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THE BETROTHAL.

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FRANCES SEYMOUR had been left an orphan and an heiress very early in life. Her mother had died in giving birth to a second child, which did not survive its parent, so that Frances had neither brother nor sister; and her father, an officer of rank and merit, was killed at Waterloo. When this sad news reached England, the child was spending her vacation with Mrs Wentworth, a sister of Mrs Seymour, and henceforth this lady's house became her home; partly, because there was no other relative to claim her, and partly, because amongst

Colonel Seymour's papers, a letter was found, addressed to Mrs Wentworth, requesting that, if he fell in the impending conflict, she would take charge of his daughter. In making this request, it is probable that Colonel Seymour was more influenced by necessity than choice; Mrs Wentworth being a gay woman of the world, who was not likely to bestow much thought or care upon her niece, whom she received under her roof without unwillingness, but without affection. Had Frances been poor, she would have felt her a burden; but as she was rich, there was some éclat and no inconvenience in undertaking the office of her guardian and chaperone—the rather as she had no daughters of her own with whom Frances's beauty or wealth could interfere; for as the young heiress grew into womanhood, the charms of her person were quite remarkable enough to have excited the jealousy of her cousins, if she had had any; or to make her own fortune, if she had not possessed one already. She was, moreover, extremely accomplished, good-tempered, cheerful, and altogether what is called a very nice girl; but of course she had her fault like other people: she was too fond of admiration—a fault that had been very much encouraged at the school where she had been educated; beauty and wealth, especially when combined, being generally extremely popular at such establishments. As long, however, as her admirers were only romantic schoolfellows and calculating school-mistresses, there was not much harm done; but the period now approached in which there would be more scope for the exercise of this passion, and more danger in its indulgence—Frances had reached the age of seventeen, and was about to make her début in the world of fashion—an event to which, certain as she was of making numerous conquests, she looked forward with great delight.

Whilst engaged in preparations for these anticipated triumphs, Mrs Wentworth said to her one day: 'Now that you are coming out, Frances, I think it is my duty to communicate to you a wish of your father's, expressed in the letter that was found after his death. It is a wish regarding your choice of a husband.'

'Dear me, aunt, how very odd!' exclaimed Frances.

'It is rather odd,' returned Mrs Wentworth; 'and, to be candid, I don't think it is very wise; for schemes of this sort seldom or never turn out well.'

'Scheme! What scheme is it?' asked Frances with no little curiosity.

'Why, you must know,' answered her aunt, 'that your father had a very intimate friend, to whom he was as much attached all his life as if he had been his brother.'

'You mean Sir Richard Elliott. I remember seeing him and his son at Otterby, when I was a little girl; and I often heard papa speak of him afterwards.'

'Well, when young Elliott got his commission, your papa, in compliance with Sir Richard's request, used his interest to have him appointed to his own regiment, in order that he might keep him under his eye. By this means, he became intimately acquainted with the young man's character, and, I suppose, as much attached to him as to his father.'

'And the scheme is, that I should marry him, I suppose?'

'Provided you are both so disposed, not otherwise; there is to be no compulsion in the case.'

'It is a scheme that will never be realised,' said Frances; 'for, of all things, I should dislike a marriage that had been planned in that way. The very idea of standing in such an awkward relation to a man would make me hate him.'

'That's why I think all such schemes better let alone,' returned Mrs Wentworth; 'but as your father desires that I will put you in possession of his wishes before you go into the world, I have no choice but to do it.'

'It does not appear, however, that this Mr Elliott is very anxious about the matter, since he has never taken the trouble of coming to see me. Perhaps he does not know of the scheme?'

'O yes, he does; but, in the first place, he is abroad with his regiment; and, in the second, he abstains upon principle from seeking to make your acquaintance. So Sir Richard told me, when I met him last year at Lady Grantley's fête. He said that his son's heart was yet perfectly free, but that he did not think it right to throw himself in your way, or endeavour to engage your affections, till you had had an opportunity of seeing something of the world. The old gentleman had a great desire to see you himself; and he would have called, but he was only passing through London on his way to some

German baths, and he was to start the next morning.'

'And what sort of a person is this Mr Elliott?'

'I really don't know, except that his father praised him to the skies. He's Major Elliott now, and must be about eight-and-twenty.'

'And is he the eldest son?'

[pg 130] 'He's the eldest son, and will be Sir Henry—I think that's his name—by and by. But he's not rich; quite the contrary, he's very poor for a baronet; and I incline to think that is one of the reasons that influenced your father. Being so fond of the Elliots, he wished to repair, in some degree, the dilapidation of their fortunes by yours.'

'So that I shall have the agreeable consciousness of being married purely for my money. I am afraid poor dear papa's scheme will fail; and I wish, aunt, you had never told me of it.'

'That was not left to my discretion; if it had been, I should not have told you of it, I assure you.'

'Well, I can only hope that I shall never see Major Elliott; and if he ever proposes to come, aunt, pray do me the favour to assure him, from me, that it will not be of the smallest use.'

'That would be foolish till you've seen him. You may like him.'

'Never; I could not like a man whom I met under such circumstances, if he were an angel.'

Thus, with a heart steeled against Major Elliott and his attractions, whatever they might be, Frances Seymour made her début; and, however brilliant had been her anticipations of success, she had the satisfaction of finding them fully realised. She was the belle of the season—admired, courted, and envied; and by the end of it, she had refused at least half-a-dozen proposals. As she was perfectly independent, she resolved to enjoy a longer lease of her liberty, before she put it in the power of any man to control her inclinations.

Shortly after the termination of the season, some family affairs called Mr and Mrs Wentworth to St Petersburg; and as it was not convenient that Frances should accompany them, they arranged that she should spend the interval in visiting some families of their own connection residing in the country, who promised to take due charge of her.

The first of these, by name Dunbar, were worthy people enough, but, unfortunately for Frances, desperately dull; and the few neighbours they had happened to be as dull as themselves. There were neither balls nor routs to keep up the spirits of the London belle; and a tiresome drive of six or eight miles to an equally tiresome dinner-party, was but a poor substitute for the gaieties which the late season had given her a taste for.

Frances was not without resources. She was a fine musician, and played and sang admirably; but she liked to be told that she did so. At Dunbar House, nobody cared for music, nobody listened to her, and her most *recherchées toilettes* delighted nobody but her maid. She was *aux abois*, as the French say, and had made some progress in the concoction of a scheme to get away, when an improvement took place in her position, from the arrival of young Vincent Dunbar, the only son of the family. He was a lieutenant in a regiment of infantry that had lately returned from the colonies, and had come, as in duty bound, to waste ten days or a fortnight of his three months' leave in the dull home of his ancestors. As he was an extremely handsome, fashionable-looking youth, Frances, when she went down to dinner, felt quite revived by the sight of him. Here was something to dress for, and something to sing to; and although the young lieutenant's conversation was not a whit above the usual standard of his class, it appeared lively and witty when compared with that of his parents. His small colonial experiences were more interesting than Mrs Dunbar's domestic ones; and his account of a tiger hunt more exciting than his father's history of the run he had had after a fox. Frances was an equally welcome resource to him. Here was an opportunity, quite unexpected, of displaying his most fashionable ties and most splendid waistcoats; here was a listener for his best stories, and one who did not repay him in kind, as his father did; and here were a pair of bright eyes, that always looked brighter at his approach; and a pair of pretty lips, that pouted when he talked of going away to fulfil an engagement he had made to meet some friends at Brighton.

As was to be expected, under circumstances so propitious, the young man fell

in love—as much in love as he could be with anybody but himself; whilst his parents did not neglect to hint, that he could not do better than prosecute a suit which the young lady's evident partiality justified. Pleased with the prospect of their son's making so good a match, they even ventured one day a dull jest on the subject in the presence of Frances—a jest which, heavy as it was, aroused her to reflection. Flirting with a man, and angling for his admiration, is one thing; loving and marrying him, is another. For the first, Vincent Dunbar answered exceedingly well; but for the second, he was wholly unfit. In spite of her little weaknesses, Frances had too much sense not to see that the young lieutenant was an empty-headed coxcomb, and not at all the man with whom she hoped to spend her years of discretion—when she arrived at them—after an ample enjoyment of the delights that youth, beauty, and wealth are calculated to procure their possessor. Her eyes were opened, in short; and the ordinary effect of this sort of awakening from an unworthy *penchant*—for attachment it could not be called—ensued: the temporary liking changed into aversion, and the attentions that had flattered her before became hateful. In accordance with this new state of her feelings, she resolved to alter her behaviour, in order to dissipate as quickly as possible the erroneous impression of the family; whilst, at the same time, she privately made arrangements for cutting short her visit, and anticipating the period of her removal to the house of Mrs Gaskoin, betwixt whom and the Dunbars the interval of her friends' absence in Russia was to be divided. In spite of her stratagem, however, she did not escape what she apprehended. Vincent's leave had nearly expired too; and when the moment approached that was to separate them, he seized an opportunity of making his proposals.

There is scarcely a woman to be met with in society, who does not know, from experience, what a painful thing it is to crush the hopes of a man who is paying her the high compliment of wishing to place the happiness of his life in her keeping; and when to this source of embarrassment is added the consciousness of having culpably raised expectations that she shrinks from realising, the situation becomes doubly distressing. On the present occasion, agitated, ashamed, and confused, Frances, instead of honestly avowing her fault, which would have been the safest thing to do, had recourse to a subterfuge; she answered, that she had been betrothed by her father to the son of his dearest friend, and that she was not free to form any other engagement. Of course, Vincent pleaded that such a contract could not be binding on her; but as, whilst she declared her determination to adhere to it, she forbore to add, that were she at liberty his position would not be improved, the young man and his family remained under the persuasion, that this premature engagement was the only bar to his happiness; and with this impression, which she allowed him to retain, because it spared him and herself pain, he returned to his regiment, whilst she, as speedily as she could, decamped to her next quarters, armed with a thousand good resolutions never again to bring herself into such an unpleasant dilemma.

Mrs Gaskoin's was a different sort of house to the Dunbars'. It was not gay, for the place was retired, and Mrs Gaskoin being in ill health, they saw little company; but they were young, cheerful, and accomplished people, and in their society Frances soon forgot the vexations she had left behind her. She even ceased to miss the admiration she was accustomed to; what was amiable and good in her character—and there was much—regained the ascendant; her host and hostess congratulated themselves on having so agreeable an inmate as much as she did herself on the judicious move she had made, till her equanimity was disturbed by learning that Mr Gaskoin was expecting a visitor, and that this visitor was his old friend and brother-officer, Major Elliott, the person of all others, Vincent Dunbar excepted, she had the greatest desire to avoid.

'I cannot express how much I should dislike meeting him,' she said to Mrs Gaskoin, to whom she thought it better to explain how she was situated. 'You must allow me to keep my room whilst he is here.'

'If you are determined not to see him, I think you had better go back to the Dunbars for a little while,' answered the hostess; 'but I really think you should stay, and let things take their course. If your aversion continues, you need not marry him; but my husband tells me he's charming; and in point of character, I know no one whom he estimates so highly.'

But Frances objected, that she should feel so embarrassed and awkward.

'In short, you apprehend that you will appear to a great disadvantage,' said Mrs Gaskoin. 'That is possible, certainly; but as Major Elliott is only coming for a day or two, I think we might obviate that difficulty, by introducing you as my husband's niece, Fanny Gaskoin. What do you say? You can declare yourself whenever you please, or keep the secret till he goes, if you prefer it.'

Frances said she should like it very much; the scheme would afford them a great deal of amusement, and any expedient was preferable to going back to Dunbar House. Neither, as regarded themselves, was it at all difficult of execution, since they always addressed her as Fanny or Frances; the danger was with the servants, who, however cautioned to call the visitor by no other name than Miss Fanny, might inadvertently betray the secret. Still, if they did, a few blushes and a hearty laugh were likely to be the only consequences of the disclosure; so the little plot was duly framed, and successfully executed; Major Elliott not entertaining the most remote suspicion that this beautiful, fascinating Fanny Gaskoin was his own *fiancée*.

