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Transcriber's notes: Minor typos have been corrected. Table of contents has been generated for HTML version. Footnotes have been moved to the end of the articles.

Contents

M. DE TOCQUEVILLE.[1]

M. De Tocqueville is one of the greatest, perhaps the very greatest, of the political philosophers of the present day. Alone of all his contemporaries, his best works will bear a comparison with those of Machiavelli and Bacon. Less caustic and condensed than Tacitus, less imaginative and eloquent than Burke, he possesses the calm judgment, the discriminating eye, and the just reflection, which have immortalised the Florentine statesman and the English philosopher. Born and bred in the midst of the vehement strife of parties in his own country, placed midway, as it were, between the ruins of feudal and the reconstruction of modern society in France, he has surveyed the contest with an impartial gaze. He has brought to the examination of republican institutions in the United States, the eye of calm reason and the powers of philosophic reflection. The war-cries, the illusions, the associations of neither party have been able to disturb his steady mind. Though a man of rank, descended, as his name indicates, of an ancient family, he is not bigoted in favour of the old régime; though belonging to a profession where strenuous efforts can alone ensure success, he is not blind to the dangers of the new order of things. The feudal ages, with their dignified manners, glorious episodes, and heart-stirring recollections, are not lost upon him, but they have not closed his eyes to the numerous evils which they brought in their train.

Modern times, with their general activity, vast achievements, and boundless anticipations, have produced their full effect on his thoughtful mind; but they have not rendered him insensible to the perils with which they are fraught. He is a Burke without his imagination—a Machiavelli without his crimes.

M. De Tocqueville, it is well known, is a firm believer in the progress of society to a general system of equality and popular government. He thinks that, for better or for worse, this tendency is inevitable; that all efforts to resist it are vain, and that true wisdom consists in accommodating ourselves to the new order of things, and making the transition with as little confusion and individual distress as may be. America he considers as the type of what Europe is to become; though he has grievous misgivings as to the final result of such a prostration of the great interests of society as has there taken place, and is too well-read a scholar not to know that it was in the institutions of the Byzantine empire that a similar levelling resulted in ancient times. But being thus a devout believer, if not in the doctrine of perfectibility, at least in that of [Pg 526] ceaseless progress towards democracy, his opinions are of the highest value when he portrays the perils with which the new order of things is attended. Alone of all the moderns, he has fixed the public attention upon the real danger of purely republican institutions; he first has discerned in their working in America, where it is that the lasting peril is to be apprehended. Passing by the bloodshed, suffering, and confiscations with which the transition from aristocratic ascendency to democratic power is necessarily attended, he has examined with a scrutinising eye the practical working of the latter system in the United States, where it had been long established and was in pacific undisputed sovereignty. He has demonstrated that in such circumstances, it is not the *weakness* but the *strength* of the ruling power in the state which is the great danger, and that the many-headed despot, acting by means of a subservient press and servile juries, speedily becomes as formidable to real freedom as ever Eastern sultaun with his despotic power and armed guards has proved.

The works of this very eminent writer, however, are by no means of equal merit. The last two volumes of his "Democratie en Amerique" are much inferior to the first. In the latter, he sketched out with a master hand, when fresh from the object of his study, the practical working of democratic institutions, when entirely free from all the impediments which, it was alleged, concealed or thwarted their operation in the Old World. He delineated the results of the republican principle in a new state, without a hereditary nobility, established church, or national debt; unfettered by primogeniture, pauperism, or previous misgovernment; surrounded by boundless lands of exceeding fertility, with all the powers of European knowledge to bring them into cultivation, and all the energy of the Anglo-Saxon race to carry out the mission of Japhet—to replenish the earth and subdue it. The world had never seen, probably the world will never again see, the democratic principle launched into activity under such favourable circumstances, and when its practical effect, for good or for evil, could with so much accuracy and certainty be discerned. The study and delineation of such an experiment, in such circumstances, and on such a scale, by a competent observer, must have been an object of the highest interest at any time; but what must it be when that observer is a man of the capacity and judgment of M. De Tocqueville?

The latter volumes of the same work, however, have dipped into more doubtful matters, and have brought forward more questionable opinions. The inquisitive mind, philosophic turn, and deep reflection of the author, indeed, are every where conspicuous; but his opinions do not equally as in the first two volumes bear the signet mark of truth stamped upon them. They are more speculative and fanciful; founded rather on contemplation of future, than observation of present effects. When De Tocqueville painted the unrestrained working of democracy on political thought and parties, as he saw it around him in the course of his residence in America, he drew a picture which all, in circumstances at all similar, must at once have recognised as trustworthy, because it was only an extension of what they had witnessed in their own vicinity. But when he extended these effects so far as he has done in his later volumes, to manners, opinions, habits, and the intercourse of the sexes, the attempt seemed overstrained. The theory, beyond all question just to a certain point, was pushed too far. M. De Tocqueville's great reputation, accordingly, has been somewhat impaired by the publication of his last two volumes on democracy in America; and it is to the first two that the philosophic student most frequently recurs for light on the practical working of the popular system.

Perhaps, too, there is another, and a still more cogent, reason why the reputation of this philosopher has not continued so general as it at first was. This is his *impartiality*. Both the great parties which divide the world turned to his work on its first appearance with avidity, in the hope of discovering something favourable to their respective views. Neither were disappointed. Both found numerous facts and observations of the very highest importance, and having a material [Pg 527] bearing on the points at issue between them. Enchanted with the discovery, each raised an *Io Pæan*; and in the midst of a chorus of praise from liberals and conservatives, M. De Tocqueville took his place as the first political philosopher of the age. But in process of time, both discovered something in his opinions which they would rather had been omitted. The popular party were displeased at seeing it proved that the great and virtuous middle classes of society could establish a despotism as complete, and more irresistible, than any sultaun of Asia: the aristocratic, at finding the opinion of the author not disguised that the tendency to democracy was irresistible, and that, for good or for evil, it had irrevocably set in upon human affairs. But present celebrity is seldom a test of future fame; in matters of thought and reflection, scarcely ever so. What makes a didactic author popular at the moment is, the coincidence of his opinions with those of his readers, in the main, and the tracing them out to some consequences as yet new

to them. What gives him fame with futurity is, his having boldly resisted general delusions, and violently, and to the great vexation of his contemporaries, first demonstrated the erroneous nature of many of their opinions, which subsequent experience has shewn to be false. "Present and future time," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "are rivals; he who pays court to the one, must lay his account with being discountenanced by the other." We augur the more favourably for M. De Tocqueville's lasting fame, from his being no longer quoted by party writers on either side of the questions which divide society.

M. de Tocqueville calls the history he has recently published, and which forms the subject of this article,—"A *Philosophic* History of the Reign of Louis XV."[2] We regret the title: we have an instinctive aversion to *soi-disant* philosophic histories. Those that really are so, invariably shun the name. Robertson, in his first volume of Charles V.; Guizot in his "Civilisation Européenne;" Sismondi, in his "Essais sur les Sciences Sociales," and the last volume of his "Republiques Italiennes," have carried the philosophy of history to the highest perfection; but none of them thought of calling their immortal works "Philosophic Histories." Schlegel has written an admirable book not improperly styled "the *Philosophy* of History;" but it avowedly is not a history, but a review of the general conclusions which seemed deducible from it. Bossuet entitled his celebrated work, "Histoire Universelle," without a word of philosophy. In truth, philosophy, though a corollary from history, is not its primary object. That is, and ever must be, the narrative of human events. Not but what the noblest and most important lessons of philosophy may and should be deduced from history; but they should be *deduced*, not made the main object of the work. The reason is obvious: history is addressed to the great body of mankind; to most of whom, narrative of event, if told in an agreeable manner, may be made an object of interest; but to not one in twenty of whom general or philosophic conclusions ever can be a matter of the smallest concern. History, in truth, is much more nearly allied to poetry, oratory, and painting. The drama is but the expansion of its touching scenes,—painting, the representation of its fleeting events. Even to the few who are gifted by nature with the power of abstract thought, it is often hazardous to push matters to a conclusion too openly. Lingard evinced the profound knowledge of the human heart by which the Church of Rome has ever been distinguished, when, in his skilful narrative, he concealed the Roman Catholic save in the facts which he brought forward. It is well to enlist self-love on the side of truth. No conclusions are so readily embraced, as those which the reader flatters himself he himself has had a large share in drawing. Like the famous images which were withheld from the funeral of Junia, they are only the more present to the mind that they are withdrawn from the sight.

