and manners. His birthplace was Quebec, and he had formerly possessed a very considerable fortune; but losing this through fraud, and finding himself deserted by "summer friends," he had conceived a disgust at polite society, and escaped to these solitudes. Here his wounds had healed, and his nature recovered its tone. His labors prospered; a healthy and handsome family grew up to enrich his household; and no regrets drew him back to the big world he had left behind. Nature preserves to herself the

right of asylum, no matter how the Louis Napoleon of civilization may demand its surrender,—preserves a place of rest and refuge for the weary hearts which are self-sent into spiritual exile.

It is also to be considered whether this terrible region does not play a most serviceable part in the physical geography of the continent. I have not science enough to speak here with entire confidence; and yet I am rationally convinced. Without the ice-fields in the North, and the frigid current which these send down to meet the tepid waters of the Gulf Stream, would not this low and level America, with its dry atmosphere, suffer fearfully for want of rain? would it not, indeed, be one great desert? Could we dispense with the collisions and sudden interchanges of cold and hot currents of air which are due to these causes? Do we not obtain thus the same effects which in South America are produced by the snowy summits of the Andes? The cold current meets the warm, chills its vapor, precipitates this in fruitful rain. Our northeast winds are the chief bringers of rain. Take these away, and what about wheat and corn? Take away Labrador and the Arctic current, and what about northeast winds? They would still blow; would they still force the warm air to yield its vapor for the benefit of our fields? The extreme changeableness of our climate is, I am fully persuaded, connected very closely and indispensably with the fertility of the continent. Thank God, therefore, for Labrador!

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE ON BOARD.

I have recounted above the manner in which the good divinity spoiled the Labrador triumph of the malign god. To that veracious history belongs the following *addendum*. The evil power was deeply chagrined to be so robbed of his victory. Rubbing his brow with vexation, he chanced to break the skin with his nails. The venom of the viper is poisonous to its own blood; and in like manner, the malignity of the demon afflicted his own flesh with a festering pain. The slight anguish gave him a thought. "Ha! now I have it!" he cried; "now I will be quits with him!" He caused, accordingly, a boggy moss to grow in the hollows of this dreary land, and made this to generate in countless multitudes a small, winged, venomous fiend, named *mosquito*. "Ahriman is victor, after all!" he shouted, as the humming imps trooped forth upon the air.

I think he was!

Delighted with this success, the demon tried to repeat it in other lands; but it fared with him as with every genius, good or bad, who begins to repeat himself: the imitation was but a feeble copy of the original. The mosquito of Labrador would spoil Eden itself. The imitated fiend I am indifferent to, but from the original spare me!

We were spared in a degree. Ormuzd turned the weapons of his enemy against himself: rain, hail, and snow fought for us against the mosquito; but when fair weather came, this pest came with it. It is clear that Dante was not a man of genius! Otherwise he would have put the mosquito (the original, of course) in his "Inferno."

Ennui is always to be suffered on a long voyage. We had it, enough of it, and to spare, yet always broken by days of high delight. [Pg 571]

During the early part of the voyage, while we were still sailing, or even during considerable detentions in harbor, there was, novelty and incident enough to give the mind employment. The weather was fine; the sun shone; we lived on deck, in company with sun, sea, sky, horizon; and the mere relief from the narrowness of in-door life, the wide fellowship with the elements in which we were established, sufficed of themselves to invest our days with an unfailing charm. I was peculiarly happy, for I love the sea. All its ordinary aspects delight me in a very deep and heartfelt way. These were varied in the present instance with much that to me was far from being ordinary. Ever there was some ascending shore, some towering island or prodigious cliff, some enticing bird, some

magnificence of morning or evening; and besides all these and a hundred attractions more, there were the beauty and terror of berg and floe-field, the marvel of the ice. For a time, therefore, all was enchantment. If we made a harbor, if we left one, expectation sailed with us; we fancied new scenes, new adventures,—the delight of exploration yet fierce in our souls.

But now comes a change. The novelty wears away; we get in some degree the gauge of the scenery and the variety of circumstance; the dawdling, snail-foot, insufferable creep of the ship from one fisherman's dog's-hole to another becomes inexcusable; the weather conspires against us; the sportsman wonders why he had brought gun and fishing-rod; even Science grows weary at times in its limited and hampered inspection. For more than five weeks our average progress along the coast was eight miles a day! The ice and the weather were partly responsible for this lagging; but there were other causes, at which I forbear to hint more definitely. Suffice it to say that they were of a kind that one finds it hard to be charmed with; and the Elder will here confide to the reader that he was in the end a much vexed individual.

Ennui overtook us first in Square Island Harbor. During our long duress there, outward objects of interest began to fail, and each man was thrown back in some degree upon his own resources.

Now follows a special development of idiosyncrasy, and with it of friction. Kept below much of the time by inclement weather, we are crowded and jumbled incessantly together; you jostle against the shoulders of one, you rub elbows with another, you clamber over the knees of a third; the members of the company are thrust together more closely than husband and wife in the narrowest household, and there is no exhaustless spousal love, no nameless mutual charm of man and woman, to relieve the sharpness of contact. Every man's peculiarities come out; and as there is no space between one and another, every man's peculiarities jar upon those of his neighbor. One is rampant just when another is moodily silent; one wishes to sleep when another must shout or split.

For a while, however, these idiosyncrasies amuse. We are rather pleased with them as a resource than vexed by them as an annoyance. We are as yet full of the sense of power; we are equal to occasion, and like to feel our independence of outward support. So our young people run out into all sorts of riotous fun, and, sooth to say, the older do not always refuse a helping hand. The "Nightingale Club" becomes a "Night-Owl Club"; there are whistling choruses, laughing choruses, weeping, howling, stamping choruses, choruses of huzzas, of mock-complaint; there are burglaries, spectres, lampoons, and what not? At last these follies became tiresome, and every man was brought to the marrow-bones of his endurance.

Now, then, impatience, impatience! The abominable cooking, the dawdling progress,—how was one to endure them? Especially when we had turned homeward, and were sluggishly repeating the ground already traversed, did the delay become almost insupportable. At length, on the 24th of August, we fairly said good-bye to Labrador, and [Pg 572] came sweeping southward with the matchless speed of which our schooner was capable when she got a chance. It wellnigh tore Bradford's heart-strings to leave his icebergs once and for all behind; for a more fascinated human being I believe there never was than this true enthusiast while on that coast. He *must* paint the bergs with rare power, must get the very spirit and suggestion of them on canvas, or his soul will quit him, and make off north!

P——, the indefatigable, would also have gladly stayed longer, I believe. Our voyage had not extended so far as he desired to go, but had been fruitful of results, nevertheless. Besides making important observations upon the action of glacial and coast ice, counting upwards of seventy-five raised beaches, obtaining convincing indications of a great central table-land, and establishing by abundant detail a resemblance amounting almost to identity between the insect Fauna of Labrador and that of the summit of Mount Washington, he had been able to collect indubitable evidence that there exists a sub-Arctic group of marine animals inhabiting the shores of Labrador and Newfoundland.

This last is a result of especial importance, as this group, owing to the want of material, had been overlooked by preceding naturalists. This gentleman, whose industry and zeal in scientific research are literally boundless, and are matched with much penetration, designs visiting the North of Europe to make comparisons between the land of the Lapps and Finns and the sub-Arctic regions of America; and I make no doubt that American science will obtain honor in his person.

The rest of us, however, breathed freer now that we were

HOMEWARD BOUND.

Wide swells aloft the snowy sail,
New life comes flowing on the gale.
Joy! joy! our exile all is past!
We're homeward bound, homeward at last!
  Ill fates are strong, but God is stronger;
  The loved that wait shall wait no longer;
  Our wake is white with happy foam,
  And blithe the skies to fan us home.

O bliss of friendship, bliss of heaven!
O heart of love, earth's angel leaven!
The speed of winds is in your feet,
Soon hands will join and lips will meet.

Now through our land roll far and wide
War's lurid flame and crimson tide;
But glory blushes through her woe,
And both to share with joy we go.

Farewell, grim North! Possess thy throne,
And reign amid thy bergs alone;
Now turn our hearts to truer poles,
To native shores and kindred souls.
  Ill fates are strong, but God is stronger;
  The loved that wait shall wait no longer;
  Our wake is white with happy foam,
  And blithe the skies to fan us home.

September 1.—The Gulf had waylaid us, with a fierce storm in readiness. Our reckoning was wrong; we just escaped going ashore in the pitchy darkness; and, to mend all, the ship took fire! The flames were soon quenched, but St. Lawrence Neptune kept trying to put them out for twelve hours afterward; and such a drenching! But here we are between the shores of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Isle. Fort Mulgrave, two miles away over the calm water and beneath the floods of sunshine, looks like a little paradise, (painted white,) after all my reviling it. And fields, too!—green fields and forests! Could one ever again wish more pleasure than to look on swarded fields and wooded hills? Yes,—besides this, the pleasure of *remembering* Labrador!

FOOTNOTES:

[C] Possibly sienite. I omitted to make a note, and speak from recollection. If sienite, very hard, the quartz element predominating, as the feldspar does farther north.

NOTES OF A PIANIST.

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III.

New York, *February, 1862*.—One thing surprises me. It is to find New York, to say the least of it, as brilliant as when I took my departure for the Antilles in 1857. In general, the press abroad relates the events of our war with such a predetermined pessimist spirit, that at a distance it is impossible to form a correct estimate of the state of the country. For the last year I have read in the papers statements to this effect:—"The theatres are closed; the terrorism of Robespierre sinks into insignificance, compared to the excesses of the Americans; the streets of New York are deluged with blood" (I very nearly had a duel in Puerto Rico for venturing to question the authenticity of this last assertion, propounded by a Spanish officer); "in short, the North is in a starving condition."

"How can you think of giving concerts to people who are in want of bread?" was the remark of my friends, on being apprised of my resolution to return to the United States; and, in all humility, I must acknowledge that the same question suggested itself not unfrequently to my mind, when I discussed within me the expediency of my voyage. I have still in my possession a newspaper in which a correspondent states the depreciation of our currency to be such that he actually saw a baker refuse to take a dollar from a famished laborer in exchange for a loaf of bread.

The number of these trustworhy correspondents has increased in the direct ratio of our prosperity, the development of our resources, and the umbrage these blessings give to the enemies of democratic principles. There are very few governments that would not deem it a matter of duty to exult over the ruin of our republican edifice. Fear actuates the less enlightened; jealousy is the motive of the more liberal. A celebrated statesman once said to me, "A republic is theoretically a very fine thing, but it is a Utopia." Like the man in antiquity, who, on hearing motion denied, refuted the assertion simply by rising and walking, we had hitherto put the "Utopia" into practice; and the *thing did* march on, and proved a reality. The argument was peremptory. A principle can be discussed; a fact is undeniable. Although refracted by the organs of the foreign press, the light of truth still flashed at times upon the people in Europe, and taught it to reflect. When our troubles broke out, I was in Martinique. In all the Antilles,—Spanish, French, Danish, English, Swedish, Dutch,—it was but one unanimous cry, "Did not we say so?" and the truthful and independent correspondents immediately embraced this opportunity to redouble their zeal, and forthwith began to multiply like mosquitoes in a tropical swamp after a summer shower.

But it is not my province to pronounce upon lofty political and moral questions. I would merely say that New York, for a deserted city, is singularly animated; that Broadway yesterday was thronged with pretty women, who, famished as they are, present, nevertheless, the delusive appearance of health, and brave with heroic indifference the bloody tumults of which our streets are daily the theatre; that Art is not so utterly dead among us but that Maretzek gives "Un Ballo in Maschera" to crowded houses, and Church sees his studio filled with amateurs desirous of admiring his magnificent and strange "Icebergs," which he has just finished.

It is difficult to account for the extreme ignorance of many foreigners with regard to the political and intellectual standing of the United States, when one considers the extent of our commerce, which covers the entire world like a vast net, or when one views the [Pg 574] incessant tide of immigration which thins the population of Europe to our profit. A French admiral, Viscount Duquesne, inquired of me at Havana, in 1853, if it were possible to venture in the vicinity of St. Louis without apprehending being massacred by the Indians. The father of a talented French pianist who resides in this country wrote a few years since to his son to know if the furrier business in the city of New York was exclusively carried on by Indians. Her Imperial Highness the Grand-Duchess of Russia, on seeing Barnum's name in an American paper, requested me to tell her if he were not

one of our prominent statesmen. For very many individuals in Europe, the United States have remained just what they were when Châteaubriand wrote "Les Natchez," and saw parrots(?) on the boughs of the trees which the majestic "*Méchasébé*" rolled down the current of its mighty waters. All this may seem improbable, but I advance nothing that I am not fully prepared to prove. There is, assuredly, an intelligent class of people who read and know the truth; but, unfortunately, it is not the most numerous, nor the most inclined to render us justice. Proudhon himself—that bold, vast mind, ever struggling for the triumph of light and progress—regards the pioneer of the West merely as an heroic outlaw, and the Americans in general as half-civilized savages. From Talleyrand, who said, "*L'Amérique est un pays de cochons sales et de sales cochons,*" down to Zimmermann, the director of the piano-classes at the Conservatory of Paris, who, without hearing me, gave as a reason for refusing to receive me in 1841, that "America was a country that could produce nothing but steam-engines," there is scarcely an eminent man abroad who has not made a thrust at the Americans.—It may not be irrelevant to say here that the little Louisianian who was refused as a pupil in 1841 was called upon in 1851 to sit as a judge on the same bench with Zimmermann, at the "*Concours*" of the Conservatory.

Unquestionably there are many blanks in certain branches of our civilization. Our appreciation of the fine arts is not always as enlightened, as discriminating, as elevated, as it might be. We look upon them somewhat as interlopers, parasites, occupying a place to which they have no legitimate right. Our manners, like the machinery of our government, are too new to be smooth and polished; they occasionally grate. We are more prone to worship the golden calf, in bowing down before the favorites of Fortune, than disposed to kill the fatted calf in honor of the elect of thought and mind. Each and every one of us thinks himself as good and better than any other man: an invaluable creed, when it engenders self-respect; but, alas! when we put it in practice, it is generally with a view of pulling down to our level those whose level we could never hope to reach. Fortunately, these little weaknesses are not national traits. They are inherent in all new societies, and will completely disappear when we shall attain the full development of our civilization with the maturity of age.

My *impresarios*, Strakosch and Gran, have made the important discovery, that my first concert in New York, on my return from Europe in 1853, took place the 11th of February, and consequently have decided to defer my reappearance for a few days in order that it may fall upon the 11th of February, 1862. The public (which takes not the remotest interest in the thing) has been duly informed of this memorable coincidence by all the papers.

Query by some of my friends: "Why do you say such and such things in the advertisements? Why do you not eliminate such and such epithets from the bills?"

Answer: Alas! are you ignorant of the fact that the artist is a piece of merchandise, which the *impresario* has purchased, and which he sets off to the best advantage according to his own taste and views? You might as well upbraid certain pseudo-gold-mines for declaring dividends which they will never pay, as to render the artist responsible for the puffs of his managers. A poor old negress becomes, in the hands of the Jupiter of the Museum, the nurse of Washington; after that, can you marvel at the magniloquent titles coupled with my name? [Pg 575]

The artist is like the stock which is to be quoted at the board and thrown upon the market. The *impresario* and his agents, the broker and his clique, cry out that it is "excellent, superb, unparalleled,—the shares are being carried off as by magic,—there remain but very few reserved seats." (The house will perhaps be full of dead-heads, and the broker may be meditating a timely failure.) Nevertheless, the public rushes in, and the money follows a similar course. If the stock be really good, the founders of the enterprise

become millionnaires. If the artist has talent, the *impresario* occasionally makes his (the *impresario's*) fortune. In case both stock and artist prove bad, they fall below par and vanish after having made (quite innocently) a certain number of victims. Now, in all sincerity, of the two humbugs, do you not prefer that of the *impresario*? At all events, it is less expensive.

I heard Brignoli yesterday evening in "Martha." The favorite tenor has still his charming voice, and has retained, despite the progress of an *embonpoint* that gives him some uneasiness, the aristocratic elegance which, added to his fine hair and "beautiful throat," has made him so successful with the fair sex. Brignoli, notwithstanding the defects his detractors love to heap upon him, is an artist I sincerely admire. The reverse of vocalists, who, I am sorry to say, are for the most part vulgar ignoramuses, he is a thorough musician, and perfectly qualified to judge a musical work. His enemies would be surprised to learn that he knows by heart Hummel's Concerto in A minor. He learned it as a child when he contemplated becoming a pianist, and still plays it charmingly. Brignoli knows how to sing, and, were it not for the excessive fear that paralyzes all his faculties before an audience, he would rank among the best singers of the day.

I met Brignoli for the first time at Paris in 1849. He was then very young, and had just made his *début* at the Théâtre Italien, in "L' Elisire d' Amore," under the sentimental patronage of Mme. R., wife of the celebrated barytone. In those days Brignoli was very thin, very awkward, and his timidity was rendered more apparent by the proximity of his protectress. Mme. R. was an Italian of commanding stature, impassioned and jealous. She sang badly, although possessed of a fine voice, which she was less skilful in showing to advantage than in displaying the luxuriant splendor of her raven hair. The public, initiated into the secret of the green-room, used to be intensely amused at the piteous attitudes of Nemorino Brignoli, contrasting, as they did, with the ardent pantomime of Adina R., who looked by his side like a wounded lioness. Poor woman! What has been your fate? The glossy tresses of which you were so proud in your scenes of insanity, those tresses that brought down the house when your talent might have failed to do so, are now frosted with the snow of years. Your husband has forsaken you. After a long career of success, he has buried his fame under the orange-groves of the Alhambra. There he directs, according to his own statement, (but I can scarce credit it,) the phantom of a Conservatory for singing. I am convinced he has too much taste to break in upon the poetical silence of the old Moorish palace with *portamenti*, trills, and scales, and I flatter myself that the plaintive song of the nightingales of the Generalife and the soft murmur of the Fountain of the Lions are the only concerts that echo gives to the breeze that gently sighs at night from the mountains of the Sierra Nevada. Alas! poor woman, your locks are silvered, and Brignoli—has grown fat! "*Sic transit gloria mundi!*"

DIPLOMACY OF THE REVOLUTION.

[Pg 576]

When a European speaks about the American Revolution, he speaks of it as the work of Washington and Franklin. These two names embody for his mind all the phases of the contest, and explain its result. The military genius of Washington, going hand in hand with the civil genius of Franklin, fills the foreground of his picture. He has heard of other names, and may remember some of them; but these are the only ones which have taken their place in his memory at the side of the great names of European history.

In part this is owing to the importance which all Europeans attach to the French alliance as one of the chief causes of our success. For then, as now, France held a place among the great powers of the world which gave importance to all her movements. With direct

access to two of the principal theatres of European strife and easy access to the third, she never raised her arm without drawing immediate attention. If less powerful than England on the ocean, she was more powerful there than any other nation; and even England's superiority was often, and sometimes successfully, contested. The adoption by such a power of the cause of a people so obscure as the people of the "Thirteen Colonies" then were was, in the opinion of European statesmen, decisive of its success. The fact of our actual poverty was known to all; few, if any, knew that we possessed exhaustless sources of wealth. Our weakness was on the surface, palpable, manifest, forcing itself upon attention; our strength lay out of sight, in rich veins which none but eyes familiar with their secret windings could trace. Thus the French alliance, as the European interpreted it, was the alliance of wealth with poverty, of strength with weakness,—a magnanimous recognition of efforts which without that recognition would have been vain. What, then, must have been the persuasive powers, the commanding genius, of the man who procured that recognition!

Partly, also, this opinion is owing to the personal character and personal position of Franklin. Franklin was preëminently a wise man, wise in the speculative science and wise in the practical art of life. Something of the maturity of age seems to have tempered the liveliest sallies of his youth, and much of the vivacity of youth mingles with the sober wisdom of his age. Thoughtful and self-controlling at twenty, at seventy his ripe experience was warmed by a genial glow. He entered upon life with the feeling that he had a part to perform, and the conviction that his happiness would depend upon his performing it well. What that part was to be was his earliest study; and a social temperament, combining with a sound judgment, quickly taught him that the happiness of the individual is inseparably connected with the happiness of the species. Thus life became his study as a condition of happiness; man and Nature, as the means of obtaining it. He sought to control his passions as he sought to control the lightning, that he might strip them of their power to harm. Sagacious in the study of causes, he was still more sagacious in tracing their connection with effects; and his speculations often lose somewhat of their grandeur by the simple and unpretending directness with which he adapts them to the common understanding and makes them minister to the common wants of life. The ambition which quickened his early exertions met an early reward. He was ambitious to write well, and he became one of the best writers in our language. He was ambitious of knowledge, and he laid it up in such stores that men sought his conversation in order to learn from him. He was ambitious of pecuniary independence, and he accumulated a fortune that made him master of his time and actions. He was [Pg 577] ambitious of influence, and he obtained a rare control over the thoughts and the passions of men. He was ambitious of fame, and he connected his name with the boldest and grandest discovery of his age.

Living thus in harmony with himself, he enjoyed the rare privilege of living in equal harmony with the common mind and the advanced mind of his contemporaries. He entered into every-day wants and feelings as if he had never looked beyond them, and thus made himself the counsellor of the people. He appreciated the higher wants and nobler aspirations of our nature, and thus became the companion and friend of the philosopher. His interest in the present—and it was a deep and active interest—did not prevent him from looking forward with kindling sympathies to the future. Like the diligent husbandman of whom Cicero tells us, he could plant trees without expecting to see their fruit. If he detected folly with a keen eye, he did not revile it with a bitter heart. Human weakness, in his estimate of life, formed an inseparable part of human nature, the extremes of virtue often becoming the starting-points of vice,—better treated, all of them, by playful ridicule than by stern reproof. He might never have gone with Howard in search of abuses, but he would have drawn such pictures of those near home as would have made some laugh and some blush and all unite heartily in doing away with them. With nothing of the ascetic, he could impose self-denial and bear it. Like Erasmus, he may not have aspired to become a martyr,—but in those long voyages and journeys, which, in his infirm old age, he undertook in his country's service, there was much of the sublimest spirit of martyrdom. His philosophy, a philosophy of observation and

induction, had taught him caution in the formation of opinions, and candor in his judgments. With distinct ideas upon most subjects, he was never so wedded to his own views as to think that all who did not see things as he did must be wilfully blind. His justly tempered faculties lost none of their serene activity or gentle philanthropy by age. Hamilton himself, at thirty, did not labor with more earnestness in the formation of the Constitution than Franklin at eighty-one; and as if in solemn record of his own interpretation of it, his last public act, with eternity full in view, was to head a memorial to Congress for the abolition of the slave-trade.

That such a man should produce a strong impression upon the excitable mind of France must be evident to every one who knows how excitable that mind is. But to understand his public as well as his personal position, not so much at the French Court as at the court of French opinion, we must go back a dozen years and see what that opinion had been since the Peace of 1763.

The Treaty of Paris, like all treaties between equals founded upon the temporary superiority of one over the other, had deeply wounded, not the vanity only, but the pride of France. Humbled in the eyes of her rival, humbled in the eyes of Europe, she was still more profoundly humbled in her own eyes. It was a barbed and venomous arrow, haughtily left to rankle in the wound. For highminded Frenchmen, it was henceforth the wisdom as well as the duty of France to prepare the means and hasten the hour of revenge. It was then that the eyes of French statesmen were first opened to the true position of the American Colonies. It was then that they first saw how much the prosperity of the parent state depended upon the sure and constant flow of wealth and strength from this exhaustless source. Then, too, they first, saw, these Colonies, in due time, must grow into independence; and in this, independence, in this severing of ties which they foresaw English pride would cling to long after English avidity had stripped them of their natural strength, there was the prospect of full and sweet revenge.

Scarce a twelvemonth had passed from the signing of the Treaty of Paris, when the first [Pg 578] French emissary, an officer of the French navy, was already at his work in the Colonies. Passing to and fro, travelling here and there, moving from place to place as any common traveller might have done, his eyes and his ears were ever open, his note-book was ever in his hand, and, without awakening the suspicions of England, the first steps in a work to which the Duke of Choiseul looked forward as the crowning glory of his administration were wisely and surely taken. They were promptly followed up. The French Ambassador in England established relations with Colonial agents in London which enabled him to follow the progress of the growing discontent and anticipate the questions which must soon be brought forward for decision. Franklin's examination before the House of Commons became the text of an elaborate despatch, harmonizing with the report of his secret agent, and opening a prospect which even the weary eyes of Louis XV. could not look upon without some return of the spirit that had won for his youth the long forfeited title of the Well-Beloved. It was not the first time that the name of the great philosopher had been heard in the council-chamber of Versailles. But among the secret agents of France we now meet for the first time the name of De Kalb, a name consecrated in American history by the life that he laid down for us on the fatal field of Camden. Scarce a step was taken by the English Ministry that was not instantly communicated by the Ambassador in London to the French Minister at Versailles, with speculations, always ingenious, often profound, upon its probable results. Scarce a step was taken in the Colonies without attracting the instant attention of the French agent. Never were events more closely studied or their character better understood. When troops were sent to Boston, the English Ministry was not without serious apprehensions of resistance. But when the tidings of their peaceful landing came, while the English were exulting in their success, the French Ambassador rejoiced that the wisdom of the Colonial leaders had withheld them from a form of opposition for which they were not yet ready. The English Ministry was preparing to enter upon a system of coercion at the point of the bayonet. "If the Colonists submit under the pressure," said Choiseul, "it will only be in appearance and for a short time."

Meanwhile his active brain was teeming with projects; the letters of his agents were teeming with suggestions. Frances counsels caution, dreads the effects of hasty measures; for the Colonists have not yet learned to look upon France as a friend, and premature action might serve only to bind them more firmly to England. Du Châtelet proposes that France and Spain, sacrificing their old colonial system, should open their colonial ports to the products of the English Colonies,—thus inflicting a fatal blow upon England's commerce, while they supplant her in the affections of the Colonists. A clerk in the Department of Commerce goes still farther, advocating a full emancipation of the French Colonies, both to throw off a useless burden and to increase the irritation of the English Colonies by the spectacle of an independence which they were not permitted to share.

There is nothing in history more humiliating than to see on what small hinges great events sometimes turn. Of all the disgraceful intrigues of a palace filled with intrigues from the day of its foundation, there is none half so disgraceful as the overthrow of the Duke of Choiseul in 1770. And yet, vile as it was both by its motive and by its agents, it marks an important point in the progress of American independence. A bow more, a sarcasm less, might have confirmed the power of a man whose deep-rooted hatred of England was fast hastening to its natural termination, an open rupture; and a premature rupture would have brought the Colonists into the field, either as the subjects of England or as the allies of France. To secure the dependence of the Colonies, England would have been compelled to make large concessions; and timely concessions might have put off the [Pg 579] day of separation for another century. To secure the alliance of the Colonies, France would have been compelled to take upon herself the burden of the war; a French general might have led our armies; French gold might have paid our troops; we might have been spared the sufferings of Valley Forge, the humiliation of bankruptcy; but where would have been the wise discipline of adversity? and if great examples be as essential to the formation of national as of individual character, what would the name of independence have been to us, without the example of our Washington?