Whether they might have fallen in love with each other had they met under more prosaic circumstances, there is no saying. As it was, they did so almost at first sight. It is needless to say, that Major Elliott extended his visit beyond the day or two he had engaged for; and when Mr and Mrs Gaskoin saw how matters were going, they recommended an immediate avowal of the little deception that had been practised, lest some ill-timed visitor should inopportunely let out the secret, which had already been endangered more than once by the forgetfulness of the servants: but Frances wished to prolong their diversion till she should find some happy moment for the *dénouement*; added to which, she had an extreme curiosity to know how Major Elliott intended to release himself from the engagement formed by Colonel Seymour, in which he had tacitly, if not avowedly, acquiesced. It was certainly very flattering that her charms had proved sufficiently powerful to make him forget it; but that he should have yielded to the temptation without the slightest appearance of a struggle, did somewhat surprise her, as indeed, from their knowledge of his character, it did Mr and Mrs Gaskoin. Not that they would have expected him to adhere to the contract, if doing so proved repugnant either to himself or the young lady; but under all the circumstances of the case, they would have thought his conduct less open to exception, if he had deferred entering into any other engagement till he had seen Miss Seymour. It was true, that he had not yet offered his hand to his friend Gaskoin's charming niece; but neither she, nor any one else, entertained a doubt of his intention to do so; and Frances never found herself alone with him, that her heart did not beat high with the expectation of what might be coming.

The progress of love affairs is no measure of time: where the *attrait*, or magnetic rapport (for perhaps magnetism has something to do with the mystery), is very strong, one couple will make as much way in a fortnight as another will do in a year. In the present instance, Major Elliott's proclivity to fall in love with Frances may have been aided by his persuasion that she was the niece of his friend. Be that as it may, on the thirteenth day of his visit, Major Elliott invited his host to join him in a walk, in the course of which he avowed his intention of offering his hand to Miss Gaskoin, provided her family were not likely to make any serious objection to the match. 'My reason for mentioning the subject so early is,' said he, 'that, in the first place, I cannot prolong my visit; I have already broken two engagements, and now, however unwillingly, I must be off: and, in the second place, I felt myself bound to mention the subject to you before speaking to Miss Gaskoin, because you know how I am situated in regard to money-matters; and that I cannot, unfortunately, make such a settlement as may be expected by her friends.'

'I don't think that will be any obstacle to your wishes,' answered Mr Gaskoin, with an arch smile. 'If you can find Fanny in the humour, I'll undertake to answer for all the rest. As for her fortune, she'll have something at all events—but that is a subject, I suppose, you are too much in love to discuss.'

'It is one there is no use in discussing till I am accepted,' returned Major Elliott; 'and I confess that is a point I am too anxious about to think of any other.'

'Prepare yourself,' said Mrs Gaskoin to Frances: 'Major Elliott has declared himself to my husband, and will doubtless take an opportunity of speaking to you in the course of the evening. Of course, now the truth must be disclosed, and I've no doubt it will be a very agreeable surprise to him.'

When the tea-things were removed, and Frances, as usual, was seated at the pianoforte, and Major Elliott, as usual, turning over the leaves of her music-book, she almost lost her breath with agitation when the gentle closing of a door aroused her to the fact, that they were alone. Mr and Mrs Gaskoin had quietly slipped out of the room; and conscious that the critical moment was come, she was making a nervous attempt to follow them, when a hand was laid on hers, and— But it is quite needless to enter into the particulars: such scenes do not bear relating. Major Elliott said something, and looked a thousand things; Frances blushed and smiled, and then she wept, avowing

that her tears were tears of joy; and so engrossed was she with the happiness of the moment, that she had actually forgotten the false colours under which she was appearing, till her lover said: 'I have already, my dear Fanny, spoken on this subject to your uncle.'

'Now, then, for the *dénouement!*' thought Frances; but she had formed a little scheme for bringing this about, which she forthwith proceeded to put in execution.

'But, dear Henry,' she said, as, seated on the sofa hand in hand, they dilated on their present happiness and future plans—'dear Henry, there is one thing that has rather perplexed me, and does perplex me still, a little—do you know, I have been told you were engaged?'

'Indeed! Who told you that?'

'Well, I don't know; but I'm sure I heard it. It was said that you were engaged to Miss Seymour—the Miss Seymour that lives with Mrs Wentworth'—

'Do you know her?' inquired Major Elliott, interrupting her.

'Yes, I do—a little.'

'Only a little?'

'Well, perhaps I may say I know her pretty well. Indeed, to confess the truth, I'm rather intimate with her.'

'That is extremely fortunate,' returned Major Elliott.

'Then you don't deny the engagement?' said Frances.

[pg 132] 'Colonel Seymour, who was my father's friend and mine, very kindly expressed a wish, before he died, that, provided there was no objection on either side, his daughter and I should be married; but you see, my dearest Fanny, as there happens to be an objection on both sides, the scheme, however well meant, is defeated.'

'On both sides!' reiterated Frances with surprise.

'Yes; on both sides,' answered he smiling.

'But how do you know that, when you've never seen Miss Seymour—at least I thought you never had?'

'Neither have I; but I happen to know that she has not the slightest intention of taking me for her husband.'

'Oh,' said Frances, laughing at the recollection of her own violent antipathy to this irresistible man, who, after all, had taken her heart by storm—'I suppose you have somehow heard that she disliked the idea of being trammelled by an engagement to a person she never saw, and whom she had made up her mind she could not love; but remember, Henry, she has never seen you. How do you know that she might not have fallen in love with you at first sight?—as somebody else did,' she added playfully.

'Because, my dear little girl, she happens to be in love already. She did not wait to see me, but wisely gave away her heart when she met a man that pleased her.'

'But you're mistaken,' answered Frances, beginning to feel alarmed; 'you are indeed! I know Frances Seymour has no attachment. I know that till she saw you—I mean that—I am certain she has no attachment, nor ever had any.'

'Perhaps you are not altogether in her confidence.'

'O yes, I am indeed.'

Major Elliott shook his head, and smiled significantly. 'Rely on it,' he said, 'that what I tell you is the fact; but you have probably not seen Miss Seymour very lately, which would sufficiently account for your ignorance of her secret. I am told that she is extremely handsome and charming, and that she sings divinely.'

Five minutes earlier, Frances would have been delighted with this testimony to her attractions; and would have been ready with a repartee about the loss he would sustain in relinquishing so many perfections for her sake; but now her heart was growing faint with terror, and her tongue clove to the roof of

her mouth. Thoughts that would fill pages darted through her brain like lightning—dreadful possibilities, that she had never foreseen nor thought of.

Vincent Dunbar's regiment had been in India; she knew it was one of the *seventies*; but she had either never heard the exact number, or she had not sufficiently attended to the subject to know which it was. Major Elliott's regiment had also been in India; and it was the 76th. Suppose it were the same, and that the two officers were acquainted—and suppose they had met since Vincent's departure from Dunbar House! The young man had occasionally spoken to her of his brother-officers; she remembered Poole, and Wainright, and Carter; the name of Elliott he had certainly not mentioned; but it was naturally of his own friends and companions he spoke, not of the field-officers. Then, when she told him that she had been betrothed by her father, she had not said to whom; but might he not, by some unlucky chance, have found that out? And might not an explanation have ensued!

Could Major Elliott have distinctly discovered the expression of her features, he would have seen that it was something more than perplexity that kept her silent; but the light fell obscurely on the seat they occupied, and he suspected nothing but that she was puzzled and surprised.

'I see you are very curious to learn the secret,' he said, 'and if it were my own, you should not pine in ignorance, I assure you; but as it is a young lady's, I am bound to keep it till she chooses to disclose it herself. However, I hope your curiosity will soon be satisfied, for I have ascertained that Mr and Mrs Wentworth are to be in England almost immediately—they have been some time on the continent—and then we shall come to a general understanding. In the meantime, my dearest Fanny'—

But Frances, unable longer to control her agitation, took advantage of a slight noise in the hall, to say that Mr and Mrs Gaskoin were coming; and before he had time to finish his sentence, she started to her feet, and rushed out of the room.

On the other side of the hall was Mrs Gaskoin's boudoir, where she and her husband were sitting over the fire, awaiting the result of the tête-à-tête in the drawing-room.

'Well?' said they, rising as the door opened and a pale face looked in. 'Is it all settled?'

'Ask me nothing now, I beseech you!' said Frances. 'I'm going to my room; tell Major Elliott I am not well; say I'm agitated—anything you like; but remember, he still thinks me Fanny Gaskoin'—

'But, my dear girl, I cannot permit that deception to be carried any further; it has lasted too long already,' said Mr Gaskoin.

'Only to-night!' said Frances.

'It is not fair to Major Elliott,' urged Mrs Gaskoin.

'Only to-night! only to-night!' reiterated Frances. 'There! he's coming; I hear his step in the hall! Let me out this way!' and so saying, she darted out of a door that led to the backstairs, and disappeared.

'She has refused him!' said Mrs Gaskoin. 'I confess I am amazed.'

But Major Elliott met them with a smiling face. 'What has become of Frances?' said he.

'She rushed in to us in a state of violent agitation, and begged we would tell you that she is not well, and is gone to her room. I'm afraid the result of your interview has not been what we expected.'

'On the contrary,' returned Major Elliott, 'you must both congratulate me on my good-fortune.'

'Silly girl!' said Mr Gaskoin, shaking his friend heartily by the hand. 'I see what it is: she is nervous about a little deception we have been practising on you.'

'A deception!'

'Why, you see, my dear fellow, when I told Frances that you were coming here, she objected to meeting you'—

'Indeed! On what account?'

'You have never suspected anything?' said Mr Gaskoin, scarcely repressing his laughter.

'Suspected anything? No.'

'It has never by chance occurred to you that this bewitching niece of mine is'—

'Is what?'

'Your betrothed lady, for example, Frances Seymour?'

Major Elliott's cheeks and lips turned several shades paler; but the candles were not lighted, and his friends did not remark the change.

'Frances Seymour!' he echoed.

'That is the precise state of the case, I assure you;' and then Mr Gaskoin proceeded to explain how the deception came to be practised. 'I gave into it,' he said, 'though I do not like jests of that sort, because I thought, as my wife did, that you were much more likely to take a fancy to each other, if you did not know who she was, than if you met under all the embarrassment of such an awkward relation.'

During this little discourse, Major Elliott had time to recover from the shock; and being a man of resolute calmness and great self-possession—which qualities, by the way, formed a considerable element in his attractions—the remainder of the evening was passed without any circumstance calculated to awaken the suspicions of his host and hostess, further than that a certain gravity of tone and manner, when they spoke of Frances, led them to apprehend that he was not altogether pleased with the jest that had been practised.

[pg 133] 'We ought to have told him the moment we saw that he was pleased with her; but, foolish child, she would not let us,' said Mr Gaskoin to his wife.

'She must make her peace with him to-morrow,' returned the lady; but, alas! when they came down to breakfast on the following morning, Major Elliott was gone, having left a few lines to excuse his sudden departure, which, he said, he had only anticipated by a few hours, as, in any case, he must have left them that afternoon.