Perhaps M. de Tocqueville meant, by prefixing this title to his work, to prepare his readers for what they were to expect. He does not aim at making a very interesting narrative. Though possessed, as the extracts we shall give will abundantly testify, of considerable power of description, and rising at times into strains of touching eloquence, it is not his object to render his work attractive in either of these ways. Had it been so, he would have chosen a different subject; he would have selected the glories of Louis XIV. which preceded the disasters of the Revolution; the glories of the empire, which followed it. His turn of mind is not dramatic; he is neither poetic in his imagination, nor pictorial in his description. Considering the close connexion between these arts and history, these are very great deficiencies, and must ever prevent his work from taking its place beside the masterpieces in this department of literature. It will not bear a comparison with the dramatic story of Livy, the caustic nerve of Sallust, the profound observation of Tacitus, or the pictorial page of Gibbon. But, regarded as a picture of the moral causes working in society, anterior to a great and memorable convulsion, it is entitled to the highest praise, and will ever be viewed as a most valuable *preliminary volume* to the most important period of European history. [Pg 528]

M. de Tocqueville possesses one most important quality, in addition to his calm judgment and discriminating sagacity. His moral and religious principles are not only unexceptionable, but they are founded on the soundest and most enlightened basis. Humane without being sentimental—moral but not uncharitable—religious but not fanatical—he surveys society, its actors and its crimes, with the eve of enlightened philanthropy, experienced reason, and Christian charity. He is neither a fierce, imperious Romish bigot like Bossuet, nor a relentless Calvinistic theologian like D'Aubigné, nor a scoffing infidel like Voltaire. Deeply impressed with the vital importance of religion to the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind, he is yet enlightened enough to see that all systems of religious belief have much to recommend them, and rejects the monstrous doctrine that salvation can be obtained only by the members of any particular sect. He sees much good in all religions; much evil in many of their supporters. He is a Roman Catholic; but he is the first to condemn the frightful injustice of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; he does not doom the whole members of the Church of England to damnation, as so many of our zealous sectarians do the adherents of the Church of Rome.

It is a remarkable and most consolatory circumstance, that these just and enlightened views on the subject of religion, and its beneficial influence on society, are now entertained by all the deepest thinkers and most brilliant writers in France. There is not an intellect which rises to a certain level now in that country—not a name which will be known a hundred years hence, which is not thoroughly *Christian* in its principles. *That*, at least, is one blessing which has resulted from the Revolution. Chateaubriand, Guizot, Lamartine, Vilmain, De Tocqueville, Michelet, Sismondi, Amadée Thierry, Beranger, Barante, belong to this bright band. When such men, differing so widely in every other respect, are leagued together in defence of Christianity, we may regard as a passing evil whatever profligacy the works of Victor Hugo, Eugène Sue, and Sand, pour forth upon the Parisian world and middle classes throughout France. They, no doubt,

indicate clearly enough the state of general opinion *at this time*. But what then? Their great compeers, the giants of thought, foreshadow what it will be. The profligate novels, licentious drama, and irreligious opinions of the middle class now in France, are the result of the infidelity and wickedness which produced the Revolution. The opinions of the great men who have succeeded the school of the Encyclopedie, who have been taught by the suffering it produced, will form the character of a future generation. Public opinion, of which we hear so much, is never any thing else than the re-echo of the thoughts of a few great men *half a century before*. It takes that time for ideas to flow down from the elevated to the inferior level. The great never adopt, they only originate. Their chief efforts are always made *in opposition* to the prevailing opinions [Pg 529] by which they are surrounded. Thence it is that a powerful mind is always uneasy when it is not in the minority on any subject which excites general attention.

The reign of Louis XV. is peculiarly favourable for a writer possessed of the philosophic mind, calm judgment, and contemplative turn of M. de Tocqueville. It was then that the many causes which concurred to produce the Revolution were brought to maturity. We say *brought to maturity*: for, great as were the corruptions, enormous the profligacy of that reign, and of the regency which preceded it, it would be absurd to suppose that it was during them alone that the causes which produced the terrible convulsion began to operate. They were only brought to maturity—but the catastrophe undoubtedly was accelerated by the vices that succeeded the reign of Louis XIV., not so much by the evils they inflicted on the people, as by the corruption which they spread among the defenders of the throne. They paralysed the nobility by the fatal gangrene of individual selfishness; they prostrated thought by diverting it almost entirely to wicked and licentious purposes. Intellect, instead of being the guardian of order, the protector of religion, the supporter of morality, became their most fatal enemy; for its powers—and they were gigantic in that age—were all devoted to the spread of infidelity, the ridicule of virtue, the fomenting of passion. It is in this *debauchery of the public mind* by the example of royal and noble profligacy, and the power of vigorous and perverted talent, that the real causes of the Revolution are to be found. The working classes of themselves can never overturn a state—if they could, England would have been revolutionised in 1832. They may make a *Jacquerie*, but they cannot make a revolution. They may rear up a Jack Cade, a Wat Tyler, or a Jacques Bonhomme, but they will never produce a Robespierre or a Cromwell. It is the *coincidence* of general evils that make all the people feel sore, with corrupted manners, and licentious or selfish writers who make their leaders *think wrong*, which can alone overturn society. The first furnishes the private soldier, the last the officers to the army of revolution; or, what is the same thing, they withdraw them from that of religion and order.

The latter years of Louis XV. were so completely sunk in shameless debaucheries, the glory of France had been so long tarnished by the wretched choice which his mistresses had made of ministers to rule the state and generals to lead the armies, that the world has not unnaturally come to entertain an opinion in many respects exaggerated or erroneous, of his character. He had many good points; at first he was an unexceptionable sovereign. Though bred up in the licentious school of the Regent Orleans, he led in the outset a comparatively blameless life. The universal grief which seized the nation when he lay at the point of death at Metz, in 1744, proves to what extent he had then won the hearts of his subjects. His person was fine and well-proportioned; his manners were grace personified; he possessed considerable penetration when his native indolence would permit him to attend to public affairs; and he was not destitute, like his predecessor Charles VI., when roused by necessity, or the entreaties of a high-minded and generous mistress, of noble and heroic qualities. His conduct at Foutenoy, and during the few occasions when he made war in person, in company with Marshal Saxe, sufficiently proved this. Nay, what is still more extraordinary, he was at first a model of conjugal fidelity. Though married at nineteen to his Queen, Marie Leczinska, daughter of the king of Poland, who was six years older than himself, and possessed of no remarkable personal attractions, he resisted for long all the arts of the ladies of the court, who were vieing with each other for his homage, saying constantly to those who urged the beauty of any one upon him, "the Queen is handsomer." The Queen had already borne him nine children, before a suspicion even of his infidelities came to be entertained; and he was led into them at first, rather by the efforts of those around him than his own inclination. So timid was his disposition in these respects in early years—so strong the religious scruples to which throughout life he continued subject, that, on the first occasion on [Pg 530] which he obtained an interview with his future mistress, Madame de Chateauroux, the visit passed over without the desired result, and on the second his valet had, literally speaking, to throw him into her arms. "C'est le premier pas qui coute." He became less scrupulous in subsequent years.

Of the Regent Orleans, who succeeded Louis XIV. in the government, and preceded Louis XV. in its abuse, M. de Tocqueville gives the following masterly character:—

"Nature had bestowed on the Duke of Orleans all those gifts which usually captivate mankind. His physiognomy was agreeable and prepossessing: to a natural eloquence he joined uncommon sweetness of manner. Brave, full of liveliness, his penetration was never at fault, and his abilities would have procured for him distinction at the head of councils or armies. Those Who were about his person became attached to him, because they found him amiable and indulgent. They lamented his faults, without ceasing to love him, carried away by the graces of his character and amiability of his manners, which recalled, they said, those of his grandfather, Henry IV. He had the good fortune, rare in princes, to preserve his friends to the hour of his death. He readily forgave offences and pardoned injuries. But the mind endowed with so many amiable qualities was destitute of that which can alone develop or turn them to good account—he had no force of

character. Without the energy which prompts crime, he was equally without that which leads to virtue. After having lost his first preceptor, his ill fortune placed him in the hands of Dubois, the most corrupt of men. This Dubois, the son of an apothecary of Brives-la-Gaillarde, founded his hopes of fortune on the entire demoralisation of the prince committed to his care. Inspired by the genius of vice, he divined and encouraged the vices of others, and above all of his master. He taught him to believe that virtue is but a mask worn by hypocrisy, a chimera on which no one can rely in the business of life; that religion is a political invention, of use only to the lower people; that all men are cheats and deceivers, and pretended rectitude a mere cover for intended villany. Madame, the mother of the Regent, early discovered the character of this detestable man. 'My son,' said she, 'I desire nothing but the good of the state and your glory: I ask but one thing for your safety, and I demand your word of honour for it—it is never to employ that scoundrel the Abbé Dubois—the greatest miscreant on the earth: who would at any time sacrifice the state and you to the slightest interest of his own.' The Duke of Orleans gave his word accordingly, but he was not long of breaking it. Shortly after, he made Dubois a councillor of state. The debaucheries into which that man impelled him soon became all indispensable distraction for that soft and enervated mind, to which the *ennui* of a court was insupportable. He loved its scandal and rumours—even the report of incest was not displeasing to him. Every evening, he assembled his *roués*, his mistresses, some *danseuses* from the Opera, often his daughter the Duchess de Berri, [3] and some persons of obscure birth, but brilliant for their talent or renowned for their vices. At these suppers the choicest viands, the finest wines, exhilarated the guests, all the disorders and scandal of court and the city were passed in review. They drank, they became intoxicated; the conversation became licentious; impieties of every sort issued from every mouth. At last, fatigued with satiety, the party was broken up: those who could walk retired to rest; the others were carried to bed;—and the next evening a similar scene was renewed."—(Vol. i. pp. 22-24.)