French diplomacy had little to do with the American events of the next five years. England, unconscious how near she had been to a new war with her old enemy, held blindly on in her course of irritation and oppression; the Colonies continued to advance by sure steps from resistance by votes and resolves to resistance by the sword. When Louis XVI. ascended the throne in 1774, and Vergennes received the portfolio of Foreign Affairs, domestic interests pressed too hard upon them to allow of their resuming at once the vast plans of the fallen minister. Unlike that Minister, Vergennes, a diplomatist by profession, preferred watching and waiting events to hastening or anticipating hem. But to watch and wait events like those which were then passing in the Colonies without being drawn into the vortex was beyond the power of even his well-trained and sagacious mind. In 1775, a French emissary was again taking the measure of American perseverance, French ambassadors were again bringing forward American questions as the most important questions of their correspondence. That expression which has been put into so many mouths as a summing up of the value of a victory was applied in substance by Vergennes to the Battle of Bunker Hill,—"Two more victories of this kind, and the English will have no army left in America."

And while thus tempted by this proof of American strength, his wavering mind was irritated by the apprehension of some sudden outbreak of English arrogance; for the Ambassador wrote that Whigs and Tories might yet unite in a war against France in order to put an end to the troubles in the Colonies,—and no Frenchman had forgotten that England began the War of 1755 by an open violation of international law, by seizing three hundred French merchant ships and casting into prison ten thousand French sailors before the declaration of hostilities. Thus events prepared the way for American diplomacy, and, more powerful than the prudence of Vergennes or the pacific longings of Louis XVI., compelled them to decide and act, when they would still gladly have discussed and waited.

And, moreover, a new element had been introduced into the councils of statesmen,—or rather, an element hitherto circumscribed and resisted had begun to act with irresistible

force. Public opinion, speaking through the press by eloquent pens, through coffee-houses and saloons by eloquent voices, called loudly for action in the name of humanity and in the still more exciting name of French honor. Little as most Frenchmen knew about America, they knew enough about England to believe that in her disputes with other nations she was apt to be in the wrong,—and if with other nations, why not with her own colonies? The longing for revenge, which ever since the Treaty of Paris filled some corner of every French heart, grew stronger at the near approach of so abundant a harvest; nor did it lose any of its sweetness from the reflection that their enemy himself was doing what they never could have done alone to prepare it for them.

But humanity, too, was a powerful word. Men could not read Rousseau without being led to think more earnestly, if not always more profoundly, upon the laws of social organization. They could not read Voltaire without a clearer perception of abuses and a more vigorous contempt for the systems which had put the many into the hands of the few to be butchered or butchers at their will. They could not read Montesquieu without feeling that there was a future in store for them for which the long past had been patiently laboring, and longing, as they read, to hasten its coming. In that future, mankind were to rise higher than they had ever risen before; rulers and ruled were to act in fruitful harmony for their common good; the brightest virtues of Greece, the purest virtues of Rome, were to revive in some new form of society, not very definitely conceived by the understanding, but which floated in magnificent visions before the glowing imagination. [Pg 580]

I hasten reluctantly over this part of my subject; for the formation of public opinion in France and its action upon Government, even while all the forms of an almost absolute monarchy were preserved, is an important chapter in the history of European civilization. But hasten I must, merely calling attention to the existence of this element, and reminding my reader, that, chronologically, of the two parts which composed this opinion, hatred for England had been at work ever since 1763, while sympathy with the Colonists was rather an individual than a public feeling till late in 1776.

It was at Versailles, and not at Paris, that action began. Vergennes's first step was to send another agent, no longer merely to observe and report, but to ascertain, though without compromising the French Government, how far the Americans were prepared for French intervention. English suspicions were already awakened. Already the English Minister had informed the French Ambassador, upon the authority of a private letter of General Lee to General Burgoyne, that the Americans were sure of French aid. It was not without great difficulty that the new agent, De Bonvouloir, could find a safe conveyance. But by December he was already in Philadelphia, and, though still pretending to be a mere traveller, soon in full communication with the Committee of Secret Correspondence.

The appointment of this committee, on the 29th of November, 1775, is the beginning of the history of our foreign relations. Then began our attempts to gain admission into the great family of nations as an independent power,—attempts not always judiciously directed, attended in some instances with disappointment and mortification, but crowned at last with as full a measure of success as those who understood monarchy and Europe could have anticipated. Two of its members, Franklin and Dickinson, were already known abroad, where, at a later day, Jay also was to make himself an enduring name. The other two, Johnson and Harrison, enjoyed and merited a high Colonial reputation.

There can be but little doubt that Franklin's keen eye quickly penetrated the veil under which De Bonvouloir attempted to conceal his real character. It was not the first time that he had been brought into contact with French diplomacy, nor the first proof he had seen that France was watching the contest in the hope of abasing the power of her rival. While agent in London for four Colonies,—a true ambassador, if to watch events, study character, give timely warning and wise counsel be the office of an ambassador,—he had lived on a friendly footing with the French legation, and profited by it to give them correct views of the character and feelings of the Colonies. And now, reducing the question to these simple heads, he asked,—

"How is France disposed towards us? If favorably, what assurance will she give us of it?

"Can we have from France two good engineers, and how shall we apply for them?

"Can we have, by direct communication, arms and munitions of war, and free entrance and exit for our vessels in French ports?"

But whatever reliance they may have placed on the French emissary, the Committee were unwilling to confine themselves to this as the only means of opening communication with European powers. During a visit to Holland, Franklin had formed the acquaintance of a [Pg 581] Swiss gentleman of the name of Dumas,—a man of great learning and liberal sentiments, and whose social position gave him access to sure sources of information. To him he now addressed himself with the great question of the moment:—"If we throw off our dependence upon Great Britain, will any court enter into alliance with us and aid us for the sake of our commerce?"

Such, then, was the starting-point of our diplomatic history, the end and aim of all our negotiations: alliance and aid for the sake of our commerce.

But we should greatly mistake the character of the times, if we supposed that this point was reached without many and warm debates. When the question was first started in Congress, that body was found to be as much divided upon this as upon any of the other subjects which it was called upon to discuss. With Franklin, one party held, that, instead of asking for treaties with European powers, we should first conquer our independence, when those powers, allured by our commerce, would come and ask us; the other, with John Adams, that, as our true policy and a mark of respect from a new nation to old ones, we ought to send ministers to all the great courts of Europe, in order to obtain the recognition of our independence and form treaties of amity and commerce. Franklin, who had already outlived six treaties of "firm and lasting peace," and now saw the seventh swiftly approaching its end, might well doubt the efficacy of those acts to which his young and impetuous colleague attached so much importance. But in Congress the majority was with Adams, and for a while there was what Gouverneur Morris called a rage for treaties.

The Committee of Secret Correspondence, as I have already said, was formed in November, 1775. One of its first measures was to appoint agents,—Arthur Lee for London, Dumas for the Hague, and, early in the following year, Silas Deane for France. Lee immediately opened relations with the French Court by means of the French Ambassador in London; and Deane, on his arrival in France in June, followed them up with great intelligence and zeal. A million of livres was placed by Vergennes in the hands of Beaumarchais, who assumed the name of Hortalez & Co., and arranged with Deane the measures for transmitting the amount to America in the shape of arms and supplies.

And now the Declaration of Independence came to add the question of recognition to the question of aid. But recognition was a declaration of war, and to bring the French Government to this decisive pass required the highest diplomatic skill supported by dignity and weight of character. The Colonies had but one man possessed of these qualifications, and that man was Franklin.

The history of diplomacy, with its long record of solemn entrances and brilliant processions, its dazzling pictures of thrones and courts, which make the head dizzy and the heart sick, has no scene half so grand as the entrance of this unattended, unushered old man into France, in December, 1776. No one knew of his coming until he stood among them; and then, as they looked upon his serene, yet grave and thoughtful face,—upon his gray hairs, which carried memory back to the fatal year of Ramillies and the waning glories of the great Louis,—on the right hand which had written words of persuasive wisdom for prince and peasant, which had drawn the lightning from its home in the heavens, and was now stretched forth with such an imperial grasp to strip a sceptre they all hated of its richest jewel,—a feeling of reverential awe came over them, and they bowed themselves before him as in the secret depths of their hearts they had never bowed to emperor or king. "He is at Nantes, he is on the road," was whispered from mouth to mouth in the saloons of the capital, as his landing became known. Some asserted

confidently that he had already reached Paris, others that he might be hourly expected. Then came the certainty: he had slept at Versailles the night of the 21st, had come to Paris at two the next afternoon, and now was at his lodgings in the Rue de l'Université. [Pg 582]

No one, perhaps, was more surprised than Franklin to find himself the object of such universal attention. But no one knew better than he how to turn it to account for the accomplishment of his purpose. In a few days he withdrew to the quiet little village of Passy, at easy distance both from the city and the court,—and, without endeavoring to increase the public curiosity by an air of mystery or seclusion, kept himself sufficiently in the background to prevent that curiosity from losing its stimulant by too great a familiarity with its object. Where men of science met for the discussion of a new theory or the trial of a new experiment, he was to be seen amongst them with an unpretending air of intelligent interest, and wise suggestions, never indiscreetly proffered, never indiscreetly withheld. Where humane men met to discuss some question of practical benevolence, or philosophers to debate some principle of social organization, he was always prepared to take his part with apt and far-reaching illustrations from the stores of his meditation and experience. Sometimes he was to be seen in places of amusement, and always with a genial smile, as if in his sympathy with the enjoyment of others he had forgotten his own perplexities and cares. In a short time he had drawn around him the best minds of the capital, and laid his skilful hand on the public pulse with an unerring accuracy of touch, which told him when to speak and when to be silent, when to urge and when to leave events to their natural progress. Ever active, ever vigilant, no opportunity was suffered to escape him, and yet no one whose good-will it was desirable to propitiate was disgusted by injudicious importunity. Even Vergennes, who knew that his coming was the signal of a new favor to be asked, found in his way of asking it such a cheerful recognition of its true character, so considerate an exposition of the necessities which made it urgent, that he never saw him come without pleasure. If he had been a vain man, he would have enjoyed his position too much to make good use of it for the cause he came to serve. If he had been a weak man, he would have fallen under the control of the opinion which it was his office to guide. If he had not possessed a pure and genuine sympathy with human nature, he would not have been able, at the age of seventy, to enter into the feelings of a people so different from those among whom he had always lived. And if he had not been stimulated by earnest convictions, and governed by high principles, he would not have been able to withstand the frequent and insidious attempts that were made to shake his fortitude and undermine his fidelity. But in him, as in Washington, there was a rare predominance of that sound common-sense which is man's surest guide in his relations with events, and that firm belief in the progress of humanity which is his best reliance in his relations with men.

Congress had given him two associates in his commission to France,—Silas Deane of Connecticut, and Arthur Lee of Virginia. Deane had been a member of Congress, was active, enterprising, and industrious; but his judgment was not sound, his knowledge of men not extensive, his acquaintance with great interests and his experience of great affairs insufficient for the important position in which he was placed. Lee had lived long in England, was an accomplished scholar, a good writer, familiar with the character of European statesmen and the politics of European courts,—but vain, jealous, irritable, suspicious, ambitious of the first honors, and disposed to look upon every one who attracted more attention than himself as his natural enemy. Deane, deeply impressed with the importance of Franklin's social position for the fulfilment of their common duties, although energetic and active, cheerfully yielded the precedence to his more experienced colleague. Lee, conscious of his own accomplishments, regarded the deference paid to Franklin as an insult to himself, and promptly resumed in Paris the war of petty intrigue and secret accusation which a few years before he had waged against him in England. In [Pg 583] this vile course Congress soon unwittingly gave him a worthy coadjutor, by appointing, as Commissioner to Tuscany, Ralph Izard of South Carolina, who, without rendering a single service, without even going near the court to which he was accredited, continued for two years to draw his salary and abuse Dr. Franklin.

When Franklin reached Paris, he found that Deane had already made himself a respectable position, and that, through Caron de Beaumarchais, the brilliant author of "Figaro," the French Government had begun that system of pecuniary aid which it continued to render through the whole course of the war. Vergennes granted the Commissioners an early interview, listened respectfully to their statements, asked them for a memorial to lay before the King, assured them of the personal protection of the French Court, promised them every commercial facility not incompatible with treaty obligations with Great Britain, and advised them to seek an interview with the Spanish Ambassador. The memorial was promptly drawn up and presented. A copy of it was given to the Spanish Ambassador to lay before the Court of Madrid. Negotiations were fairly opened.

But Franklin soon became convinced that the French Government had marked out for itself a line of policy, from which, as it was founded upon a just appreciation of its own interests, it would not swerve,—that it wished the Americans success, was prepared to give them secret aid in arms and money and by a partial opening of its ports,—but that it was compelled by the obligations of the Family Compact to time its own movements in a certain measure by those of Spain, and was not prepared to involve itself in a war with England by an open acknowledgment of the independence of the Colonies, until they had given fuller proof of the earnestness of their intentions and of their ability to bear their part in the contest. Nor was he long in perceiving that the French Government was giving the Colonies money which it sorely needed for paying its own debts and defraying its own expenses,—and thus, that, however well-disposed it might be, there were certain limits beyond which it was not in its power to go. It was evident, therefore, to his just and sagacious mind, that to accept the actual policy of France as the gauge of a more open avowal under more favorable circumstances, and to recognize the limits which her financial embarrassments set to her pecuniary grants, was the only course that he could pursue without incurring the danger of defeating his own negotiations by excess of zeal. Meanwhile there was enough to do in strengthening the ground already gained, in counteracting the insidious efforts of English emissaries, in correcting erroneous impressions, in awakening just expectations, in keeping up that public interest which had so large a part in the formation of public opinion, and in so regulating the action of that opinion as to make it bear with a firm and consistent and not unwelcome pressure upon the action of Government. And in doing this he had to contend not only with the local difficulties of his position, but with the difficulty of uncertain communications: months often intervening between the sending of a despatch and the receiving of an answer, and affording newsmongers abundant opportunities for idle reports and unfounded conjectures, and enemies ample scope for malicious falsehoods.

It was a happy circumstance for the new state, that her chief representative was a man who knew how to wait with dignity and when to act with energy; for it was this just appreciation of circumstances that gave him such a strong hold upon the mind of Vergennes, and imparted such weight to all his applications for aid. No sooner had Congress begun to receive money from Europe than it began to draw bills upon its agents there, and often without any certainty that those agents would be in a condition to meet them. Bills were drawn on Mr. Jay when he was sent to Spain, and his already difficult [Pg 584] position made doubly difficult and humiliating. Bills were drawn on Mr. Adams in Holland, and he was unable to meet them. But such was the confidence of the French Court in the representations of Dr. Franklin, that he was enabled not only to meet all the drafts which were made upon him directly, but to relieve his less fortunate colleagues from the embarrassments in which the precipitation of their own Government had involved them.

And thus passed the first twelve months of his residence in France,—cloudy and anxious months, more especially during the summer of 1777, when it was known that Burgoyne was coming down by Lake Champlain, and Howe preparing for a great expedition to the northward. Then came the tidings that Howe had taken Philadelphia. "Say rather," said Franklin, with that air of conviction which carries conviction with it, "that Philadelphia has taken Howe." Men paused as they repeated his words, and suspended their judgment;

and when the news of the Battle of Germantown and the surrender of Burgoyne followed, they felt deeper reverence for the calm old man who had reasoned so wisely when all others desponded. It was on the 4th of December that these welcome tidings reached Paris; and the Commissioners lost no time in communicating them to the Court. The second day after, the secretary of the King's Council came to them with official congratulations. Negotiations were resumed and carried on rapidly, nothing but a desire to consult the Court of Madrid being allowed to retard them; and on the 6th of February, 1778, the first treaty between the United States and a foreign power was signed with all the formalities which custom has attached to these acts. On the 20th of March the Commissioners were presented to the King.

Nor was it mere curiosity which filled the halls of the royal palace with an eager throng on that eventful day. These were the halls which had witnessed the gathering of powerful men and of great men to the footstool of the haughtiest of French kings,—which had seen a Condé and a Turenne lay down their laurels at the royal feet, a Bossuet and a Boileau check the flow of independent thought to bask them in the beams of the royal smile, a Fénelon retiring with saddened brow to record for posterity the truths which he was not permitted to utter to the royal ear, a Racine shrinking from the cold glance of the royal eye and going home to die of a broken heart. Here Louis had signed the decree which sent his dragoons to force his Protestant subjects to the mass and the confessional; here he had received with a smile of triumph the tidings that the Pope himself had been compelled to yield to his arrogant pretensions; and here he had listened in haughty state, when one of the last of the glorious republics of the Middle Ages, the city of Columbus and Andrew Doria, which had once covered the Mediterranean with her ships, and sent forth her hardy mariners, as from a nursery of brave men, to impart their skill and communicate their enterprising genius to the rest of Europe, humbled herself before him through her Doge, as, bowing his venerable head, the old man asked pardon in her name, not for the wrongs that she had committed, but for the wrongs that she had borne.

And now, up those marble stairs, through those tapestried halls, came three men of humble birth, two of whom had wrought for their daily bread and eaten it in the sweat of their brows, to receive their recognition as the representatives of a power which had taken its place among the nations, not by virtue of the divine right of kings, but in the name of the inalienable rights of the people. Happy would it have been for the young King who sat in Louis's seat, if he could have understood the full meaning of his act, and recognized at the same moment the claims of his own people to participate in that government which derived its strength from their labor and its security from their love! [Pg 585]

Nothing could have demonstrated more clearly the wisdom of Franklin's confidence in the sincerity of the French Government than the generous and liberal terms of the treaty. No present advantage was taken of the dependent condition of their new ally; no prospective advantage was reserved for future contingencies. Only one condition was stipulated,—and that as much in the interest of the Colonies as of France,—that they should never return to their allegiance. Only one reciprocal obligation was assumed,—that neither party should make peace with England without the knowledge and consent of the other. All the rest was full and free reciprocation in the future, and the assurance of efficient aid in the present; no ambiguities, no doubtful expressions, no debatable ground for interpretation to build upon and weave the mazes of her subtile web,—but clear, distinct, and definite, a mutual specification of mutual duties and mutual rights. Equal could not have treated more firmly with equal than this new power, as yet unrecognized in the congress of nations, with the oldest monarchy of Europe.

I have already alluded to the rage for treaties which prevailed for a while in Congress. It was this that sent William and Arthur Lee upon their bootless errands to Vienna and Berlin, Francis Dana to St. Petersburg, John Jay to encounter embarrassment and mortification at Madrid, and gave Ralph Izard an opportunity to draw an unearned salary, through two successive years, from the scanty funds of the Congressional banker at Paris.

Jay's situation was peculiarly trying. He had been Chief Justice of New York, President of Congress, had written some of the most eloquent state papers that were issued in the name of that body whose state papers were ranked by Chatham among the best that ever were written, and, at a personal sacrifice, had exchanged a position of honor and dignity at home for a doubtful position abroad. A clear-headed, industrious, decided man, he had to contend for more than two years with the two qualities most alien to his nature,—habitual dilatoriness and diplomatic reticence.

Spain, like France, had marked out a path for herself, and it was impossible to move her from it. Jay obtained some money to help him pay some of the drafts of Congress, but neither treaty nor recognition. "They have taken four years," wrote Franklin, "to consider whether they would treat with us. I would give them forty, and let us mind our own business." And still viewing the question as he had viewed it in the beginning, he wrote in his diary in May, 1782,—"It seems to me that we have in most instances hurt our credit and importance by sending all over Europe, begging alliances and soliciting declarations of our independence. The nations, perhaps from thence, seemed to think that our independence is something they have to sell, and that we do not offer enough for it."[D]

The most important European event in its American bearings, after the recognition by France, was the armed neutrality of the Northern powers,—a court intrigue in Russia, though a sober act in Spain,—and which was followed, in December, 1780, by the addition of Holland to the open enemies of England.

Attempts had already been made to form a treaty with Holland,—first through William Lee, with such prospect of success as to induce Congress to send Henry Laurens to the Hague to continue the negotiations. Laurens was captured by an English cruiser, and soon after John Adams was directed to take his place. At Paris, Adams had failed singularly as a negotiator,—lending a ready ear to Lee, hardly attempting to disguise his jealousy of Franklin, and enforcing his own opinions in a manner equally offensive to the personal feelings of the Minister and the traditional usages of the Court. But at the Hague he found a field better suited to his ardent temperament, and, backed by the brilliant success of the campaign of 1781, and the votes of the House of Commons in favor of reconciliation, succeeded in obtaining a public recognition in the spring of 1782, and concluding a treaty in the autumn. [Pg 586]

All these things were more or less upon the surface,—done and doing more or less openly. But under the surface the while, and known only to those directly concerned therein, were covert attempts on the part of England to open communications with Franklin by means of personal friends. There had been nothing but the recognition of our independence that England would not have given to prevent the alliance with France; and now there was nothing that she was not ready to do to prevent it from accomplishing its purpose. And it adds wonderfully to our conception of Franklin to think of him as going about with this knowledge, in addition to the knowledge of so much else, in his mind,—this care, in addition to so many other cares, ever weighing upon his heart. Little did jealous, intriguing Lee know of these things; petulant, waspish Izard still less. A mind less sagacious than Franklin's might have grown suspicious under the influences that were employed to awaken his distrust of Vergennes. And a character less firmly established would have lost its hold upon Vergennes amid the constant efforts that were made to shake his confidence in the gratitude and good faith of America. But Franklin, who believed that timely faith was a part of wisdom, went directly to the French Minister with the propositions of the English emissaries, and frankly telling him all about them, and taking counsel of him as to the manner of meeting them, not only stripped them of their power to harm him, but converted the very measures which his enemies had so insidiously, and, as they deemed, so skilfully prepared for his ruin, into new sources of strength.

Of the proffers of mediation in which first Spain and then Russia and the German Emperor were to take so important a part, as they bore no fruit, it is sufficient to observe, in passing, how little European statesmen understood the business in which they were so

ready to intermeddle, and what a curious spectacle Catharine and Kaunitz present, seeking to usher into the congress of kings the first true representative of that great principle of popular sovereignty which was to make all their thrones totter and tremble under them. It may be added, that they furnished that self-dependence of John Adams which too often degenerated into arrogance an occasion to manifest itself in a nobler light; for he refused to take part in the discussions in any other character than as the representative of an independent power.

Meanwhile events were hastening the inevitable termination. In Europe, England stood alone, without either open or secret sympathy. In June, 1779, a war with Spain had followed the French war of 1778. In July, 1780, the "armed neutrality" had defined the position of the Northern powers adversely to her maritime pretensions. War was declared with Holland in December of the same year. In America, the campaign of 1781 had stripped her of her Southern conquests, and effaced the impression of her early victories. At home her people were daily growing more and more restless under the pressure of taxation; and even the country gentlemen, who had stood by the Ministry so long in the hope of transferring their own burden to the shoulders of their American brethren, began to give evident tokens of discontent. It was clear that England must consent to peace. And yet she still stood bravely up, presenting a bold front to each new enemy: a grand spectacle in one light, for there is always something grand in indomitable courage; but a sad one in the true light, and one from which a hundred years hence the philosophic historian will turn with a shudder, when, summing up all these events, and asking what all this blood was shed for, he shows that the only principle at stake on her part was that pernicious claim to control the industry of the world, which, had she succeeded, would have dried up the sources of prosperity in America, as it is fast drying them up in Ireland and in India.[E] [Pg 587]

Nor was peace less necessary to her rival. The social revolution which the two last reigns had rendered inevitable was moving with gigantic strides towards its bloody consummation. The last well-founded hope of reforms that should probe deep enough to anticipate revolution had disappeared with Turgot. The statesmanship of Vergennes had no remedy for social disease. It was a statesmanship of alliances and treaties and wars, traditional and sometimes brilliant, but all on the surface, leaving the wounded heart untouched, the sore spirit unconsoled. The financial skill of Necker could not reach the evil. It was mere banking skill, and nothing more,—very respectable in its time and place, filling a few mouths more with bread, but failing to see, although told of it long ago by one who never erred, that "man does not live by bread alone." The finances were in hopeless disorder. The resources of the country were almost exhausted. Public faith had been strained to the utmost. National forbearance had been put to humiliating tests under the last reign by the partition of Poland and the Peace of Kaïnardji; and the sense of self-respect had not been fully restored by the American War. And although no one yet dreamed of what seven swift years were to bring forth, all minds were agitated by a mysterious consciousness of the approaching tempest.

In 1782 the overtures of England began to assume a more definite form. Franklin saw that the time for decisive action was at hand, and prepared himself for it with his wonted calm and deliberate appreciation of circumstances. That France was sincere he could not doubt, after all the proofs she had given of her sincerity; nor could he doubt that she would concur heartily in preparing the way for a lasting peace. He had the instructions of Congress to guide him in what America would claim; and his own mind was quickly made up as to what England must yield. Four points were indispensable: a full recognition of independence; an immediate withdrawal of her troops; a just settlement of boundaries,—those of Canada being confined, at least, to the limits of the Act of 1774; and the freedom of the fisheries. Without these there could be no treaty. But to make the work of peace sure, he suggested, as equally useful to both parties, four other concessions, the most important of which were the giving up of Canada, and securing equal privileges in English and Irish ports to the ships of both nations. The four necessary articles became the real basis of the treaty.

John Adams, John Jay, and Henry Laurens were joined with him in the commission. Jay was first on the ground, reaching Paris in June; Adams came in October; Laurens not till November, when the preliminary articles were ready for signature. They all accepted Franklin's four articles as the starting-point. But, unfortunately, they did not all share Franklin's well-founded confidence in the sincerity of the French Government. Jay's mind was embittered by the tergiversations of Spain. Adams had not forgotten his former disagreements with Vergennes, and hated Franklin so bitterly that he could hardly be prevailed upon to treat him with the civility which his age and position demanded, much less with the consideration which the interest of his country required. Both Jay and Adams were under the influence of that hostility to France which prevailed as extensively in the Colonies as in the mother country,—an hostility which neither of them was at sufficient pains to conceal, although neither of them, perhaps, was fully conscious of it. It was this feeling that kept them both aloof from the French Minister, and made them so accessible to English influences. And it was a knowledge of this feeling which three years later suggested to George III. that well-known insinuation about Adams's dislike to [Pg 588] French manners, which would have been a scathing sarcasm, if it had not been an inexcusable impertinence.