By the same morning's post there arrived a letter from Vincent Dunbar, addressed to Miss Seymour. Its contents were as follow:—

'MY DEAREST, DEAREST FRANCES—I should have written to you ten days ago to tell you the joyful news—you little guess what—but that I had applied for an extension of leave *on urgent private affairs*, and expected every hour to get it. But they have refused me, be hanged to them! So I write to you, my darling, to tell you that it's all right—I mean between you and me. I'm not a very good hand at an explanation on paper, my education in the art of composition having been somewhat neglected; but you must know that old Elliott, whom your dad wanted you to marry, is our senior major. Well, when I came down here to meet Poole, as I had promised—his governor keeps hounds, you know; a capital pack, too—I was as dull as ditch-water; I was, I assure you; and whenever there was nothing going on, I used to take out the verses you wrote, and the music you copied for me, to look at; and one day, who should come in but Elliott, who was staying with his governor on the West Cliff, where the old gentleman has taken a house. Well, you know, I told you what a madcap fellow Poole is; and what should he do, but tell Elliott that I was going stark mad for a girl that couldn't have me because her dad had engaged her to somebody else; and then he shewed him the music that was lying on the table with your name on it. So you may guess how Elliott stared, and all the questions he asked me about you, and about our acquaintance and our love-making, and all the rest of it. And, of course, I told him the truth, and shewed him the dear lock of hair you gave me; and the little notes you wrote me the week I ran up to London; for Elliott's an honourable fellow, and I knew it was all right. And it *is* all right, my darling; for he says he wouldn't stand in the way of our happiness for the world, or marry a woman whose affections were not all his own. And he'll speak to your aunt for us, and get it all settled as soon as she comes back,' &c. &c.

The paper dropped from poor Frances Seymour's hands. She comprehended enough of Major Elliott's character to see that all was over. But for the unfortunate jest they had practised on him, an explanation would necessarily have ensued the moment he mentioned Vincent's name to her; but that unlucky deception had complicated the mischief beyond repair. It was too late

now to tell him that she did not love Vincent; he would only think her false or fickle. A woman who could act as she had done, or as she appeared to have done, was no wife for Henry Elliott.

There is no saying, but it is just possible, that an entire confidence placed in Mr Gaskoin might have led to a happier issue; but her own conviction that her position was irrecoverable, her hopelessness and her pride, closed her lips. Her friends saw that there was something wrong; and when a few lines from Major Elliott announced his immediate departure for Paris, they concluded that some strange mystery had divided the lovers, and clouded the hopeful future that for a short period had promised so brightly.

Vincent Dunbar was not a man to break his heart at the disappointment which, it is needless to say, awaited him. Long years afterwards, when Sir Henry Elliott was not only married, but had daughters coming out in the world, he, one day at a dinner-party, sat next a pale-faced, middle-aged lady, whose still beautiful features, combined with the quiet, almost grave elegance of her toilet, had already attracted his attention in the drawing-room. It was a countenance of perfect serenity; but no observing eye could look at it without feeling that that was a serenity not born of joy, but of sadness—a calm that had succeeded a storm—a peace won by a great battle. Sir Henry felt pleased when he saw that the fortunes of the dinner-table had placed him beside this lady, and they had not been long seated before he took an opportunity of addressing her. Her eyelids fell as she turned to answer him; but there was a sweet, mournful smile on her lip—a smile that awoke strange recollections, and made his heart for a moment stand still. For some minutes he did not speak again, nor she either; when he did, it was to ask her, in a low, gentle voice, to take wine with him. The lady's hand shook visibly as she raised her glass; but, after a short interval, the surprise and the pang passed away, and they conversed calmly on general subjects, like other people in society.

When Sir Henry returned to the drawing-room, the pale-faced lady was gone; and, a few days afterwards, the *Morning Post* announced among its departures that Miss Seymour had left London for the continent.

THE CONTINENTAL 'BRADSHAW' IN 1852.

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BRADSHAW'S *Continental Railway Guide*—the square, pale-yellow, compact, brochure which makes its appearance once a month, and which has doubled its thickness in its brief existence of five years—is suggestive of a multitude of thoughts concerning the silent revolution now passing over Europe. Presidents may have *coups d'état*; kings may put down parliaments, and emperors abrogate constitutions; Legitimists may dream of the past, and Communists of the future; but the *railways* are marking out a path for themselves in Europe which will tend to obliterate, or at least to soften, the rugged social barriers which separate nation from nation. This will not be effected all at once, and many enthusiasts are disappointed that the cosmopolitanism advances so slowly; but the result is not the less certain in being slow.

Our facetious contemporary *Punch* once gave a railway map of England, in which the face of the land was covered with intersecting lines at mutual distances of only a mile or two. A railway map of Europe has certainly not yet assumed such a labyrinthine character; still, the lines of civilisation (for so we may well term them) are becoming closer and closer every year. The outposts of Europe, where the Scandinavian, the Sclavonian, the Italian, and the Spaniard respectively rule, are scanty in their exhibition of such lines; but as we gradually approach the scenes of commercial activity, there do railways appear in greater and greater proximity. France strikingly exemplifies its own theory, that 'Paris is France,' by shewing how all its important railways spring from the metropolis in six directions. Belgium exhibits its compact net-work of railways, by which nearly all its principal towns are accommodated. The phlegmatic Dutchman has as yet placed the locomotive only in that portion of Holland which lies between the Rhine and the Zuiderzee. Rhineland, from Bâle to Wiesbaden, is under railway dominion. North Germany, within a circle of which Magdeburg may be taken as a centre, is railed pretty thickly; and Vienna has become a point from which lines of great length start. Exterior to all these are solitary lines, the pioneers of the new order of things, pointing in directions which will one day come within the yellow covers of Bradshaw. There is one line straggling out to Rostock; another to Stettin and Bromberg, on its way to Danzig; another to Warsaw, on its way to meet the czar at St Petersburg; another to Pesth, whence it will be carried through the scenes of

the late Hungarian war; another to the neighbourhood of the Adriatic; others from Central Germany southward to the Swiss highlands, which bar further progress; and a very modest little group in North Italy.

It is instructive to mark the steps by which these continental railways have been brought into existence. The English practice of undertaking all such great works, is very little understood abroad; there is not capital enough afloat, and the commercial audacity of the people has not yet arrived at such a high-pressure point. Almost the whole of the railways now under notice, have been constructed either by the governments of the respective countries, or by companies which require some sort of government guarantee before they can obtain their capital.

Belgium was the first continental country to follow the railway example of England. Very soon after King Leopold was seated securely on his throne, he initiated measures for the construction of railways in Belgium; and a law was passed in 1834, sanctioning that compact system which, having Mechlin as a centre, branches out in four directions—to Liege, Antwerp, Brussels, and Ostend; and there were also lines sanctioned to the Prussian frontier, and the French frontier—the whole giving a length of about 247 English miles. Three years afterwards, a law was passed for the construction of 94 additional miles of railway—to Courtrai, Tournay, Namur, and other towns. In the western part of Belgium, the engineering difficulties were not of a formidable character; but towards the Prussian frontier, the bridges, cuttings, and embankments are so extensive, as to have rendered the works far more costly than in the average of continental railways. The Belgian Chambers provided the money, or rather authorised the government to borrow it, year after year. The first portion of railway was opened in 1835, and every year from thence till 1843, witnessed the opening of additional portions; until at length, in this last-named year, all the 341 miles mentioned above were opened for traffic. The cost varied from L.6140 per mile (near Courtrai), to L.38,700 per mile (near Liege); the entire cost of the whole, including working-plant, was within L.17,000 per average mile. While these railways were progressing, private companies were formed for the construction of other lines, to the extent of about 200 additional miles, most of which are now open—the Namur and Liege being opened in 1851. These various railways are said to have yielded, on an average, about 3½ per cent. on the outlay.

It was of course impossible for France to see its little neighbour, Belgium, advancing in its railway course, without setting a similar movement on foot; but various circumstances have given a lingering character to French railway enterprise. It was in 1837 that the short railway from Paris through Versailles to St Germain—the first passenger line in France—was opened. In the next following year, two companies, aided by the government in certain ways, undertook the construction of the railways from Paris to Rouen, and from Paris to Orleans. The French government, having a strong taste for centralisation in national matters, formed in 1842 that plan which has since, with some modifications, been carried into execution. The plan consisted in causing the great lines of communication to be surveyed and marked out by government engineers, and then to be ceded to joint-stock companies, to be constructed on certain conditions. There were to be seven such lines radiating from Paris: to the Belgian frontier; to one or more ports on the Channel; to the Atlantic ports; to Bordeaux; to the Spanish frontier; to Marseille; and to Rhenish Prussia. The government has had to concede more favourable conditions to some of these companies than were at first intended, to get the lines constructed at all. The first and second of the above lines of communication are now almost fully opened; the third is finished to Chartres; the fourth, to Nantes and Poitiers; the fifth, to Chateauroux; the sixth, to Chalons, with another portion from Avignon to Marseille; while the seventh, or Paris and Strasbourg Railway, is that of which the final opening has been recently celebrated with so much firing of guns, drinking of healths, blessing of locomotives, and speechifyings of presidents. At the close of 1851, the length of French railway opened was about 1800 miles; while the portion since opened, or now in progress or projected, amounts to about as much more. In the president's speech to the National Assembly in 1851 (of course, *before the coup d'état*), it was announced that the length of French railway to be finished and opened in 1851 would be 516 kilomètres (about 320 miles); and in 1852, about 330 kilomètres (205 miles.)

Prussia loves centralisation little less than France in other matters; but in railway enterprise she has allowed mercantile competition to have freer scope. Private companies have constructed nearly all the Prussian railways; but in cases where the traffic appeared likely to be small, the government has rendered aid in one of three or four modes. The government will not permit any parallel or competing lines; and it holds the power of purchasing the

railways after a lapse of thirty years, on certain specified terms. On this principle have been constructed the railways which radiate from Berlin in five different directions—towards Hamburg, Hanover, Saxony, Silesia, and the Baltic; together with minor branches springing out of them, and also the railways which accommodate the rich Rhenish provinces belonging to Prussia. The Prussian railways open and at work at the close of 1851 appear to have been about 1800 miles in length.

In the heterogeneous mass of states which constitute Germany, the railways have for the most part been constructed by, and belong to, the respective governments. Such is the case in Baden, Hanover, Brunswick, Würtemberg, Bavaria, and many of the petty states; and such is also the case in the imperial dominions in Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Styria. There may be some among these lines of railway which belong to companies, but, as a general rule, they constitute government property. If we include Prussia and the Austrian dominions in the general name of Germany, we find the railways very unequally distributed. An oblong quadrangular district, measuring about 400 miles from east to west, and 200 from north to south, and lying eastward of the Netherlands, contains a net-work of railways which contrast remarkably with those of east, south, and central Germany; it includes Hamburg, Berlin, Leipsic, Dresden, Magdeburg, Brunswick, Hanover, Bremen, and a busy knot of other important towns. Although the various German railways twist about in more tortuous forms than those of England—for the engineers have studied economy by going round hills rather than through them—and although they are broken up into many different proprietorships by passing through so many petty states, yet there may be traced certain great lines of communication which run nearly or entirely across the whole of Germany. Starting from Cologne, we find one line running through Elberfeld, Minden, Hanover, Brunswick, Berlin, to Bromberg and Posen; another from Cologne—with a short break not yet completed in Westphalia—to Cassel, Gotha, Weimar, Leipsic, Dresden, Breslau, and Cracow; a third from Hamburg, through Magdeburg, Leipsic, Dresden, Prague, Presburg, and Pesth, into the heart of Hungary; a fourth from the Baltic at Stettin, through Berlin, Leipsic, Nürnberg, Augsburg, to the vicinity of the Lake of Constance; and a fifth from Warsaw, through Vienna, to the vicinity of the Adriatic. Dr Lardner has estimated, that if we include the Netherlands and the Austrian and Prussian dominions within the German group, the German railways at the beginning of 1851 were about 5100 miles in length, with 3000 miles more either in progress or decided on—making a total of between 8000 and 9000 miles. Many hundred miles of railway have been opened since the date to which this estimate refers.