It may be conceived what an effect manners such as these pervading the head of a court, already sufficiently inclined to excitement and gratification, must have had upon the general tone of morals among the higher ranks. M. de Tocqueville portrays it in strong colours, but not stronger we believe than the truth:— [Pg 531]

"The disorders of its head spread to all the branches of the royal family. There was not a princess who had not her lover—not a prince who had not his mistresses. This system soon descended from the palace to the hotels of the nobles. Conjugal fidelity was considered as a prejudice, fit only to be the subject of ridicule. Adultery became the fashion, intemperance a path to distinction —the seduction of women was deemed the great object of life, and conquests in that line were sought as the highest glory; minds absorbed in the frivolous pursuits of a man *à bonnes fortunes*, became incapable of attention to serious affairs. When a young woman appeared in the world, no inquiries were made as to the union which prevailed in her establishment, the sole point was what lover they were to give her. The men with pretensions in that line, the corrupted women, entered into a league to plunge her into crime; and in that abominable lottery, they fixed beforehand on the person to whom she was to fall. The example of the Duchess de Berri obtained many imitators. Sometimes devotion was mingled with debauchery, as if a feeble struggle was still kept up between the recollections of the past and the seductions of the present. Women of gallantry, ambitious debauchees, passed from their orgies to the cloister; and the abstinence of penitence furnished some respite to the pleasure of the world and the agitations of politics. Such was the society of the great world, under the regency. The impulse given to vice during that period, continued through that which followed it. Neither the good example given by Louis XV., during the first years of his youth, nor the grave habits of Cardinal de Fleury, could avail as a barrier to the inundation. It only abated something of its audacity; more veiled, it excited less public scandal."—(Vol. i. p. 31.)

It is impossible that in any country, but most of all in a monarchical and in aristocratic one, such manners can exist in the higher ranks, without inducing a total depravity of general thought, and perversion of the power of mind. Talent, often the most venal of venal things, follows in the wake of corruption. Covetous of gain, thirsting for patronage, it fans, instead of lowering, the passions by which all hope to profit. Whenever prevailing vices have set in upon a nation, be they such as spring from a monarchical, an aristocratic, or a democratic régime, the great majority of its abilities will do nothing but encourage its excesses, because it is there alone they can gain profit. A few great and generous minds will probably set themselves to resist the torrent, and they may produce a great effect upon a future age; but in their own, they are almost sure to meet with nothing but ridicule, abuse, and neglect. We see this deplorable subservience of talent, even of a very high cast, to the taste of the majority holding preferment in their hands, around us in Great Britain at this time; and the same evil was experienced in an equal degree in France during the whole course of the reign of Louis XV. and his virtuous but ill-fated successor.

"The reign," says Tocqueville, "of Louis XIV. finished: that of Louis XV. commenced. During its course we shall see every thing change: of old forms there will remain only the shadow. Never was alteration more complete among mankind."

"In lieu of lofty thoughts, and their serious expression, will appear a sterile futility. An incurable frivolity will get possession of the high society, and come entirely to direct thought. Licentiousness of language will accompany wicked manners, and lend a seduction the more to vice. Libertinism becomes the fashion. Impiety *á la mode*, miserable vanities, will supplant a noble pride to achieve a reputation in letters: it will become necessary to raise a doubt, wherever truth has been admitted. Amidst the din of feasts and the music of the ball-room, they will sap the foundations of religion, morality, and society. They will call themselves philanthropic, they will

declaim on humanity—at the very moment that they are taking from the people the consolations which render supportable the miseries of life, and the religious curb which suspends wrath and restrains vengeance. It is thus, also, that they will obtain the envied title of philosophy, and merit the protection of the great; for they, too, will desire the reputation of *Esprits forts*. All will give way together. In war, no more great generals. The pulpit will no longer resound with the illustrious orators, whose words seemed to descend from divine inspiration. Statesmen will be without elevation: instead of able men, mere intriguers: the influence of talent will be replaced by the influence of coteries. Business will be treated of in boudoirs, and decided according to the caprice of abandoned women. They will dispose of administrations, lower politics to the level of their own minds, and even ecclesiastical dignities will depend on their patronage. As a consequence of that general debasement, an unmeasured disdain will arise in the inferior classes of all that is great in the state. Doubt will be applauded, and it will extend to the power of the king, the noblesse, and the clergy. The spirit of investigation and analysis will replace the flights of the imagination. Men will sound the depths of that power which they have ceased to regard with respect. The authorities of the earth will not be sufficiently respected to make them look up to them—they must bring them down to their own level, and look below them. A terrible reaction will arise—the result of old rancours to which general feeling will no longer oppose any barrier. On all sides will spring up the ideas of liberty and independence. Meanwhile the redoubtable progress of a revolution, which is advancing, will escape the observation of those whom it is to swallow up; for the frivolity of their lives, and the vacancy of their thoughts, will have deprived them of all foresight."—(Vol. i. p. 22.) [Pg 532]

The courage with which the French church frequently denounced the vices and corruptions in high places with which it was surrounded, has always been one of the most honourable features of its glorious annals. Massillon, in the corrupted days of the regency, was not behind Bourdalone and Bossuet and Fénélon, in the time of Louis XIV., in the discharge of this noble duty:—

"When Massillon ascended the pulpit to instruct the young king, he threatened with the wrath of God the great on the earth who violated his commandments, and the Regent manifested no displeasure: conscience had palsied his mind. Never had religion been more sublime,—never did she appear clothed in more magnificent language. To the profound corruption of the court, the preacher opposed the example of the little and the weak; to their pride, the virtue of the poor, and its omnipotence in the sight of God. 'If Providence permits,' said he, 'the elevation of some unworthy characters, it is that they may be rendered useful to others. All power comes from God, and is established only for the use of man. The great would be useless on the earth if they were not surrounded by the poor and the indigent; they owe their elevation to the public necessities; and, so far are the people from being made for them, it is they who are made for the people. It is the people who give the great the right which they have to approach the throne; and it is for the people that the throne itself has been raised. In a word, the great and the princes are but, as it were, the men of the people: thence it is that the prosperity of the great and their ministers, and of the sovereigns who have been the oppressors of the people, has never brought any thing but shame, ignominy, and maledictions to their descendants. We have seen issue from that stem of iniquity the shameless shoots which have been the disgrace of their name and of their age. The Lord has breathed upon the heaps of their ill-gotten riches; he has dispersed them as the dust: if he yet leaves on the earth the remnants of their race, it is that they may remain an eternal monument of his vengeance.

"'The glory of a conqueror will be always stained with blood:—He passes like a torrent over the earth, only to devastate it, and not as a majestic river which brings joy and abundance. The remembrance of his reign will recall only the recollection of the evils he has inflicted on humanity. The people suffer always from the vices of their sovereign. Whatever exaggerates authority, vilifies or degrades it; princes, ruled by their passions, are always pernicious and bizarre masters. Government has no longer a ruler when its head has none. [Pg 533]

"'The Lord has ever blown on the haughty races and withered their roots. The prosperity of the impious has never passed to their descendants. Thrones themselves, and royal succession have failed, to effeminate and worthless princes; and the history of the crimes and excess of the great is, at the same time, the history of their misfortunes and of their fall.

"'Prince's and sovereigns cannot be great but in rendering themselves useful to the people—in bringing them, like Jesus Christ, abundance and peace. The liberty which princes owe to their people, is the liberty of the laws. You know only God above you, it is true; but the laws should have an authority even superior to yourselves.

"'A great man—a prince—is not born for himself alone. He owes himself to his subjects. The people, in elevating him, have entrusted him with power and authority, and have reserved to themselves, in exchange, his care, his time, his vigilance. He is a superintendant whom they have placed at their head to protect and defend them. It is the people who, by the order of God, have made them what they are.—Yes, Sire! *It is the choice of the nation which has put the sceptre in the hand of your ancestors.* It is it which proclaimed them sovereigns. The kingdom came in time to be considered as the inheritance of their successors; but they owed it at first to the free consent of their subjects, and it was the public suffrages which, in the beginning, attached that right and that prerogative to their birth. In a word, as their prerogative first flowed from ourselves, so kings should make no use of their power but for us.'"—(Vol. i. p. 67.)

Such was the eloquent and intrepid language in which Massillon addressed the Regent Orleans and Louis XV., in the plenitude of their power, in the chapel-royal at Versailles. It was a minister

of the *established* church, be it recollected, who thundered in those unmeasured terms to the prince who held in his hands the whole patronage of the church of France. We should like to see a preacher of the Free and popular dissenting establishments of Great Britain or America, thunder in equally intrepid strains on the sins which most easily beset the democratic congregations upon whom their elevation and fortune depend.

"There is nothing new," says the Wise Man, "under the sun." We have seen enough, of late years, of railway manias, and the almost incredible anxiety of all classes to realise something in the numerous El Dorados which infatuation or cupidity set afloat in periods of excitement. But, from the following account of De Tocqueville, it appears that a hundred and thirty years ago the same passions were developed on a still greater scale in France; and even our ladies of rank and fashion may take a lesson in these particulars from the marchionesses and countesses of the court of the Regent Orleans.