The English agents availed themselves skilfully of those sentiments,—sowing suspicions, fostering doubts, and not shrinking, there is strong reason to suppose, from gross exaggeration and deliberate falsehood. The discussion of articles, like all such discussions, was protracted by the efforts of each party to make the best terms, and the concealing of real intentions in the hope of extorting greater concessions. But England was really prepared to yield all that America was really prepared to claim; France, in spite of the suspicions of Adams and Jay, was really sincere; and on the 30th of November, 1782, the preliminary articles were signed.

Franklin's position was difficult and delicate. He knew the importance of peace. He knew that the instructions of Congress required perfect openness towards the French Minister. He believed that the Minister deserved, both by his past kindness and present good intentions, to be treated with perfect openness. But both his colleagues were against him. What should he do? Refer the difference to Congress, and meanwhile hold the country in painful and expensive suspense? What could he do but submit, as he had done through life, to the circumstances which he could not control, and give the appearance of unanimity to an act which the good of his country required to be unanimous?

He signed the preliminaries, and submitted to the reproach of personal and public ingratitude as he had submitted to the taunts of Wedderburn. History has justified his confidence,—the most careful research having failed to bring to light any confirmation of the suspicions of his colleagues. And Vergennes, though nettled for the moment, understood Franklin's position too well to lay the act at his door as an expression of a real opinion.

Much time and long discussions were still required to convert the preliminaries into a final treaty; for the complicated interests of England, France, and Spain were to be taken into the account. But each party longed for peace; each party needed it; and on the 3d of September, 1783, another Treaty of Paris gave once more the short-lived, though precious boon to Europe and America.

During Franklin's residence at the Court of France, and mainly through his influence, that court had advanced to Congress three millions of livres a year as a loan, had increased it to four millions in 1781, had the same year added six millions as a free gift to the three millions with which she began, and become security for the regular payment of the interest upon a loan of ten millions to be raised in Holland.[F]

Nor will it be inappropriate to add, that, before he sailed upon his mission to France, he called in all the money he could command in specie (between three and four thousand pounds) and put it into the public treasury as a loan,—and that while the young men, Adams and Jay, were provided with competent secretaries of legation, he, though bowed down by age and disease, and with ten times their work to do, was left to his own

resources, and, but for the assistance of his grandson, would have been compelled to do it all with his own hand.

FOOTNOTES:

[D] Franklin's Works, Vol. IX. p. 284, Sparks's edition.

[E] I cannot deny myself the pleasure of referring in this connection to Mr. Carey's admirable exposition of this fact in his "Principles of Political Science."

[F] In all, eighteen millions as a loan, and nine millions as a free gift.

OUR BATTLE-LAUREATE.

[Pg 589]

"How came the Muses to settle in Connecticut?" This was the question of a writer in the "Atlantic Monthly" last February, whose history of the "Pleiades" of that State we read with a pleasure which we doubt not was shared by all who saw it, except perhaps a few who did not relish the familiar way in which the feather duster was whisked about the statuettes of the seven *dii minorum gentium* who once reigned in Hartford and New Haven.

"There still remain inventive machinists, acute money-changers, acutest peddlers; but the seed of the Muses has run out. No more Pleiades at Hartford."

In the July number of our elder brother, the "North American," one of the ablest of American critic's said of an author who had just published a small volume, "In him the nation has found a new poet, vigorous, original, and thoroughly native." "We have had no such war-poetry, nor anything like it. His 'River-Fight' is the finest lyric of the kind since Drayton's 'Battle of Agincourt.'"

The author of this volume, which is entitled "Lyrics of a Day, or Newspaper Poetry, by a Volunteer in the U. S. Service," and of which a second edition has just been issued by Carleton in New York, is Mr. Henry Howard Brownell of East Hartford, taught in a school at that place, a graduate of Trinity College, a nephew of the late Bishop Brownell of Connecticut. The good which came out of Nazareth, as all remember, claimed another birthplace. If the author of the "Pleiades" asks Nathanael's question, putting Hartford for Nazareth, and we tell him to come and see, we shall have to say that Providence was our new poet's birthplace, and that his lineage divides itself between Rhode Island and Massachusetts. But the good has come to us from the Connecticut Nazareth.

If Drayton had fought at Agincourt, if Campbell had held a sabre at Hohenlinden, if Scott had been in the saddle with Marmion, if Tennyson had charged with the Six Hundred at Balaklava, each of these poets might possibly have pictured what he said as faithfully and as fearfully as Mr. Brownell has painted the sea-fights in which he took part as a combatant. But no man can tell a story at second hand with the truth of incident which belongs to an eye-witness who was part of what he saw. As a mere relator, therefore, of the sights and sounds of great naval battles, Mr. Brownell has a fresh story to tell. Not only so, but these naval battles are not like any the Old World ever saw. One or two "Monitors" would have settled in half an hour the fight which Aeschylus shared at Salamis. The galleys "rammed" each other at Actium; but there was no Dahlgren or Sawyer to thunder from their decks or turrets. The artillery roared at Trafalgar; but there were no iron-clads to tilt at each other, meeting with a shock as of ten thousand knights in armor moulded into one mailed Centaur and crashing against such another monster.

But, again, a man may see a fight and be able to describe it truthfully, yet he may be unable to describe it dramatically. He must have the impressibility of the poetical nature to take in all its scenes, and the vocabulary of an artist to reproduce them. But, for some reason or other, poets are not very often found under fire, unless it be that of the critics. The temperament which makes men insensible to danger is rarely the gift of those who are so organized as to be sensitive to the more ethereal skyey influences. The violet end of the spectrum and the invisible rays beyond it belong to the poet, farthest from the red, which is the light that shines round the soldier.

It happens rarely that poets put their delicate-fibred brains in the paths of bullets, but it does happen. Körner fell with his last song on his lips. Fitz-James O'Brien gave his life as well as his chants to our cause. Mr. Brownell has weathered the great battle-storms on the same deck with Farragut, and has told their story as nobly as his leader made the story for him to tell. We cannot find any such descriptions as his, if for no other reason than that already mentioned, that there have been no such scenes to describe. [Pg 590]

But Mr. Brownell's genius is exceptional, as well as his experience. He can compose his verses while the battle is going on around him. During the engagement with Fort Powell, he was actually pencilling down some portions of the "Bay Fight," when he received a polite invitation to step down to the gun-deck and "try a shot at 'em with the Sawyer." He took minutes of everything as it happened during the contest, so that the simple record and the poetical delineation run into each other. We take the liberty to quote a few words from a note he kindly sent in answer to some queries of our own.

"Some of the descriptions [in the 'Bay Fight'] might seem exaggerated, but better authorities than I am say they are not. To be sure, blood and powder are pretty freely mixed for the painting of it; but these were the predominant elements of the scene,—the noise being almost indescribable, and the ship, for all the forward half of her, being an absolute 'slaughter-house.' Though we had only twenty-five killed and twenty-eight wounded (some of whom afterwards died) on that day, yet numbers were torn into fragments, (men with their muscles tense, subjected to violent concussion, seem as *brittle as glass*,) causing the deck and its surroundings to present a most strange spectacle."

We can understand better after this the lines—

"And now, as we looked ahead,
  All for'ard, the long white deck
Was growing a strange dull red,...
Red from mainmast to bitts!
  Red on bulwark and wale,—
Red by combing and hatch,—
  Red o'er netting and rail!"

The two great battle-poems begin, each of them, with beautiful descriptive lines, move on with gradually kindling fire, reach the highest intensity of action, till the words themselves have the weight and the rush of shot and shell, and the verses seem aflame with the passion of the conflict,—then, as the strife calms itself after the victory is won, the wild dithyrambic stanzas rock themselves into sweet, even cadences. No one can fail to be struck with the freedom and robustness of the language, the irregular strength of the rhythm, the audacious felicities of the rhyme. There are hints which remind us of many famous poets,—hints, not imitations. There can be no doubt that these were either coincidences or unconscious tricks of memory. To us they seem beauties, not defects, in poems of such originality, as in a new musical composition a few notes in some well-remembered sequence often seem to harmonize the crudeness of the newer strain,—as in many flowers and fruits Nature herself repeats a streak of color or a dash of flavor belonging to some alien growth.

Thus, Drayton says,—

"With Spanish yew so strong.

Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents *stung*."

And Brownell,—

"Trust me, our berth was hot;
Ah, wickedly well they shot;
How their death-bolts howled and *stung*!"

A mere coincidence, in all probability, but the word one which none but a poet could have used. There are reminiscences of Cowper's grand and simple lines on the "Loss of the Royal George," of Campbell's "Battle of the Baltic," of Tennyson's "Charge of the Six Hundred," not one of which but has a pleasing effect in the midst of such vigorous pictures as the new poet has given us fresh from the terrible original. The most obvious criticism is one which applies to the "River Fight," and which is directed against what might be thought an overstraining of the singular power in the use of words which is one of Mr. Brownell's most remarkable characteristics. "General Orders," not essential to the poem, may be admired as a *tour de force*, but cannot be properly called poetry. It is a condensed, versified edict,—true, no doubt, to the prose original, but on the whole better printed by itself, if printed at all, than suffered to distract the reader from the main narration by its elaborate ingenuity. [Pg 591]

These two poems—the "River Fight" and the "Bay Fight"—are better adapted for public reading and declamation than almost any in our literature. They hush any circle of listeners, and many cannot hear those exquisitely tender passages which are found toward the close of each without yielding them the tribute of their tears. They are to all the drawing-room battle-poems as the torn flags of our victorious armadas to the stately ensigns that dressed their ships in the harbor.

Such pictures, if they do not kill everything hung on the walls with them, make even a brilliant canvas look comparatively lustreless. Yet the first poem of Mr. Brownell's which ever attracted our attention, "The Fall of Al Accoub," is of great force, and shows much of the same red light and black shadow, much of the same Vulcanic power over words, as with blast and forge and hammer, which startle us in the two battle-pieces. The lines "Annus Memorabilis," dated Jan. 6th, 1861, read like prophecy in 1865. "Wood and Coal" (November, 1863) gives a presage of the fire which the flame of the conflict would kindle. "The Burial of the Dane" shows the true human sympathy of the writer, in its simple, pathetic narrative; and the story of the "Old Cove" had a wider circulation and a heartier reception than almost any prose effort which has been called forth by the "All we ask is to be let alone" of the arch traitor.

The "Lyrics of a Day" are too modestly named. Our literature cannot forget the masterpieces in this little volume in a day, a year, or an age. The War of Freedom against Slavery has created a devilish enginery of its own: iron for wood, steam for wind and muscle, "Swamp-Angels" and thousand-pounders in place of the armaments that gained the Battle of the Nile and toppled over the chimneys of Copenhagen. New modes of warfare thundered their demand for a new poet to describe them; and Nature has answered in the voice of our Battle-Laureate, Henry Howard Brownell.

DOCTOR JOHNS.

XVI.

Miss Eliza being fairly seated in the Doctor's study, with great eagerness to hear what might be the subject of his communication, the parson, with the letter in his hand, asked

if she remembered an old college friend, Maverick, who had once paid them a vacation visit at Canterbury.

"Perfectly," said Miss Eliza, whose memory was both keen and retentive; "and I remember that you have said he once passed a night with you, during the lifetime of poor Rachel, here at Ashfield. You have a letter from him?"

"I have," said the parson; "and it brings a proposal about which I wish your opinion." And the Doctor cast his eye over the letter.

"He expresses deep sympathy at my loss, and alludes very pleasantly to the visit you speak of, all which I will not read; after this he says, 'I little thought, when bantering you in your little study upon your family prospects, that I too was destined to become the father of a child, within a couple of years. Yet it is even so; and the responsibility weighs [Pg 592] upon me greatly. I love my Adèle with my whole heart; I am sure you cannot love your boy more, though perhaps more wisely."

"And he had never told you of his marriage?" said the spinster.

"Never; it is the only line I have had from him since his visit ten years ago."

The Doctor goes on with the reading:—

"It may be from a recollection of your warnings and of your distrust of the French character, or possibly it may be from the prejudices of my New England education, but I cannot entertain pleasantly the thought of her growing up to womanhood under the influences which are about her here. What those influences are you will not expect me to explain in detail. I am sure it will be enough to win upon your sympathy to say that they are Popish and thoroughly French. I feel a strong wish, therefore,—much as I am attached to the dear child,—to give her the advantages of a New England education and training. And with this wish, my thought reverts naturally to the calm quietude of your little town and of your household; for I cannot doubt that it is the same under the care of your sister as in the old time."

"I am glad he thinks so well of me," said Miss Eliza, but with an irony in her tone that she was sure the good parson would never detect.

The Doctor looks at her thoughtfully a moment, over the edge of the letter,—as if he, too, had his quiet comparisons to make,—then goes on with the letter:—

"This wish may surprise you, since you remember my old battlings with what I counted the rigors of a New England 'bringing-up'; but in this case I should not fear them, provided I could assure myself of your kindly supervision. For my little Adèle, besides inheriting a great flow of spirits (from her father, you will say) and French blood, has been used thus far to a catholic latitude of talk and manner in all about her, which will so far counterbalance the gravities of your region as to leave her, I think, upon a safe middle ground. At any rate, I see enough to persuade me to choose rather the errors that may grow upon her girlhood there than those that would grow upon it here.

"Frankly, now, may I ask you to undertake, with your good sister, for a few years, the responsibility which I have suggested?"

The Doctor looked over the edge of the sheet toward Miss Eliza.

"Read on, Benjamin," said she.

"The matter of expenses, I am happy to say, is one which need not enter into your consideration of the question. My business successes have been such that any estimate which you may make of the moneys required will be at your call at the office of our house in Newburyport.

"I have the utmost faith in you, my dear Johns; and I want you to have faith in the earnestness with which I press this proposal on your notice. You will wonder, perhaps,

how the mother of my little Adèle can be a party to such a plan; but I may assure you, that, if your consent be gained, it will meet with no opposition in that quarter. This fact may possibly confirm some of your worst theories in regard to French character; and in this letter, at least, you will not expect me to combat them.

"I have said that she has lived thus far under Popish influences; but her religious character is of course unformed; indeed, she has as yet developed in no *serious* direction whatever; I think you will find a *tabula rasa* to write your tenets upon. But, if she comes to you, do not, I beg of you, grave them too harshly; she is too bird-like to be treated with severity; and I know that under all your gravity, my dear Johns, there is a kindliness of heart, which, if you only allowed it utterance, would win greatly upon this little fondling of mine. And I think that her open, laughing face may win upon you.

"Adèle has been taught English, and I have purposely held all my prattle with her in the same tongue, and her familiarity with it is such that you would hardly detect a French accent. I am not particularly anxious that she should maintain her knowledge of French; still, should a good opportunity occur, and a competent teacher be available, it might be well for her to do so. In all such matters I should rely greatly on your judgment. [Pg 593]

"Now, my dear Johns,"—

Miss Eliza interrupts by saying, "I think your friend is very familiar, Benjamin."

"Why not? why not, Eliza? We were boys together."

And he continues with the letter:—

"My dear Johns, I want you to consider this matter fairly; I need not tell you that it is one that lies very near my heart. Should you determine to accept the trust, there is a ship which will be due at this port some four or five months from now, whose master I know well, and with whom I should feel safe to trust my little Adèle for the voyage, providing at the same time a female attendant upon whom I can rely, and who will not leave the little voyager until she is fairly under your wing. In two or three years thereafter, at most, I hope to come to receive her from you; and then, when she shall have made a return visit to Europe, it is quite possible that I may establish myself in my own country again. Should you wish it, I could arrange for the attendant remain with her; but I confess that I should prefer the contrary. I want to separate her for the time, so far as I can, from *all* the influences to which she has been subject here; and further than this, I have a strong faith in that self-dependence which seems to me to grow out of your old-fashioned New England training."

"That is all," said the Doctor, quietly folding the letter. "What do you think of the proposal, Eliza?"

"I like it, Benjamin."

The spinster was a woman of quick decision. Had it been proposed to receive an ordinary pupil in the house for any pecuniary consideration, her pride would have revolted on the instant. But here was a child of an old friend of the Doctor, a little Christian waif, as it were, floating toward them from that unbelieving world of France.

"Surely it will be a worthy and an honorable task for Benjamin" (so thought Miss Eliza) "to redeem this little creature from its graceless fortune; possibly, too, the companionship may soften that wild boy, Reuben. This French girl, Adèle, is rich, well-born; what if, from being inmates of the same house, the two should come by-and-by to be joined by some tenderer tie?"

The possibility, even, of such a dawn of sentiment under the spinster's watchful tutelage was a delightful subject of reflection to her. It is remarkable how even the cunningest and the coolest of practical-minded women delight in watching the growth of sentiment in others,—and all the more strongly, if they can foster it by their artifices and provoke it into demonstration.

Miss Johns, too, without being imaginative, prefigured in her mind the image of the little French stranger, with foreign air and dress, tripping beside her up the meeting-house aisle, looking into her face confidingly for guidance, attracting the attention of the simple townspeople in such sort that a distinction would belong to her *protégée* which would be pleasantly reflected upon herself. A love of distinction was the spinster's prevailing sin,—a distinction growing out of the working of good deeds, if it might be, but at any rate some worthy and notable distinction. The Doctorate of her good brother, his occasional discourses which had been subject of a public mention that she never forgot, were objects of a more than sisterly fondness. If her sins were ever to meet with a punishment in the flesh, they would know no sharper one than in a humiliation of her pride.

"I think," said she, "that you can hardly decline the proposal of Mr. Maverick, Benjamin."

"And you will take the home care of her?" asked the Doctor. [Pg 594]

"Certainly. She would at first, I suppose, attend school with Reuben and the young Elderkins?"

"Probably," returned the Doctor; "but the more special religious training which I fear the poor girl needs must be given at home, Eliza."

"Of course, Benjamin."

It was further agreed between the two that a French attendant would make a very undesirable addition to the household, as well as sadly compromise their efforts to build up the little stranger in full knowledge of the faith.

The Doctor was earnest in his convictions of the duty that lay before him, and his sister's consent to share the charge left him free to act. He felt all the best impulses of his nature challenged by the proposal. Here, at least, was one chance to snatch a brand from the burning,—to lead this poor little misguided wayfarer into those paths which are "paths of pleasantness." No image of French grace or of French modes was prefigured to the mind of the parson; his imagination had different range. He saw a young innocent (so far as any child in his view could be innocent) who prattled in the terrible language of Rousseau and Voltaire, who by the providence of God had been born in a realm where all iniquities flourished, and to whom, by the further and richer providence of God, a means of escape was now offered. He would no more have thought of declining the proposed service, even though the poor girl were dressed in homespun and clattered in sabots, than he would have closed his ear to the cry of a drowning child.

Within that very week the Doctor wrote his reply to Maverick. He assured him that he would most gladly undertake the trust he had proposed,—"hoping, by God's grace, to lead the little one away from the delusions of sense and the abominations of Antichrist, to the fold of the faithful."

"I could wish," he continued, "that you had given me more definite information in regard to the character of her early religious instruction, and told me how far the child may still remain under the mother's influence in this respect; for, next to special interposition of Divine Grace, I know no influence so strong in determining religious tendencies as the early instruction or example of a mother.

"My sister has promised to give home care to the little stranger, and will, I am sure, welcome her with zeal It will be our purpose to place your daughter at the day-school of a worthy person, Miss Betsey Onthank, who has had large experience, and under whose tuition my boy Reuben has been for some time established. My sister and myself are both of opinion that the presence of any French attendant upon the child would be undesirable.

"I hope that God may have mercy upon the French people,—and that those who dwell temporarily among them may be watched over and be graciously snatched from the great destruction that awaits the ungodly."

XVII.

Meantime Reuben grew into a knowledge of all the town mischief, and into the practice of such as came within the scope of his years. The proposed introduction of the young stranger from abroad to the advantages of the parsonage home did not weigh upon his thought greatly. The prospect of such a change did not soften him, whatever might come of the event. In his private talk with Esther, he had said, "I hope that French girl'll be a *clever* un; if she a'n't, I'll"——and he doubled up a little fist, and shook it, so that Esther laughed outright.

Not that the boy had any cruelty in him, but he was just now learning from his older companions of the village, who were more steeped in iniquity, that defiant manner by which the Devil in all of us makes his first pose preparatory to the onslaught that is to come.

"Nay, Ruby, boy," said Esther, when she had recovered from her laughter, "you wouldn't hurt the little un, would ye? Don't ye want a little playfellow, Ruby?" [Pg 595]

"I don't play with girls, I don't," said Reuben. "But, I say, Esther, what'll papa do, if she dances?"

"What makes the boy think she'll dance?" said Esther.

"Because the Geography says the French people dance; and Phil Elderkin showed me a picture with girls dancing under a tree, and, says he, 'That 's the sort that's comin' to y'r house.'"

"Well, I don't know," said Esther, "but I guess your Aunt Eliza 'd cure the dancin'."

"She wouldn't cure me, if I wanted to," said Reuben, who thought it needful to speak in terms of bravado about the spinster, with whom he kept up a series of skirmishing fights from week to week. The truth is, the keen eye of the good lady ferreted out a great many of his pet plans of mischief, and nipped them before they had time to ripen. Over and over, too, she warned him against the evil associates whom he would find about the village tavern, where he strayed from time to time to be witness to some dog-fight, or to receive a commendatory glance of recognition from one Nat Boody, the tavern-keeper's son, who had run away two years before and made a voyage down the river in a sloop laden with apples and onions to "York." He was a head taller than Reuben, and the latter admired him intensely: we never cease admiring those "a head taller" than ourselves. Reuben absolutely pined in longing wonderment at the way in which Nat Boody could crack a coach-whip, and with a couple of hickory sticks could "call the roll" upon a pine table equal to a drum-major. Wonderful were the stories this boy could tell, to special cronies, of his adventures in the city: they beat the Geography "all hollow." Such an air, too, as this Boody had, leaning against the pump-handle by his father's door, and making cuts at an imaginary span of horses!—such a pair of twilled trousers, cut like a man's!—such a jacket, with lapels to the pockets, which he said "the sailors wore on the sloops, and called 'em monkey-jackets"!—such a way as he had of putting a quid in his mouth! for Nat Boody chewed. It is not strange that Reuben, feeling a little of ugly constraint under the keen eye of the spinster Eliza, should admire greatly the free-and-easy manner of the tavern-boy, who had such familiarity with the world and such large range of action. The most of us never get over a wonderment at the composure and complacency which spring from a wide knowledge of the world; and the man who can crack his whip well, though only at an imaginary pair of horses, is sure to have a throng of admirers.

By this politic lad, Nat Boody, the innocent Reuben was decoyed into many a little bargain which told more for the shrewdness of the tavern than for that of the parsonage. Thus, he bartered one day a new pocket-knife, the gift of his Aunt Mabel of Greenwich Street, for a knit Scotch cap, half-worn, which the tavern traveller assured him could not be matched for any money. And the parson's boy, going back with this trophy on his

head, looking very consciously at those who give an admiring stare, is pounced upon at the very door-step by the indefatigable spinster.

"What now, Reuben? Where in the world did you get that cap?"

"Bought it,"—in a grand way.

"But it's worn," says the aunt. "Ouf! whose was it?"

"Bought it of Nat Boody," says Reuben; "and he says there isn't another can be had."

"Bah!" says the spinster, making a dash at the cap, which she seizes, and, straightway rushing in-doors, souses in a kettle of boiling water.

After which comes off a new skirmish, followed by the partial defeat of Reuben, who receives such a combing down (with sundry killed and wounded) as he remembers for a month thereafter.

The truth is, that it was not altogether from admiration of the accomplished Nat Boody that Reuben was prone to linger about the tavern neighborhood. The spinster had so strongly and constantly impressed it upon him that it was a low and vulgar and wicked place, that the boy, growing vastly inquisitive in these years, was curious to find out what shape the wickedness took; and as he walked by, sometimes at dusk, when thoroughly infused with the last teachings of Miss Eliza, it seemed to him that he might possibly catch a glimpse of the hoofs of some devil (as he had seen devils pictured in an illustrated Milton) capering about the doorway,—and if he had seen them, truth compels us to say that he would have felt a strong inclination to follow them up, at a safe distance, in order to see what kind of creatures might be wearing them. But he was far more apt to see the lounging figure of the shoemaker from down the street, or of Mr. Postmaster Troop, coming thither to have an evening's chat about Vice-President Calhoun, or William Wirt and the Anti-Masons. Or possibly, it might be, he would see the light heels of Suke Boody, the pretty daughter of the tavern-keeper, who had been pronounced by Phil Elderkin, who knew, (being a year his senior,) the handsomest girl in the town. This might well be; for Suke was just turned of fifteen, with pink arms and pink cheeks and blue eyes and a great flock of brown hair: not very startling in her beauty on ordinary days, when she appeared in a pinned-up quilted petticoat, and her curls in papers, sweeping the tavern-steps; but of a Saturday afternoon, in red and white calico, with the curls all streaming,—no wonder Phil Elderkin, who was tall of his age, thought her handsome. So it happened that the inquisitive Reuben, not finding any cloven feet in his furtive observations, but encountering always either the rosy Suke, or "Scamp," (which was Nat's pet fighting-dog,) or the shoemaker, or the round-faced Mr. Boody himself, could justify and explain his aunt's charge of the tavern wickedness only by distributing it over them all. And when, one Sunday, Miss Suke appeared at meeting (where she rarely went) in hat all aflame with ribbons, Reuben, sorely puzzled at the sight, says to his Aunt Eliza,— [Pg 596]

"Why didn't the sexton put her out?"

"Put her out!" says the spinster, horrified,—"what do you mean, Reuben?"

"Isn't she wicked?" says he; "she came from the tavern, and she lives at the tavern."

"But don't you know that preaching is for the wicked, and that the good had much better stay away than the bad?"

"Had they?" said Reuben, thoughtfully, pondering if there did not lie somewhere in this averment the basis for some new moral adjustment of his own conduct.

There are a vast many prim preachers, both male and female, in all times, who imagine that certain styles of wickedness or vulgarity are to be approached with propriety only across a church;—as if better preaching did not lie, nine times out of ten, in the touch of a hand or a whisper in the ear!