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Our Bradshaw leaves us little to notice on the continent beyond the groups of railways included under the above four systems. The Dutch have given a curious serpentine line of railway, about 150 miles in length, from Rotterdam through Schiedam, Delft, The Hague, Leyden, Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Utrecht, to Arnhem—an economical mode of linking most of the chief towns together. Holstein, the recent field of struggle between the Danes and the Germans, has its humble quota of about 100 miles of railway, from Altona to Glückstadt, Rendsburg, and Kiel, connecting the German Ocean with the Baltic in a very convenient way. Russia has a railway in its Polish dominions from Warsaw to Cracow; a short bit from St Petersburg to Tsarkoé-soélo; portions of the projected great lines from St Petersburg to Moscow and to Warsaw, and a horse railway connecting the Don with the Volga. Italy has a few bits of railway—perhaps quite as much as we could yet expect in so strangely governed a country; one from Venice through Padua, Vicenza, and Verona, to Mantua; another from Treviglio to Milan, Monza, and Como; a Piedmontese line from Genoa to Alessandria and Turin; a Tuscan web which connects Florence, Sienna, Pistoja, Lucca, Pisa, and Leghorn, in a roundabout way; and a few miles of Neapolitan railway, to connect Naples with Pompeii, Portici, Castel-a-mare, and Capua. Rome, behindhand in most things, is behindhand in railways. Switzerland has its little railway of twenty-five miles, from Zurich to Baden. Spain has its two small lines, from Madrid to Aranjuez, and from Barcelona to Mataro. Turkey and Greece, in the south-east; Portugal, in the south-west; Sweden and Norway,^[1] in the bleak north, have yet to become members of the great European railway system.

In comparing all these continental railways with those of our own country, we find many instructive differences. In the first place, the engineering, as we lately remarked, is much less daring; there is not so much capital at command, and the engineers, therefore, bend to difficulties instead of cutting through them. Still, there are not wanting engineering works of great magnitude. One such is the great railway bridge over the Vistula, near Bromberg, the first stone of which was laid with much form by the king of Prussia some short time back, and which will form one link in the chain from

Berlin to Königsberg. Another is the double railway bridge over the Elbe at Dresden, opened in April 1852, having a railway on its eastern half, and an ordinary roadway on its western. The stupendous Cologne Bridge will be for the future to talk about: at present, not a single railway bridge, we believe, crosses the Rhine; so that Western Europe is, in fact, not yet connected by the iron pathway with Eastern. Among the many thousand miles of continental railway, there must, of course, be numerous constructions of great skill and magnitude; but the ratio is small compared with those of England.

Another feature, is the great prevalence of single lines of rail. In England, there is so much wrangling against single lines, and so great a tendency among directors to think that there *ought* to be traffic enough for more, that double lines prevail almost everywhere. In the German railways, double lines are laid down only in places of great traffic—single lines being the rule, and the others the exception. Where there are only three or four departures per day, which is the case on most German railways, one line, with carefully-managed sidings, is amply sufficient. 'Express trains,' and 'first-class trains,' and 'special trains,' and anything which disturbs the steady jog-trot mode of proceeding, are very little known in Germany; the general speed, including stoppages, is about twenty miles an hour. Although the first-class fares are only a fraction above 1-1/2d. per mile, and the second-class just over 1d., yet the Germans travel so cheaply, and mix among each other with so little exclusiveness, that it is said only 3½ per cent. of the whole number of passengers travel by first-class, and 74 per cent. by third-class; the ratios in England being 14 and 46 per cent. respectively. One apparent effect of these very low fares is, that although the railways are for the most part cheaply constructed, the net profits are not supposed to exceed 3 per cent. on an average; but if the fares were higher, perhaps the number of passengers would be so reduced as to lessen the net profit.

Whatever else may be the superiority of English railways over those of the continent, assuredly it is not apparent in the *carriages*. The public press has made an onslaught on the English railway carriages for twenty years, but with very little success. Let those whose bones ache with the ill-conditioned wooden seats of our second-class carriages, think wishfully of the cushioned seats, and the easily-opened windows shielded with sun-blinds, and the useful hat-hooks found in many of the French second-class carriages; let those who shiver under English arrangements, think of the hot-water tin cases beneath the feet of the first-class French passengers; and let those who wish to be usefully employed while travelling, think of the little table, and the pen and ink, provided in some of the Prussian carriages. The truth is, we spend money on magnificent stations which ought to be expended on carriages. The cramped-up position of passengers on English railways is much reprobated by foreigners. In America, and in many parts of the continent, it is customary to have carriages long, broad, and high, with an avenue down the middle, and short seats for two persons each on either side of the avenue; every person looks towards the engine, and there is a plentiful supply of window on both sides. In America, these short seats are not only cushioned, but each seat has its two elbows and its cushioned back.

Another English annoyance, is the *ticket-taking*. If all the wrath which is poured out on the heads of the railway directors during this formality could take effect, they would be among the most miserable and unfortunate of mortals. Arrived at Euston Station, we will say, by the last train from the north—some sleepy, some hungry, and all tired—the passengers are anxious to wend their several ways as quickly as possible; instead of this, the train is brought to a stand-still, the man with his bull's-eye lantern pokes his head into one doorway after another, and all are kept waiting until all the tickets are collected. One passenger may have dropped his ticket, and then comes a search among the hat-boxes and carpet-bags beneath the seats; another may have underpaid his fare, or overridden the power of his ticket, and then occurs the fuss of paying up the difference; a third may be sleeping weariedly in the further corner of the carriage, and then comes the process of waking him, followed, perhaps, by a search for the ticket in an incalculable number of pockets. All this is nicely ill-managed! The larger size of many of the continental carriages, and the avenue through the centre, enable the ticket-taker to enter the carriage easily while the train is yet in motion, and to collect the tickets by the time of arrival at the station. On one of the Austrian railways, the carriages have an exterior gangway extending the whole length of the train, by which a guard can obtain easy access to all the passengers: shortly before arriving at a station, he enters the carriages, calls out the name of the station about to be approached, and takes the tickets of those who are to alight at that station. There is one oddity about the railway management abroad. In England, a railway smoker commits a high crime and misdemeanour, for which he is frowned at by his neighbours, and threatened

by the guard; but on the continent, not only do the passengers smoke abundantly, but we were once rather struck at seeing a ticket-taker enter the carriage with a meerschau in his mouth; one passenger, whose pipe was out, asked the customary German question: 'Haben sie feuer?' and the official gave him a light accordingly. We believe, however, that there is a wish at head-quarters to keep down this habit of smoking on the continental railways.

There are two sources of embarrassment which the Englishman is spared in his own country, but which press upon him in full force while travelling by rail abroad—namely, the different kinds of distance measurement, and the different kinds of money employed. Accustomed to English charges varying from three farthings to threepence per mile, he is frequently thrown out of his reckoning by the absence of miles abroad. The French kilomètre and the German meile are not English miles; the former equals 1093 yards, and is therefore a troublesome fraction of an English mile; while the German meile is as long as about four and a half English miles.

But this, however, is a minor inconvenience; for our 'Continental Bradshaw' gives most of the measurements in English miles. Not so in respect to the current coinage abroad. Although there was a 'railway congress' held a few years ago, to determine on a plan for facilitating the intercourse between country and country, yet this plan did not go so far as to assimilate the moneys of the different states; the tourist speedily discovers that this is the case, and he becomes perplexed with a multiplicity of cares. So long as he is in France or Belgium, the *franc* (9-1/2d.), with its multiples and submultiples, are easily managed; but when he gets beyond the Rhine, his troubles begin. If in Holland, he has to manage with the *guilder* (1s. 8d.) and its fractional parts in *cents*. If in the neighbourhood of Hamburg, he has to pay by means of the *mark* (14-1/2d.), and certain strange-looking *schillings* or *skillings*, of which sixteen equal one mark. Going south and east into Prussia, he finds the ruling coin to be the *thaler* (3s.), divisible into thirty *groschen*, and each of these into twelve *pfennige*; but if he be hovering in the frontiers of Prussia and Saxony, he will find that the *neu-groschen* of the latter country is worth a little more than the *silber-groschen* of the former, and that there is some difficulty in getting rid of either in the country of the other. Getting further south, to the regions belonging to or adjoining Austria, he will find his thalers and groschen no longer welcome; he has to attend to the *florin* (2s.), and its divisions into sixty *kreutzers*. If he travels north-east, to the few miles of railway yet existing in Poland, he will have to pay in *rubles* (3s. 3d.) and *kopecks*, which rank at 100 to the ruble. On the little Zurich and Baden Railway, the only one yet in Switzerland, our traveller meets again with his old acquaintance the *franc*; but this is worth 14-1/2d., instead of 9-1/2d., and, moreover, it is divided into ten *batzen*, each of which is worth ten *rappen*. If he crosses the Alps to Austrian Italy, he finds that his fare is reckoned in Austrian *lire* (about 8d.) In many cases, the different states take money from *through* passengers in the coin of either country; but the traveller who makes frequent stoppages, soon finds the embarrassment of the different moneys. A railway has lately been completed from Dresden to Prague—the capitals of the two kingdoms of Saxony and Bohemia—along the banks of the Elbe; it is no great distance, and yet the fees north of the frontier are charged in *thalers* and *neu-groschen*, while those south of it are in *florins* and *kreutzers*.

There have been very busy and important railway enterprises agreed upon or discussed within the last year or two, in various parts of the continent, which augur favourably for the future of Europe. We shall shortly pass these in review, to shew what may possibly be the aspect presented by the 'Continental Bradshaw' in 1862.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] A line of about forty-five miles, from Christiania to the end of the Miösin Lake, is surveyed, and in course of preparation.—*Ed.*

A SEARCH FOR ROBIN HOOD.

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THE adventures of an amateur in search of a picture, of a foundling in search of his father, and even of a dog in search of his master, have been severally recorded by skilful pens for the amusement of the public. But, however entertaining or romantic these narratives may be considered, they can hardly surpass in interest the curious history which has just been disclosed of the adventures of an antiquary in search of a ballad-hero. We owe our knowledge of the facts to one of a series of *Critical and Historical Tracts*, by the Rev.

Joseph Hunter, now in course of publication. Mr Hunter is an assistant-keeper of the public records, and is well known, by his other publications, as one of the most laborious and most judicious elucidators of mysterious passages in our national history. But the evidences of industry, of minute knowledge, and of logical acuteness, contained in his little treatise concerning 'the ballad-hero, Robin Hood,' are really surprising. The story of an obscure outlaw, who chased deer and took purses in a northern forest five hundred years ago, has been investigated with the painstaking sagacity of a Niebuhr; and a strong light has been unexpectedly thrown on the state of public sentiment and manners existing at that period. Mr Hunter, it is proper to say, dwells in his treatise chiefly upon results, and says little, and that very modestly, of the labours by which they were obtained. He even seems to fear that his subject may be considered trivial, and that he may possibly receive 'the censure of being one who busies himself with the mere playthings of antiquity.' Dr Percy, when he compiled his invaluable *Reliques*, had similar apprehensions, which were then not altogether groundless; but it may reasonably be hoped, that the race of pedants, who wondered how a man of learning could be interested in a bundle of old ballads, is now extinct.

Departing a little from the method and order observed by Mr Hunter in his tract, we will endeavour not only to state in a condensed form the remarkable conclusions at which he has arrived, but also to follow, as accurately as his references will enable us to do so, the ingenious processes of investigation which led to these results. The object of the inquiry was to determine, in the first place, whether such a person as Robin Hood ever existed; and, in the second place, to ascertain who and what he was, and to what extent the ballads of which he was the hero were based upon actual occurrences. What a vast amount of uncertainty there was to clear up, may be inferred from the wide differences of opinion among writers of the highest credit who preceded Mr Hunter in this inquiry. The celebrated historian of the Norman Conquest, M. Thierry, supposes Robin Hood to have been the chief of a small body of Saxons, who, in their forest strongholds, held out for a time against the domination of the Norman conquerors. On this point, as confessedly on others, the French historian seems to have derived his opinions from the suggestive scenes in Scott's splendid romance of *Ivanhoe*. Another writer conjectures, that the outlaws of whom Robin was the leader, may have been some of the adherents of Simon de Montfort, whose partisans were pursued to extremity after the fatal battle of Evesham, in the year 1264. Others, still, have denied altogether the existence, at any period, of such a person as Robin Hood. They make him either a mere hero of romance—the 'creation of some poetical mind;' or else, led by a similarity of names, they discover in him merely one of the embodiments of popular superstitions—a sylvan sprite, a Robin Goodfellow, or a Hudkin. Only two years ago, a historical writer of no small acumen, Mr Thomas Wright, published his opinion, that Robin Hood, in his original character, was simply 'one amongst the personages of the early mythology of the Teutonic people.'