"In the month of August 1719, the anxiety to procure shares (in the Mississippi scheme) began to assemble an immense crowd in the street Quincampoix, where, for many years, the public funds had been bought and sold. From six in the morning, crowds of people, men and women, rich and poor, gentlemen and burghers, filled the street and never left it till eight at night. There were spread all sorts of rumours, true or false; and all the devices of stock-jobbing were put in practice, in order to effect a rise or fall in the prices. The price of some shares rose to *six-and-thirty times* their original value. Their price often varied, during the course of a single day, several thousand francs. From this perilous gambling arose alternately incredible fortunes and total ruins.

"The numerous instances which occurred of person who had risen from nothing and suddenly become possessed of immense wealth, raised the public avidity to a perfect frenzy. At that epoch of scandal and opprobrium, there was no folly or vice in which the high society did not take the lead. The degradation of men's minds was equal to the corruption of their manners. The courtiers, even the princes of the blood, besieged the Regent to obtain shares. He flung them among them with open hands; and soon they were seen mingling in the crowds of speculators, and covetous like them of discreditable gains. 'My son,' said the Regent's mother, 'has given me, for my family, two millions in shares. The King has taken some millions for his house. The whole royal family have received some; all the children of France, all their grandsons and princes of the blood.'—(28th Nov. 1719.) [Pg 534]

"Women of the highest rank did not scruple to pay the most assiduous court to Law to obtain shares. They passed whole days in his ante-chamber waiting for an audience, which he very seldom gave them. One caused her carriage to be overturned before his door to attract his attention, and had the good fortune, in consequence, to get a few words from him. Another stopped before his hotel and made her servants call out 'Fire,' to force him to come out, and thus obtain an interview. They were to be seen seated on the front part of the carriage of Madame Law, striving to obtain from her a profitable friendship. That woman who had the effrontery to take the name of Law, though she was only his mistress, treated them with hauteur.

"The same passion was not less vehement in the other classes of society. The latest *arrêts* of the council had ordained that all shares should be paid in paper: and instantly a crowd assembled round the bank, to exchange their gold and silver for bank-notes. The women sold their diamonds and pearls, the men their plate. Ere long the provinces became envious of the profits made in the capital, and desirous to share in them: proprietors sold their lands for whatever they would bring, and hastened to Paris to acquire the much coveted shares. Ecclesiastics, bishops even, did not scruple to mingle in these transactions. In a short time, the population of the capital was increased by three hundred thousand souls. Foreigners also arrived in crowds; but, less intoxicated by the prevailing madness than the French, they foresaw the fatal denoûement, and, for the most part, extricated themselves in time from its effects."—(Vol. i. pp. 129, 130.)

The ultimate issue of this, as of all other general manias, was disastrous in the extreme.

"The rise of shares having at length experienced a check, they continued for some time to oscillate up and down without any material variation, according to the devices employed by skilful speculators. These variations occasioned enormous changes in the fortune of the gamblers. Those newly enriched, displayed an unheard-of luxury; hastening to enjoy wealth which had come to them like a dream, and which the wakening from it might dissipate. Never had the equipages been so magnificent, never so numerous. Laquais rolled about in their chariots, and, from the force of habit, were seen sometimes *to get upon the back of their own carriages*. 'Put the most showy arms on my coach,' said one to his coach-maker. 'I will have that livery,' said another, when a particularly stylish one drove past. Their furniture was sumptuous, their repasts exquisite, and the *noblesse* did not disdain to honour their tables, making such condescension the first step to alliances which might hereafter convey to them some of the profits of their speculations.

"Meanwhile a frightful tumult disturbed every existence. Speculation became universal, unbounded, at length brutal. Persons were crushed to death in the approaches to the Rue Quincampoix: the men with large portfolios were in hourly danger of their lives. Assassinations were committed: a Count de Horn was condemned to be broken on the wheel by the Parliament, and the sentence carried into execution, for having robbed and murdered a courtier. Alarmed at the crowds, the Regent interdicted the speculators from making use of the Rue Quincampoix: they took refuge in the Place Vendôme. In a single day that square was covered with tents, where the most sumptuous stuffs were displayed; and, without disquieting themselves with the wild joy

of some, or the abject despair of others, the ladies of the court seated themselves at gambling tables, where the choicest refreshments were handed to them. Bands of musicians and courtezans served to amuse that insensate crowd. Soon its excesses led to its being expelled from the Place Vendôme; it then fixed itself in the Hotel de Soissons."—(Vol. i. pp. 133-134.) [Pg 535]

This exceeds even the joint-stock mania of 1824, or the railway mania of 1845, in this country, of which, in the conclusion of his first volume of "Tancred," Mr D'Israeli has given a graphic picture. Lady Bertie and Bellair, whose billet regarding the "*broad gauge*" occasioned her to swoon, and dispelled the romantic attachment of Lord Montacute, was but a repetition of the French countesses, who thronged the antechambers of Law a century before. More vehement in their desires, more mercurial in their temperament than the English, the French, when seized with any general mania, push it even into greater excesses, and induce upon themselves and their country more wide-spread calamities.

M. De Tocqueville frequently says that he is not a military historian; and although he has considerable powers of description, and, like all his countrymen, understands something of the art of war, yet it is very apparent that his inclination does not lie in that direction. We gladly give a place, however, to his admirable account of the battle of Fontenoy, and the exploits of the famous "English column," which, though in the end unsuccessful, displayed a valour on the banks of the Scheldt which foreshadowed the heroism of Albuera and Waterloo:—

"The King of France passed the Scheldt, and, in spite of the representations of Marshal Saxe, placed himself on an eminence commanding a view of the field of battle, and where the balls rolled to his horse's feet. Many persons were wounded behind him. The English and the Dutch commenced the attack at the same time at different points. The former advanced as if nothing could disconcert their audacity. As the ground contracted, their battalions became more close together, but still keeping the finest order; and there was formed, partly by design, partly by accident, that redoubtable column of which the Duke of Cumberland soon felt the full value. Nothing could withstand that terrible mass. Steadily it moved on, launching forth death incessantly from every front. The French regiments in vain strove to impede its progress; they perished in the attempt. The first corps which the English approached was the regiment of Gardes Françaises. Before the fire commenced, an English officer stepped forth from the rank, and taking off his hat, said, 'Gentlemen of the French guard, fire.' A French officer advanced and replied, 'The French do not fire first: we will reply.' The English then levelled their pieces, and sent in a discharge with such precision, that the whole front rank of the Guard fell. That ill-timed piece of courtesy cost the lives of eighteen officers. No sooner was this over than the column renewed its march, slowly but with immovable firmness. Soon it had passed by six hundred toises (1800 feet) the front of the French army. The battle seemed lost, and the persons who surrounded the King already began to counsel him to leave the field. 'Who is the scoundrel who dares to give that advice to your Majesty?' exclaimed the Marshal, who had been all day in the hottest of the fire. 'Before the action began it was my time to give it: now it is too late.' In truth, all was lost if the monarch had left his post. His remaining there seemed to make heroes spring out of the earth: his departure would have spread discouragement through the ranks. The advice of the Marshal coincided with the feelings of the King, and he remained firm. The blood of Henry IV. then beat at his heart. By his advice a new effort better combined was resolved on. The King, whose *sang froid* had never for an instant been disturbed, in person rallied the fugitives. Four guns, kept in reserve for his personal safety, were brought forward, and placed in battery at the distance of forty paces from the head of the English column. They fired with grape with extraordinary rapidity, and soon huge chasms appeared in the enemy's ranks. The cavalry of the French Guard charged impetuously in at the openings,—the Dauphin, sword in hand, leading them on. The swords of the horsemen, aided by the fire of the guns and the foot-soldiers, soon completed the work of destruction. And ere long that terrible column which had so recently made the bravest tremble, is nothing but a vast ruin. The English had nine thousand killed and wounded, the French were weakened by five thousand men."—(Vol. i. pp. 425-426.) [Pg 536]

Such is the account of the conduct of the English troops at Fontenoy—the only great battle on the continent of Europe in which they ever sustained a defeat from the French—as given by the historians of France itself. The crisis produced by the irruption of this terrible column into the centre of the French army, exactly resembles a similar attack at Aspern and Wagram, and the last onset of the Imperial Guards at Waterloo. The account of the progress of the English column, and the means by which its advance was at length arrested, might pass for a narrative of the penetrating of the Austrian centre by the French column under Lannes, on the second day of Aspern, or the famous advance of the Old and Middle Guard against the British right centre, on the evening of the 18th June 1815. Both these formidable attacks were defeated, and by means precisely similar to those by which Marshal Saxe stopped the English column at Fontenoy. At Wagram, also, the heavy mass of infantry led by Macdonald was arrested by the dreadful cross-fire of the Austrian batteries; and if the Archduke Charles had evinced the same tenacity and resolution as Marshal Saxe, the result would probably have been the same, and Wagram had been Waterloo!