Pondering, as Reuben did, upon the repeated warnings of the spinster against any familiarity with the tavern or tavern people, he came in time to reckon the old creaking sign-board of Mr. Boody, and the pump in the inn-yard, as the pivotal points of all the town wickedness, just as the meeting-house was the centre of all the town goodness; and since the great world was very wicked, as he knew from overmuch iteration at home, and since communication with that wicked world was kept up mostly by the stage-coach that stopped every noon at the tavern-door, it seemed to him that relays of wickedness must flow into the tavern and town daily upon that old swaying stage-coach, just as relays of goodness might come to the meeting-house on some old lumbering chaise of a neighboring parson, who once a month, perhaps, would "exchange" with the Doctor. And it confirmed in Reuben's mind a good deal that was taught him about natural depravity, [Pg 597] when he found himself looking out with very much more eagerness for the rumbling coach, that kept up a daily wicked activity about the tavern, than he did for Parson Hobson, who snuffled in his reading, and who drove an old, thin-tailed sorrel mare, with lopped ears and lank jaws, that made passes at himself and Phil, if they teased her, as they always did.

So, too, he came to regard, in virtue of misplaced home instruction, the monkey-jacket of Nat Boody, and his fighting-dog "Scamp," and the pink arms and pink cheeks and brown ringlets of Suke Boody, as so many types of human wickedness; and, by parity of reasoning, he came to look upon the two flat curls on either temple of his Aunt Eliza, and her pragmatic way, and upon the yellow ribbons within the scoop-hat of Almira Tourtelot, who sang treble and never went to the tavern, as the types of goodness. What wonder, if he swayed more and more toward the broad and easy path that lay around the tavern-pump, ("Scamp" lying there biting at the flies,) and toward the barroom, with its flaming pictures of some past menagerie-show, and big tumblers with lemons atop, rather than to the strait and narrow path in which his Aunt Eliza and Miss Almira would guide him with sharp voices, thin faces, and decoy of dyspeptic doughnuts?

Phil and he sauntering by one day, Phil says,—

"Darst you go in, Reub?"

Phil was under no law of prohibition. And Reuben, glancing around the Common, says, —

"Yes, *I*'ll go."

"Then," says Phil, "we'll call for a glass of lemonade. Fellows 'most always order somethin', when they go in."

So Phil, swelling with his ten years, and tall of his age, walks to the bar and calls for two tumblers of lemonade, which Old Boody stirs with an appetizing rattle of the toddy-stick, —dropping, meantime, a query or two about the Squire, and a look askance at the parson's boy, who is trying very hard to wear an air as if *he*, too, were ten, and knew the ropes.

"It's good, a'n't it?" says Phil, putting down his money, of which he always had a good stock.

"Prime!" says Reuben, with a smack of the lips.

And then Suke comes in, hunting over the room for last week's "Courant"; and the boys, with furtive glances at those pink cheeks and brown ringlets, go down, the steps.

"A'n't she handsome?" says Phil.

Reuben is on the growth. And when he eats dinner that day, with the grave Doctor carving the rib-roast and the prim aunt ladling out the sauces, he is elated with the vague, but not unpleasant consciousness, that he is beginning to be familiar with the world.

XVIII.

It was some four or five months after the despatch of the Doctor's letter to Maverick before the reply came. His friend expressed the utmost gratitude for the Doctor's prompt and hearty acceptance of his proposal. With his little Adèle frolicking by him, and fastening more tenderly upon his heart every year, he was sometimes half-disposed to regret the scheme; but, believing it to be for her good, and confident of the integrity of those to whom he intrusted her, he reconciled himself to the long separation.

It does not come within the limits of this simple New England narrative to enter upon any extended review of the family relations or the life of Maverick abroad. Whatever details may appear incidentally, as the story progresses, the reader will please to regard as the shreds and ravelled edges of another and distinct life, which cannot be fairly interwoven with the homespun one of the parsonage, nor yet be wholly brushed clear of our story.

"I want," said Maverick in his letter, "that Adèle, while having a thorough womanly education, should grow up with simple tastes. I think I see a little tendency In her to a [Pg 598] good many idle coquetries of dress, (which you will set down, I know, to her French blood,) which I trust your good sister will see the prudence of correcting. My fortune is now such that I may reasonably hope to put luxuries within her reach, if they be desirable; but of this I should prefer that she remain ignorant. I want to see established in her what you would call those moral and religious bases of character that will sustain her under any possible reverses or disappointments. You will smile, perhaps, at *my* talking in this strain; but if I have been afloat in these matters, at least you will do me the credit that may belong to hoping better things for my little Adèle. It's not much, I know; but I do sincerely desire that she may find some rallying-point of courage and of faith within herself against any possible misfortune. Is it too much to hope, that, under your guidance, and under the quiet religious atmosphere of your little town, she may find such, and that she may possess herself of the consolations of the faith you teach, without sacrificing altogether her natural French vivacity?

"And now, my dear Johns, I come to refer to a certain allusion in your letter with some embarrassment. You speak of the weight of a mother's religious influence, and ask what it may have been. Since extreme childhood, Adèle has been almost entirely under the care of her godmother, a quiet old lady, who, though a devotee of the Popish Church, you must allow me to say, is a downright good Christian woman. I am quite sure that she has not pressed upon the conscience of little Adèle any bigotries of the Church. My wish in this matter I am confident that she has religiously regarded, and while giving the example of her own faith by constant and daily devotions, I think, as I said in my previous letter, that you will find the heart of my little girl as open as the sky. Why it is that the mother's relations with the child have been so broken you will spare me the pain of explaining.

"Would to God, I think at times, that I had married years ago one nurtured in our old-fashioned faith of New England,—some gentle, pure, loving soul! Shall I confess it, Johns?—the little glimpse of your lost Rachel gave me an idea of the tenderness and depth of devotion and charming womanliness of many of those whom I had counted stiff and utterly repulsive, which I never had before.

"Pardon me, my friend, for an allusion which may provoke your grief, and which may seem utterly out of place in the talk of one who is just now confiding to you his daughter.

"Johns, I have this faith in you, from our college-days: I know that on the score of the things touched upon in the last paragraphs of my letter you will not press me with inquiries. It is enough for you to know that my life has not been all 'plain-sailing.' For the present, let us say nothing of the griefs.

"As little Adèle comes to me, and sits upon my knee, as I write, I almost lose courage.

"'Adèle,' I say, 'will you leave your father, and go far away over seas, to stay perhaps for years?'

"'You talk nonsense, papa,' she says, and leaps into my arms.

"My heart cleaves strangely to her: I do not know wholly why. And yet she must go: it is best.

"The vessel of which I spoke will sail in three weeks from the date of my letter for the port of New York. I have made ample provision for her comfort on the passage; and as the date of the ship's arrival in New York is uncertain, I must beg you to arrange with some friend there, if possible, to protect the little stranger, until you are ready to receive her. I inclose my draft for three hundred dollars, which I trust may be sufficient for a year's maintenance, seeing that she goes well provided with clothing: if otherwise, you will please inform me."

Dr. Johns was not a man to puzzle himself with idle conjectures in regard to the private affairs of his friend. With all kind feeling for him,—and Maverick's confidence in the Doctor had insensibly given large growth to it,—the parson dismissed the whole affair [Pg 599] with this logical reflection:—

"My poor friend has been decoyed into marrying a Frenchwoman. Frenchwomen (like Frenchmen) are all children of Satan. He is now reaping the bitter results.

"As for the poor child," thought the Doctor, and his heart glowed at the thought, "I will plant her little feet upon safe places. With God's help, she shall come into the fold of the elect."

He arranges with Mrs. Brindlock to receive the child temporarily upon her arrival. Miss Eliza puts even more than her usual vigor and system into her arrangements for the reception of the new comer. Nothing could be neater than the little chamber, provided with its white curtains, its spotless linen, its dark old mahogany furniture, its Testament and Catechism upon the toilet-table; one or two vases of old china had been brought up and placed upon brackets out of reach of the little hands that might have been tempted by their beauty, and a coquettish porcelain image of a flower-girl had been added to the other simple adornments which the ambitious spinster had lavished upon the chamber. Her pride as housekeeper was piqued. The young stranger must be duly impressed with the advantages of her position at the start.

"There," said she to Esther, as she gave a finishing touch to the disposal of the blue and white hangings about the high-post bedstead, "I wonder if that will be to the taste of the little French lady!"

"I should think it might, Marm; it's the beautifullest room I ever see, Marm."

Reuben, boy-like, passes in and out with an air of affected indifference, as if the arrangements for the new arrival had no interest for him; and he whistles more defiantly than ever.

XIX

In early September of 1829, when the orchard behind the parsonage was glowing with its burden of fruit, when the white and crimson hollyhocks were lifting their slanted pagodas of bloom all down the garden, and the buckwheat was whitening with its blossoms broad patches of the hillsides east and west of Ashfield, news came to the Doctor that his expected guest had arrived safely in New York, and was waiting his presence there at the elegant home of Mrs. Brindlock. And Sister Mabel writes to the Doctor in the letter which conveys intelligence of the arrival,—"She's a charming little witch; and if you don't like to take her with you, she may stay here." Mrs. Brindlock had no children.

A visit to New York was an event for the parson. The spinster, eager for his good appearance at the home of her stylish sister, insisted upon a toilet that made the poor man more awkward than ever. Yet he did not think of rebelling. He rejoiced, indeed, that he did not dwell where such hardships would be daily demanded; but remembering that he

was bound to a city of strangers, he recalled the Scriptural injunction,—"Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's."

The Brindlocks, well-meaning and showy people, received the parson with an effervescence of kindness that disturbed him almost as much as the stiff garniture in which he had been invested by the solicitude of Miss Eliza; and when, in addition to his double embarrassment, a little saucy-eyed, brown-faced girl, full of mirthful exuberance, with her dark hair banded in a way that was utterly strange to him, and with coquettish bows of ribbon at her throat, at either armlet of her jaunty frock, and all down either side of her silk pinafore, came toward him with a smiling air, as if she were confident of his caresses, the awkwardness of the poor Doctor was complete.

But, catching sight of a certain frank outlook in the little face which reminded him of his friend Maverick, he felt his heart stirred within him, and in his grave way dropped a kiss upon her forehead, while he took both her hands in his. [Pg 600]

"This, then, is little Adaly?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Adèle, merrily, and, turning round to her new-found friends, says,—"My new papa calls me Adaly!"

The straightforward parson was, indeed, as inaccessible to French words as to French principles. Adèle had somehow a smack in it of the Gallic Pandemonium: Adaly, to his ear, was a far honester sound.

And the child seemed to fancy it,—whether for its novelty, or the kindliness that beamed on her from the gravest face she had ever seen, it would be hard to say.

"Call me Adaly, and I will call you New Papa," said she.

And though the parson was not a bargaining man, every impulse of his heart went to confirm this arrangement. It was flattering to his self-love, if not to his principles, to have apparent sanction to his prejudices against French forms of speech; and the "New Papa" on the lips of this young girl touched him to the quick. Wifeless men are more easily accessible to demonstrations of even apparent affection on the part of young girls than those whose sympathies are hedged about by matrimonial relations.

From all this it chanced that the best possible understanding was speedily established between the Doctor and his little ward from beyond the seas. For an hour after his arrival, the little creature hung upon his chair, asking questions about her new home, about the schools, about her playmates, patting the great hand of the Doctor with her little fingers, and reminding him sadly of days utterly gone.

Mrs. Brindlock, with her woman's curiosity, seizes an occasion, before they leave, to say privately to the Doctor,—

"Benjamin, the child must have a strange mother to allow this long separation, and the little creature so loving as she is."

"It would be strange enough for any but a Frenchwoman," said he.

"But Adèle is full of talk about her father and her godmother; yet she can tell me scarce anything of her mother. There's a mystery about it, Benjamin."

"There's a mystery in all our lives, Mabel, and will be until the last day shall come."

The parson said this with extreme gravity, and then added,—

"He has written me regarding it,—a very unfortunate marriage, I fear. Only this much he has been disposed to communicate; and for myself, I am only concerned to redeem his little girl from gross worldly attachments to the truths which take hold upon heaven."

The next day the Doctor set off homeward upon the magnificent new steamboat Victory, which, with two wonderful smoke-pipes, was then plying through the Sound and up the Connecticut River. It was an object of almost as much interest to the parson as to his little companion. A sober costume had now replaced the coquettish one with its furbelows, which Adèle had worn in the city; but there was a bright lining to her little hat that made her brown face more piquant than ever. And as she inclined her head jauntily to this side or that, in order to a better listening to the old gentleman's somewhat tedious explanations, or with a saucy smile cut him short in the midst of them, the parson felt his heart warming more and more toward this poor child of heathen France. Nay, he felt almost tempted to lay his lips to the little white ears that peeped forth from the masses of dark hair and seemed fairly to quiver with the eagerness of their listening.

With daylight of next morning came sight of the rambling old towns that lay at the river's mouth,—being little more than patches of gray and white, strewed over an almost treeless country, with some central spire rising above them. Then came great stretches of open pasture, scattered over with huge gray rocks, amid which little flocks of sheep were rambling; or some herd of young cattle, startled by the splashing of the paddles, and the great plumes of smoke, tossed their tails in the air, and galloped away in a fright,—at which Adèle clapped her hands, and broke into a laughthat was as cheery as the new dawn. Next came low, flat meadows of sedge, over which the tide oozed slowly, and where flocks of wild ducks, scared from their feeding-ground, rose by scores, and went flapping off seaward in long, black lines. And from between the hills on either side came glimpses of swamp woodland, in the midst of which some maple, earlier than its green fellows, had taken a tinge of orange, and flamed in the eyes of the little traveller with a gorgeousness she had never seen in the woods of Provence. Then came towns nestling under bluffs of red quarry-stones, towns upon wooded plains,—all with a white newness about them; and a brig, with horses on its deck, piled over with bales of hay, comes drifting lazily down with the tide, to catch an offing for the West Indies; and queer-shaped flat-boats, propelled by broad-bladed oars, surge slowly athwart the stream, ferrying over some traveller, or some fish-peddler bound to the "P'int" for "sea-food". [Pg 601]

Toward noon the travellers land at a shambling dock that juts into the river, from which point they are to make their way, in such country vehicle as the little village will supply, across to Ashfield. And when they are fairly seated within, the parson, judging that acquaintance has ripened sufficiently to be put to serious uses, says, with more than usual gravity,—

"I trust, Adaly, that you are grateful to God for having protected you from all the dangers of the deep."

"Do you think there was much danger, New Papa?"

"There's always danger, said the parson, gravely. "The Victory might have been blown in pieces last night, and we all been killed, Adaly."

"Oh, terrible!" says Addle. "And did such a thing ever really happen?"

"Yes, my child."

"Tell me all about it, New Papa, please"; and she put her little hand in his.

"Not now, Adaly,—not now. I want to know if you have been taught about God, in your old home."

"Oh, the good God! To be sure I have, over and over and over"; and she made a little piquant gesture, as if the teaching had been sometimes wearisome.

This gayety of speech on such a theme was painful to the Doctor.

"And you have been taught to pray, Adaly?"

"Oh, yes! Listen now. Shall I tell you one of my prayers, New Papa? *Voyons*, how is it"—

"Never mind,—never mind, Adaly; not here, not here. We are taught to enter into our closets when we pray."

"Closets?"

"Yes, my child,—to be by ourselves, and to be solemn."

"I don't like solemn people much," said Adèle, in a quiet tone.

"But do you love God, my child?"

"Love Him? To be sure I do"; and after a little pause—"All good children love Him; and I m good, you know, New Papa, don't you?"—and she turned her eyes up toward him with a half-coaxing, half-mischievous look that came near to drive away all his solemnity.

"Ah, Adaly! Adaly! we are all wicked!" said he.

Adèle stared at him in amazement.

"You, too! Yet papa told me you were so good! Ah, you are telling me now a little—what you call—lie! a'n't you, New Papa?"

And she looked at him with such a frank, arch smile,—so like the memory he cherished of the college-boy, Maverick,—that he could argue the matter no further, but only patted her little hand, as it lay upon the cushion of the carriage, as much as to say,—"Poor thing! poor thing!

Upon this, he fell away into a train of grave reflection on the method which it would be best to pursue in bringing this little benighted wanderer into the fold of the faithful.

And he was still musing thus, when suddenly the spire of Ashfield broke upon the view.

"There it is, Adaly! There is to be your new home!"

"Where? where?" says Adèle, eagerly. [Pg 602]

And straightway she is all aglow with excitement. Her swift questions patter on the ears of the old gentleman thick as rain-drops. She looks at the houses, the hills, the trees, the face of every passer-by,—wondering how she shall like them all; fashioning to herself some image of the boy Reuben and of the Aunt Eliza who are to meet her; yet, through all the torrent of her vexed fancies, carrying a great glow of hope, and entering, with all her fresh, girlish enthusiasms unchecked, upon that new phase of life, so widely different from anything she has yet experienced, under the grave atmosphere of a New England parsonage.

THE CHIMNEY-CORNER.

V.

LITTLE FOXES.—PART IV.

PERSISTENCE.

My little foxes are interesting little beasts; and I only hope my reader will not get tired of my charming menagerie before I have done showing him their nice points. He must recollect there are seven of them, and as yet we have shown up only three; so let him have patience.

As before stated, little foxes are the little pet sins of us educated good Christians, who hope that we have got above and far out of sight of stealing, lying, and those other gross evils against which we pray every Sunday, when the Ten Commandments are read. They are not generally considered of dignity enough to be fired at from the pulpit; they seem to us too trifling to be remembered in church; they are like the red spiders on plants,—too small for the perception of the naked eye, and only to be known by the shrivelling and dropping of leaf after leaf that ought to be green and flourishing.

I have another little fox in my eye, who is most active and most mischievous in despoiling the vines of domestic happiness,—in fact, who has been guilty of destroying more grapes than anybody knows of. His name I find it difficult to give with exactness. In my enumeration I called him *Self-Will*; another name for him—perhaps a better one—might be *Persistence*.

Like many another, this fault is the overaction of a most necessary and praiseworthy quality. The power of firmness is given to man as the very granite foundation of life. Without it, there would be nothing accomplished; all human plans would be unstable as water on an inclined plane. In every well-constituted nature there must be a power of tenacity, a gift of perseverance of will; and that man might not be without a foundation for so needful a property, the Creator has laid it in an animal faculty, which he possesses in common with the brutes.

The animal power of firmness is a brute force, a matter of brain and spinal cord, differing in different animals. The force by which a bulldog holds on to an antagonist, the persistence with which a mule will plant his four feet and set himself against blows and menaces, are good examples of the pure animal phase of a property which exists in human beings, and forms the foundation for that heroic endurance, for that perseverance, which carries on all the great and noble enterprises of life. [Pg 603]

The domestic fault we speak of is the wild, uncultured growth of this faculty, the instinctive action of firmness uncontrolled by reason or conscience,—in common parlance, the being "*set in one's way*." It is the *animal* instinct of being "set in one's way" which we mean by self-will or persistence; and in domestic life it does the more mischief from its working as an instinct unwatched by reason and unchallenged by conscience.

In that pretty new cottage which you see on yonder knoll are a pair of young people just in the midst of that happy bustle which attends the formation of a first home in prosperous circumstances, and with all the means of making it charming and agreeable. Carpenters, upholsterers, and artificers await their will; and there remains for them only the pleasant task of arranging and determining where all their pretty and agreeable things shall be placed. Our Hero and Leander are decidedly nice people, who have been through all the proper stages of being in love with each other for the requisite and suitable time. They have written each other a letter every day for two years, beginning with "My dearest," and ending with "Your own," etc.; they have sent each other flowers and rings and locks of hair; they have worn each other's pictures on their hearts; they have spent hours and hours talking over all subjects under the sun, and are convinced that never was there such sympathy of souls, such unanimity of opinion, such a just, reasonable, perfect foundation for mutual esteem.

Now it is quite true that people may have a perfect agreement and sympathy in their higher intellectual nature,—may like the same books, quote the same poetry, agree in the same principles, be united in the same religion,—and nevertheless, when they come together in the simplest affair of every-day business, may find themselves jarring and impinging upon each other at every step, simply because there are to each person, in respect of daily personal habits and personal likes and dislikes, a thousand little individualities with which reason has nothing to do, which are not subjects for the use of logic, and to which they never think of applying the power of religion,—which can only be set down as the positive ultimate facts of existence with two people.

Suppose a blue-jay courts and wins and weds a Baltimore oriole. During courtship there may have been delightfully sympathetic conversation on the charm of being free birds, the felicity of soaring in the blue summer air. Mr. Jay may have been all humility and all ecstasy in comparing the discordant screech of his own note with the warbling tenderness of Miss Oriole. But, once united, the two commence business relations. He is firmly convinced that a hole in a hollow tree is the only reasonable nest for a bird; she is positive that she should die there in a month of damp and rheumatism. She never heard of going to housekeeping in anything but a nice little pendulous bag swinging down from under the branches of a breezy elm; he is sure he should have water on the brain before summer was over, from constant vertigo, in such swaying, unsteady quarters,—he would be a sea-sick blue-jay on land, and he cannot think of it. She knows now he don't love her, or he never would think of shutting her up in an old mouldy hole picked out of rotten wood; and *he* knows she doesn't love him, or she never would want to make him uncomfortable all his days by tilting and swinging him about as no decent bird ought to be swung. Both are dead-set in their own way and opinion; and how is either to be convinced that the way which seemeth right unto the other is not best? Nature knows this, and therefore, in her feathered tribes, blue-jays do not mate with orioles; and so bird-housekeeping goes on in peace.

But men and women as diverse in their physical tastes and habits as blue-jays and orioles are wooing and wedding every day, and coming to the business of nest-building, *alias* housekeeping, with predilections as violent, and as incapable of any logical defence, as the oriole's partiality for a swing-nest and the jay's preference of rotten wood. [Pg 604]

Our Hero and Leander, then, who are arranging their cottage to-day, are examples just in point. They have both of them been only children,—both the idols of circles where they have been universally deferred to. Each in his or her own circle has been looked up to as a model of good taste, and of course each has the habit of exercising and indulging very distinct personal tastes. They truly, deeply esteem, respect, and love each other, and for the very best of reasons,—because there are sympathies of the very highest kind between them. Both are generous and affectionate,—both are highly cultured in intellect and taste,—both are earnestly religious; and yet, with all this, let me tell you that the first year of their married life will be worthy to be recorded as *a year of battles*. Yes, these friends so true, these lovers so ardent, these individuals in themselves so admirable, cannot come into the intimate relations of life without an effervescence as great as that of an acid and alkali; and it will be impossible to decide which is most in fault, the acid or the alkali, both being in their way of the very best quality.

The reason of it all is, that both are intensely "*set in their way*," and the ways of no two human beings are altogether coincident. Both of them have the most sharply defined, exact tastes and preferences. In the simplest matter both have *a way*,—an exact way,—which seems to be dear to them as life's blood. In the simplest appetite or taste they know exactly what they want, and cannot, by any argument, persuasion, or coaxing, be made to want anything else.

For example, this morning dawns bright upon them, as she, in her tidy morning wrapper and trimly laced boots, comes stepping over the bales and boxes which are discharged on the verandah; while he, for joy of his new acquisition, can hardly let her walk on her own pretty feet, and is making every fond excuse to lift her over obstacles and carry her into her new dwelling in triumph.

Carpets are put down, the floors glow under the hands of obedient workmen, and now the furniture is being wheeled in.

"Put the piano in the bow-window," says the lady.

"No, not in the bow-window," says the gentleman.

"Why, my dear, of course it must go in the bow-window. How awkward it would look anywhere else! I have always seen pianos in bow-windows."

"My love, certainly you would not think of dashing that beautiful prospect from the bow-window by blocking it up with the piano. The proper place is just here, in the corner of the room. Now try it."

"My dear, I think it looks dreadfully there; it spoils the appearance of the room."

"Well, for my part, my love, I think the appearance of the room would be spoiled, if you filled up the bow-window. Think what a lovely place that would be to sit in!"

"Just as if we couldn't sit there behind the piano, if we wanted to!" says the lady.

"But then, how much more ample and airy the room looks as you open the door, and see through the bow-window down that little glen, and that distant peep of the village-spire!"

"But I never could be reconciled to the piano standing in the corner in that way," says the lady. "*I insist* upon it, it ought to stand in the bow-window: it's the way mamma's stands, and Aunt Jane's, and Mrs. Wilcox's; everybody has their piano so."

"If it comes to *insisting*," says the gentleman, "it strikes me that is a game two can play at."

"Why, my dear, you know a lady's parlor is her own ground."

"Not a married lady's parlor, I imagine. I believe it is at least equally her husband's, as he expects to pass a good portion of his time there." [Pg 605]

"But I don't think you ought to insist on an arrangement that really is disagreeable to me," says the lady.

And now Hero's cheeks flush, and the spirit burns within, as she says,—

"Well, if you insist upon it, I suppose it must be as you say; but I shall never take any pleasure in playing on it"; and Hero sweeps from the apartment, leaving the victor very unhappy in his conquest.

He rushes after her, and finds her up-stairs, sitting disconsolate and weeping on a packing-box.

"Now, Hero, how silly! Do have it your own way. I'll give it up."

"No,—let it be as you say. I forgot that it was a wife's duty to submit."

"Nonsense, Hero! Do talk like a rational woman. Don't let us quarrel like children."

"But it's so evident that I was in the right."

"My dear, I cannot concede that you were in the right; but I am willing it should be as you say."

"Now I perfectly wonder, Leander, that you don't see how awkward your way is. It would make me nervous every time I came into the room, and it would be so dark in that corner that I never could see the notes."

"And I wonder, Hero, that a woman of your taste don't see how shutting up that bow-window spoils the parlor. It's the very prettiest feature of the room."

And so round and round they go, stating and restating their arguments, both getting more and more nervous and combative, both declaring themselves perfectly ready to yield the point as an oppressive exaction, but to do battle for their own opinion as right and reason, —the animal instinct of self-will meanwhile rising and rising and growing stronger and stronger on both sides. But meanwhile in the heat of argument some side-issues and personal reflections fly out like splinters in the shivering of lances. He tells her, in his heat, that her notions are formed from deference to models in fashionable life, and that she has no idea of adaptation,—and she tells him that he is domineering, and dictatorial,

and wanting to have everything his own way; and in fine, this battle is fought off and on through the day, with occasional armistices of kisses and makings-up,—treacherous truces, which are all broken up by the fatal words, "My dear, after all, you must admit *I* was in the right," which of course is the signal to fight the whole battle over again.

One such prolonged struggle is the parent of many lesser ones,—the aforenamed splinters of injurious remark and accusation, which flew out in the heat of argument, remaining and festering and giving rise to nervous soreness; yet, where there is at the foundation real, genuine love, and a good deal of it, the pleasure of making up so balances the pain of the controversy that the two do not perceive exactly what they are doing, nor suspect that so deep and wide a love as theirs can be seriously affected by causes so insignificant.