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But Mr Hunter could not concur in these views, or be satisfied with the mode of reasoning by which they were maintained. In his opinion, Robin Hood was neither a Saxon malcontent nor the hero of a poet's romance; nor yet was he 'a goblin or a myth.' He was, in all probability, exactly such a person as the popular songs described him—an English yeoman, an outlaw living in the woods, and noted for his skill in archery. Previous researches had proved, that many of our old ballads are merely rhyming records of historical events. Mr Hunter had already rescued one ballad-hero, Adam Bell, from the 'danger of being reduced to an abstraction or a myth;' and it now remained for him to undertake the same good office for a more renowned freebooter.

The first thing to be done was, of course, to examine carefully the ballads themselves, and to ascertain the amount and value of the evidence they afforded, as to the epoch and the real story of their hero. It appeared, then, that 'three single ballads are found in manuscript, which cannot be later than the fourteenth century.' There is also a poem of considerable length, entitled *The Lytel Geste of Robyn Hood*, which was printed by Winkyn de Worde, in or about the year 1495. It is 'a kind of life' of the outlaw, and is composed of several ballads, strung together by means of a few intermediate stanzas, which give continuity to the story. The language of these ballads is that of the preceding century—being, in fact, the same as that of the ballads in manuscript. Thus the date of the songs themselves is carried back as far as the fourteenth century. It is, moreover, in the middle of this century that the first allusion to Robin Hood occurs in any work of undoubted authority. In Longland's poem, entitled *The Vision of Pierce Ploughman*, the date of which is between 1355 and 1365, mention is made of 'rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolph Earl of Chester,' the outlaw and the earl being apparently both regarded as historical personages, about whom songs had been written. It

may be observed, that if the Robin Hood ballads were much older than this date, it must be considered surprising that no earlier allusion to them should be found, since in the subsequent century they were referred to by many writers.

According to the story contained in the *Lytel Geste*, Robin Hood was at the head of a band of outlaws, who made their head-quarters in Bernysdale, or Barnesdale—once 'a woody and famous forest,' on the southern confines of Yorkshire, in the neighbourhood of Doncaster, Wakefield, and Pontefract; and who infested the woodlands and the highways from thence as far as Sherwood and Nottingham, near which ancient town some of their boldest exploits were performed. They slew the king's deer, and plundered rich travellers, but spared the humble, relieved the distressed, and were courteous to all who did not offend them.

Robyn was a proude outlaw
Whyles he walked on ground;
So curtyse an outlaw as he was one,
Was never none yfound.

All the ballads agree in ascribing to the outlaw chief a manly bearing and a generous disposition, such as might be expected to distinguish a respectable yeoman of a class somewhat above the ordinary, whom the fortune of war had driven from his home to a lawless life in the forest. That this was Robin Hood's condition, may be inferred from the general language of the ballads; but the important question is, whether any other testimony can be found to confirm this conjecture, and to give us any definite and authentic information about the fact. This is the question which Mr Hunter has undertaken to answer. The clue which first catches his experienced eye, is *the name of an English king*. One of the most remarkable adventures which the ballads record of Robin Hood, is his meeting with the king, who induced him, for a time, to take service in his household. The king, according to this authority, was exasperated with Robin and his men chiefly on account of the destruction which they had made of his deer. Finding that it was impossible to capture the outlaw by force, the king consented to practise a stratagem, suggested by a forester who was well acquainted with the outlaw's habits. He disguised himself as an abbot, and with five knights habited as monks, and a man leading sumpter-horses, rode into the greenwood. A wealthy abbot's baggage, and his ransom, would be just the bait most tempting to Robin and his men. The king, as he had expected, was seized by them, and led away to their lodge in the forest. The outlaws, however, behave courteously as usual; and when the abbot announces that he comes from the king at Nottingham, and brings a letter from his majesty, inviting Robin to come to that town, the latter receives the information joyously, and declares that 'he loves no man in all the world so well as he does his king.' Presently the monarch discovers himself, and the outlaw chief and his men kneel, and profess their loyalty—Robin at the same time asking for mercy for him and his. The king grants it on condition that Robin will leave the greenwood, and will come to court and enter his service. We quote the following after Mr Hunter, merely modernising the orthography:—

'Yes, fore God!' then said our king,
'Thy petition I grant thee,
With that thou leave the greenwood,
And all thy company;

'And come home, sir, to my court,
And there dwell with me.'
'I make mine avow to God,' said Robin,
'And right so shall it be:

'I will come to your court
Your service for to see.'

Accordingly, Robin left the greenwood and his company, entered the king's household, went with him to the court at London, and remained in his service for a year and three months. Having by that time become weary of this uncongenial mode of life, he obtained permission from the king to pay a visit to his old residence at Barnesdale. Here he resumes once more his former way of life 'under the greenwood-tree,' and becomes again chief of the outlaws of Barnesdale and Sherwood.

Now if, among the adventures ascribed to Robin by the old ballads, there is one far more improbable than all the rest, and one which an ordinary commentator would set down at once as a pure fiction of the poet, it is certainly that which has just been related. Mr Hunter, however, is not an

ordinary commentator. If the story is a strange one, he doubtless reflected, 'truth is stranger than fiction;' and if it is intrinsically and evidently improbable, that is the very reason why a poet would not have invented it. Mr Hunter, therefore, did what no other inquirer had before thought of doing—he examined the historical and documentary evidence which might throw light upon the subject. The ballad, fortunately, gives the name of the king who was concerned in this singular adventure. He is repeatedly spoken of as 'Edward, our comely king'—a phrase, by the way, which clearly implies that the ballad was composed while the monarch was still living. This circumstance is not noticed by Mr Hunter, but it is one of some importance, inasmuch as a poet would hardly have ventured to introduce the name of the reigning monarch into a purely fictitious narrative. But there are three Edwards—the first, second, and third of the name, among whom it is necessary to distinguish the one to whom the poet referred. Now, according to the ballad, this 'comely king,' before he fell in with Robin, had journeyed through the county of Lancaster:

All the pass of Lancashire,
He went both far and near,
Till he came to Plumpton Park,
He failed [missed] many of his deer.

The question then arises, which of the three Edwards did travel in that county? To this question, Mr Hunter's researches fortunately enable him to return a decisive answer. King Edward I. never was in Lancashire after he became king. King Edward III. was not in Lancashire in the early years of his reign, and probably never at all. But King Edward II. did make a 'progress' in Lancashire, and only one. The time was in the autumn of 1323, the seventeenth year of his reign, and the fortieth of his age. By the dates of the royal writs, and by other documents, Mr Hunter is enabled to trace the king's route and his various removes on this occasion with great minuteness. He follows him, for example, from York to Holderness; thence to Pickering, to Wherlton Castle, to Richmond and Jervaulx Abbey, and to Haywra Park, in the forest of Knaresborough. In this forest is situated Plumpton Park, which is mentioned in the ballad as having been visited by the king, who here became aware of Robin's depredations. King Edward proceeded thence by way of Skipton, and several other towns, to Liverpool, and, continuing his progress, arrived on the 9th of November at Nottingham, where he remained till the 23d of that month; and it was from Nottingham, it will be remembered, that the king set out in disguise to look for Robin Hood.

But if the 'proud outlaw' on this occasion actually took service in the king's household, his name would be likely to appear among those of the royal attendants, if any list of these is preserved. This consideration occurred to Mr Hunter. The result of his search must be told in his own words. 'It will scarcely be believed,' he observes, 'but it is, nevertheless, the plain and simple truth, that in documents preserved in the Exchequer, containing accounts of expenses in the king's household, we find the name of "Robyn Hode," not once, but several times occurring, receiving, with about eight-and-twenty others, the pay of 3d. a day, as one of the "*valets, porteurs de la chambre*" of the king. Whether this was some other person who chanced to bear the same name, or that the ballad-maker has in this related what was mere matter of fact, it will become no one to affirm in a tone of authority. I, for my part, believe it is the same person.' Mr Hunter then quotes the words of the original record, which is in Norman-French. It recites the names of the twenty-four '*portours*'—as the word is here spelled—who received pay from the 24th of March to the 21st of April 1324; and among these are the names of 'Robyn Hod' and 'Simon Hod.' These names do not occur in any previous document. The date of the record, it will be observed, is in the spring of the year following that in which the king made his progress through Lancashire, and stayed for some time at Nottingham on his return southward.

The office of valet, or *porteur de la chambre*, in those days, was probably similar to that of the present groom of the chamber, and if so, was a highly respectable and confidential post. In the ballad, Robin Hood is represented, while at court, as spending his money freely with knights and squires. His profusion, indeed, soon exhausted his purse, which the daily pay of 3d., however munificent it may have been at that period, could not replenish. Robin became, observes Mr Hunter, moody and melancholy:

'Alas!' then said good Robin,
'Alas, and well-a-day I
If I dwell longer with the king,
Sorrow will me slay.'

At last, he petitions the king for permission to pay a visit to his chapel at

Barnesdale; declaring, that for seven nights he has not been able to sleep, nor for seven days to eat or drink, so sore is his longing to see Barnesdale again. The king consents, but only for a se'nnight; 'in which,' says Mr Hunter, 'I suspect a corruption, for there was no Great Northern in those days.' Probably the leave of absence was for seven weeks instead of days.

Now, it is remarkable, that in the Exchequer pay-lists, the new porteur's name continues to appear (once under the form of Robert Hood) until the 22d of November 1324. Under this date appears an entry, which Mr Hunter has given in the original Norman-French, but which we prefer to translate: 'Robyn Hod, heretofore one of the porteurs, because he could no longer work, received as a gift, by command, 5s.' After this, we are told, his name does not again appear. The 22d of November 1324, was just a year from the time when the king was at Nottingham, where he arrived on the 9th of November 1323. Robin Hood, if he then took service, would have been in the royal household about a twelvemonth. The ballad, however, makes his service last for a year and three months. The discrepancy is not great; and it may, perhaps, be explained by the circumstance, that when Robin left the court, it was at first merely on leave of absence; and he would, consequently, still regard himself as in the king's service until he had finally determined to renounce it, which would probably not be until at least his term of leave had expired. The remarkable expression in the record, 'because he could no longer work,' seems, as Mr Hunter remarks, to correspond with Robin's declarations in the ballad, that he could neither eat, drink, nor sleep; and if he remained longer at court, sorrow would kill him. This apparent coincidence, the author adds, 'may be but imagination; but it looks like a reality.' It must be admitted, that if the Robyn Hod, or Robert Hood, of the Exchequer records be not Robin Hood the outlaw, then all these singular agreements of names, of dates, and of circumstances, will make together a far greater marvel than any that is to be found in the ballad-story itself, which some sceptics would require us to disbelieve.