Of the effects of the irreligious fanaticism, the natural result of the tyranny and oppressive conduct of the Church of Rome, which pervaded France for half a century before the Revolution, our author gives the following interesting account:—

"Another powerful cause of dissolution existed in French society at this period. The vast conspiracy against Christianity, of which Voltaire was the chief, daily developed itself in a more alarming manner. A body of men styling themselves philosophers—that is, lovers of wisdom—set

up for reformers of the human race. They professed to be the enemies of prejudice; they had for ever in their mouths the words 'humanity,' and 'philanthropy;' their object was declared to be to restore the dignity of man, and with that view they proposed to substitute certain conventional virtues for the precepts of Christianity. They pleaded tolerance, and soon they became themselves intolerant. Misfortune excited their pity; they ever undertook its defence, when there was a noise to be made, celebrity to be acquired by doing so. By these means, they acquired a great renown; to philosophise was continually in their mouths and their writings. It is no wonder it was so; for to philosophise, in their estimation, was to attack all the received opinions, and annihilate them under the weight of public contempt; to persecute fanaticism without perceiving that the irreligious passion soon acquired the character of the worst species of fanaticism.

"Voltaire, endowed by nature with immense talent, had, from his earliest years, the steady will and unshaken determination which were necessary to make him a leader of thought. He laboured at it all his life, and his mental qualifications enabled him to keep pace with the public desires in all their branches. The age was frivolous, and he excelled in fugitive pieces; it was libertine, and he had obscene verses at command; the *esprits forts* had a leaning to incredulity, and he put himself at the head of the movement, and made use of it to turn into ridicule all that men had been most accustomed to revere. Gifted with extraordinary powers of raillery and sarcasm, he faithfully reflected in his writings the graces and the vices of the brilliant and profligate society in which he lived. He kept some measure in his publications as long as he had any hope of obtaining in France a political station; but from the very beginning, the acerbity of his disposition displayed itself in his ceaseless attacks on the mysteries of religion, in the elegant society which sought him, and of which he was the delight. 'He had the art,' says Vilmain, 'of throwing discredit on a dogma by a happy couplet; by a philosophic sentence he refuted a syllogistic argument.'"—(Vol. ii. pp. 61, 62.)

The correspondence of Voltaire with the King of Prussia, the bond of union in which was their common antipathy to Christianity, forms not the least curious part of the lives of both these eminent men. Nearly all the sovereigns of the Continent, at this period, were led away by this mania, destined to produce such fatal effects to themselves and their children. Catherine of Russia was peculiarly active in the infidel league. De Tocqueville gives the following interesting account of the almost incredible extent to which this mania prevailed in the age which preceded the French Revolution:— [Pg 537]

"Voltaire and the King of Prussia resembled two lovers who were continually quarreling and making up their differences. The royal hero could never dispense with the renown which the praises of the Patriarch of Incredulity gave to him. Catherine II. of Russia kept up a close correspondence with him; his expressions to her were confiding, even tender. She required that trumpet to celebrate her exploits, and palliate the crimes committed in the pursuit of her ambition. 'My *Catau* (his name for the Empress) loves the philosophers, her husband will suffer for it with posterity.' At the same time, she respected him more than Frederick, and her letters were never disgraced by any impurity. She offered D'Alembert to intrust him with the education of her only son, and to settle on him a pension of 50,000 francs (£2000). She flattered Diderot, and sent him a present of 66,000 francs (£2400). If the Encyclopedia is proscribed at Paris, it was reprinted at St Petersburg; the Empress went so far as herself to translate the Belisarius of Marmontel into the Russian tongue. Eighteen other princes, among whom were the King of Poland, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark, corresponded with Voltaire, and hastened to deposit in his hands their adhesion to his protest against the prejudices of the age. The princes and great men who were travelling in Europe, endeavoured to stop at Ferney, happy if they could enjoy for a few minutes the conversation of the great writer. 'I have been,' said he to Madame de Deffand, 'for fourteen years the hotel-keeper of Europe.' In his old age, intoxicated with joy, he wrote to Helvetius, on the 26th June 1765: 'Do you not see that the whole North is for us, and that it is inevitable that sooner or later those miserable fanatics of the South must be confounded? The Empress of Russia, the King of Prussia, the conqueror of the superstitious Austrian, besides many other princes, have already erected the standard of philosophy.' Again he wrote to D'Alembert, on the 4th June 1767: 'Men begin to open their eyes from one end of Europe to the other. Fanaticism, which feels its weakness and implores the arm of authority, despite itself, acknowledges its defeat. The works of Bolingbroke, of Trent, and of Boulanger, universally diffused, are so many triumphs of Reason. Let us bless that revolution which for the last fifteen or twenty years has taken place in general opinion. It has exceeded my most sanguine hopes. *With respect to the common people, I take no charge of them—they will always remain the rabble.* I cultivate my own garden; it is unavoidable that there should be frogs in it, but they do not prevent my nightingales from singing.'"—Vol. ii. pp. 357-8.

Such were the opinions of the wise men of Europe in the age which preceded the French Revolution! It is not surprising they brought on that convulsion.

One of the most powerful means by which Voltaire and his party succeeded in rousing so strong a feeling among the ablest men of Europe in their favour, was by the constant appeals which they made to the feelings of humanity, and the resolution with which they denounced the cruelties, equally impolitic and inhuman, which the Romish Church, whenever it had the power, still exercised on the unhappy victims who occasionally fell under the barbarous laws of former times. This atrocious adherence to antiquated severity, in the vain idea of coercing the freedom of modern thought, in an age of increasing philanthropy, was, perhaps, the greatest cause of the spread of modern infidelity, and of the general horror with which the Roman Catholic Church was generally regarded by enlightened men throughout Europe. In this respect their labours are

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worthy of the highest approbation; and in so far as they mainly contributed to destroy the dreadful fabric of ecclesiastical tyranny which the Romish Church had established wherever their faith was still prevalent, they deserve, and will ever obtain, the warmest thanks of all friends of humanity. But, like most other reformers, in the ardour of their zeal for the removal of real grievances, they destroyed, also, beneficent institutions. It appears, too, from his confidential correspondence, that Voltaire's zeal in the cause of humanity was more a war-cry assumed to rouse a party, than a feeling of benevolence towards mankind; for no one rejoiced more sincerely than he did when the acerbity of the fanatics was directed against each other.

"It must ever be regretted," says M. De Tocqueville, "that Voltaire, in undertaking the defence of outraged humanity, appeared to have had no other object but to employ his sensibility to render the Roman Catholic religion odious." The same man who had expressed such touching regrets on the fate of the unhappy Calas, a Protestant, who had been broken on the wheel without sufficient evidence, on a charge of murder by a sentence of the parliament of Toulouse, permitted the most cruel irony to flow from his pen when tortures were inflicted on the Jesuits. 'I hear,' said he, 'that they have at last *burned three Jesuits* at Lisbon. This is truly *consoling intelligence*; but unhappily it rests on the authority of a Jansenist.' (Voltaire to M. Vernet, 1760.) 'It is said that they have broken Father Malagrida on the wheel: *God be praised for it! I should die content if I could see the Jansenists and Molenists crushed to death by each other.*' (Letter to the Countess of Lutzelbourg, vol. ii. p. 363.)

Great Britain was at that period as much shaken by the effects of her irreligious party as France; in fact, it was from the writings of Bolingbroke, Tindal, Toland, and their contemporaries, that Voltaire drew almost all the arguments with which his writings abound against the doctrines of Christianity. Gibbon afterwards lent the same cause the aid of his brilliant genius and vast industry. Scotland, too, had its own share of the prevailing epidemic. Hume was the great apostle of scepticism, caressed by all Europe. But neither England nor Scotland were overturned by their efforts: on the contrary, Christianity, tried but not injured, came forth unscathed from the furnace. The learning—the talent—the zeal which arose in defence of religion, were at least equal to what was employed in the attack; and so completely did they baffle the efforts of the infidel party, that Christianity grew and strengthened with every assault made upon it; and when this great conflict began between the antagonist principles in 1793, England was found at its proper post in the vanguard of religion and order. This fact is very remarkable, and deserves more serious consideration than has yet been bestowed upon it. It clearly points to some essential difference between the political and religious institutions of France and England at that period, on the capacity which they bestowed upon a nation to withstand the assaults of infidelity and corruption. It is not difficult to see what that difference was. In England, a free constitution was established, freedom of discussion was permitted, and the church was not allowed to exercise any tyrannical sway over either the minds or bodies of men. The consequence was, genius in the hour of need came to her side, and brought her triumphant through all the dangers by which she was assailed. Intellect was divided; it was not as in France wholly ranged on the side of infidelity. The cause of truth, though it may be subjected to grievous temporary trials, has nothing in the end to fear except from the excesses of tyranny exerted in its defence. Unsheltered by power, talent will speedily come to its aid. The wounds inflicted by mind can be cured only by mind: but they will never fail of being so if mind is left to itself.

One of the well-known abuses which preceded the Revolution, was the improper use which, in the reign of Louis XV. was made of *lettres de cachet*, obtained too often by private solicitation or the interest of some of the mistresses of the King or his ministers. Their abuse rose to the highest pitch, under the administration of the Duke de la Villière. The Marchioness Langeac, his mistress, [Pg 539] openly made a traffic of them, and never was one refused to a man of influence, who had a vengeance to satiate, a passion to gratify. The Comte de Segur gives the following characteristic anecdote, illustrating the use made of these instruments of tyranny, even upon the inferior classes of society.