But the cause of difficulty in both, the silent, unwatched, intense power of self-will in trifles, is all the while precipitating them into new encounters. For example, in a bright hour between the showers, Hero arranges for her Leander a repast of peace and good-will, and compounds for him a salad which is a *chef d'[oe]uvre* among salads. Leander is also bright and propitious; but after tasting the salad, he pushes it silently away.

"My dear, you don't like your salad."

"No, my dear; I never eat anything with salad oil in it."

"Not eat salad oil? How absurd! I never heard of a salad without oil." And the lady looks disturbed.

"But, my dear, as I tell you, I never take it. I prefer simple sugar and vinegar."

"Sugar and vinegar! Why, Leander, I'm astonished! How very *bourgeois!* You must really try to like my salad"—(spoken in a coaxing tone). [Pg 606]

"My dear, I *never* try to like anything new. I am satisfied with my old tastes."

"Well, Leander, I must say that is very ungracious and disobliging of you."

"Why any more than for you to annoy me by forcing on me what I don't like?"

"But you would like it, if you would only try. People never like olives till they have eaten three or four, and then they become passionately fond of them."

"Then I think they are very silly to go through all that trouble, when there are enough things that they do like."

"Now, Leander, I don't think that seems amiable or pleasant at all. I think we ought to try to accommodate ourselves to the tastes of our friends."

"Then, my dear, suppose you try to like your salad with sugar and vinegar."

"But it's so *gauche* and unfashionable! Did you ever hear of a salad made with sugar and vinegar on a table in good society?"

"My mother's table, I believe, was good society, and I learned to like it there. The truth is, Hero, for a sensible woman, you are too fond of mere fashionable and society notions."

"Yes, you told me that last week, and I think it was very unjust,—*very unjust, indeed*"—(uttered with emphasis).

"No more unjust than your telling me that I was dictatorial and obstinate."

"Well, now, Leander, dear, you must confess that you are rather obstinate."

"I don't see the proof."

"You insist on your own ways and opinions so, heaven and earth won't turn you."

"Do I insist on mine more than you on yours?"

"Certainly, you do."

"I don't think so."

Hero casts up her eyes and repeats with expression,—

> "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
> To see oursels as others see us!"

"Precisely," says Leander. "I would that prayer were answered in your case, my dear."

"I think you take pleasure in provoking me," says the lady.

"My dear, how silly and childish all this is!" says the gentleman. "Why can't we let each other alone?"

"You began it."

"No, my dear, begging your pardon, I did not."

"Certainly, Leander, you did."

Now a conversation of this kind may go on hour after hour, as long as the respective parties have breath and strength, both becoming secretly more and more "set in their way". On both sides is the consciousness that they might end it at once by a very simple concession.

She might say,—"Well, dear, you shall always have your salad as you like"; and he might say,—"My dear, I will try to like your salad, if you care much about it"; and if either of them would utter one of these sentences, the other would soon follow. Either would give up, if the other would set the example; but as it is, they remind us of nothing so much as two cows that we have seen standing with locked horns in a meadow, who can neither advance nor recede an inch. It is a mere deadlock of the animal instinct of firmness; reason, conscience, religion have nothing to do with it.

The questions debated in this style by our young couple were surprisingly numerous: as, for example, whether their favorite copy of Turner should hang in the parlor or in the library,—whether their pet little landscape should hang against the wall, or be placed on an easel,—whether the bust of Psyche should stand on the marble table in the hall, or on a bracket in the library; all of which points were debated with a breadth of survey, a richness of imagery, a vigor of discussion, that would be perfectly astonishing to any one [Pg 607] who did not know how much two very self-willed argumentative people might find to say on any point under heaven. Everything in classical antiquity,—everything in Kugler's "Hand-Book of Painting,"—every opinion of living artists,—besides questions social, moral, and religious,—all mingled in the grand *mélée*: because there is nothing in creation that is not somehow connected with everything else.

Dr. Johnson has said,—"There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said."

With all deference to the great moralist, we must say that this statement argues a very limited knowledge of the resources of talk possessed by two very cultivated and very self-willed persons fairly pitted against each other in practical questions; the logic may indeed be ridiculous, but such people as our Hero and Leander find no cases under the sun where something is to be done, yet where little can be said. And these wretched wranglings, this interminable labyrinth of petty disputes, waste and crumble away that high ideal of truth and tenderness, which the real, deep sympathies and actual worth of their characters entitled them to form. Their married life is not what they expected; at times they are startled by the reflection that they nave somehow grown unlovely to each other; and yet, if Leander goes away to pass a week, and thinks of his Hero in the distance, he can compare no other woman to her; and the days seem long and the house

empty to Hero while he is gone; both wonder at themselves when they look over their petty bickerings, but neither knows exactly how to catch the little fox that spoils their vines.

It is astonishing how much we think about ourselves, yet to how little purpose,—how very clever people will talk and wonder about themselves and each other, and yet go on year after year, not knowing how to use either themselves or each other,—not having as much practical philosophy in the matter of their own characters and that of their friends as they have in respect of the screws of their gas-fixtures or the management of their water-pipes.

"But *I* won't have any such scenes with *my* wife," says Don Positive. "I won't marry one of your clever women; they are always positive and disagreeable. *I* look for a wife of a gentle and yielding nature, that shall take her opinions from me, and accommodate her tastes to mine." And so Don Positive goes and marries a pretty little pink-and-white concern, so lisping and soft and delicate that he is quite sure she cannot have a will of her own. She is the moon of his heavens, to shine only by his reflected light.

We would advise our gentlemen friends who wish to enjoy the felicity of having their own way not to try the experiment with a pretty fool; for the obstinacy of cleverness and reason is nothing to the obstinacy of folly and inanity.

Let our friend once get in the seat opposite to him at table a pretty creature who cries for the moon, and insists that he don't love her because he doesn't get it for her; and in vain may he display his superior knowledge of astronomy, and prove to her that the moon is not to be got. She listens with her head on one side, and after he has talked himself quite out of breath, repeats the very same sentence she began the discussion with, without variation or addition.

If she wants darling Johnny taken away from school, because cruel teachers will not give up the rules of the institution for his pleasure, in vain does Don Positive, in the most select and superior English, enlighten her on the necessity of habits of self-control and order for a boy,—the impossibility that a teacher should make exceptions for their particular darling,—the absolute, perishing need that the boy should begin to do something. She hears him all through, and then says, "I don't know anything about that. I know what I want: I want Johnny taken away." And so she weeps, sulks, storms, entreats, lies awake nights, has long fits of sick-headache,—in short, shows that a pretty animal, without reason or cultivation, can be, in her way, quite as formidable an antagonist as the most clever of her sex. [Pg 608]

Leander can sometimes vanquish his Hero in fair fight by the weapons of good logic, because she is a woman capable of appreciating reason, and able to feel the force of the considerations he adduces; and when he does vanquish and carry her captive by his bow and spear, he feels that he has gained a victory over no ignoble antagonist, and he becomes a hero in his own eyes. Though a woman of much will, still she is a woman of much reason; and if he has many vexations with her pertinacity, he is never without hope in her good sense; but alas for him whose wife has only the animal instinct of firmness, without any development of the judgment or reasoning faculties! The conflicts with a woman whom a man respects and admires are often extremely trying; but the conflicts with one whom he cannot help despising become in the end simply disgusting.

But the inquiry now arises, What shall be done with all the questions Dr. Johnson speaks of, which reason cannot decide, which elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous,—cases where something must be done, and where little can be said?

Read Mrs. Ellis's "Wives of England," and you have one solution of the problem. The good women of England are there informed that there is to be no discussion, that everything in the *ménage* is to follow the rule of the lord, and that the wife has but one hope, namely, that grace may be given him to know exactly what his own will is. "*L'état, c'est moi*," is the lesson which every English husband learns of Mrs. Ellis, and we should

judge from the pictures of English novels that this "awful right divine" is insisted on in detail in domestic life.

Miss Edgeworth makes her magnificent General Clarendon talk about his "commands" to his accomplished and elegant wife; and he rings the parlor-bell with such an air, calls up and interrogates trembling servants with such awful majesty, and lays about him generally in so very military and tremendous a style, that we are not surprised that poor little Cecilia is frightened into lying, being half out of her wits in terror of so very martial a husband.

During his hours of courtship he majestically informs her mother that he never could consent to receive as *his* wife any woman who has had another attachment; and so the poor puss, like a naughty girl, conceals a little school-girl flirtation of bygone days, and thus gives rise to most agonizing and tragic scenes with her terrible lord, who petrifies her one morning by suddenly drawing the bed-curtains and flapping an old love-letter in her eyes, asking, in tones of suppressed thunder, "Cecilia, is this your writing?"

The more modern female novelists of England give us representations of their view of the right divine no less stringent. In a very popular story, called "Agatha's Husband," the plot is as follows. A man marries a beautiful girl with a large fortune. Before the marriage, he discovers that his brother, who has been guardian of the estate, has fraudulently squandered the property, so that it can only be retrieved by the strictest economy. For the sake of getting her heroine into a situation to illustrate her moral, the authoress now makes her hero give a solemn promise not to divulge to his wife or to any human being the fraud by which she suffers.

The plot of the story then proceeds to show how very badly the young wife behaves when her husband takes her to mean lodgings, deprives her of wonted luxuries and comforts, and obstinately refuses to give any kind of sensible reason for his conduct. Instead of looking up to him with blind faith and unquestioning obedience, following his directions without inquiry, and believing not only without evidence, but against apparent evidence, [Pg 609] that he is the soul of honor and wisdom, this perverse Agatha murmurs, complains, thinks herself very ill-used, and occasionally is even wicked enough, in a very mild way, to say so,—whereat her husband looks like a martyr and suffers in silence; and thus we are treated to a volume of mutual distresses, which are at last ended by the truth coming out, the abused husband mounting the throne in glory, and the penitent wife falling in the dust at his feet, and confessing what a wretch she has been all along to doubt him.

The authoress of Jane Eyre describes the process of courtship in much the same terms as one would describe the breaking of a horse. Shirley is contumacious and self-willed, and Moore, her lover and tutor, gives her "*Le Cheval dompté*" for a French lesson, as a gentle intimation of the work he has in hand in paying her his addresses; and after long struggling against his power, when at last she consents to his love, he addresses her thus, under the figure of a very fierce leopardess:—

"Tame or wild, fierce or subdued, you are *mine*."

And she responds:—

"I am glad I know my keeper and am used to him. Only his voice will I follow, only his hand shall manage me, only at his feet will I repose."

The accomplished authoress of "Nathalie" represents the struggles of a young girl engaged to a man far older than herself, extremely dark and heroic, fond of behaving in a very unaccountable manner, and declaring, nevertheless, in very awful and mysterious tones, that he has such a passion for being believed in, that, if any one of his friends, under the most suspicious circumstances, admits *one doubt* of his honor, all will be over between them forever.

After establishing his power over Nathalie fully, and amusing himself quietly for a time with the contemplation of her perplexities and anxieties, he at last unfolds to her the

mysterious counsels of his will by declaring to another of her lovers, in her presence, that he "has the intention of asking this young lady to become his wife." During the engagement, however, he contrives to disturb her tranquillity by insisting prematurely on the right divine of husbands, and, as she proves fractious, announces to her, that, much as he loves her, he sees no prospect of future happiness in their union, and that they had better part.

The rest of the story describe the struggles and anguish of the two, who pass through a volume of distresses, he growing more cold, proud, severe, and misanthropic than ever, all of which is supposed to be the fault of naughty Miss Nathalie, who might have made a saint of him, could she only have found her highest pleasure in letting him have his own way. Her conscience distresses her; it is all her fault; at last, worn out in the strife, she resolves to be a good girl, goes to his library, finds him alone, and, in spite of an insulting reception, humbles herself at his feet, gives up all her naughty pride, begs to be allowed to wait on him as a handmaid, and is rewarded by his graciously announcing, that, since she will stay with him at all events, she *may* stay as his wife; and the story leaves her in the last sentence sitting in what we are informed is the only true place of happiness for a woman, at her husband's feet.

This is the solution which the most cultivated women of England give of the domestic problem, according to these fair interpreters of English ideas.

The British lion on his own domestic hearth, standing in awful majesty with his back to the fire and his hands under his coat-tails, can be supposed to have no such disreputable discussions as we have described; since his partner, as Miss Bronté says, has learned to know her keeper, and her place at his feet, and can conceive no happiness so great as hanging the picture and setting the piano exactly as he likes.

Of course this will be met with a general shriek of horror on the part of our fair republican friends, and an equally general disclaimer on the part of our American gentlemen, who, so far as we know, would be quite embarrassed by the idea of assuming any such pronounced position at the fireside. [Pg 610]

The genius of American institutions is not towards a display of authority. All needed authority exists among us, but exists silently, with as little external manifestation as possible.

Our President is but a fellow-citizen, personally the equal of other citizens. We obey him because we have chosen him, and because we find it convenient, in regulating our affairs, to have one final appeal and one deciding voice.

The position in which the Bible and the marriage service place the husband in the family amounts to no more. He is the head of the family in all that relates to its material interests, its legal relations, its honor and standing in society; and no true woman who respects herself would any more hesitate to promise to yield to him this position and the deference it implies than an officer of State to yield to the President. But because Mr. Lincoln is officially above Mr. Seward, it does not follow that there can be nothing between them but absolute command on the one part and prostrate submission on the other; neither does it follow that the superior claims in all respects to regulate the affairs and conduct of the inferior. There are still wide spheres of individual freedom, as there are in the case of husband and wife; and no sensible man but would feel himself ridiculous in entering another's proper sphere with the voice of authority.

The inspired declaration, that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church," is certainly to be qualified by the evident points of difference in the subjects spoken of. It certainly does not mean that any man shall be invested with the rights of omnipotence and omniscience, but simply that in the family state he is the head and protector, even as in the Church is the Saviour. It is merely the announcement of a great natural law of society which obtains through all the tribes and races of men,—a great and obvious fact of human existence.

The silly and senseless reaction against this idea in some otherwise sensible women is, I think, owing to the kind of extravagances and overstatements to which we have alluded. It is as absurd to cavil at the word *obey* in the marriage ceremony as for a military officer to set himself against the etiquette of the army, or a man to refuse the freeman's oath.

Two young men every way on a footing of equality and friendship may be one of them a battalion-commander and the other a staff-officer. It would be alike absurd for the one to take airs about not obeying a man every way his equal, and for the other to assume airs of lordly dictation out of the sphere of his military duties. The mooting of the question of marital authority between two well-bred, well-educated Christian people of the nineteenth century is no less absurd.

While the husband has a certain power confided to him for the support and maintenance of the family, and for the preservation of those relations which involve its good name and well-being before the world, he has no claim to an authoritative exertion of will in reference to the little personal tastes and habits of the interior. He has no divine right to require that everything shall be arranged to please him, at the expense of his wife's preferences and feelings, any more than if he were not the head of the household. In a thousand indifferent matters which do not touch the credit and respectability of the family, he is just as much bound sometimes to give up his own will and way for the comfort of his wife as she is in certain other matters to submit to his decisions. In a large number of cases the husband and wife stand as equal human beings before God, and the indulgence of unchecked and inconsiderate self-will on either side is a sin.

It is my serious belief that writings such as we have been considering do harm both to men and women, by insensibly inspiring in the one an idea of a licensed prerogative of selfishness and self-will, and in the other an irrational and indiscreet servility. [Pg 611]

Is it any benefit to a man to find in the wife of his bosom the flatterer of his egotism, the acquiescent victim of his little selfish exactions, to be nursed and petted and cajoled in all his faults and fault-findings, and to see everybody falling prostrate before his will in the domestic circle? Is this the true way to make him a manly and Christ-like man? It is my belief that many so-called good wives have been accessory to making their husbands very bad Christians.

However, then, the little questions of difference in every-day life are to be disposed of between two individuals, it is in the worst possible taste and policy to undertake to settle them by mere authority. All romance, all poetry, all beauty are over forever with a couple between whom the struggle of mere authority has begun. No, there is no way out of difficulties of this description but by the application, on both sides, of good sense and religion to the little differences of life.

A little reflection will enable any person to detect in himself that setness in trifles which is the result of the unwatched instinct of self-will, and to establish over himself a jealous guardianship.

Everyman and every woman, in their self-training and self-culture, should study the art of giving up with a good grace. The charm of polite society is formed by that sort of freedom and facility in all the members of a circle which makes each one pliable to the influences of the others, and sympathetic to slide into the moods and tastes of others without a jar.

In courteous and polished circles, there are no stiff railroad-tracks, cutting straight through everything, and grating harsh thunders all along their course, but smooth, meandering streams, tranquilly bending hither and thither to every undulation of the flowery banks. What makes the charm of polite society would make no less the charm of domestic life; but it can come only by watchfulness and self-discipline in each individual.

Some people have much more to struggle with in this way than others. Nature has made them precise and exact. They are punctilious in their hours, rigid in their habits, pained by any deviation from regular rule.

Now Nature is always perversely ordering that men and women of just this disposition should become desperately enamored of their exact opposites. The man of rules and formulas and hours has his heart carried off by a gay, careless little chit, who never knows the day of the month, tears up the newspaper, loses the door-key, and makes curlpapers out of the last bill; or, *per contra*, our exact and precise little woman, whose belongings are like the waxen cells of a bee, gives her heart to some careless fellow, who enters her sanctum in muddy boots, upsets all her little nice household divinities whenever he is going on a hunting or fishing bout, and can see no manner of sense in the discomposure she feels in the case.

What can such couples do, if they do not adopt the compromises of reason and sense,—if each arms his or her own peculiarities with the back force of persistent self-will, and runs them over the territories of the other?

A sensible man and woman, finding themselves thus placed, can govern themselves by a just philosophy, and, instead of carrying on a life-battle, can modify their own tastes and requirements, turn their eyes from traits which do not suit them to those which do, resolving, at all events, however reasonable be the taste or propensity which they sacrifice, to give up all rather than have domestic strife.

There is one form which persistency takes that is peculiarly trying: I mean that persistency of opinion which deems it necessary to stop and raise an argument in self-defence on the slightest personal criticism.

John tells his wife that she is half an hour late with her breakfast this morning, and she indignantly denies it. [Pg 612]

"But look at my watch!"

"Your watch isn't right."

"I set it by railroad time."

"Well, that was a week ago; that watch of yours always gains."

"No, my dear, you're mistaken."

"Indeed I'm not. Did I not hear you telling Mr. B—— about it?"

"My dear, that was a year ago,—before I had it cleaned."

"How can you say so, John? It was only a month ago."

"My dear, you are mistaken."

And so the contest goes on, each striving for the last word.

This love of the last word has made more bitterness in families and spoiled more Christians than it is worth. A thousand little differences of this kind would drop to the ground, if either party would let them drop. Suppose John is mistaken in saying breakfast is late,—suppose that fifty of the little criticisms which we make on one another are well- or ill-founded, are they worth a discussion? Are they worth ill-tempered words, such as are almost sure to grow out of a discussion? Are they worth throwing away peace and love for? Are they worth the destruction of the only fair ideal left on earth,—a quiet, happy home? Better let the most unjust statements pass in silence than risk one's temper in a discussion upon them.

Discussions, assuming the form of warm arguments, are never pleasant ingredients of domestic life, never safe recreations between near friends. They are, generally speaking, mere unsuspected vents for self-will, and the cases are few where they do anything more than to make both parties more positive in their own way than they were before.

A calm comparison of opposing views, a fair statement of reasons on either side, may be valuable; but when warmth and heat and love of victory and pride of opinion come in, good temper and good manners are too apt to step out.

And now Christopher, having come to the end of his subject, pauses for a sentence to close with. There are a few lines of a poet that sum up so beautifully all he has been saying that he may be pardoned for closing with them.

"Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love;
Hearts that the world has vainly tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied;
That stood the storm when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea
When heaven was all tranquillity!
A something light as air, a look,
A word unkind, or wrongly taken,—
Oh, love that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken!
For ruder words will soon rush in
To spread the breach that words begin,
And eyes forget the gentle ray
They wore in courtship's smiling day,
And voices lose the tone which shed
A tenderness round all they said,—
Till, fast declining, one by one,
The sweetnesses of love are gone,
And hearts so lately mingled seem
Like broken clouds, or like the stream,
That, smiling, left the mountain-brow
As though its waters ne'er could sever,
Yet, ere it reach the plain below,
Breaks into floods that part forever."

NEEDLE AND GARDEN.

[Pg 613]

THE STORY OF A SEAMSTRESS WHO LAID DOWN HER NEEDLE AND BECAME A STRAWBERRY-GIRL.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

CHAPTER V.

I imagine, that, if one went into any of the numerous places, in this or any other city, where numbers of women are assembled as workers, or to any of the charitable institutions where orphan children are taken in and cared for, and were to institute a general examination of the inmates as to their personal history, he would find few of them but had experiences to relate of a kind to make the heart ache. From my own incidental inquiry and observation of these classes, it would appear that they afford representatives of every phase of domestic and pecuniary suffering. I read of kindred sufferings which occasionally happen to the high-born and wealthy, but here I have come in personal contact with those in humble life to whom such trials seem to be a perpetual inheritance.

In our factory there was one operator on a machine with whom I never could gain an acquaintance beyond the usual morning salutation which passed between most of us as we came in to our daily employment. To me she was reserved and taciturn, and it was evident that there was no disposition on her part to be sociable. But somehow she fell in with my sister's gay, open, and prepossessing manner, and there grew up a sort of passionate intimacy between them that I could not account for, as she was much older than Jane. When we stopped work at noon, they always dined together by themselves, in a corner of the room, and a close and incessant conversation was carried on between them, for an hour at a time, as if they had been lovers. There must have been great mutual outpourings of confidence, for my sister soon became acquainted with the minutest particulars of her new friend's singular life.

This woman's name was Vane. Who her father was no one knew but her mother. When a child, she had lived with the latter in what was at that time the remains of a wooden hut, that must have been among the very first buildings erected in the forest which covered the northwestern portion of what is now the suburbs of the great city around us. In this little obscure home the two lived entirely alone. They had neighbors, of course, but none of them could tell how they contrived to subsist. The mother did no work, except for herself and her child; she had but a small garden in front of the house, the embellishment of which was her particular care; and she was surrounded with books, in the reading of which she spent all her leisure time, having little intercourse with her neighbors. The gossips that exist everywhere in society, if curious about her affairs, could discover nothing as to how she lived so comfortably without any visible means.

When the daughter, Sabrina, grew up to sixteen, her beauty, the character she developed, and her general conduct were the topic of quite as much rural conversation and remark as had been the mystery that hung around the mother. Gradually drawn out into the neighboring society, her great personal attractions, added to her shrewdness and good sense, made her so much admired as to collect around her a train of suitors, who seemed to consider her being fatherless as of no more consequence to them than it was to herself.

But there was in her temperament an undercurrent of ambition so strong as to cause her to receive their advances toward tender acquaintance with a freezing coldness, while at [Pg 614] the same time it rendered her positively unhappy. She felt superior to her condition, and she longed to rise above it. Her mind had attained to a premature development while feeding almost exclusively on its own thoughts,—for she had never been fond of books, though there were many around her. Her sole occupations had been the school, the needle, and assisting her mother in the management of their flower-garden. For this last she had a decided taste, and they had concealed the time-worn character of the old house they occupied by covering it with a luxuriance of floral wealth, so tastefully arranged, and so profuse and gorgeous, that travellers on the dusty highway on which it stood would stop to admire the remarkable blending of the climbing rose, the honeysuckle, and the grape.

Thus filled with indefinite longings, she grew up to womanhood without any proper direction from her mother. She had no sympathy with her uncultivated suitors. She sighed for something higher, an ideal that was far off, indistinct, and dim. Good offers of marriage from neighboring workmen of fair character and prospects she stubbornly declined, sometimes with a tartness that quite confounded the swain whom her well-known character had half-intimidated before he ventured on the dangerous proposal. Love had not yet unsealed the deep fountain of her singularly constituted heart. But I suppose that there must somewhere be a key to every woman's affections, and that it is generally found in but few hands,—sometimes in safe ones, sometimes in very dangerous ones. It was so with Sabrina.

One evening, at a party, she became acquainted with a young sprig of the medical profession, who was captivated by her beauty. The fellow was loquacious, prepossessing, and bold, with an air of high life and fashion about him to which Sabrina had not been accustomed. But though unsteady, insincere, and wholly unworthy of her, yet the glitter

of his style and manner won her heart, and an engagement of marriage took place between them, which he, for some unexplained reason, required of her to keep secret. She was young and inexperienced, and so happy in her prospects as to give but little thought to the obligation to concealment. A future was opening to her such as she had longed for; her ambitious aspirations for a higher destiny were about to be realized.

Somehow the neighborhood became possessed of her secret,—not, however, from her, but by that intuition which reveals to lookers-on the sure finale of an intimacy such as every one saw had grown up between her and the young physician. Her future was said to be a brilliant one; she was to be rich, and a great lady. There were absurd and wide-spread exaggerations of an almost every-day occurrence. Some sneered while they repeated them, as if envious of her elevation, while others went so far as to suggest surmises unworthy of her virtue. But Sabrina heard nothing of what the little world around her said or thought. Happy in her own heart, she was unconcerned as to all beyond.

Months passed away, when all at once her lover ceased his visits. This, too, was immediately observed by all the gossips of the neighborhood. It was said that she had been cruelly deceived, even ruined. But she no more than others was able to account for this unexpected abandonment. The truth eventually came out, however. The father of her lover had heard the common rumor, that his son was about marrying an obscure and fatherless girl, questioned him, and warned him of the consequences. It was the first serious intimation the young man had received that his secret was known, and he resolved to cast off the poor girl, seeking to pacify the reproaches of his conscience by accusing her of having divulged it. There was not a manly impulse in his bosom; he gave her no opportunity for explanation, but forsook her on the instant.

For a time the victim of this faithlessness sunk under the weight of her disappointment. To her proud spirit the mortification was almost beyond endurance. And if Divine [Pg 615] Providence had not mercifully given to us, to woman especially, strength according to our day, tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, the world would be peopled with perpetual mourners. But there is

> "No grief so great but runneth to an end;
> No hap so hard but will in time amend."

She bore up bravely, and in time her strong mind recovered in a good degree its equilibrium. But she was now a subdued and thoughtful woman. Four years passed away, during which her former admirers gradually gathered around her again, solicitous, as before, to win her favor. To one of them she gave her hand,—her heart was yet another's. Years of an unhappy married life went over her, brightening no cloud above her head, admitting no sunshine into her heart. All her ambitious aspirations had been blasted, all her early hopes wrecked. Marriage had proved no blessing to a mind so ill-regulated. Her mother died, and then her husband. The secret source from which the mother had been supplied with means was unknown to the daughter, and she had still pride enough to refrain from all endeavor to solve the mystery. No one was able to do so during the lifetime of the former,—who was there to do it after her death?