This, however, is only the commencement of Mr Hunter's researches, which we cannot here follow in the same detail. The ballads relate that Robin Hood, after continuing twenty-two years in the greenwood, died—through some foul play—at the convent of Kirklees, the prioress of which was nearly related to him. On this hint, Mr Hunter seeks to discover, through this relationship, the original social position and family connections of the outlaw. He finds reason for believing, that the prioress of Kirklees at that period was a certain Elizabeth de Staynton, a member of a family of some note, established near Barnesdale. The Stayntons were tenants in chief of both the 'honours' of Tickhill and Pontefract. One of them was prior of Monk Bretton, and two were incumbents of churches in that vicinity. If Robin Hood was nearly related to this family, the connection would raise him somewhat above the rank of an ordinary yeoman; it might, as the author observes, 'give him that kind of generous air in which he is invested, and qualify him for his station among the valets of the crown.'

But if Robin Hood was a person of good condition, his name might perhaps be found in the law-records of the local courts; and, in fact, Mr Hunter has found, in the court-rolls of the manor of Wakefield, the name of 'Robertus Hood,' as that of the defendant in a suit relative to a small piece of land, in the ninth year of Edward II. He again appears in a subsequent year, when he is described as being of Wakefield; and the name of his wife, Matilda, is mentioned. Here is another curious coincidence. Mr Hunter says: 'The ballad testimony is—not the Lytel Geste, but other ballads of uncertain antiquity—that the outlaw's wife was named Matilda, which name she changed for Marian when she joined him in the greenwood.'

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But what cause could have driven a respectable yeoman like Robin Hood, along with so many others, apparently not much below him in rank, to the fastnesses of the forest? It is evident that only a great civil convulsion could have made, in one district, so large a number of outlaws of this peculiar character. Now, the rising of the discontented barons under the Earl of Lancaster, provoked by the king's favouritism and misgovernment, took place in the early part of the year 1322. By the battle of Boroughbridge, fought on the 16th of March in that year, the insurrection was suppressed. It was punished with great severity. The Earl of Lancaster and many of his adherents were beheaded, and their property was confiscated. Some offenders—probably persons who were not conspicuous in the outbreak—escaped with heavy fines; and among these are mentioned two members of the Staynton family, Robin Hood's supposed connections. We may thence infer the part which he himself probably took in the movement. From his skill with the bow, and from the personal esteem in which he was held, it is likely that he would be a leader of the archers in the rebel force, and would consequently be of

importance enough to become specially obnoxious to the king's party. Many others—perhaps the whole company which followed him to the battle—might be in the same plight. If so, it would account not only for their outlawry, but for the goodwill with which they were regarded by the people of their neighbourhood, who were generally favourable to the cause of the Earl of Lancaster, and looked upon him as a martyr. The battle of Boroughbridge, it should be observed, was fought in the year preceding that in which the king made his progress through the north, and rested for a fortnight at Nottingham.

Mr Hunter, in conclusion, sums up the results of his investigation in what he cautiously styles his 'theory' concerning the career of the famous ballad-hero. He considers that Robin Hood was one of the 'contrariantes,' or malcontents, of the reign of King Edward II., and that he was still living in the early years of King Edward III.; but that his birth must 'be carried back into the reign of King Edward I., and fixed in the decennary period, 1285 to 1295; that he was born in a family of some station and respectability, seated at Wakefield or in villages around; that he, like many others, partook of the popular enthusiasm which supported the Earl of Lancaster, the great baron of those parts, who, having attempted in vain various changes in the government, at length broke out into open rebellion, with many persons, great and small, following his standard; that when the earl fell, and there was a dreadful proscription, a few persons who had been in arms not only escaped the hazards of battle, but the arm of the executioner; that he was one of these; and that he protected himself against the authorities of the time, partly by secreting himself in the depths of the woods of Barnesdale or of the forest of Sherwood, and partly by intimidating the public officers by the opinion which was abroad of his unerring bow, and his instant command of assistance from numerous comrades as skilled in archery as himself; that he supported himself by slaying the wild animals which were found in the forests, and by levying a species of blackmail on passengers along the great road which united London with Berwick, occasionally replenishing his coffers by seizing upon treasure as it was being transported on the road; that there was a self-abandonment and a courtesy in the way in which he proceeded, which distinguishes him from the ordinary highwayman; that he laid down the principle, that he would take from none but those who could afford to lose, and that, if he met with poor persons, he would bestow upon them some part of what he had taken from the rich: in short, that in this respect he was the supporter of the rights or supposed reasonable expectations of the middle and lower ranks—a *leveller* of the times; that he continued this course for about twenty months—April 1322 to December 1323—meeting with various adventures, as such a person must needs do, some of which are related in the ballads respecting him; that when, in 1323, the king was intent upon freeing his forests from such marauders, he fell into the king's power; that this was at a time when the bitter feeling with which the king and the Spencers had first pursued those who had shewn themselves such formidable adversaries, had passed away, and a more lenient policy had supervened—the king, possibly for some secret and unknown reason, not only pardoned him all his transgressions, but gave him the place of one of the *valets*, *porteurs de la chambre*, in the royal household; which appointment he held for about a year, when the love for the unconstrained life he had led and for the charms of the country returned, and he left the court, and betook himself again to the greenwood shade; that he continued this mode of life we know not exactly how long; and that at last he resorted to the prioress of Kirklees, his own relative, for surgical assistance, and in that priory he died and was buried.'

These conclusions must of course be looked upon at present merely as a series of probable suppositions. Mr Hunter does not pretend to have placed them within the domain of authentic history. But it is by no means unlikely, that future researches will produce evidence of the indubitable truth of some of them. To Mr Hunter is due the credit of having first pointed out the direction in which this evidence must be sought, and of having, at the same time, indicated by his example the true value of such researches in the light which they cast on the politics and social life of the period to which they refer.

SNOW-STORM IN THE SAHARA.

NOTES FROM THE JOURNAL OF A MILITARY SURGEON.

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WHEN it was determined by the French government in the spring of 1847, to undertake several military expeditions simultaneously into the deserts to the south of Algeria, it was my lot to accompany the column of General

Cavaignac, both in a medical and scientific capacity. The western route, being the most difficult and dangerous, was that assigned to him. He was to penetrate the hitherto unexplored regions traversed by the Hamian-garabas—a powerful tribe, who could bring 2000 horsemen into the field, and among whom the various tribes that had at different times sworn allegiance to the French government always found willing allies whenever they chose to break their treaties and throw off the yoke. He was to destroy every village throughout this region that refused submission; and thus it was hoped that the retreats of Abd-el-Kader might be cut off, and that by a speedy termination of the war, the country might become settled, and its commerce be restored.

We were a motley and grotesque-enough-looking caravan; for our six battalions of infantry and four squadrons of cavalry were accompanied by 3000 camels laden with provisions and attended by Arab drivers, besides 500 mules carrying water-barrels, and cacolets—jointed arm-chairs—for the sick. It was not deemed desirable to observe the strictest military regularity in our march; so that French uniforms and Arab burnouses, military chargers, camels of the desert, and pack-saddled mules travelled side by side, pretty much as fancy dictated.

It was nearly three weeks before we reached the enemy's country. We had meanwhile met with the usual adventures incident to these regions. We had set fire to the forests of the Little Atlas Mountains, and been obliged to raise our camp, and fly in terror from the conflagration. We had crossed the dreary solitudes of Goor and Shott, through which our daily march had been enlivened by songs, or beguiled by listening to the wild legends of our Arab guides; and night after night we had encamped, like the vagabond tribes of Sahara, either round the mouths of wells, or without water in the open plains, each man receiving a scanty supply from the barrels, while the beasts were left to bear their thirst as they could. But now, after passing the basins of the Shott, and gaining the slight elevation beyond, we entered on a tract of desert as yet untrodden by European feet, and met with trials of a nature the least of all expected.

The wide wastes which lay before us appeared uniform and level as far as the eye could reach, but somewhat diversified by verdant patches of halfa (coarse grass of the desert), and by deceitful appearances of sheets of water, produced by the reflection of the light in the undulating vapours rising from the burning sand. In the distance, something like blue waves appeared: it was part of the great Atlas chain; but close at hand, to our right, was a long line of dunes. These eminences, smooth and sterile as marble domes, were apparently as solid too; but we knew that, if the desert wind should blow, they would be shaken into moving clouds of sand, overwhelming all before them.

Our column proceeded in silence. The soft sand yielded no echo to the tread. Every one appeared thoughtful and abstracted. This place has terrors even for the Arabs; they tell a thousand stories of the Pass of Sidi-Mohammed-el-Aoori: it was there, in times remote, that great armies were overpowered and slain by hostile bands, or destroyed by the scarcely less merciless elements; there many travellers have disappeared in the storm, or fallen under the hand of the murderer. It is the 'gate' of the desert; and the tutelar genii have placed the terrific dunes as a hieroglyphic warning to those who rashly approach. They seem to say, 'here begins the empire of Sterility and Death; enter if thou darest!' Doubtless the Arab tales had some influence on our minds, increasing the well-grounded fears inspired by the natural features of these arid wastes. Several of us mentally repeated that melancholy line from Dante—

Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate;^[2]

and not a few pictured to themselves a body of troops visiting these sands half a century later, and finding the bones of Cavaignac's army scattered here and there over the plains.

Hitherto the atmosphere had always been perfectly clear, but now it was thick and cold, the horizon wearing that gray, heavy aspect which in Europe precedes a fall of snow. No one, however, ventured to pronounce this word; it appeared an occurrence so unlikely in the plain, at such a season and under such a latitude. What, then, was our surprise, on awaking on the morning of the 19th of April, to find the tents covered with a thick sheet of snow, and to see the vast expanse of the desert white to the verge of the horizon, like the frozen steppes of Siberia! The general ordered the camp to be raised immediately, for the bivouac afforded very scanty materials for fire, and he hoped there might be wood in the mountains if he could reach them. The snow continued to fall in large flakes; the troops, anxious and sorrowful, described a thousand circuits and made a thousand useless turnings, for our

Arab guides were utterly at fault. During three or four months previous to the expedition, Cavaignac had been selecting and retaining as guides whatever Saharians he could find acquainted with that part of the desert he intended to traverse. The Arabs are gifted with remarkable dexterity in steering without compass, recognising a footstep imperceptible to the common eye, scenting the water at a distance, and finding their way by marks which would escape the most observant European. A Saharian once affirmed to Colonel Daumas: 'I am not considered remarkably sharp-sighted, but I can distinguish a goat from a sheep at the distance of a day's journey; and I know some who smell the smoke of a pipe, or of broiled meat, at thirty miles! We all know each other by the track of our feet in the sand, for no one tribe walks like another, nor does a wife leave the same footprint as an unmarried woman. If a hare has passed, we know by its footprint whether it is male or female, and, in the latter case, whether it is with young. If we see the stone of a date, we know the particular tree that produced it.'

Our conductors, though not pretending to all this sagacity, were nevertheless far in advance of some of us who proudly called ourselves 'old Africans,' and considered ourselves wonderfully expert in tracking the desert paths. But now the landmarks on which they depended had disappeared beneath the snow; and the atmosphere was so surcharged with it, that the mountain summits could no longer be descried. At length the guides abandoned the hopeless effort, and declared that they had entirely lost the way, and knew not in what direction to proceed. At this juncture, Cavaignac, remembering that the mountains had appeared due south on the preceding evening, seized his compass, and boldly ordered the troops in that direction. It was the only hope; but the march became so fatiguing, and the natives gave so little encouragement to the expectation of finding the mountains wooded, that a halt was ordered, and a bivouac on the snowy plain.