"I have heard related the sad mishap which occurred to a young shop-mistress, named Jeanneton, who was remarkable for her beauty. One day the Chevalier de Coigny met her radiant with smiles, and in the highest spirits. He inquired the cause of her extreme satisfaction. 'I am truly happy,' she replied,—'My husband is a scold, a brute; he gave me no rest—I have been with M. le Comte de Saint Florentin; Madame ----, who enjoys his good graces, has received me in the kindest manner, and for a present of ten *Louis* I have just obtained a *lettre de cachet* which will deliver me from the persecution of that most jealous tyrant.'

"Two years afterwards, M. de Coigny met the same Jeanneton, but now sad, pale, with downcast look, and a care-worn countenance. 'Ah! my poor Jeanneton!' said he, 'what has become of you? I never meet you any where. What has cast you down, since we last met?' 'Alas! sir,' replied she, 'I was very foolish to be then in such spirits; my villanous husband had that very day taken up the same idea as I; he went to the minister, and the same day, by the intervention of his mistress, *he brought an order to shut me up*; so that it cost our poor *menage* twenty *louis* to throw us at the same time reciprocally into prison.'"—(Vol. ii. p. 489.)

M. De Tocqueville sums up in these eloquent words which close his work, the tendency and final result of the government of the Regent Orleans and Louis XV.:—

"The high society was more liberal than the bourgeois: the bourgeois than the people. The Revolution commenced in the head of the social system; from that it gained the heart, and spread to the extremities. It became a point of honour to be in opposition. It was a mode of shining and

acquiring popularity; a fashion which the young seized with avidity. The words Liberty and Representative Government were continually in the mouths of those who were, ere long, to ascribe to them all their misfortunes.

"The partition of Poland revealed to the French the political degradation of their country. The great and beautiful kingdom of France resembled a planet under eclipse: its light seemed extinguished. The French honour felt itself profoundly mortified. In the midst of that degradation, and from its very effects, political combinations entered more and more into every thought. The activity of mind, which no longer could find employment in the glory of the country, took a direction towards industry and the sciences. The middle class, rich and instructed, obtained an influence which formerly had been monopolised by the *noblesse*, and aspired to the destruction of privileges which it did not enjoy. Beneath both, the working classes, steeped in misery, crushed under the weight of taxes, reserved to the innovators the most formidable support.

"Thus the movement, arising from many different causes, extended more and more. The philosophers, by incessantly depreciating the nation in their writings, had succeeded in rendering the nation ashamed of itself. All parties in the nation seemed to unite in deeming it necessary to destroy the ancient social order. It was manifest that important changes would take place at no distant period, though the exact time of their approach could not be fixed with certainty. It was at the approach of that tempest which was destined to shake the state to its foundations, that the pride of philosophy sought to exalt itself by attacking heaven. By it the curb of conscience was broken, and the great name of God, which might have imposed a restraint on the violence of the passions which the Revolution called forth, was effaced. By this means, to the legitimate conquest of liberty will ere long succeed a mortal strife of vanities, in which those of the majority, having proved victorious, will stain themselves without mercy with the blood of the vanquished. Other people will, in future times, undergo changes similar to ours; but they will eschew the [Pg 540] same violence, because the influence of religion will not be extinct among them. Posterity, that equitable judge of the past, imputes to philosophy that it perverted the minds of the people while it pretended to enlighten them, and turned aside from its proper end a revolution commenced with the design of ameliorating the lot of the human race.

"Louis XV. left royalty tarnished in France. At his death the people rejoiced,—the enlightened classes congratulated themselves. The vices of the sovereign had opened in every heart an incurable wound. Neither the virtues of Louis XVI., nor the glory acquired during the American war; nor the sight of France restored to its rank among the nations; nor the love of the King for his subjects; nor the liberal institutions which he bestowed on them, could heal that fatal wound. The stains of the crown could be washed out only by the blood of the just ascending to Heaven by the steps of the scaffold."[4]—(Vol. ii. pp. 531, 533.)

After these quotations, it is needless to say what the merits of M. De Tocqueville's work are. He possesses the abstract thought, the philosophic temperament, the reflecting mind, which enable him to follow, with a correct and discerning eye, the *general* course of events. He does not attach himself to individual men,—he is no hero-worshipper. His narrative has not the interest of biography, or of histories framed on its model. It has not the dramatic air of Thierry, the genius of Chateaubriand, or the pictorial powers of Michelet. It is, on that account, not likely to be so generally popular as the works of any of these eminent writers. It resembles more nearly the admirable "Sketches of the Progress of Society," to be found in the works of Guizot and Sismondi. As such, it possesses very high merit, and will doubtless take its place among the standard works of French history. Perhaps his work is more worthy of study, and more likely to be esteemed by thinking men in other countries than his own: for France has gone through the convulsions consequent on the social and moral evils which he has so well portrayed; but other nations are only in their commencement. What to the one is history, to the other, if not averted, may be prophecy.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] *Histoire Philosophique du Regne de Louis XV.* Par M. Le Comte De Tocqueville. 2 Vols. Paris, 1847.

[2] *Histoire Philosophique du Regne de Louis XV.*

[3] The Duchess de Berri was an apt scholar in the lessons which her father taught her. One evening, after copious libations, a fancy seized them to represent the Judgment of Paris. The Princess played the part of Venus; two of the Regent's mistresses those of Minerva and Juno. "*The three Goddesses appeared in the costume in which those in the tale displayed themselves to the son of Priam.*" De Tocqueville. Vol. i. p. 26—note.

[4] Alluding to the sublime words of the Father Edgeworth to Louis XVI., at the foot of the scaffold:—"Fils de St Louis, montez au ciel!"

LETTERS ON THE TRUTHS CONTAINED IN POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS. [Pg 541]

IV.—REAL GHOSTS, AND SECOND-SIGHT.

DEAR ARCHY,—You will not expect, after my last letter, that under the title of real ghosts, I am going to introduce to your acquaintance a set of personages resembling Madame Tussaud's wax-work, done in air—filmy gentlemen, in spectral blue coats, gray trousers, Wellingtons; and semi-transparent ladies clad from the looms of the other world. No, Nicolai's case, has extinguished that delusion. The visitant and his dress are figments of the imagination *always*. They are as unreal and subjective as the figures we see in our dreams. They are fancy's progeny, having under pressing circumstances acting rank, as realities. But, Archy, do dreams never come true? Let them plead their own cause. Enter Dream.

A Scottish gentleman and his wife were travelling four or five years ago in Switzerland. There travelled with them a third party, an intimate friend, a lady, who some time before had been the object of a deep attachment on the part of a foreigner, a Frenchman. Well, she would have nothing to say to him, but she gave him a good deal of serious advice, which I conclude she thought he wanted, and ultimately promoted, or was a cognisant party to his marriage with a lady, whom she likewise knew. The so-married couple were now in America. And the lady, my friend's fellow-traveller, occasionally heard from them, and had every reason to believe they were both in perfect health. One morning on their meeting at breakfast she told her companions, that she had had a very impressive dream the night before, which had recurred twice. The scene was a room in which lay a coffin, near which stood her ex-lover, in a luminous transfigured resplendent state; his wife was by, looking much as usual. The dream had caused the lady some misgivings; but her companions exhorted her to view it as a trick of her fancy, and she was half persuaded so to do. The dream, however, was right notwithstanding. In process of time, letters arrived announcing the death after a short illness of the French gentleman, within the twenty-four hours in which the vision appeared. Exit Dream, with applause.

I adduce this individual instance, simply because it is the last I have heard, out of many that have come before me equally well attested. I should have observed, that my informant was the fellow-traveller himself: he told me the story in presence of his wife, who religiously attested its accuracy. You will meet with similar stories, implicitly believed, in every society you go into, varying in their circumstances—a ghost being sometimes put in the place of a dream, and sometimes a vague but strong mental impression, a foreboding only. But the common point exists in all, that all intimation of the death of an absent acquaintance has been in one or another way insinuated into the mind of his friend about the time the event really took place. Instances of this kind, it will be found, are far too numerous to permit one off-hand to conclude that they have arisen from accident; that the connexion between the event and its anticipation and foreshadowing has been merely coincidence.

If you ask me how I would otherwise explain these stories, I will frankly avow, that it appears to me neither impossible, nor absurdly improbable, that the soul, or the nervous system, as you like, of the dying man, should have put itself into direct communication with the thoughts of his absent friend.

Ah, ah! the last touch of the vampyr theory again! You were then very modest about your hobby, and pretended not to know him, and passed him off as my beast, and now you daringly mount him yourself, and expect to be allowed to pace him before us, in that easy and confident style, as if he were some well-known roadster of Stewart's, or Ferriar's, or Hibbert's, or Abercromby's. Now [Pg 542] shall we shortly see you thrown, or run away with, or led by some will-o'-the-wisp into a bottomless slough.

Well, that at all events will amuse you.

But in the mean time did you ever hear of the Wynyard ghost? A late General Wynyard and the late Sir John Colebrook, when young men, were serving in Canada. One day—it was daylight—Mr Wynyard and Mr Colebrook both saw a figure pass through the room in which they were sitting, which Mr Wynyard recognised as a brother then far away. One of them walked to the door, and looked out upon the landing-place; but the stranger was not there, and a servant, who was on the stairs, had seen nobody pass out. In time the news arrived, that Mr Wynyard's brother had died about the time of the visit of the apparition. Of this story, which I had heard narrated, I inquired the truth of two military men, each a General Wynyard, near relations of the ghost-seer of that name. They told me it was so narrated *by him*, certainly, and that it had the implicit belief of the family.