Thus thrown upon herself when only twenty-six years of age, she went to work; and when we came to the factory, we found her there, the most industrious and skilful of all the operators. Employment gave a new turn to her thoughts. New associations opened other and more hopeful views to her mind. She became cheerful, sometimes animated, and, with my sister, intimate and confiding.

But if interested in what my sister thus learned of her history, I was to be still more surprised by the subsequent portion of it to which I was myself a witness.

One day a gentleman came into the room where we were at work, and obtained from the proprietor permission to examine the mode in which it was carried on. His age was probably fifty, and his dress and manner evinced polish and acquaintance with society: if

dress was ever an index of wealth, his also indicated that. He went slowly round among the machines, stopping before each, and courteously addressing and entering into a brief conversation with the several operators in turn. Sabrina was working a machine between my sister and myself. When he came to her, he had more to say than to any of the others; and while conversing with her, the proprietor came up, and, speaking to her on some business matter, addressed her by name, "Sabrina."

The stranger heard it. He gazed on her long and silently. Sabrina was his own child, for whose discovery he had come among us! There could be no mutual recognition by face and feature, because neither had ever seen the other before,—the heartless parent had never kissed or fondled his own child!—they had lived total strangers. There was no excitement at the moment, nothing that could be called a scene,—no symptom of remorse on the part of the one, nor of affectionate recognition by the other. I could know nothing, therefore, of their relations to each other, even though I saw them at the very moment the parent was identifying his daughter. All these curious facts were communicated to us afterwards.

That very evening Sabrina quitted her employment at the factory, and was taken to her father's house, acknowledged as his child, her future to be made by him as cloudless as in the past his own shameless neglect had caused it to be gloomy.

If in such a refuge as this factory there were gathered many examples of the ups and downs of life, it was a blessing that such an establishment existed. Here was a certainty of employment at wages on which a woman could live. But, generally, such factories accommodated only what might be called the better order of workers,—that is, the least necessitous.

The press had been for years exalting the character and attainments of the working-women of New England, celebrating their thrift, their intelligence, their neatness, even their personal loveliness, until the fame of their numerous virtues has overshadowed, at least on paper, that of all others, extending even to European circles, and becoming a theme for foreign applause. But from what I have seen of the working-women of my native city, I am satisfied that their merits have been undervalued as much as their numbers have been underestimated. Both in the sewing-school and in the factory, there were girls who were patterns of all that is modest, beautiful, and womanly, many of them graduates of the public schools, and worthy to be wedded to the best among the other sex. No Lowell factory could turn out a larger or more interesting army of young and virtuous girls than some of the establishments here in which the sewing-machine is driven by steam. [Pg 616]

Then, as regards numbers, this city has a female manufacturing population to which that of the largest manufacturing towns in New England can bear no comparison. To particularize.

The book-binderies reckon three thousand in their various establishments, who fold and sew the sheets, and work the ruling-machines. I have seen in one of these establishments a collection of young women whose manners and deportment could not be excelled in any assembly of their fashionable and wealthy sisters: the proprietor never came in among them without removing his hat. As the work they do is light and cleanly, so the dress of the workers is neat and tidy. These earn two dollars and upward per week. Some hundreds of others are employed in printing-offices, feeding the paper to book-presses: these are able to earn more. Another class are employed in coloring maps and prints, and among these are some who exhibit taste and skill fitted to a much higher department of the arts. Thus the business of publishing, in nearly all its branches, is largely aided by the labor of intelligent women,—and it might be still more so, if they were taught the truly feminine, as well as intellectual art, of type-setting.

Thousands among us are engaged in binding shoes, some by machinery, and some by hand; but the wages they receive are miserably small. The clothing-stores employ some six thousand, but also paying so little that every tailor's working-woman seeks the earliest

opportunity of changing her employment for something better. The hat-trimmers probably number two thousand, while the cap-makers constitute a numerous body, whose wages average three dollars per week. Several hundred educated girls, possessed of a fine taste, are employed in making artificial flowers. The establishments in which umbrellas and parasols are made depend almost exclusively on the labor of women, while the millinery and straw-goods branches owe most of their prosperity and merit to the handiwork of female taste and skill. There are many who work for the dentists, manufacturing artificial teeth. Even at the repulsive business of cigar-making, in a close, unwholesome atmosphere continually loaded with tobacco-fumes, there are many hundred women who earn bread for themselves and their families.

There is a lower class of workers who find employment in the spinning-mills and power-loom factories that abound among us, and these number not less than two thousand. They are the children of weavers who came from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Germany. They have been brought up from childhood to fill the bobbin or attend the spindle or the loom, and are therefore skilled hands, young as many of them are. I have known more than one affecting instance of aged parents having been comfortably maintained by daughters belonging to this class.

It has been one of the plumes in the cap of New England factory-girls, that they kept themselves genteel on factory-wages, educated their brothers, supported their parents, and yet had something over when they came to be married. I never could understand how [Pg 617] such financial marvels could be accomplished on the wages of a mill-girl. But I have seen great things in the same line done among the untidy girls of foreign parentage who work in the cotton and woollen factories of our city. These, however, have toiled on silently and in obscurity, with no poet to celebrate their doings, no newspaper to sound their praises, no magazine to trumpet forth their devotion, their virtue, or even their beauty.

I cannot give, with either fulness or accuracy, the industrial statistics of a city like this; nor would I volunteer thus to increase the dulness of my narrative, if it were in my power to do so. But it will be seen, that, wherever a door stands open into which woman may enter and obtain the privilege to toil, she is sure to ask for admission. Wages are always a consideration, but employment of some kind, whether remunerative or not, is a greater one. Of the thousands thus toiling at all kinds of labor, some descriptions of which are necessarily unhealthy, there are many whose once robust frames have become attenuated and weary unto wearing out, whose midnight couch, instead of being one of repose, is racked with cough and restlessness and pain. The once brilliant eyes have lost their lustre, the once rosy cheeks their fresh and glowing bloom. The young girl fades under unnatural labor protracted far into the night. If she should fail to toil thus, some infirm parent would go without food. The sick widow, older in years, and farther travelled round the long circuit of human sorrow, dares not indulge in the rest that is necessary even to life, lest hungry children, as well as herself, should be even more severely pinched by famine. No wonder that they knock at every door where a little money may be had for a great amount of labor.

But it must be granted, that, if the employments to which American women are compelled to resort are often severe, and less remunerative than they ought to be, they are by no means so unsuited to the sex as some which women are forced into in other countries. Only a few years ago many thousands of females were working under-ground in the English coal-mines. When laws were enacted to abolish this unsuitable employment, they still continued to work at the mouth of the mine, and are thus employed at this moment. They labor in the coke-works and coal-pits; they receive the ores at the pit's mouth, and dress and sort them. The hard nature of the employment may not be actually injurious to health, yet it quite unsexes them. Their whole demeanor becomes as coarse and rude as their degrading occupation. As they labor at men's work, so they wear men's clothing. A stranger would feel sure that they were men, and it would be by their conversation alone that he could identify them as women. He would think it strange to hear persons dressed like men conversing together about their husbands, unless he had been informed who they were.

A celebrated English author speaks thus particularly of these unhappy women:—"Some few months since, happening to be in Wigan, my attention was directed to the, to me, unwonted spectacle of one of those female colliers returning homewards from her daily labor. It was difficult to believe that the unwomanly-looking being who passed before me was actually a female; yet such was the case. Clad in coarse, greasy, and patched fustian unmentionables and jacket, thick canvas shirt, great heavy hob-nailed boots, her features completely begrimed with coal-dust, her hard and horny hands carrying the spade, pick, drinking-tin, sieve, and other paraphernalia of her occupation, her not irregular features wearing a bold, defiant expression, and nothing womanly about her except two or three latent evidences of feminine weakness, in the shape of a coral necklace, a pair of glittering ear-rings, and a bonnet, which, as regards shape, size, and color, strongly resembled the fan-tail hat of a London coal-heaver,—she proceeded unabashed through the crowded streets, no one appearing to regard the degrading spectacle as being anything unusual." [Pg 618]

Some work in the potteries at the laborious task of preparing the clay, and others in the brick-yards, in open weather, and on the wet clay with naked feet. At other times the same women are forced, by the nature of their employment, to walk over hot pipes, obliging them to wear heavy wooden shoes to protect their feet from being burned. Every stranger who sees these women at their work is shocked at the impropriety and dangerous nature of their occupation.

So far exceeding masculine strength and endurance are the tasks imposed on thousands of English dairy-women, that they constitute a special class of patients with the medical faculty,—pining and perishing under maladies arising entirely from over-fatigue and insufficient rest.

There are multitudes of women in Liverpool who work daily on the farms around that city. They walk four or five miles to the scene of their toil, where they are required to be by six in the summer months and seven in the winter. They work all day at the severest agricultural labor, wielding a heavy, clumsy hoe, digging potatoes, grubbing up stones from the soil, stooping on the ground in weeding, and compelled even to the unfeminine and offensive employment of spreading manure. For a day's work at what men alone should be required to do, they receive but a shilling! Then, worn out with fatigue, having eaten little more than the crust they brought with them,—for what more can be afforded by one who earns only a shilling a day?—they drag themselves back at nightfall over the increasingly weary miles which they traversed in the morning. What comforts can fall to the lot of such? What a domestic life must such unhappy creatures lead!

There are yet others, in that land which boasts of its high civilization, who live by carrying to the city immense loads of sand for sixpence a day,—harder work than carrying a hod. Other women may be daily seen collecting fresh manure along the streets and docks of Liverpool.

In certain rooms of the great English cotton-mills, the high temperature maintained there compels the women to work in a half-naked condition. This constant exposure of one half the body speedily destroys all feminine modesty. Added to this is an extreme, but unavoidable, filthiness of person. These poor creatures part with their health almost as quickly as with their modesty. They become hollow-cheeked and pale, while their coarse laugh and gestures indicate a deep demoralization.

There are many English women engaged in the occupation of nail-making. They work in glass-houses, glue-works, nursery-gardens, at ordinary farm-work. On some of the canals they manage the boats, open the locks, drive the horses, and sometimes even draw the boats with the line across their shoulders. In short, wherever the lowest and dirtiest drudgery is to be done, there they are almost invariably to be found. For wages, they sometimes get tenpence a day, sometimes only sixpence. If they perform overwork, they get a penny an hour,—a penny for the hauling of a canal-boat for an hour! Here is poverty in its most abject condition, and hard work in its most killing form. Their victims are necessarily toilworn, degraded, and hopelessly immoral.

It is such extreme destitution that drives women to crime. In an English paper-mill, where the girls worked at counting the sheets in a room by themselves, and made good wages, they were all well-behaved and respectable. In another department of the same mill, where the work was dirty and the wages only a shilling a day, they were almost uniformly of bad character. The base employment degraded them,—the starvation wages demoralized them. Philanthropy has not been deaf to the cries of these unhappy classes, and has made repeated and herculean efforts to improve their condition and reform their morals. But the stumbling-block of excessively low wages was always in the way. It was [Pg 619] found, that, until the physical condition was improved, the ordinary wants of life supplied, the moral status was incapable of elevation.

I grant that no one item of this long catalogue of calamities has yet overtaken the women of our own country. It would seem that the fact must be, that in other lands the sex is not more degraded than it was centuries ago, but that it has never been permitted to rise to its true level. Once put down, it has always been kept down.

The contrast between the condition of women in foreign countries and their condition here is too striking to be overlooked. We have our hardships, our trials, our privations; but what are they to those of our European sisters? If we get low wages, they are in most cases sufficient to enable us to maintain a respectable position and a decent appearance. If the influence of caste is felt among us, if by some it is considered ungenteel to work, this prejudice is not of American growth, but was transferred to our shores from the very people with whom woman is degraded to the level of the brutes. The first settlers brought it with them, and it has descended to us as an inheritance. While it is our province to confront it, we should do so bravely.

But as yet, no woman here is compelled to engage in labor that involves the necessity of dressing like a man. The law itself forbids such change of dress; and when it was proposed, some years ago, to so alter our costume as to make it half male and half female, not for working purposes, but for mere personal convenience, the public sentiment of the nation ridiculed and frowned it down. The other sex has been educated to regard us with a respect and deference too sincere to permit these foreign degradations to overtake us; while the spirit of independence infused by the nature of our government, the unrestricted intercourse of all classes with each other, and that robust training of thought which it is impossible that any American woman should fail to receive, will forever place us above the shocking contingencies to which the poor laborious Englishwoman is exposed. If, in common with her, we are compelled to work, our labor will keep us respectable, though it fail to make us rich.

These are some of the compensations which fall to the lot of the American working-woman. There are many others,—too many, indeed, to be recited here. Chief among them is the respect and courtesy accorded to us by all classes. A public insult to a well-behaved woman is never heard of. We may travel unattended over the vast network of railroads that traverse our country, and passenger and conductor will vie with each other in paying us not only respect, but attention. The former instinctively rises from his seat that we may be accommodated. It is the same in all public places,—in the streets, in churches, and in places of public entertainment. At table we are served first. In short, as we respect ourselves, so will others respect us. The laws have been modified in our favor. The property of a woman is her own, whether married or single. It is subject to no invasion by her husband's creditors, yet her dower in his estate remains good.

These are substantial concessions to our sex, and they are prime essentials to personal comfort. For my part, I am content with them, asking no other I have never slept uneasily because the law did not permit me to vote or to become a candidate for office. The time was, as I have heard, when women voted, all who were eighteen years old being entitled to deposit their ballots. They mingled in the crowds about the polls, and became as violently agitated by partisan excitements as the men. Those who would have been quiet home bodies, had no such foolish liberty been allowed them, became zealous politicians; while others, to whom excitement of some kind was a necessity of life, turned to this, and

became so wild with political furor as to unsex themselves,—if throwing aside all modesty be doing so. They carried placards in their hands among the crowd to influence [Pg 620] voters, distributed handbills and tickets, entered into familiar conversation with total strangers, many of them persons of infamous character, and pleaded and wrangled with them to secure their votes. They obeyed literally the injunction of modern political managers to "vote early,"—so many mere girls swearing that they were of legal age, when they were in reality much younger, that the singular statistical dislocation became apparent, that there were no women in the country under eighteen years old. With so loose a morality on this point, it cannot be doubted that the other injunction, to "vote often," was as generally obeyed. I have no positive information as to how the married women who thus devoted themselves to electioneering managed their domestic concerns, —who prepared the dinner, who rocked the cradle, who tended the baby,—or whether these cards were thrust upon the husbands. History is silent on this subject; but the more practical minds of the men of this generation can readily conceive how inconvenient it would be for them to be transformed into cooks and dry-nurses.

I have had no ambition to parade in Bloomer costume, or to be otherwise eccentric, even where it happened to be more comfortable. Neither have I figured as the chairman or secretary of a woman's convention, nor had my name ringing through the newspapers as an impatient struggler after more rights than I now possess. I do not think that I should be happier by being permitted to vote, and am sure there is no office I can think of that I would have for the asking. But I was never one of the strong-minded of my sex. I know that there are such, and that even in this noisy world they have made themselves heard. How attentively they have been listened to I will not stop to inquire. I have always believed that the truest self-respect lies, not in the exaction of questionable prerogatives, but in seeking to attain that shining eminence to which the common sentiment of our fellow-beings will concede honor and admiration as its rightful due.

Yet the picture which represents the true condition of our working-women has undeniably its harsh and melancholy features. It shows a daily, constant struggle for adequate compensation. There is everywhere a discrimination against them in the matter of wages, as compared with those of men. It looks, in some cases, indeed, as if women were employed only because they can be had at cheaper rates.

Probably the gay ladies covered with brilliants that flash out accumulated lustre from the footlights of the theatres they nightly visit have no suspicion that the delicate and graceful girls they see upon the stage are victims of this same unjust discrimination as regards compensation. I have never been inside a theatre, and know nothing of the stage, or of the dancing-girls, except what I hear and read. But I can readily imagine how beautiful these young creatures must appear, dressed in light and graceful attire, bringing out by all the well-known artifices of theatrical costume the most captivating charms of face and figure. As they crowd upon the stage in tableaux, which without long and toilsome rehearsal would become more confused and aimless groupings of gayly dressed dancers, they take their appointed places, and with a symmetrical unity repeat the graceful combinations of attitude and movement they have so laboriously acquired in private. The crowded house is electrified by the complicated, yet truly beautiful display. All is fair and happy on the outside. No step in painful, no grief shows itself, no consciousness of wrong appears, no face but is wreathed in smiles. The show of perfect happiness is complete.

But do the crowd of rich men who occupy box and pit bestow a thought on the domestic life of these young girls? Do their wives and daughters, lolling on cushioned seats, clothed in purple and fine linen, and waited on by a host of obsequious fops, ever think [Pg 621] whether the dancing-girls have a domestic life of any kind or not? They came to the theatre to be amused,—not to meditate; why should they permit their amusement to be clouded by a single thought as to whether any others but themselves are happy?

Sometimes, in the evolutions of the dance, the gossamer dresses of these ballet-girls are caught in the blaze of the footlights, instantly enveloping them in fire, and burning them

to a crisp,—and they are borne from the theatre to the grave. Yet these girls, thus nightly exposed to so frightful a death, are paid a third to a half less than men employed in the same vocation, and who by dress are exempt from such hazards. Moreover, the wardrobe of the men is furnished by the theatrical manager,—while the girls, those even who receive but five dollars a week, are compelled out of this slender sum to supply their own. They must change it also at every caprice of fashion or of the manager, sometimes at very short notice, and are expected, no matter how heavy the heart or how light the purse, to come before the public the impersonation of taste and elegance and happiness. A single dress will at times consume the whole salary of a month; and to obtain it even at that cost, the ballet-girl must work on it with her own hands day and night. She must submit to these impositions, or give up her occupation, when perhaps she can find nothing better to do.

The star-actor, the strutting luminary of the theatre, whether native or imported,—he who receives the highest salary for the least work,—when the performance is closed, unrobes himself and departs, with no care or oversight of the drapery in which he charmed his audience. He leaves it in the dressing-room,—it is the manager's tinsel, not his,—and the owner may see to it or not. Not so the poor ballet-girl, whose elaborate performances have been an indispensable feature of the evening's entertainment. Her gossamer dress, her costly wreaths of flowers, her nicely fitting slippers, are carefully packed up,—for they are her own, her capital in trade, and must be taken care of. The well-paid actor goes to the most fashionable restaurant, gorges himself with rich dishes and costly wines, then seeks his bed to dream blissfully over his fat salary and his luxurious supper. The ballet-girl takes up her solitary walk for the humble home in which perhaps an infirm mother is anxiously waiting her return, exposed to such libertine insults as the midnight appearance of a young girl on the street is sure to invite. It is many hours since she dined; she is fatigued and hungry, but she sups upon a crust, or the cold remains of what was at best a meagre dinner, with possibly a cup of tea, boiled by herself at midnight,—then goes wearily to bed, and sleeps as well as one so hard-worked and so poorly paid may be able to.

The gay crowds who spend their evenings at the theatres are permitted to see but one side of this tableau. The curtain lifts upon the group of smiling ballet-girls, but it never unveils their private life. The theatre is intended to amuse, not to excite commiseration for the realities of every-day life around us. Why should anything disagreeable be allowed? If it sought to make people unhappy, it would soon become an obsolete institution.

With all these impositions, actresses and ballet-girls are proverbially more tractable than actors, less exacting, more uncomplaining, more unfailingly prompt in their attendance and in the discharge of their arduous duties. Why, then, are they subjected to such grinding injustice, except because of their weakness? And who will wonder, that, thus kept constantly poor, they should sometimes fall away from virtue? Their profession surrounds them with temptations sufficiently numerous and insidious; and when to these is added the crowning one of promised relief from hopeless penury, shall Pity refuse a tear to the unhappy victims?

CASTLES.

[Pg 622]

There is a picture in my brain
That only fades to come again:
The sunlight, through a veil of rain
To leeward, gilding
A narrow stretch of brown sea-sand;
A light-house half a league from land;
And two young lovers hand in hand

A-castle-building.

Upon the budded apple-trees
The robins sing by twos and threes,
And even at the faintest breeze
Down drops a blossom;
And ever would that lover be
The wind that robs the bourgeoned tree,
And lifts the soft tress daintily
On Beauty's bosom.

Ah, graybeard, what a happy thing
It was, when life was in its spring,
To peep through Love's betrothal ring
At Fields Elysian,
To move and breathe in magic air,
To think that all that seems is fair!—
Ah, ripe young mouth and golden hair,
Thou pretty vision!

Well, well,—I think not on these two,
But the old wound breaks out anew,
And the old dream, as if 't were true,
In my heart nestles;
Then tears come welling to my eyes,
For yonder, all in saintly guise,
As 't were, a sweet dead woman lies
Upon the trestles!

FAIR PLAY THE BEST POLICY.

[Pg 623]

It is said that Lord Eldon, the typical conservative of his day, shed tears of sincere regret on the abolition of the death-penalty for five-shilling thefts. The unfortunate Lord Eldons of our own day must be weeping in rivers. Slavery is dead, and the freedmen are its bequest. Through a Red Sea which no one would have dared to contemplate, we have attained to the Promised Land. By the sublimest revenge which history has placed on record, we have returned good for evil, and have punished those who wronged us by requiring them to cease from doing wrong. The grand poetic justice by which Maryland, the first State to shed her brothers' blood, has been the first to be transformed into a condition of happy liberty, only symbolizes a like severity of kindness in store for all. Five years of devastating war will have only rounded the sublime cycle of retribution predicted so tersely by Whittier long ago:—

"Have they chained our free-born men?
Let us unchain theirs."

The time has come to put in practice that fine suggestion of the wise foreign traveller, Von Raumer, which some of us may remember to have read with almost hopeless incredulity twenty years ago. "The European abolition of the dependent relations between men of one and the same race was an easy matter, compared with the task which Americans have to perform. But if, on the one part, this task carries with it many cares, pains, and sufferings, on the other hand, the necessary instruction and guardianship of the blacks, and their final reconciliation with the whites, offer an employment so noble, influential, and sublime, that the Americans should testify with awe and humility their gratitude to Providence for intrusting them with this duty also, in addition to many others

of the greatest importance to the progress of the race. Were its performance really impossible, it would not have been imposed."

In important periods, words are events; and history may be read in the successive editions of a dictionary. The transition from the word "serf" to the word "citizen" marked no European epoch more momentous than that revealed by the changes in our American vocabulary since the war began. In the newspapers, the speeches, the general orders, one finds, up to a certain time, a certain class recognized only as "slaves." Suddenly the slaves vanish from the page, and a race of "contrabands" takes their place. After another interval, these, too, gradually disappear, and the liberated beings are called "freedmen." The revolution is then virtually accomplished; and nothing remains but to rectify the details, and drop the *d*. When the freedmen are lost in the mass of freemen, then the work will be absolutely complete; and the retrospect of its successive stages will be matter for the antiquary alone.

Corresponding with these verbal milestones, one may notice successive stages of public sentiment as to the class thus variously designated. It was usually considered that the "slaves" were a vast and almost hopeless mass of imbruted humanity. It was generally feared that the "contrabands" would prove a race of helpless paupers, whose support would bankrupt the nation. It is almost universally admitted that the "freedmen" are industrious, intelligent, self-supporting, soldierly, eager for knowledge, and far more easily managed than an equal number of white refugees.

There is no doubt that these last developments were in some degree a surprise to Abolitionists, as well as to pro-slavery prophets. They compelled the admission, either that slavery was less demoralizing than had been supposed, or else that this particular type of human nature was less easy to demoralize. It is but a few years since anti-slavery [Pg 624] advocates indignantly rejected the assertion that the English peasantry were more degraded than the slaves of South Carolina. Yet no dweller on the Sea Islands can now read a book like Kay's "Social Condition of the English People," without perceiving that the families around him, however fresh from slavery, have the best of the comparison. In the one class the finer instincts of humanity seem dead; in the lowest specimens of the other those instincts are but sleeping. I have seen men and women collected from the rice-fields by the hundred, at the very instant of transition from slavery to freedom. They were starved, squalid, ragged, and ignorant to the last degree; but I could not call them degraded, for they had the instincts of courtesy and the profoundest religious emotions. There was none of that hard, stolid, besotted dulness which seems to reduce the English peasant below the level of the brutes he tends.

And what is surprising, above all, in the freedman's condition, is, not that it shows a recuperative power, but that it has such a wonderful suddenness in the recoil. It is not a growth, but a spring. It reverses the *nihil per saltum* of the philosophers. In watching them, one is constantly reminded of those trances produced by some violent blow upon the head, from which the patient suddenly recovers with powers intact. One looks for a gradual process, and beholds a sudden illumination. This abates a little of one's wrath at slavery, perhaps, though the residuum is quite sufficient; but it infinitely enhances one's hopes for the race set free. It shows that they have simply risen to the stature of men, and must be treated accordingly.

And, indeed, when one thinks how unexampled in our tame experience is the event which has thus suddenly raised them from their low estate, one must expect to find something unexampled in the result. This is true even where liberty has come merely as a thing to be passively received; but in many cases the personal share of the freedman has been anything but passive. What can most of us know of the awful thrill which goes through the soul of a man, when, having come over a hundred miles of hourly danger out of slavery to our lines, with rifle-bullets whizzing round him and bloodhounds on the trail behind, he counts that for a preliminary trip only, and, having thus found the way, goes back through that hundred miles of peril yet again, and brings away his wife and child? As Hawthorne's artist flung his hopeless pencil into Niagara, so all one's puny literary art

seems utterly merged and swept away in the magnificent flood of untaught eloquence with which some such nameless man will pour out his tale. Two things seem worth recording, and no third: the passionate emotions of the humblest negro, as they burst into language at such a time,—and the very highest triumph of the very greatest dramatic genius, if perchance some Shakespeare or Goethe could imagine a kindred utterance. Anything intermediate must be worthless and unavailing.

Now there is no doubt, that, under this great stimulus, the freedmen will do their part; the anxious question is, whether we of the North are ready to do ours. Our part consists not chiefly in money and old clothes, nor even in school-books and teachers. The essential thing which we need to give them is justice; for that must be the first demand of every rational being. Give them justice, and they can dispense even with our love. Give them the most exuberant and zealous love, and it may only hurt them, if it leads us to subject them to fatal experiments, and to fancy them exceptions to the universal laws.

Cochin well says,—"To have set men at liberty is not enough: it is necessary to place them in society." That American emancipation should be a success is more important to every one of us than the whole sugar-crop of Louisiana or the whole rice-crop of Georgia. Secure this result, and the future opens for this nation a larger horizon than the most [Pg 625] impassioned Fourth-of-July orator in the old times dared to draw. Fail in this result, and the future holds endless disorders, with civil war reappearing at the end. If, therefore, there be any general principle to assert, any essential method to inculcate, its adoption is the most essential statesmanship. Twenty millions of white men, with ballots and school-houses, will be tolerably sure to thrive, whatever be the legislation: legislation for them is secondary, because they are assured in their own strength. But four millions of black men, just freed, and as yet unprovided with any of these tools,—the fate of the nation may hinge on a single error in legislating for them.