Many were the miseries that attended this encampment. The rattling of arms was heard on every side, for the soldiers were shivering to such a degree that they could not hold their guns steadily. What would they not now have given for some of the wood they had so wantonly destroyed in the forests of the Tell! But the bivouac was not even supplied with chiah—one of the commonest plants in Sahara, having a ligneous root, which had hitherto served us for fuel when everything else failed. Nothing was to be found but halfa, green, and steeped in snow; and the most skilful kindlers succeeded only in amusing themselves for a time with poor, little fires, that emitted more smoke than flame. The men, of course, could not make their soup; but the general ordered them rations of biscuit and coffee. For my own part, not being able to make a fire of wet halfa, I was looking disconsolately at a bit of biscuit, and a little morsel of cheese, which was to compose my dinner, when Lieutenant N— sent word that his fire-makers had been more successful, and that they offered me a corner. In a few minutes, I sat down to two boiled eggs, which appeared delicious. Meanwhile, the night drew on. The soldier's bed out-of-doors is a sheepskin laid on the bare ground, under a tent so small that he cannot stand upright in it. Now, as the earth was very damp, those who did not take the precaution of choosing a little mound, and removing a portion of the wet soil, soon found themselves literally in the mud, and were obliged to get up, and walk about all night.

The snow continued to fall thick and fast, the thermometer marking 7 degrees below the freezing-point during the night. Some days before, it had been 125 degrees Fahrenheit in the sun; so that we were doomed, as in the Purgatory of Dante—

A sofferir tormenti caldi e geli;

from which, by the way, Milton has obviously borrowed his idea of infernal torment:

— And feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more
fierce,
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round,
Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire.

[pg 141] At the sound of the morning watch-gun, the camp presented a most distressing spectacle. The Arabs and negroes of the convoy were lying motionless in the open air, rolled in their burnouses. Many of these poor creatures were but lightly clad, and had the lower limbs entirely naked. They were so benumbed and stupified with cold, that they refused to rise and load the camels; they begged to be allowed to lie still and die in peace. The cattle

also were in a sad condition, not only from cold, but hunger; for the snow-covered ground afforded them no pasture. As part of the provisions had been damaged, it was now asked in dismay, what would become of the army if the beasts should perish? The recollection of the disaster at Boo-Taleb, where the column of General Levasseur left so many men in the snow, occurred to the stoutest hearts. But even darker shades mingled in the prospects of our troops; for 'General Levasseur,' said they, 'was only thirty miles from a post occupied by French troops, and the neighbouring tribes raised and reanimated those whom they found alive, though benumbed on the plain; but we, in the midst of the desert, far from any human dwelling, what will become of us? Hunger, thirst, and the enemy, will soon finish the remains of our unfortunate army.'

But the officers are on foot, setting the example of vigorous exertion, and striving to comfort and encourage the men; while the calm and quiet prudence of the general inspires every one with confidence in endeavouring to obey his orders, as the only hope of deliverance. We begin our march: the snow is now falling only at intervals; it lies two feet deep in the hollow plains, and above a foot on the level and rising ground.

Some of the men, however, remained as if nailed to the soil—not only their limbs benumbed, but their mental energies so paralysed as to be incapable of acting on the physical; the mind inaccessible to moral incentives, and the body insensible to the influence of outward stimulants. By and by they found energy to beg that they might be hoisted on the arm-chairs; but this was peremptorily refused. Since Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, and the recent work of Dr Shrimpton on the disaster at Boo-Taleb, every one knows the consequence of indulging this deceitful stupor.

But we found we must do more than talk; so we set the drums and trumpets about the ears of the sleepers, and made their comrades shake them with all their might. It was not till after an hour's march, in which coaxing, scolding, and pushing, stimulants to laughter and provocatives to anger, had been incessantly employed in turn, that the vital powers appeared to be in tolerably full play. There was one man more obstinate than the rest, who, in order to get a place on one of the cacolets, threatened every minute to lie down on the ground. I slid among the ranks, and began telling one of his comrades all the horrible stories I knew of those who, yielding to sleep in the cold, had awaked no more; adding, with affected indifference: 'I am afraid we shall have to leave some of our poor men as a supper for the hyenas to-night. There are two or three of them so benumbed and stupified, that they will perish if they halt for a single instant.' In a few minutes, I learned that the soldier had done begging to be carried; he said his strength was returning.

In the midst of so much human distress, it seems almost like trifling to advert to the poor swallows. On awaking in the morning, I had found two under my bed-cover. They allowed themselves to be taken, and either could not, or would not fly away when I tried to banish them. So I put them in the hood of my cloak, and allowed it to fall down my back, while I raised over my head that of the ample burnoose which I wear in the cold above all my other garments. The swallows travelled thus for several hours, and gradually recovered in their warm nest. When the sun emitted some genial rays, I took them out, and set them free. They fluttered for some time round my horse, uttering a little cry, which I took for an expression of gratitude before taking flight into the mountains.

Other companies of them had taken shelter under the matted hair which hangs from the flanks of the camel; and when the pitiless driver persisted in dislodging them, they departed with a plaintive cry, to seek an asylum with a camel whose driver was more hospitable. A sentinel had found one in his pocket during the night, but it paid dearly for its lodging—he roasted it for his supper! These poor birds had fled from the rigours of a European winter, to find cold as severe in the heart of Africa. Alas! how many of us felt that, like the swallows, we had exiled ourselves to improve our fortunes, and were now in danger of perishing. How gladly would we have resigned all our hopes of glory and advantage for the fireside of the modest paternal dwelling!

But before night we encamped in the shelter of the mountains; the chiah, which grew in abundance around us, enabled us to kindle fires, and a salutary reaction took place in the spirits of the troops. According to a common practice of mine, I invited to supper the man whose life I had saved by frightening him into exertion. After swallowing a glass of warm wine, well sugared, and spiced with tincture of cinnamon, he licked his lips, sucked the edges of his glass, and said: 'Thank ye, doctor; but for you I should have been dead,' with a naïveté which I can never forget, and which even now mingles pleasing associations with the thoughts of those days of suffering.

The next day nearly 200 of the men were affected with partial or total blindness. Some had merely a sensation like fatigue of the visual organs, with heaviness, watering, and inflammation of the conjunctive membrane. But with others the pain was acute, the eye much inflamed, and the cornea covered with minute ulcerations. Those who were more slightly affected, marched like persons enveloped in a cloud of smoke, and trying to see their way out of it; they took a few steps with their eyes shut, then half opened them with evident pain to reconnoitre the ground before them, and quickly closed them again. But many had for the time wholly lost their sight; they stumbled on the tufts of halfa, and rolled on the ground, so that we were obliged to hoist them on the cacolets. The general, in a state of much uneasiness, called a council of such members of the military corps of health as were found in his column. Some were of opinion that this epidemic was occasioned by the sudden cold, others that it was attributable to the smoke of the chiah; but the truth is, that, both before and after this period, we had experienced nearly as great extremes of heat by day and cold by night without any such consequences, and that some, who had not approached the chiah fires were as severely affected as those who had. It was concluded, with every appearance of reason, that the real cause was the dazzling light reflected from the snow during our march on the 20th of April. I recollect one artilleryman, who was conducting his gun, when suddenly, as the sun broke out afresh, he stopped, rubbed his eyes, turned his head in every direction, and exclaimed: 'I cannot see; I am quite blind!' Although we had not expected snow in the plains of Sahara, the general had anticipated the effects of the reflection of light from the sand, and the possibility of small particles of it getting into the eyes; and with this view each man had been provided with a green gauze veil. But the soldier dislikes anything out of his regular routine as much as the most ignorant peasant; so when the order was given that these veils should be worn,^[3] the soldiers wore them to be sure—in their pockets. I insisted that each man should fasten his on his helmet, and this, too, was done; but it was allowed to fly like a streamer behind, instead of being drawn over the eyes. Happily the epidemic was but temporary, and none permanently suffered the loss of sight as the punishment of his folly.

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FOOTNOTES:

[2] All hope abandon ye that enter here.

[3] *Porter*, to carry, is the word by which the French express to wear a thing, so that the error of Cavaignac's soldiers was somewhat more excusable than it would have been in Englishmen.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

August 1852.

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THE great heat, which has been more talked about than anything else, if it does not prove that the meteorologists, who predicted that this summer was to bring a return of the warm cycle, were right in their conclusions, at least coincides with their vaticinations. Not least remarkable was the suddenness with which we plunged into it, as though the cause which had produced a precisely similar effect in the United States a month earlier, had slowly crossed the Atlantic for our benefit.

It follows, when 'everybody' is going out of town, that the number of those who stay behind to talk must be greatly diminished; and to see that the things to be talked about undergo a collapse at this season, it is only necessary to look at the newspapers. A new actor, or an out-door place of amusement, is treated to a whole column of criticism, whereas, at other times, they would be dismissed in a brief paragraph. Penny-a-liners of lively imagination, find their reports less subjected to curtailment. Emigration comes in for a considerable share of notice, and the statements put forth of the numbers who sail weekly for Australia and the 'Diggins,' must be taken as decided evidence of a desire to better their condition on the part of a large section of the population. It is easy to foresee that thousands will be disappointed, if they are not made of that stuff which can brave hardship, and triumph over the wild work of pioneer colonisation. Now and then we see accounts of unsuspecting emigrants having been deluded and robbed by a mock 'company,' whose ships are perhaps in the moon, for they are never seen in terrestrial seas; but with so many facilities as now exist for getting a passage in a straightforward, business-like way, it is not easy to understand how it is that people should

persist in giving their money to swindlers. It would appear that to some the *verbum sap.* never suffices. Means are not lacking for putting the unwary on their guard, among which the conferences and group-meetings held by the indefatigable Mrs Chisholm are especially to be commended. At these meetings, those who desire to expatriate themselves are informed of the most economical mode of effecting their purpose, and counselled as to what they should do during the voyage. Whatever be the result to those who go, there are indications that the labour-market is bettered for those who stay; in connection with which a noteworthy fact may be mentioned, which is, that in the southern, western, and midland counties, scarcely an Irish labourer is to be seen; and who is there that does not remember what troops of the ragged peasantry used to come over for haymaking and the harvest?

The lovers of the picturesque, who are apt to become migratory at this period of the year, will be glad to hear of Earl de Grey's announcement to the Society of British Architects, that he has repaired Fountains' Abbey—one of the beautiful ruins for which Yorkshire is famous—without modernising its appearance or altering its character. It is to be hoped that so praiseworthy an attempt to preserve a relic of the olden time from decay will find many imitators. Pilgrims will thank his lordship for many a generation to come. And, to leave the past to the present; metropolitan promenaders are about to have a cause of satisfaction, for the embankment of the Thames from Vauxhall Bridge to Chelsea Gardens is at last to be commenced; and London will cease to be the only capital in Europe which cannot obtain a view of its river. If the authorities could be persuaded to extend this beneficial work through the whole length of the city, what popularity would be theirs!

An official notice from the Post-office states, that from the first of the present month London is to be placed on the same footing, with respect to letters, as the rest of the country—that is, they must either be stamped before being posted, or sent unpaid. This is a measure which will materially diminish the labour of keeping accounts at the central office; and the more that labour is saved, the more will there be left to facilitate postal communication. Books and periodicals can now be sent to most of our colonies at the rate of a shilling a pound—a fact which those who have hitherto sent their parcels at any one's trouble and expense but their own, will do well to bear in mind. Ocean Penny Postage is growing into favour, and is talked about in such a way as to shew that the project will not be left to take care of itself.