Another similar, double-barreled ghost story I recently had narrated to me, and was assured it rested on evidence equally good. I have heard of several others being in existence.

Now, if these stories be true, to suppose the events mere coincidences, or rather to believe them to be so, would be an immense stretch of credulity. The chances would be millions to one against two persons, neither of whom, before or after, experienced sensorial illusions, becoming the subject of one, and seemingly the same illusion at the same moment—the two hallucinations coinciding in point of time with an event which they served, in the mind of one of the parties at least, to foreshadow. I prefer supposing that the event so communicated really had to do with, and was the common idea of the sensorial illusion experienced by both parties. To speak figuratively, my dear Archy—mind, *figuratively*—I prefer to think, that the death of a human being throws a sort of gleam through the spiritual world, which may now and then touch some congenial object with sudden light, *or even two*, when they happen to be exactly in the proper

position; as the twin spires of a cathedral may be momentarily illuminated by some far-off flash, while the countless roofs below lie in unbroken gloom.

Pretty well, indeed! I think I hear you say—Very easy, certainly! But, perhaps, you will be kind enough to give us a trifle more grounds for admitting your hypothesis than you have yet vouchsafed. Likewise a little explanation of what you exactly mean might be of use, if you seriously hope to reconcile us to this most prodigious prance.

I shall be happy to give you every reasonable satisfaction. Then, in the first place, I propose to establish beyond the possibility of doubt or question, and at once, that the mind of a living human being, in his ordinary state, may enter into communication with the mind of another human being, likewise in his every-day state, through some other channel than that of the senses, in their understood and ordinary operation, and as it would seem, *immediately and directly*; so that it becomes *at once* intimately acquainted with all the former affections, feelings, volitions, history of the second mind.

Heinrich Zschokke, I need hardly say, is one of the most eminent literary men now living in Europe; one, too, whose life has not been exclusively occupied with the cultivation of letters, but who, having been early engaged in public and official employments in Switzerland, the country of his adoption, has been practically tried and proved in sight of the world, in which he has always borne a high and unblemished character; one, finally, whose writings and whose life have happily concurred in winning for him general respect, esteem, and confidence. Then, in a sort of autobiography which Zschokke published a few years back, (*Selbstschau*, it is entitled—Self-retrospect,) there occurs the following passage, which I translate and give at length, from its marvellous interest, from its unquestioned fidelity, from the complete and irresistible evidence it affords that the phenomenon, enunciated in the last paragraph, occasionally turns up in men's experience. [Pg 543]

"If the reception of so many visitors was occasionally troublesome, it repaid itself occasionally, either by making me acquainted with remarkable personages, or by bringing out a wonderful sort of seer-gift, which I called my inward vision, and which has always remained an enigma to me. I am almost afraid to say a word upon this subject, not for fear of the imputation of being superstitious, but lest I should encourage that disposition in others; and yet it forms a contribution to psychology. So to confess.

"It is acknowledged that the judgment which we form of strangers upon first seeing them, is frequently more correct than that which we adopt upon a longer acquaintance with them. The first impression, which, through an instinct of the soul, attracts one towards, or repels one from another, becomes after a time more dim, and is weakened, either through his appearing other than at first, or through our being accustomed to him. People speak, too, in reference to such cases, of involuntary sympathies and aversions, and attach a special certainty to such manifestations in children, in whom knowledge of mankind by experience is wanting. Others again are incredulous, and attribute all to physiognomical skill. But of myself.

"It has happened to me occasionally, at the first meeting with a total stranger, when I have been listening in silence to his conversation, that his past life up to the present moment, with many minute circumstances, belonging to one or other particular scene in it, has come across me like a dream, but distinctly, entirely involuntarily and unsought, occupying in duration a few minutes. During this period, I am usually so completely plunged into the representation of the stranger's life, that at last I neither continue to see distinctly his face, on which I was idly speculating, nor hear intelligently his voice, which at first I was using as a commentary on the test of his physiognomy. For a long time, I was disposed to consider those fleeting visions as a trick of the fancy; the more so that my dream-vision displayed to me the dress and movements of the actors, the appearance of the room, the furniture and other accidents of the scene. Till on one occasion, in a gamesome mood, I narrated to my family the secret history of a sempstress, who had just before quitted the room. I had never seen the person before. Nevertheless, the hearers were astonished, and laughed, and would not be persuaded but that I had a previous acquaintance with the former life of the person, in as much as what I had stated was perfectly true. I was not less astonished to find that my dream-vision agreed with reality. I then gave more attention to the subject, and as often as propriety allowed of it, I related to those whose lives had so passed before me, the substance of my dream-vision, to obtain from them its contradiction or confirmation. On every occasion its confirmation followed, not without amazement on the part of those who gave it.

"Least of all could I myself give faith to these conjuring tricks of my mind. Every time that I described to any one my dream-vision respecting him, I confidently expected him to answer, it was not so. A secret thrill always came over me, when the listener replied, "It happened as you say," or when, before he spoke, his astonishment betrayed that I was not wrong. Instead of recording many instances, I will give one, which at the time made a strong impression upon me:—

"On a market-day, (fair-day,) I went into the town of Waldshut, accompanied by two young foresters who are still alive. It was evening, and, tired with our walk, we went into an inn called the Rebstock. We took our supper with a numerous company at the public table, when it happened that they made themselves merry over the peculiarities and simplicity of the Swiss; in common with the belief in mesmerism, Lavater's physiognomical system, and the like. One of my companions, whose national pride was touched by their raillery, begged me to make some reply, particularly in answer to a young man of superior appearance, who sat opposite, and had [Pg 544]

indulged in unrestrained ridicule. It happened that the events of this very person's life had just previously passed before my mind. I turned to him with the question, whether he would reply to me with truth and candour, if I narrated to him the most secret passages of his history, he being as little known to me as I to him. That would, I suggested, go something beyond Lavater's physiognomical skill. He promised, if I told the truth, to admit it openly. Then I narrated the events which my dream-vision had furnished me with, and the table learned the history of the young tradesman's life, of his school years, his peccadilloes, and finally of a little act of roguery committed by him on the strong-box of his employer. I described the uninhabited room, with its white walls, where, to the right of the brown door, there had stood upon the table the small black money-chest, &c. A dead silence reigned in the company during this recital, which I broke in upon, only by occasionally asking whether I spoke the truth. The man, much struck, admitted the correctness of each circumstance—even, which I could not expect, of the last. Touched with his frankness, I reached my hand to him across the table, and closed my narrative. He asked my name, which I gave him. We sat up late in the night conversing. He may be alive yet.

"Now, I can well imagine how a lively imagination could picture, romance fashion, from the obvious character of a person, how he would act under given circumstances. But whence came to me the involuntary knowledge of accessory details, which were without any sort of interest, and respected people who for the most part were perfectly indifferent to me, with whom I neither had, nor wished to have, the slightest association? Or was it in each case mere coincidence? Or had the listener, to whom I described his history, each time other images in his mind than the accessory ones of my story, but, in surprise at the essential resemblance of my story to the truth, lost sight of the points of difference? Yet I have, in consideration of this possible source of error, several times taken pains to describe the most trivial circumstances that the dream-vision has shown me.

"Not another word about this strange seer-gift—which I can aver was of no use to me in a single instance, which manifested itself occasionally only, and quite independently of my volition, and often in relation to persons in whose history I took not the slightest interest. Nor am I the only one in possession of this faculty. In a journey with two of my sons, I fell in with an old Tyrolese, who travelled about selling lemons and oranges, at the inn at Unterhauenstein in one of the Jura passes. He fixed his eyes for some time upon me, joined in our conversation, observed that though I did not know him, he knew me, and began to describe my acts and deeds to the no little amusement of the peasants, and astonishment of my children, whom it interested to learn that another possessed the same gift as their father. How the old lemon merchant acquired his knowledge, he was not able to explain to himself, or to me. But he seemed to attach great importance to his hidden wisdom."

It appears to me, my dear Archy, that the remarkable statement which I have thus put before you, completely establishes that, in reference to the past, the mind occasionally receives knowledge through other than the known and ordinary channels; and that the simplest and most natural interpretation of the facts narrated, is to suppose that, under special circumstances, one mind can put itself into direct communication with another.

And I think that these considerations give a front and plausibility to the hypothesis, that, in some cases of dreams and sensorial illusions, which have turned out true and significant intimations of the death of absent persons, there may have been at the bottom of them a relation established between the minds or nervous systems of the distant parties.