Now there are but two systems possible in dealing with an emancipated people. All minor projects are modifications of these two. There is the theory of preparation, under some form, and there is the theory of fair play. Preparation is apprenticeship, prescription,—the bargains of the freedman made for him, not by him. Fair play is to remove all obstructions, including the previous monopoly of the soil,—to recognize the freedman's right to all social and political guaranties, and then to let him alone.

There is undoubtedly room for an honest division of opinion on this fundamental matter, among persons equally sincere. Even among equally well-informed persons there may be room for difference, although it will hardly be denied that those who favor the theory of "preparation" are in general those who take a rather low view of the capacities of the emancipated race. The policy pursued in Louisiana, for instance, was undoubtedly based at the outset, whatever other reasons have since been adduced, on the theory that the freedmen would labor only under compulsion. I have seen an elaborate argument, from a leading officer in that Department, resting the whole theory on precisely this assumption. "The negro, born and reared in ignorance, could not for years be taught to properly understand and respect the obligations of a contract. His ideas of freedom were merged in the fact that he was to be fed and clothed and supported in idleness." Whatever excuses may since have been devised for the system, this was its original postulate. To suppose it true would be to reject the vast bulk of evidence already accumulated, all demonstrating the freedmen's willingness to work. Yet if the assumption be false, any system founded on it must be regarded by the freedmen as an insult, and must fail, unless greatly modified.

In organizing emancipation, one great principle must be kept steadily in mind. All men will better endure the total withholding of all their rights than a system which concedes half and keeps back the other half. This has been admirably elucidated by De Tocqueville in his "Ancien Régime," in showing that the very prosperity of the reign of Louis XVI. prepared the way for its overthrow. "The French found their position the more insupportable, the better it became.... It often happens that a people which has endured the most oppressive laws without complaint, and as if it did not feel them, throws them

off violently the instant the burden is lightened,... and experience shows that the most dangerous moment to a bad government is usually that in which it begins to mend. The evil which one suffers patiently as inevitable seems insupportable as soon as he conceives the idea of escaping it. All that is then taken from abuses seems to uncover what remains, and render the feeling of it more poignant. The evil has become less, it is true, but the sensibility is keener."

Every one who is familiar with the freedmen knows that this could not be a truer description of their case, if every word had been written expressly for them. The most timid laborer on the remotest plantation will not bear from his superintendent or his teacher the injustice he bore from his master. The best-disciplined black soldier will not [Pg 626] take from his captain one half the tyranny which his overseer might safely have inflicted. Freedom they understand; slavery they understand. When they become soldiers, they know that part of their civil rights are to be temporarily waived; and as soon as they can read, they study the "Army Regulations," to make sure that they concede no more. Neither as citizens nor as soldiers do they retain the faculty of dumb, dead submission which sustains them through every conceivable wrong while enslaved. Before a blow from his master the slave helplessly cowers, and takes refuge in silent and inert despair. He draws his head into his shell, like a turtle, and simply endures. Liberate him, he quits the shell forever, and the naked palpitating tissue is left bare. Afterwards, every touch reaches a nerve, and every nerve excites a whole muscular system in reflex action.

I remember an amusing incident which took place while I was on picket at Port Royal. Complaints began to come in against a certain neighboring superintendent, an ex-clergyman, whose demeanor was certainly not creditable to his cloth, but whose offences would have seemed slight enough in the old plantation times. Still they were enough to exasperate the people under his charge, and the ill feeling extended rapidly among the black soldiers, many of whom had been slaves on that very island. At last their captain felt it necessary to interfere. "Has it ever occurred to you, my dear Sir," he one day asked the superintendent, "that you are in some danger from these soldiers whom you meet every day with their guns in the picket paths?"—The official colored and grew indignant. "Do you mean to say, Sir, that your men are forming a conspiracy to murder me?"—"By no means," returned the courteous captain. "I trust you will find my soldiers too well disciplined for any such impropriety. But you may not have noticed that the regiment has at present exceedingly poor guns which often go off at half-cock, so that no one can be held responsible. It was but the other day that one of our own officers was shot dead by such an accident,"—which was unhappily true,—"and consider, my dear Sir, how very painful"——"I understand you, I understand you," interrupted the excited divine, putting spurs to his horse. It was a remarkable coincidence that we never heard another complaint from that plantation.

It was this new-born sensitiveness that brought to so sudden a close the attempted apprenticeship of the British West Indies. Cochin, the wisest recent critic, fully recognizes this connection of events. "Either the regulations were incomplete, or the masters failed in their observance, or such failures were not repressed, so that the slaves were in many places maltreated and mutinous. In proportion as the moment of freedom approached, some broke loose prematurely from their duties, others aspired prematurely to their rights. Patience long delayed is easier than patience whose end is approaching; it is at the last moment that one grows weary of waiting."

The best preparation for freedom is freedom. It is of infinite importance that we should avail ourselves of the new-born self-reliance of the freedmen while its first vigor lasts, and guard against sacrificing those generous aspirations which are the basis of all our hope. It is not now doubted (except, perhaps, in Louisiana) that the first eager desire of the emancipated slave is to own land and support his own household. I remember that one of the ablest sergeants in the First South Carolina Volunteers, when some of us tried to convince him that the colored people attached too much importance to the mere ownership of land, utterly refused all acquiescence in the criticism. "We shall still be slaves," he said, in an impassioned way, "until eb'ry man can raise him own bale ob

cotton, and put him brand upon it, and say, *Dis is mine*." And it was generally admitted in the Department of the South, that the freedmen on Port Royal Island, who had mostly worked for themselves, had made more decided progress, and were more fitted for entire [Pg 627] self-reliance, than those who had remained as laborers on the plantations owned by Mr. Philbrick and his associates upon St. Helena Island. Yet it would be impossible to try the system of tenant-industry more judiciously than it was tried under those circumstances; and if even that was found, on the whole, to retard the development of self-reliance in the freedmen, what must it be where this is a part of a great system of coercion, and where the mass of the employers are still slaveholders at heart?

It is a fact of the greatest importance, that King Cotton turns out to be a thorough citizen-king, and adapts himself very readily to changed events. The great Southern staple can be raised by small cultivators as easily as corn or potatoes; and difficulty begins only when sugar and rice are to be produced. Yet it will not be long before these also will come within reach of the freedmen, if they continue their present tendency towards joint-stock operations. In the colored regiments of South Carolina there are organizations owning plantations, saw-mills, town-lots, and a grocery or two: they even meditate a steamboat. A few of these associations no doubt will go to pieces, through fraud or inexperience. Indeed, I knew of one which was nearly broken asunder by the president's taking a fancy to send in his resignation: no other member knew the meaning of that hard word, and they were disposed to think it a declaration of hostilities from the presiding officer. But even if such associations all fail, for the present, the training which they give will be no failure; and when we consider that there are already individuals among the freedmen who have by profitable ventures laid up twenty or thirty thousand dollars within three years, it seems no extravagant ambition for a joint-stock company to aim at a rice-mill.

The Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, where, from the very beginning, under the limited authority of General Saxton, the most favorable results of emancipation have been attained, are now to be the scene of a larger experiment, still under the same wise care. The objections urged by General Butler, with his usual acuteness, against some details of the project of General Sherman, must not blind us to its real importance. Its implied exclusions can easily be modified; but the rights which it vests in the freedmen are a substantial fact, which, when once established, it will require a revolution to overthrow. The locality fixed for the experiment is singularly favorable. There is no region of the country where a staple crop can be grown so profitably by small landholders. There is no agricultural region so defensible, in a military aspect. So difficult is the navigation of the muddy tide-streams which endlessly intersect these islands,—so narrow are the connecting causeways,—so completely is every plantation surrounded and subdivided by hedges, ditches, and earthworks, long since made for agricultural purposes, and now most available for defence,—that nothing this side of the famous military region of La Vendée (which this district much resembles) can be more easily held by peasant proprietors.

The mere accidents of the war have often led to the experiment of leaving small bodies of colored settlers, in such favorable localities, to support and defend themselves. This was successfully done, for instance, on Barnwell Island, a tract two or three miles square, which lies between Port Royal Island and the main, in the direction of Pocotaligo, and is the site of the Rhett Plantation, described in Mr. W. H. Russell's letters. This region was entirely beyond our picket lines, and was separated from them by a navigable stream, while from the Rebel lines it was divided only by a narrow creek that would have been fordable at low water, but for the depth of mud beneath and around it. On this island a colony of a hundred or thereabouts dwelt, in peace, with no resident white man, and only an occasional visit from their superintendent. There were some twenty able-bodied [Pg 628] settlers who did picket duty every night, by a system of their own, and for many months there was no alarm whatever,—the people raising their cotton and supporting themselves. This went on, until, by a fatal error of judgment, the men were all conscripted into the army. This was soon discovered by the Rebels, who presently began to make raids upon the island, so that ultimately the whole population had to be withdrawn.

Extend such settlements indefinitely, and we have the system adopted by General Sherman. It is a system which, like every other practicable method, must depend on military authority at last, and for which the army should therefore be directly responsible. The main argument for intrusting the care of the freedmen to a bureau of the War Department is, that it must come to be controlled by that Department, at any rate, and that it is best to have the responsibility rest where the power lies. On conquered territory there can be but one authority, and no conceivable ingenuity can construct any other system. If authority is apparently divided, then either the military commander does not understand his business, or he is hampered by impracticable orders and should ask to be relieved. This is what has paralyzed the action of every military governor, a title which implies a perfectly anomalous function, certain to lead to trouble. Almost all the great good effected by General Saxton has been achieved in spite of that function, not by means of it; and it was not until he was placed in military command of the post of Beaufort that he was able, even in that limited region, to establish any satisfactory authority. All else that he did was by sufferance, and often he could not even obtain sufferance.

While the war lasts, martial law must last. After martial law ceases, civil institutions, whatever they may then be, must resume control. It is therefore essential that all the rights of the freedmen should be put upon a sure basis during the contest; but, whatever method be adopted, the real control must inevitably rest with the War Department. It cannot be transferred to civilians; nor is there reason to suppose it desirable for the freedmen that it should. Whatever be the disorder resulting from military command, it has the advantage of being more definite and intelligible than civil mismanagement; there is always some one who can be held responsible, and the offender is far more easily brought to account. On this point I speak from personal experience. In South Carolina I have seen outrages persistently practised among the freedmen by civilians, for which a military officer could have been cashiered in a month. I have oftener been appealed to for redress against civilians than against officers or soldiers. I have been compelled to post sentinels to keep superintendents away from their own plantations, to prevent disturbance. I have been a member of a military commission which sentenced to the pillory an eminent Sunday-school teacher who had been convicted of the unlawful sale of whiskey,—and this in a community into which the majority of the civilians had come with professedly benevolent intent.

The truth is, that abuses, acts of oppression towards the freedmen, do not proceed from mere antecedent prejudice in the army or anywhere else. They proceed from the temptations of power, and from that impatience which one is apt to restrain among his equals and to indulge among his inferiors. The irritability of an Abolitionist may lead him to outrages as great as those which spring from the selfishness of a mere soldier. It is becoming almost proverbial, in colored regiments, that radical anti-slavery men make the best and the worst officers: the best, because of their higher motives and more elevated standard; the worst, because they are often ungoverned, insubordinate, impatient, and will sometimes venture on high-handed acts, under the fervor of their zeal, such as a mere soldier would not venture to commit. Yet in an army such aberrations, like all [Pg 629] others, yield to discipline. But on a solitary plantation the temptations and immunities of the slave-driver recur; and I have seen men yield to these, who had safely passed the ordeal of persecution and mobs at home.

It was thus, perhaps, that General Sherman and his advisers felt justified in adopting the theory of absolute separation, on the Sea Islands,—seeing that the companionship of Southern white men would be an evil, and that of Northern men by no means an unmixed good. Yet it seems altogether likely that the system is so far wrong, and will be modified. Separation is better than "preparation," and is a good antidote to it. It is better to assume the freedmen too self-reliant than too feeble,—better to exclude white men than to give them the monopoly of power. Nevertheless, the principle of exclusion is wrong, though it is happily a wrong not fundamental to the system, and hence easily corrected. If the people of any village desire to introduce a white teacher, the prohibition would become an obvious outrage, which hardly any administration would risk the odium of maintaining. The injury, in a business point of view, done by separation would perhaps

strike deeper, and be harder to correct. Here, for instance, is the flourishing negro village of Mitchellville, just outside of the fortifications of Hilton Head. All that is produced in the numerous garden-patches of the suburb is to be sold in the town; all the clothing that is to be worn in the suburb must be obtained in exchange for the garden-products. Yet, if newspaper correspondents tell truth, the temporary commander of that post has taken it on himself to forbid white men from trading in Mitchellville, or black men at Hilton Head. How, then, is business to be transacted? Are the inhabitants of the town to be allowed to come to the sally-port of the fortifications, hand out a yard of ribbon and receive two eggs in return? If the entire exchanges are to be intrusted to a few privileged favorites, black or white, then another source of fraud is added to those which lately, in connection with the recruiting bounties, have been brought to bear upon the freedmen of that Department, and, if the truth be told, under the same auspices from which this order proceeds. Be this as it may, it seems a pity that these poor people, who are just learning what competition means, and will walk five miles farther to a shop where dry goods are retailed a little cheaper, should be checked and hampered in their little commerce by an attempt to abolish all the laws of political economy in their favor.

If the freedmen were a race like the Indians, wasting away by unseen laws through the mere contact of the white man, the case would be very different. Or if they were a timid and dependent race, needing to be thrust roughly from the nest, like young birds, and made self-dependent, the difference would be greater still. But it is not so. The negro race fits into the white race, and thrives by its side; and the farther South, the greater the thriving. The emancipated slave is also self-relying, and, if fair play be once given, can hold his own against his former master, whether in trade or in war. He is improvident while in slavery, as is the Irishman in Ireland, because he has no opportunity to be anything else. Shift the position, and the man changes with it,—becoming, whether Irishman or negro, a shrewd economist, and rather formidable at a bargain. Almost every freedman is cheated by a white man once after his emancipation, and many twice; but when it comes to the third bargain, it is observed that mere Anglo-Saxon blood is not sufficient to secure a victory.

It is claimed that this principle of separation was adopted after consultation with the leading colored men of Savannah, and that the only dissenter was the Rev. James Lynch, a Northern colored man. But it also turns out that Mr. Lynch was the only man among them who had ever seen the experiment tried of the mingling of the races in a condition of liberty. He is a man of marked energy and ability, and has been for two years one of [Pg 630] the most useful missionaries in the neighborhood of Port Royal. Some weight is, no doubt, to be attached to the opinions of those who had known white men only as masters; but we should not wholly ignore the judgment of the only delegate who had met them on equal terms. In restoring men from the trance of slavery, the instincts of the patient, though doubtless an important fact, are not the only point to be considered. It may be true, as Hippocrates said, that the second-best remedy will succeed better than the best, if the patient likes it best. But it is not safe to forget that those who have never known their brother-men except in the light of oppressors may have some crude notions on political economy which a milder experience might change. At any rate, the more exclusive features of General Sherman's project may be changed by a stroke of the pen; and so far as it tends to secure the freedmen in permanent possession of the Sea Islands, it is almost an unmingled good.

The truth is, that, in these changing days, none of these specific "systems" are very important. "Separation" is interesting chiefly because it is the last project reported; "preparation," because it was the last but one. What is needed is not so much a "system" as the settled resolution to do daily justice. Let any military commander merely determine to treat the emancipated black population precisely as he would treat a white population under the same circumstances,—to encourage industry, schools, savings-banks, and all the rest, but not interfere with any of them too much,—and he will have General Saxton's method and his success. The question what to do with the soil is far more embarrassing than what to do with the freedmen; and happily the soil also can be let alone, and the freedmen will take care of that and of themselves too. We must say to the

cotton lords, as Horne Tooke said to Lord Somebody in England,—"If, as you claim, power should follow property, then we will take from you the property, and the power shall follow." And fortunately for us, the same logic of events points to the political enfranchisement of the black loyalists, as the only way to prevent Congress from being replenished with plotting and disloyal men. Fair play to them is thus fair play to all of us; and, like Tony Lumpkin, in Goldsmith's comedy, if we are indifferent as to disappointing those who depend upon us, we may at least be trusted not to disappoint ourselves.

The lingering caste-institutions in the Free States,—as the exclusive street-cars of Philadelphia, the separate schools of New York, the special gallery reserved for colored people in Boston theatres,—must inevitably pass away with the institution which they merely reflect. The perfect acquiescence with which abolition of these things is regarded, so soon as it takes effect, shows how little they are really sustained by public opinion. These are local matters, mere corollaries, and will settle themselves. They are not upheld by any conviction, and scarcely even by prejudice, but by an impression in each citizen's mind that there is some other citizen who is not prepared for the change. When it comes to the point, it is found that everybody is perfectly prepared, and that the objections were merely traditional. Who has ever heard of so much as a petition to restore any of the unjust distinctions which have thus been successively outgrown?

But in our vast national dealings with the freedmen, we still drift from experiment to experiment, and adopt no settled purpose. Did this proceed from the difficulty of wise solution, in so vast a problem, one could blame it the less. But thus far the greatest want has been, not of wisdom, but of fidelity,—not of constructive statesmanship, but rather of pains to discern and of honesty to observe the humbler path of daily justice. When we consider that the order which laid the basis for the whole colored army—the "Instructions" of the Secretary of War to Brigadier-General Saxton, dated August 25, 1862—was so carelessly regarded by the War Department that it was not even placed on file, but a copy had to be supplied, the year following, by the officer to whom it was issued, it is obvious in what a hap-hazard way we have stumbled, into the most momentous acts. A government that still repudiates a duty so simple as the payment of arrears due under its own written pledges to the South Carolina soldiers can hardly shelter itself behind the plea of any complicated difficulties in its problem. Let us hope that the freedmen, on their part, will be led by some guidance better than our example: that they will not neglect their duties as their rights have been neglected, and not wrong others as they have been wronged. [Pg 631]

REVIEWS AND LITERARY NOTICES.

Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher, D. D. Edited by CHARLES BEECHER. With Illustrations. In Two Volumes. New York. Harper & Brothers.

Reading this life of Dr. Beecher is like walking over an ancient battle-field, silent and grass-grown, but ridged with graves, and showing still by its conformation the disposition of the troops which once struggled there in deadly contest,—and while we linger, lo! the graves are graves no more. The dry bones come together,—sinew and flesh form upon them,—the skin covers them about,—the breath enters into them,—they live and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great and mighty army. Drums beat, swords flash, and the war of the Titans rages again around us.

The life of Dr. Beecher is closely inwoven with the ecclesiastical history of New England. Ecclesiastical, like civil history, is chiefly a military record; and through both these volumes a sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction. We who have fallen on comparatively quiet days can hardly conceive the intensity and violence of the excitement that glowed at our theological centres, and flamed out even to their

circumferences, when the great Unitarian controversy was at its height,—when Park-Street Church alone of the Boston churches stood firm in the ancient faith, and her site was popularly christened "Hell-Fire Corner,"—when, later, the Hanover-Street Church was known as "Beecher's Stone Jug" and the firemen refused to play upon the flames that were destroying it. There were giants on the earth in those days, and they wrestled in giant fashion.

All this conflict Dr. Beecher saw, and a large part of it he was. In Connecticut he had drawn his sword against intemperance, "Toleration," and other forms of what he considered evil, and had been recognized as a mighty man of valor in his generation; but it was in this Unitarian controversy that he leaped to the battlements of Zion, sounded the alarm through the land, and took his place henceforth as leader of the hosts of the elect. "I had watched the whole progress," he says, "and read with eagerness everything that came out on the subject. My mind had been heating, heating, heating. Now I had a chance to strike." And strike he did, blows rapid and vigorous, whose echoes ring even through these silent pages. It was to him a real warfare. His speech ran naturally to military phrase. He saw the foe coming in like a flood. "The enemy, driven from the field by the immortal Edwards, have returned to the charge, and now the battle is to be fought over again." "The time has at length fully come to take hold of the Unitarian controversy by the horns." "The enemies ... are collecting their energies and meditating a comprehensive system of attack, which demands on our part a corresponding concert of action." "Let the stand taken be had in universal and everlasting remembrance, and we shall soon get the enemy out of the camp." "Wake up, ministers, form conspiracies against error, and scatter firebrands in the enemy's camp." "A schism in our ranks, with the enemy before and [Pg 632] behind us, would indeed be confusion in the camp." "It is the moment to charge as Wellington did at Waterloo." "Will Walker and his friends feel as if my gun was loaded deep enough for the first shot, and will the Orthodox think I have done so far sufficient execution?... As the game is out of sight, I must depend on those who are near to tell me what are the effects of the first fire." "My sermons on Depravity ... are point-blank shot."

Nor was the fight between Unitarian and Orthodox alone. Even within the ranks of the faithful dissensions arose, and many a time and oft had Dr. Beecher to defend himself against the charges, the insinuations, and the suspicions of his brethren. To the eyes of the more cautious or the more inert his adventurous feet seemed ever approaching the verge of heresy. Just where original sin ceases to be original and becomes acquired,—just where innate ill-desert meets voluntary transgression,—just where moral government raises the standard of rebellion against Absolutism,—just where New Haven theology branches off from ultra Orthodoxy on the debatable ground, the border-land of metaphysics and religion, Dr. Beecher and his brethren were engaged in perpetual skirmishing.

It is not our province to decide or even to discuss the points at issue. Uninitiated laymen may perhaps be pardoned for hearing in all this din of battle but the echo of the Schoolmen's guns. Whether the two-year-old baby who dashes his bread-and-butter on the floor, in wrath at the lack of marmalade, does it because of a prevailing effectual tendency in his nature, or in consequence of his federal alliance with Adam, or from a previous surfeit of plum-cake, is a question which seems to bear a general family likeness to the inquiry, whether there is such a thing as generic bread-and-butter, or only such specific slices as arouse infant ire and nourish infant tissue. But around both classes of questions strife has waxed hot. Both have called out the utmost strength of the ablest minds, and both, however finespun they may seem to the uninstructed eye, have contributed in no small measure to the mental and moral health of the world. But while we would not make so great a mistake as to look with a supercilious smile either upon the conflict between Nominalism and Realism or on that between the Old and the New School theology, (notwithstanding we might find countenance in Dr. Pond of Bangor, who writes to Dr. Beecher, "In Maine we do not sympathize very deeply in your Presbyterian squabbles, except to look on and laugh at you all!") it may be permitted us as laymen to confess a greater interest in the phenomena than in the event of the struggle. We leave it, therefore, to our ecclesiastical contemporaries to descend into the arena and

fight their battles o'er again, content ourselves to stand without and give thanks for the Divine voice that rises above the clash of contending creeds, saying alike to wise and foolish, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Spite of all the truculence of his language, and through all his strenuous thrust and parry, Dr. Beecher's sincerity, integrity, and piety shine forth unclouded. Looking at this memorial in one aspect, he seems to have assumed a charge which Mr. Lincoln has professed himself unable to undertake, namely, to "run the churches." He evidently believed that the Lord had committed to the clergy, of whom he was chief, the building up of a great ecclesiastical edifice, whose foundation should be laid in New England, but whose wings should presently cover the whole land. Individual churches were the pillars of this edifice. Now in Boston, now in New Haven, now at Cincinnati, he watched its progress, noting a fault, praising an excellence, repairing mistakes, strengthening weaknesses. It was the business and the delight of his life. He had his agents throughout the country. The churches might be many, but the cause was one. Ever watchful, ever active, he spoke of his measures and his plans in just such terse, homely phrase as any house-carpenter would use. Doubtless the fragile reverence of many a clerical cumberer of the ground was shocked by his familiar use of their sacred edge-tools. One can imagine the thrill of horror with which the Reverend Cream Cheese, of the Church of the Holy (Self-) Assumption, would hear the assertion, that "it was as finely organized a church as ever trod shoe-leather." Our elegant Unitarian friends have probably quite forgotten, and will hardly thank us for reminding them, that there ever was a time when they "put mouth to ear, and hand to pocket, and said, *St-boy!*" Our decorous Calvinistic D.D.s would scarcely recognize their own dogmas at the inquiry-meeting, where "language of simplicity came along, and they'd see me talking 'way down in language fit [Pg 633] for children.... And then the language of free agency and ability came along ... and they'd stick up their ears.... But next minute came along the plea of morality and self-dependence, and I took them by the nape of the neck and twisted their head off." There must have been great inertness in New England at the time of his first visit to Boston, when "nobody seemed to have an idea that there was anything but what God had locked up and frozen from all eternity. The bottom of accountability had fallen out. My first business was to put it in again." The coldness and indifference of the Church, which ministers usually employ the vivid language of the Bible regarding the ways of Zion to portray, he described in the equally vivid, but less dignified New England vernacular. "What did I do at Litchfield but to 'boost'? They all lay on me, and moved very little, except as myself and God moved them. I spent sixteen of the best years of my life at a dead lift in boosting." And we greatly fear that the reverend seigniors in Synod and Presbytery, notwithstanding their firm faith in Total Depravity, will be sadly scandalized at hearing it announced, "That was a scampy concern, that Old School General Assembly, and is still."