The French are going to send a new Scientific Exploring Expedition to South America, chiefly for researches in Brazil and Paraguay. Perhaps the veteran Bonpland, who was so long detained by the dictator Francia, may be induced to come home in it, as he has written to express his desire of returning to France. And something has been said at Washington, about sending a couple of frigates to survey the great river Amazon, in which, as the official document states, there is a sufficient depth of water to float a large ship at the foot of the Andes, 1500 miles from the sea. America will surely be well known some day. Meanwhile, we are extending our knowledge of Africa; a map of that country is about to be published, comprising the whole region from the equator to 19 degrees of south latitude. In this the recent discoveries will be laid down, and we shall see Mr Galton's route of 1600 miles from Walfish Bay to Odonga, near a large river named the Nourse, and to the country of the Ovampo, described as an intelligent tribe of natives. We shall find also, that the snow-peaked mountains seen by the German missionaries, and considered to be the source of the White Nile, are not more than about 300 miles distant from the eastern coast; and it is said that no more promising enterprise could be undertaken, than an attempt to ascend and explore them, starting from Mombas. Barth and Overweg were at the eastern end of Lake Tchad when last heard from; and we are told that the slave-traders, finding their occupation decreasing on the western coast, have lately, for the first time, penetrated to the interior, and tempted many of the natives to sell their children for showy European goods. Lieutenant Macleod, of the Royal Navy, proposes to ascend the Niger in a steam-launch, and when up the country, to cross over to, and descend the Gambia, with a view to discover new sources of trade; and Mr Macgregor Laird is still ready to carry a vessel up any river of the western coast to which government may please to send him. Besides the travellers mentioned, there are others pushing their way in different parts of the south; and the French are not idle in the north—they have added to our information concerning Abyssinia, and the countries bordering on the Great Desert. But in addition to African geography, all these explorations have added to our knowledge of African geology. A vast portion of the interior is supposed to have been an inland sea, of which Ngami and other lakes are the remains; fossil bones of most peculiar character have been found, but only of terrestrial and fresh-water animals. A name is already given to a creature of a remote secondary period; Professor Owen, from the examination of a few

relics, pronounces it to be a *Dicynodon*. According to Sir B. Murchison, such have been the main features of Africa during countless ages; 'for the old rocks which form her outer fringe, unquestionably circled round an interior marshy or lacustrine country, in which the dicynodon flourished at a time when not a single animal was similar to any living thing which now inhabits the surface of our globe. The present central and meridian zone of waters, whether lakes, rivers, or marshes, extending from Lake Tchad to Lake Ngami, with hippopotami on their banks, are, therefore, but the great modern, residual, geographical phenomena of those of a mesozoic age.'

The publication of special scientific works is going on under the auspices of different European governments. The Batavian Society of Rotterdam have just issued an elaborate illustrated Report on the best method of improving permanently the estuary of Goedereede—a question of considerable moment to the merchants of Rotterdam. The French government have had a new fount of Ethiopic types cast, to enable M. d'Abbadie to prepare a catalogue of African manuscripts. And our Secretary of State for the Home Department has presented various libraries and public institutions with two portly folios, entitled *Liber Munerum Publicorum Hiberniæ, or the Establishments of Ireland, from the Nineteenth of King Stephen to the Seventh of George IV.*, which we may accept as an addition to the *Memorials of History*, commenced two or three years since. Then, as a private enterprise, we have a scheme for a new edition of Shakspeare, in twenty volumes folio, which is to be completed in six years, with all that can be required in the way of illustration, be it archæological, philological, historical, or exegetical. Mr Halliwell is to be the editor; and it is said that not more than 150 copies will be printed. Another birth for the spirit of the dust that lies in the tomb at Stratford.

Research is as active as ever in France. M. Bernard, who is well known as a physiologist and anatomist, after a careful study of the salivary glands, finds that each of the three, common to nearly all animals, furnishes a different secretion. The saliva from the sublingual gland is viscous and sticky, fit to moisten the surface of substances, but not to penetrate them, giving them a coat which facilitates their being swallowed. That from the parotid gland, on the contrary, is thin and watery, easily penetrates substances taken into the mouth, and thereby favours their assimilation; while the saliva from the submaxillary gland is of a nature between these two. These facts were verified by soaking portions of the membrane in water, as well as by experiments on the living subject; the liquid in which they were soaked presented the same character as that of the secretions.

The varying of the parotid secretion with the nature of the food taken, is considered by M. Bernard to be a proof that this secretion is especially intended to favour mastication. A horse kept on perfectly dry food gives out a far greater quantity than when the food is moistened. Experiments on the dog and rabbit supplied similar results; and, extraordinary as it may appear, the gland will secrete saliva in the course of an hour weighing eight or ten times as much as its own tissue. A striking example this of the rapidity with which saliva can be separated from the blood under certain circumstances, and of the fallacy of founding conclusions on the quantity secreted within the twenty-four hours.

The sublingual gland is inert during mastication, and only begins to act as swallowing commences, when it envelops or lubricates the chewed substance with a fluid that assists its passage to the stomach. The function of the submaxillary has much to do with taste; the fluid which it pours out dilutes and diminishes the pungent flavour of sapid substances, and at the same time weakens the energy of their contact. The three organs are identical in texture, though so different in their secretions; 'each gland,' as M. Bernard says, 'having a special act, its function is exercised under separate and independent influences. Notwithstanding their discharging into and mixing in the mouth, their use remains distinct,' as above stated. To complete this brief summary of an interesting subject, it may be added, that birds and reptiles have but one kind of saliva, answering to the viscous in mammalia.

M. Vogt, in a communication to the Académie, adds to the proofs that what is called the spontaneous generation of certain worms, is due to natural causes. For instance, a worm, which has no reproductive organs, is often found in the body of the stickle-back; this worm, however, is known to breed, but it does so only when the stickle-back happens to be eaten by a bird; the worm is then placed in the proper condition for development, 'for it is then only that its segments become filled with eggs, which, egested by the bird, pass into the bodies of other fishes;' in a way more in accordance with natural operations than spontaneous generation.

Again, of two kinds of worms which infest human beings, the *Bothriocephalus*

is found among the Poles, Swiss, and Dutch, while the *Tenia*, or tape-worm, is common among the French and Germans. If, however, the latter reside in Switzerland, they also become infested with the first-named worm, the reason given being, that in Switzerland liquid *excretæ* from cesspools are largely used for manuring vegetables, and that, in the eating of these vegetables, the eggs of the worms are taken into the body, and become hatched by means of the intestinal warmth. These investigations, which are to be continued, are important, seeing that they have a bearing on the phenomena of health and disease.

There are some curious facts, too, concerning oysters. M. Dureau de la Malle states, that 100,000,000 of these bivalves are collected annually from a bank off the port of Granville; and that, by a proper course of feeding, white oysters have been converted into a much esteemed green sort, which sell at a high price. And further, a physician at Morlaix has succeeded in crossing a big, tough species with one that is small and delicate, and has obtained 'hybrids of large size and of an excellent quality.'

M. Verdeil informs the Académie, that he has proved the chlorophyll, or resinous green colouring-matter of plants, to be 'a mixture of a perfectly colourless fat, capable of crystallising, and of a colouring principle which presents the greatest analogies with the red colouring principle of the blood, but which has never yet been obtained in a perfectly pure state.' He has isolated a quantity for experiment and examination by a chemical process, and has added another fact to the list of those which shew a relation between animal and vegetable functions. It has been known for some time, that certain functions of the liver are similar to those of certain plants.

M. Marcel de Serres shews, that marine petrifications are not necessarily of ancient date, for they are formed at the present day in existing seas; that shells are now being petrified in the Mediterranean. All that is required for the result, is the presence of certain calcareous salts in the water; repose even is not essential, for the process goes on below, though the surface may be stormy. These petrifications are not, as some suppose, to be regarded as fossils, the latter designation belonging only to 'those organic remains which are found in geological deposits.'

Apropos of the burning of the *Amazon*: M. Dujardin relates, that a fire broke out a short time since in a spinning-mill at Douai. It penetrated to the carding-room; destruction seemed inevitable, and the engines were sent for, when it was proposed to fill the blazing room with steam. A steam tube traversed the apartment; it was broken by a stroke with an axe, the steam rushed out, 'and in a few minutes the conflagration was extinguished as if by enchantment.'

Attempts are still being made towards aerial navigation. M. Prosper Meller, of Bordeaux, proposes to construct an aerial locomotive 200 mètres in length, 62 wide, and 60 high, the form to be cylindrical, with cone-shaped ends, as best adapted for speed. The outer case is to be varnished leather, which is to be filled with gas, and to contain five spherical balloons. A net, which covers the whole, is to support sixteen helices by ropes, eight on each side; and to these two galleries are to be attached, one for the machinery, the other for passengers. The affair looks well on paper; but there is little risk in saying, that the days of flying machines are not yet come, neither is the scheme for aerial railways—a series of cables stretched from one high building to another—to be regarded as any more promising.

THE SHIP'S FIRST VOYAGE.

BY MRS ALARIC WATTS.

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That ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
But I pursued her with a lover's look.

WORDSWORTH.

A STRANGER in a foreign land,
Soft music met mine ear—
O Richard, O mon roi, struck up
In flute-notes wild and clear:
And scarce had died that plaintive strain,
When lo! how could it be?
Thy thunder pealed above the tide,
'Britannia rules the sea!'

I knew not whence the magic came,
But sought the distant shore,
And there a stately pageant lay
Unseen, undreamt before:
A gallant vessel newly dressed
With flags and streamers gay,
An untried wanderer on the wing,
To cleave an untried way.

And joy was with the multitude,
And gladness on the earth,
The tongue of every living thing
Rang with a sound of mirth.
All that stern Wisdom could desire,
Or Fancy fair engage—
Danger-defying youth was there,
And calm experienced age.
It seemed as though earth's very best
To that brave barque were given—
Science for nature's mysteries,
And childlike faith for Heaven.

How strangely is sensation formed,
How mingled hope and fear,
Since Mirth herself can oft repel
And Sadness' self endear!
Whence is it that a sigh can soothe,
And sweetest sounds may jar?
Those wingèd words my thoughts had sent
A thousand leagues afar.
I listened to the thrilling strain,
Unbidden tears would start,
The sound fell lightly on the ear,
But heavy on the heart.
The low breath of the summer wind
Seemed but the siren's voice,
In vain I chid my coward fears,
And struggled to rejoice!

Her gallant hearts were numbered,
Her snowy wings were set,
Her pilot's hand was on the helm,
But there she lingered yet.
The ringing laugh suspended,
The voice of mirth was hushed,
When the twilight's holy anthem
In a burst of music gushed.
Warm hearts of many nations
Were blended in that prayer,
And the incense that went up to heaven,
Was surely welcomed there.
Like rain upon the thirsting earth
Was that sweet chant to me,
Like a cool breeze in a desert—
Like a gale from Araby.
And the mental clouds, late veiling
The charm of sea and shore,
Rolled off like mist before the sun,
And I was sad no more.
Slow sailed the stately vessel,
And slowly died the strain;
But I knew that God was with it,

THE HARE AND THE LION: AN INDIAN POLITICAL LIBEL.

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Who knows not this story? Nevertheless we publish it; for even as the hare conquered the lion, so does the Bengalee overcome the Englishman:—A hare sat in the jungle with his wife, and he said: 'There is our king, the lion, come into the wood, and he will devour our children.' 'No,' said the little hare, 'for I will go to confront him, and conquer the great lion, the king of the beasts.'

Then her husband laughed, and said: 'Intellect is power; we can die but once; let us see what you can do.' Then the little hare, taking her little son in her paws, jumped and jumped till she came to the lion. Then she put down her son before his face, and put her two paws together in all humility, and said: 'Lo! king of kings, I have brought you a nuzzurana; oblige me by eating it. Also, I have some news to give you.' Then the lion looked at the hare's baba, and saw it was soft and juicy, and was pleased in his soul, and laughed, and his laugh was as the roar of the thunder of Indro. Then he asked her news, and the little hare replied: 'You are the sovereign of the forest, but another has come who calls himself king of the beasts, and demands tribute.' Then the roar of the lion shook the forest, and the little hare nearly died with fear as he asked: 'Where is the scoundrel? Can you shew him to me?' Then the little hare leaped along with the lion till she came to an old well. The well was nearly full, but had no wall. And she said: 'Look, he is hiding there in fear.' Then the lion, craning his neck, looked and saw his own shadow, and with a fearful roar, leaped into the well. So the little hare, with a glad heart, took up her son, and went to her husband, and said: 'Lo! intellect is power: I have killed the lion, the king of the beasts.'—*From the Sumochar Durpun, a Bengalee newspaper, of the 2d August 1851.*

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