But he would make a great mistake who should infer, that, in thus busily and energetically building up the temple, Dr. Beecher forgot the glory of the Lord which was to dwell in it. He treated it, indeed, as a business matter, but it was the business of immortal souls and of the Most High God. No merely professional attachment bound him to it; there was no contemplating it from a public and a private point of view; but his whole inner and outer life was enlisted. Not only the religious public, but, what is even more rare, his own family, were vitalized with his spirit and drawn into his train. The doctrines that he preached from the pulpit had been discussed over the woodpile in the cellar. His public teachings had first been household words. The Epistles, death, a preëxistent state, were talked over by the fireside. Theology took precedence even of the baby in the family letters. One breath announces that he could not find any trout at Guilford, and the next that he has preached his sermon on Depravity. Catharine writes, that the house needs paper and paint very much, father's afternoon sermon perfectly electrified her, and his last article will make all smoke again. Harriet records, with great inward exultation, that, on their Western journey, father preached, and gave them the Taylorite heresy on Sin and Decrees to the highest notch, and what was amusing, he

established it from the "Confession of Faith," and so it went high and dry above all objections, and delighted his audience, who had never heard it christened heresy. He sets forth to attend the Synod, accompanied by his son Henry, with one rein in the right hand, and one in the left, and an apple in each, biting them alternately, and alternately telling Tom how to get the harness mended, and showing Henry the true doctrine of Original Sin. His fatherly heart yearned over his children; with voice and pen and a constant watchful tenderness, he knew no rest till the whole eleven had adopted the faith for which he so earnestly contended. The genius of Napoleon elicited almost a personal affection, and he read every memoir from St. Helena with the earnest desire of shaping out of those last conversations some hope for his future. He mourned for Byron as for a friend, lamenting sorely that wasted life, and was sure, that, if Byron "could only have talked with Taylor and me, it might have got him out of his troubles." Indeed, he evidently considered "Taylor and me," not to say me and Taylor, the two pillars of Orthodoxy,—in no wise from vanity, but in the simplicity of truth. He spoke of his own feats with an openness that could proceed only from a guileless heart. The work of the Lord was the one thing that absorbed him, to the oblivion of all lesser interests. He was as absolutely free from vanity on the one side as from envy on the other. Lyman Beecher as Lyman Beecher had no existence. Lyman Beecher as God's servant was the verity. He rejoiced in the prosperity of the sacred cause: if it was Beecher's hand that furthered it, he exulted; if another than Beecher's, it was all the same. There was no room in his mind for any petty personal jealousy. He stood in nobody's way. He enjoyed every man's success. So the building rose, it was of small moment who wielded the hammer. Ever on the watch for indications of the mind and will of God, it was from zeal, not ambition, that he waited for no precedence, but pushed through the opened door, opened it never so narrowly. In doubt as to what is the true meaning of some "providence," he advises "to take hold of the end of the rope that is put into your hand, and pull it till we see what is on the other end."

Yet, with all his electric enthusiasm, he was wise in his generation and beyond his generation, and in some respects beyond our own. He watched for souls as one that must give account. He adapted means to ends. He was careful not by fierce opposition to push doubt into error. When a drunkard died, he remembered that "his mother was an habitual drinker, and he was nursed on milk-punch, and the thirst was in his constitution"; so he hoped "that God saw it was a constitutional infirmity, like any other disease." He reduced the dogma of Total Depravity to the simple proposition, "that men by nature do not love God supremely, and their neighbor as themselves." He stoutly resisted the attempt to overawe belief, either his own or another's. He refused to expend his strength in contending with the friends of Christ, when there was so much to be done against his foes. Yet he was as far as possible from that narrow sectarianism, which sees no evil in its own ranks and no good in those of its adversaries. He denounced the faults of the Orthodox as heartily as those of the Unitarians. Standing in the forefront of Calvinism, he did not hesitate to say, "It is my deliberate opinion that the false philosophy which has been employed for the exposition of the Calvinistic system has done more to obstruct the march of Christianity, and to paralyze the saving power of the Gospel, and to raise up and organize around the Church the unnumbered multitude to behold and wonder and despise and perish, than all other causes beside.... Who of us are to suffer the loss of the most wood and hay by the process [of purging out this false philosophy] I cannot tell; but all mine is at the Lord's service at any time; and if all which is in New England should be brought out and laid in one pile, I think it would make a great bonfire." [Pg 634]

Unfortunately, there was something worse in the Church than false philosophy, unless this book very grievously falsifies facts. Her bitterest foe would hardly dare charge upon Zion such iniquity as the friendly unbosoming in these pages reveals. Wily intrigue, reckless perversion of language, rule or ruin, such things as we regret to see even in a political caucus, are to be found in abundance in the counsels of men who profess to be working only for the glory of God and the good of souls. Insinuations of craft and cowardice are set on foot, where direct charges fail for want of evidence. Rumor is made to do the work which reason cannot accomplish. Private letters are surreptitiously

published, the publication defended as done with the permission of the writer, and testimony to the contrary refused a hearing. Extracts are taken out of their connection and made to carry a different meaning from that which they originally bore. What cannot be put down by evidence is to be put down by odium. There is a "cool and deliberate determination on the part of one half the Presbyterian Church to inflict upon the other half all the injury possible." Dr. Beecher's son, himself a prominent clergyman, is forced to confess, that, "for a combination of meanness and guilt and demoralising power in equal degrees of intensity, I have never known anything to exceed the conspiracy in New England and in the Presbyterian Church to crush by open falsehood and secret whisperings my father and others, whom they have in vain tried to silence by argument or to condemn in the courts of the Church." And yet, as Dr. Beecher stands forth in this biography, in native honor clad, so, undoubtedly, does Brother Nettleton stand forth in his biography, and Brother Woods in his, and Brother Wilson in his, and all the brethren in theirs,—all honorable men. We venture to say that not one of these reverend traducers and mischief-makers was "dealt with" by his church for his evil-doing. We make no doubt he went through life without loss of prestige or diminution of sanctity, and was bewailed at his death by the sons of the prophets in tenderest phrase, "My father! my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

We do not attribute these shameful proceedings to Orthodoxy, still less to Christianity. "Perhaps it is a fact of our fallen nature, as Dr. Beecher asserted, that "Adam and grace will do twice as much as grace alone." But surely all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition. Seeing how unlovely is the spectacle of bickering and bitterness, let Christians of every name look well to their steps, saying often one to another, and especially repeating in concert, at the opening of every council, conference, synod, and assembly,—

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For 't is their nature, too.

"But bretheren, we will never let
Our angry passions rise:
Our little hands were never made
To tear each other's eyes."

[Pg 635]

This biography, as the title-page asserts, is edited rather than written. By familiar talk and private letters, the subject is made, as far as possible, to tell his own story. What remains is supplied by the pens of different members of the family and of old friends. The result is a composite, the connections of whose parts we do not always readily discern. But what the book lacks in coherence is more than made up in accuracy and vividness. We obtain, by glimpses of the man, a far more exact knowledge of his character and work than we should by ever so steady a contemplation of some other man's symmetrical rendering of his life. We feel the beating of his great, fiery heart. We delight in his large, loving nature. We partake in his honest indignation. We smile, sometimes not without tears, at his childlike simplicity. We sit around the household hearth, join in the theological disputation, and share the naïve satisfaction of the whole Beecher family with themselves and each other. We see how it was that the father set them all a-spinning each in his own groove, but all bearing the unmistakable Beecher stamp. We feel his irresistible energy, his burning zeal, his magnetic force yet thrilling through the land and arousing every sluggish power to come to the help of the Lord-against the mighty. For such a life there is indeed no death.

Engineer and Artillery Operations against the Defences of Charleston Harbor in 1863. Comprising the Descent upon Morris Island, the Demolition of Fort Sumter, the Reduction of Forts Wagner and Gregg. With Observations on Heavy Ordnance, Fortifications, etc. By L. A. GILLMORE, Major of Engineers, Major-General of Volunteers, and Commanding

General of the Land Forces engaged. Published by Authority. New York: D. Van Nostrand.

Just after Major-General Hunter was removed—or, as the delicate military phrase went, "temporarily relieved"—from the command of the Department of the South, there was a report current in those parts of a conversation, perhaps imaginary, between President Lincoln and the relieved General, on his arrival at Washington. The gossip ran, that on General Hunter's inquiring the cause of his removal, the good-natured President could only say that "Horace Greeley said he had found a man who could *do the job*." The job was the taking of Charleston, and the "coming man" was Brigadier-General (now Major-General) Gillmore. The so-called "siege of Charleston," after being the nine-days'-wonder of two continents, dwindled to a mere daily item in the dingy newspapers of that defiant city,—an item contemptuously sandwiched between the meteorological record and the deaths and marriages. The "coming man" came and went, being in his turn "temporarily relieved," and consigned to that obscurity which is the Nemesis of major-generals. He is more fortunate, however, than some of his compeers, in experiencing almost at once the double resurrection of autobiography and reappointment. Whether his new career be more or less successful than the old one, the autobiography is at least worth printing, so far as it goes. Had an instalment of it appeared when the siege of Charleston was at its height, it would have been translated into a dozen European languages, and would have been read more eagerly in London and Paris than even in Washington. Even now it will be read with interest, and with respect to rifled ordnance will be a permanent authority.

The total impression left behind by General Gillmore, in his former career in the Department of the South, was that of an unwearied worker and an admirable engineer officer. Military gifts are apt to be specific, and a specialist seldom gains reputation in the end by being raised to those elevated posts which require a combination of faculties. If the object of General Gillmore's original appointment was to silence Fort Sumter and to throw shell into Charleston, he was undoubtedly the man who could "do the job." If the aim was to take Charleston with a small military force, or even a large one, the wisdom of the choice was less clear. If the intent was to govern an important Department, without reference to further conquests,—to regulate trade, organize industry, free the slaves, educate the freedmen,—then the selection was still more doubtful. For this sphere of action, which had seemed so important to Mitchell and to Hunter, was foreign to Gillmore's whole habits and temperament, and he never could galvanize himself into caring for it. His strong point, after all, was in dealing with metal rather than with men, white or black. And as (since the disaster at Olustee) he can hardly be charged with any squeamish unwillingness to throw upon others the chief responsibility of any seeming failures of his own, it is perhaps fortunate that in this book he is able to keep chiefly upon the ground where he is strongest. [Pg 636]

Yet, after all, the work is historical as well as scientific. And there is in it such a mingling of great questions of philanthropy with mere questions of grooving, and black soldiers jostle so inextricably with black guns, that the common reader and the mere student of human nature will find an interest in the book, as well as that intelligent lady of our acquaintance, who, having heard of the brilliant ornithology of the tropics, was eager to read about the hundred-pound "Parrotts" of South Carolina.

As to the guns, the contributions of this superbly illustrated volume are of the very greatest value. Nothing in print equals it, except Mr. Holley's recent great treatise, some of whose tables are here also employed by permission. Here we find the most authentic statements, both as to the work done by the large rifled guns, and as to that trick of bursting which is their gravest weakness. But for this, the heavy ordnance of Parrott would be a magnificent success. And when we consider that six two-hundred pounders and seventeen one-hundred pounders were burst during the siege of Charleston, as recorded in this volume,—that five one-hundred pounders are said to have been burst in a single week on Morris Island at a later period, and that Admiral Porter reports six similar instances during the first attack on Fort Fisher,—it was certainly worth while in the

publisher of this work, with his usual liberality, to devote a long series of admirable plates, prepared under the direction of Captain Mordecai, to the details of these dangerous fractures.

It is generally admitted that the smaller "Parrott" guns, including the thirty pounders, approach very near perfection. The large calibres have precisely the same merits, as respects range, accuracy, and simplicity of construction and manipulation. This their work against Fort Sumter shows. But the deficiency of endurance belongs to the large guns alone; since the smaller, after an immense amount of service, have shown no sort of weakness. Yet, if the principle be correct, on which the latter are strengthened, there seems no reason why the same degree of endurance may not yet be secured for the larger. It is simply a mechanical problem, whose solution cannot be far off.

The guns have burst both longitudinally and laterally, and in quite a variety of position and service. General Turner's suggestion, that an important secondary cause of bursting is the presence of sand within the bore, among the ever-blowing sand-hills of the Sea Islands, seems justified by the fact that in the naval service the accidents have been far less frequent,—a thing in all respects fortunate, by the way, as such explosions on board ship involve far greater sacrifice of life than on land. Another secondary cause is the premature explosion of shell within the bore, a defect which should be also remediable. Indeed, the "Parrott" shell were at first notoriously defective, often bursting too soon or not at all, and thus losing much of their usefulness; though this defect has now been, in a great degree, remedied. The discussion of the whole subject in this book seems reasonable and unprejudiced, and a letter from the maker of the guns, at the end, gives with equal candor his side of the question.

General Gillmore's narrative of his military operations is exceedingly interesting, and generally clear and simple. The descent upon Morris Island from Folly Island was undoubtedly one of the most skilful achievements of the war. Under the superintendence of Brigadier-General Vogdes, forty-seven pieces of artillery, with two hundred rounds of ammunition for each gun, and provided with suitable parapets, splinter-proof shelters, and magazines, were placed in position, by night, within speaking distance of the enemy's pickets, and within view of their observatories. And yet all this immense piece of work was done with such profound secrecy, that, when the first shot from these batteries fell among the enemy, it astounded them as if it had come from the planet Jupiter. At the time, this brilliant success was merged in the greater prospective brilliancy of the expected results. Now that the results have failed to follow, we can perhaps do more justice to the remarkable skill displayed in the preliminary movements.

So far as this report is concerned, General Gillmore shows no disposition to do injustice to other officers. In reprinting the daily correspondence with Admiral Dahlgren it might have been better to omit or explain some hasty expressions of censure,—as where a young naval lieutenant is charged (on page 333) with defeating an important measure by acting without orders, though the fact was, that the officer was not under General Gillmore's orders at all, and simply followed the instructions of his immediate [Pg 637] commander. But in dealing with officers of higher rank he is more discreet, and his implied criticisms on Admiral Dahlgren are not so severe as might have been expected. They are not nearly so sharp as those which were constantly heard, during the siege, from the officers of the navy; and the Admiral's telegraphic note on page 327, "My chief pilot informs me a gale is coming on, and I am coming into the creek," was the source of very unpardonable levity on board some of the gun-boats.

In the few passages relating to the colored troops, in the main report, the author shows evident pains in the statement, with rather unsatisfactory results. The style suggests rather the adroitness of the politician than the frankness of the soldier. This is the case, for instance, in his narrative of the unsuccessful assault upon Fort Wagner, where he uses language which would convey the impression, to nine readers out of ten, that it was somehow a reproach to the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts that it was thrown into disorder, and that this disorder checked the progress of the rest. Of course this was so,—because it

led the charge. It is not usual to say, in preparing a very brief narrative of some railway collision, that the leading car "was thrown into a state of great disorder, which reacted unfavorably upon, and delayed the progress of, those which followed." Yet it is hardly less absurd to say it of the leading battalion in a night attack on a fortress almost impregnable. The leading car takes the brunt of the shock precisely because it is in that position, and so does the leading regiment. How well the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts bore the test is recognized by its being apparently included in the final admission, that "the behavior of the troops, under the circumstances, was unexceptionable." But a fractional share in a line and a half of rather chilly praise is hardly an equivalent for three lines of implied individual censure. Had Brigadier-General Strong lived to tell the story of that night, it would have been stated less diplomatically than by Major-General Gillmore.

The report of Major Brooks on the working qualities of the colored troops is far more discriminating and more valuable, as are the appended statements of Captain Walker and Lieutenant Farrand. Major Brooks, as chief of engineering, sent circulars to six different officers who had superintended fatigue parties in the trenches, covering inquiries on five points relating to efficiency and courage. The report may be found at page 259 of the book, constituting Appendix XIX. (misprinted XIV.) to the Journal of Major Brooks.

The statement is probably as fair as the facts in the compiler's possession could make it; yet it is seriously vitiated by the scantiness of those facts. In answer to one question, for example, we are told that "all agree that the colored troops recruited from Free States are superior to those recruited from Slave States." But only two regiments of the latter class appear to have come under Major Brooks's observation at all. One of these was a perfectly raw regiment, which had never had a day's drill when it was placed in the trenches, but which was kept constantly at work there, although an order had been issued forbidding white recruits from being so employed. The other was a regiment composed chiefly of South Carolina *conscripts*, enlisted in utter disregard of pledges previously given, and of course unwilling soldiers. It was absurd to institute a comparison between these troops and a regiment so well trained and officered as the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts. Longer experience has shown that there is no great choice between the Northern and Southern negro, as military material; and the preferences of an officer will usually depend upon which he has been accustomed to command. Many, certainly, are firm in the conviction that the freed slave makes the best soldier.

In other points the report carries with it some of the needful corrections, at least for a careful reader. For instance, Major Brooks's general summary is, that "the black is more timorous than the white, but is in a corresponding degree more docile and obedient, hence more completely under the control of his commander, and much more influenced by his example." But when we read on the previous page that the white soldiers were allowed to take their arms into the trenches, and that the black soldiers were not, it makes the whole comparison nearly worthless. It is notorious that the presence or absence of manhood in the bravest soldier often seems to be determined by the mere fact that he has a gun in his hand; and had the object been to annihilate all vestige of military pride in the colored troops, it could not have been better planned than by this and other distinctions maintained during a large part of the siege of Charleston. That, while smarting under the [Pg 638] double deprivation both of a soldier's duty and of a soldier's pay, they should have so behaved as to merit a report so favorable as that of Major Brooks, is one of the greatest triumphs they have yet achieved. This volume contains the record of what they did. The story of what they underwent is yet to be told; for even of his two famous "orders" General Gillmore judiciously makes no mention here.

Thus mingled, in this superb work, are the points of strength and weakness. It remains only to add that the typographical and artistic execution is an honor to our literature, and adds to the laurels previously won in the same department by the publisher. Where all else is so admirable, it seems a pity to have to lament the absence of an index. The division of the work among several different authors makes this defect peculiarly inconvenient.

General Todleben's History of the Defence of Sebastopol, 1854-5. A Review. By WILLIAM HOWARD RUSSELL. New York: D. Van Nostrand.

It does not yet appear whether our great civil war will leave behind it materials for debate as acrimonious as that which has gathered round the affair in the Crimea. If General Butler and Admiral Porter live and thrive, there seems a fair chance that it may. In that case it will be interesting to read how General Todleben, in a parallel case, substitutes the Russian bear for the monkey in the fable, pats each combatant on the shoulder, and presents each with a shell, while extracting for himself the oyster.

Mr. Russell's "Review" is rather a paraphrase and a condensation,—the original work of the Russian General being too costly even for the English market. The task of the English editor is done with his usual spirit, and with all the more zest from an evident enjoyment of finding Mr. Kinglake in the wrong. Between his sympathies as a Briton and his sympathies as a literary man there is sometimes a struggle. But we Americans can do more justice to Mr. Russell than in those days of national innocence when we knew not Mackay and Gallenga and Sala; and it must be admitted that the tone of the present book is manly and impartial.

Kinglake's description of the Battle of the Alma will always remain as one of the masterpieces of literature in its way; but it is noticeable that Todleben entirely ignores some of the historian's most dramatic effects, and also knocks away much of his underpinning by demolishing the reputation of General Kiriakoff, his favorite Russian witness. Kinglake says that Eupatoria was occupied by a small body of English troops, and tells a good story about it: Todleben declares that the Allies occupied it with more than three thousand men and eight field-guns. Kinglake represents Lord Raglan as forcing the French officers, with great difficulty, to disembark the troops at a spot of his own selection: Todleben gives to Canrobert and Martinprey the whole credit of the final choice and of all the arrangements. And so on.

On the side of the Russians, the most interesting points brought out by Todleben are their fearful disadvantage as regarded the armament of the infantry, (these being decimated by the rifles of the Allies long before the Russians were near enough to use their smooth-bores,) and the popular enthusiasm inspired by the war in Russia. "The Czar was aided by the spontaneous contributions of his people. Great supplies were forwarded by private individuals of all that an army could need." "From all parts of the empire persons sent lint, bandages, etc., by post to the army." These are phrases which bring us back to the daily experience of our own vaster struggle.

As respects the Allies, Todleben uniformly credits the French army with more of every military quality than the English, save personal courage alone. From the commanding general to the lowest private, every technical detail of duty seems to have been better done by the French. At the height of the siege, it became "a war of sorties" on the part of the Russians, and Todleben says,—"*Apropos* of those sorties, it is indispensable to make the remark here, that the French guarded their trenches with much more vigilance, and defended them with incomparably more tenacity, than the English. It frequently happened that our volunteers approached the English trenches without being perceived, and without even firing a single shot, and found the soldiers of the guard sitting in the trench in the most perfect security, far from their firelocks, which were stacked in piles. With the French, matters were quite different. They were always on the *qui vive*, so that it rarely happened we were able to get near them without having been remarked, and without having to receive beforehand a sharp fire of musketry." [Pg 639]

This, however, as Russell remarks, was when the English army was at its lowest condition of neglect; but that simply transfers the indictment to another count. And it is interesting to observe, that Russell's claim for the English army and Todleben's claim for the Russian army come at last to about the same point, namely, that the individual soldier is in each case tough and resolute to the last degree. But this is only the beginning of the merits of the French array, which to individual courage superadds all that organization can attain.

As to the poor Turks, they are dismissed with much the same epitaph which might long since have been written for our colored troops, if some of our Department commanders had been suffered to have their way:—"As to the Turks, the Allies despised them, and the English used them as beasts of burden; in short, they lost three hundred men a day, till they almost perished out, and the remains of their army were sent away."

In view of the grander issues of our own pending contest, with its vaster scale of munitions and of men, one cannot always feel the due interest in successive pages about battles like "Little Inkermann," where the total of Russian killed and wounded comprised twenty-five officers and two hundred and forty-five men. But it is not numbers which make a contest memorable. Even the mere contemplation of the Crimean War had an appreciable influence on the military training of the American people; and the clear narratives of Todleben, written "in his usual elaborate engineering way, in which every word is used like a gabion," form a good sequel to that unconscious instruction.

> *Vanity Fair.* A Novel without a Hero. By William Makepeace Thackeray. With Illustrations by the Author. New York: Harper & Brothers. 3 vols. 12mo.

In the novels of Thackeray, essay is so much mixed up with narrative, and comment with characterization, that they can hardly be thoroughly appreciated in poor editions. The temptation to skip is almost irresistible, when wisdom can be purchased only at the expense of eyesight. We are therefore glad to welcome the commencement of a new edition of his writings, over whose pages the reader can linger at his pleasure, and quietly enjoy subtilties of humor and observation which in previous perusals he overlooked. The present volumes, published by the Harpers, are among the most tasteful and comely products of the Cambridge University Press. Printed in large type on tinted paper, elegantly bound in green cloth, and with a fac-simile of the author's autograph on the cover, every copy has the appearance of being a presentation copy. No English edition of "Vanity Fair" is equal to this American one in respect either to convenience of form or beauty of mechanical execution. The illustrations are numerous, well engraved, and embody the writer's own conceptions of his scenes and characters, and are often deliciously humorous.

"Vanity Fair," though it does not include the whole extent of Thackeray's genius, is the most vigorous exhibition of its leading characteristics. In freshness of feeling, elasticity of movement, and unity of aim, it is favorably distinguished from its successors, which too often give the impression of being composed of successive accumulations of incidents and persons, that drift into the story on no principle of artistic selection and combination. The style, while it has the raciness of individual peculiarity and the careless ease of familiar gossip, is as clear, pure, and flexible as if its sentences had been subjected to repeated revision, and every pebble which obstructed its lucid and limpid flow had been laboriously removed. The characterization is almost perfect of its kind. Becky Sharp, the Marquis of Steyne, Sir Pitt Crawley and the whole Crawley family, Amelia, the Osbornes, Major Dobbin, not to mention others, are as well known to most cultivated people as their most intimate acquaintances in the Vanity Fair of the actual world. It has always seemed to us that Mr. Osborne, the father of George, a representation of the most hateful phase of English character, is one of the most vividly true and life-like of all the delineations in the book, and more of a typical personage than even Becky or the Marquis of Steyne. Thackeray's theory of characterization proceeds generally on the assumption that the acts of men and women are directed not by principle, but by instincts, selfish or amiable,—that toleration for human weakness is possible only by lowering the standard of human capacity and obligation,—and that the preliminary condition of an accurate knowledge of human character is distrust of ideals and repudiation of patterns. This view is narrow, and by no means covers all the facts of history and human life, but what relative truth it has is splendidly illustrated in "Vanity Fair." There is not a person in the book who excites the reader's respect, and not one who fails to excite his interest. The morbid quickness of the author's perceptions of the selfish element, even in his few amiable characters, is a constant source of surprise. The novel not only has no hero, but

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implies the non-existence of heroism. Yet the fascination of the book is indisputable, and it is due to a variety of causes besides its mere exhibition of the worldly side of life. Among these, the perfect intellectual honesty of the writer, the sad or satirical sincerity with which he gives in his evidence against human nature, is the most prominent. With all his lightness of manner, he is essentially a witness under oath, and testifies only to what he is confident he knows. Perhaps this quality, rare not only in novel-writing, but in all writing, would not compensate for the limitation of his perceptions and the repulsiveness of much that he perceives, were it not for the peculiar charm of his representation. It is here that the individuality of the man appears, and it presents a combination of sentiments and powers more original perhaps than the matter of his works. Take from "Vanity Fair" that special element of interest which comes from Thackeray's own nature, and it would lose the greater portion of its fascination. It is not so much what is done, as the way in which it is done, that surprises and delights; and the manner is always inimitable, even when the matter is common.

Seaside and Fireside Fairies. Translated from the German of George Blum and Louis Wahl. By A. L. WISTAR. Philadelphia: Ashmead & Evans.

These pretty fairy stories peep at us out of German-land through a pleasant, clear translation, and they remind us how easily the supernatural and loves to dwell in airborn castles. The beautiful instinct of reverence common to child-life is readily taken advantage of by writers for the young; but where in England we find in stories some angel-mother who discovers the treachery of her governess and teaches her own children, or a rotund uncle who tips the boys, providentially, as it seems, in Germany the protectors of children possess no nearer abode than the land of Fairy, and their presence is as rare as that of the Indian "Vanishers." Perhaps, even among American children, the tales which approximate more nearly to their experience hold the strongest attractive power; yet, in the wide range of the commingled races of the United States, there must be many children who long for stories of that dear Dream-land familiar to their thoughts, and to whom these stories would be a happy era in childhood's experience.

RECENT AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS.

Lectures on the Science of Language, delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, in February, March, April, and May, 1863. By Max Müller, Fellow of All-Souls College, Oxford; Correspondent de l'Institut de France. Second Series. With Thirty-One Illustrations. New York. C. Scribner. 12mo. pp. 622. $3.00.

Meditations on the Essence of Christianity, and on the Religious Questions of the Day. By M. Guizot. Translated from the French, under the Superintendence of the Author. New York. C. Scribner. 12mo. pp. 356. $1.75.

The Beautiful Widow. By Mrs. Percy B. Shelley. Philadelphia. T. B. Peterson & Brothers. 12mo. pp. 244. $2.00.

The Differential Calculus: with Unusual and Particular Analysis of its Elementary Principles, and Copious Illustrations of its Practical Application. By John Spare, A. M., M. D. Boston. Bradley, Dayton, & Co. 12mo. pp. xx., 244. $2.00.

Vest-Pocket Lexicon. An English Dictionary of all except Familiar Words; including the Principal Scientific and Technical Terms, and Foreign Moneys, Weights, and Measures. By Jabez Jenkins. Philadelphia. J. B. Lippincott & Co. 18mo. pp. 563. 62 cts.

The American Conflict. A History of the Great Rebellion. By Horace Greeley. Volume One. Hartford. O. D. Case & Co, 8vo. pp. 648. $5.00.

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