I will now go a step further, and throw out the conjecture, that the mind may occasionally assert the power of penetrating into futurity, not through a shrewd calculation of what is likely to come to pass, but by putting itself in relation with some other source of knowledge. [Pg 545]

For I think it cannot be doubted that there is something in the superstition of second-sight, which formerly prevailed so extensively in Scotland, in the northern islands, and Denmark. Every one has heard and read of this pretended gift. I have no evidence, I must confess, to offer of its reality beyond that which is accessible to every one. But I have heard several instances told, which, if the testimony of sensible people may be taken in such marvellous matters as readily as on other subjects, evinced *foreknowledge*. The thing foretold has generally been death or personal misfortune. Sometimes the subject has been more trivial. A much-respected Scottish lady, not unknown in literature, told me very recently how a friend of her mother's, whom she well remembered, had been compelled to believe in second-sight, through its manifestation in one of her servants. She had a cook, who was a continual annoyance to her through her possession of this gift. On one occasion, when the lady expected some friends, she learned, a short time before they were to arrive, that the culinary preparations which she had ordered in their honour had not been made. Upon her remonstrating with the offending cook, the latter simply but doggedly assured her that come they would not, that she knew it of a certainty; and true enough they did not come. Some accident had occurred to prevent their visit. The same person frequently knew beforehand what her mistress's plans would be, and was as inconvenient in her kitchen as a calculating prodigy in a counting-house. Things went perfectly right, but the manner was vexatious and irregular; so her mistress sent her away. This anecdote would appear less puerile to you, if I might venture to name the lady who told it to me, and who believed it. But, as I said before, I do not build, in this branch of the question, upon any special evidence that I have to adduce. I rely upon the mass of good, bad, and indifferent proof there is already before the world, of the reality of second-sight. I have, of course, not the least doubt that more than half of those who have laid claim to the faculty, were not possessed of it. I have further no doubt that those who occasionally really manifested it, often deceived themselves, and confounded casual

impressions with real intimations; and that they were nuisances to themselves and to their friends, through being constantly on the look-out for, and conveying warnings and forebodings; and that the power which they possessed, was probably never useful in a single instance, either to themselves or others—those only having gained by the superstition, who were mere rogues and impostors, and turned their pretended gift to purposes of deception.

I shall now proceed to inquire how far it is conceivable that the mind or soul, its usual channels of communication with external objects, the senses namely, being suspended and unemployed, may enter into direct relation with other minds.

There is a school of physiological materialists, who hold that the mind is but the brain in action; in other words, that it is the office of the brain to produce thought and feeling. I must begin by combating this error.

What is meant by one substance producing another? A metal is produced from an ore; alcohol is produced from saccharine matter; the bones and sinews of an animal are produced from its food. Production, in the only intelligible sense of the word, means the conversion of one substance into another, weight for weight, agreeably with, or under mechanical, chemical, and vital laws. But to suppose that in order to produce consciousness, the brain is converted, weight for weight, into thought and feeling, is absurd.

But what, then, is the true relation between consciousness and the living brain, in connexion with which it is manifested?

To elucidate the question, let us consider the parallel relation of other imponderable forces to matter. Take, for instance, electricity. A galvanic battery is set in action. Chemical decomposition is in progress; one or more new compounds are produced; the quantitative differences are exactly accounted for. But there is something further to be observed. The chemical action has [Pg 546] disturbed the omnipresent force of electricity, and a vigorous electric current is in motion.

The principle of consciousness is another imponderable force which pervades the universe. The brain and nerves are framed of such materials and in such arrangements, that the chemical changes constantly in progress under the control of life, determine in them currents of thought and feeling.

We must be satisfied with having got thus far by help of the analogy, nor try to push it further; for beyond the fact of both being imponderable forces, electricity and consciousness have nothing in common. They are otherwise violently unlike; or resemble each other as little as a tooth-pick and a headach. Their further relations to the material arrangements through which they may be excited or disturbed, are subjects of separate and dissimilar studies, and resolvable into laws which have no affinity, and admit of no comparison.

But upon the step which we have gained, it stands to reason, that the individual consciousness or mind, habitually energizing in and through a given living brain, may, for any thing we know to the contrary, and very conceivably, be drawn, under circumstances favourable to the event, into direct communication with consciousness, individualised or diffused elsewhere.

Accordingly, there is no intrinsic absurdity in supposing that Zschokke's mind was occasionally thrown into direct relation with that of a chance visitor through favourable influences; that the soul of Arnod Paole, as he lay in his grave alive, in the so-called vampyr-state, may have drawn into communion the minds of other persons, who were thereupon the subjects of sensorial illusions of which he was the theme;—that the mind of Joan of Arc may by possibility have been placed in relation with a higher mind, which foreknew her destiny, and in a parallel manner displayed it to her.

Individual facts may be disputed or attributed to more coincidence, but as soon as their number and singularity and authentication take them out of that category, the explanation offered above cannot be put aside as *prima facie* absurd. Like other first hypotheses, indeed, it will, if received for a time, have ultimately to make way for a correcter notion. Still it will have helped to lead to truth. I am quite indifferent to its fate. But I am not indifferent to the reception the facts themselves may meet with, which I have adduced it to explain. It is true that nothing can be more trivial and useless than the character in which they present themselves. Disconnected objectless outbreaks, they seem, of some obscure power, they may be compared to the attraction of light bodies by amber after friction, and are as yet as unmeaning and valueless as were the first indications of the electric force. Therefore, doubtless, are they so commonly disregarded.

It is not indeed unlikely that, on looking closer, a number of other incidents, turning up on trifling or important occasions, may be found to depend on the same cause with those we have been considering—things that seem for a moment odd and unaccountable, something more than coincidences, and are then forgotten. The simultaneous suggestions of the same idea to two persons in conversation, the spread of panic-fears, sympathy in general, the attraction or repulsion felt on first acquaintance, the intuitive knowledge of mankind which some possess, the universal fascination exercised by others, may be found, perhaps, in part to hinge on the same principle with Zschokke's seer-gift.

Among the odd incidents which this train of reflection brings to my mind, (which you are at liberty to explain in the way you like best,) I am tempted to select and mention two that were communicated to me by Admiral the Honourable G. Dundas, then a Lord of the Admiralty, and in constant communication with his colleague, Sir Thomas Hardy, from whom he received them.

They were mentioned as anecdotes of Lord Nelson, to show his instinctive judgment of men. They both go further.

When Lord Nelson was preparing to follow the French fleet to the West Indies, Captain Hardy was present as he gave directions to the commander of a frigate to make sail with all speed,—to proceed to certain points, where he was likely to see the French,—having seen the French, to go to a certain harbour, and there wait Lord Nelson's coming. After the commander had left the cabin, Nelson said to Hardy, "He will go to the West Indies, he will see the French, he will go to the harbour I have directed, but he will not wait for me. He will return to England." He did so. Shortly before the battle of Trafalgar, an English frigate was in advance of the fleet looking out for the enemy; her place in the offing was hardly discernible. Captain Hardy was with Nelson on the quarter-deck of the Victory. Without any thing to lead to it, Nelson said, "The Celeste" (or whatever the frigate's name may have been)—"the Celeste sees the French." Hardy had nothing to say on the matter. "She sees the French; she'll fire a gun." Within a little, the boom of the gun was heard. [Pg 547]

Socrates, it is well known, had singular intimations, which he attributed to a familiar or demon. One day being with the army, he tried to persuade an officer, who was going across the country, to take a different route to that which he intended; "If you take that," he said, "you will be met and slain." The officer, neglecting his advice, was killed, as Socrates had forewarned him.

Timarchus, who was curious on the subject of the demon of Socrates, went to the cave of Trophonius, to learn of the oracle about it. There, having for a short time inhaled the mephitic vapour, he felt as if he had received a sudden blow on the head, and sank down insensible. Then his head appeared to him to open and to give issue to his soul into the other world; and an imaginary being seemed to inform him that, "the part of the soul engaged in the body, entrammelled in its organisation, is the soul is ordinarily understood; but that there is another part or province of the soul, which is the demon. This has a certain control over the bodily soul, and among other offices constitutes conscience. In three months," the vision added, "you will know more of this." At the end of three months Timarchus died.

Again adieu. Yours, &c.,
MAC DAVUS.

V.—TRANCE AND SLEEPWALKING.

DEAR ARCHY.—The subjects which remain to complete our brief correspondence, are Religious Delusions, the Possessed, and Witchcraft.

In order that I may set these fully and distinctly before you, it is necessary that you should know what is meant by Trance.

You have already had partial glimpses of this comprehensive phenomenon. Arnod Paole was in a trance, in his grave in the church-yard of Meduegua: Timarchus was in a trance in the cave of Trophonius.

But we must go still further back. To conceive properly the nature of trance, it is necessary to form clear ideas of the state of the mind in ordinary sleeping and waking.

During our ordinary waking state, we are conscious of an uninterrupted flow of thought, which we may observe to be modified by three influences—the first, suggestions of our experience and reflections, impulses of our natural and acquired character; the second, present impressions on our senses; the third, voluntary exertion of the attention to detain one class of ideas in preference to others.

Further, we habitually perceive things around us, by or through sensation. But on some, and for the most part trivial occasions, we seem endowed with another sort of perception, which is either direct, or dependent on new modes of sensation.

Again, the balance of the mental machinery may be overthrown. The suggestions of the imagination may become sensorial illusions; the judgment may be the subject of parallel hallucinations; the feelings may be perverted; our ideas may lose connexion and coherence; and intelligence may sink into fatuity. [Pg 548]

So much for our waking state.

During sleep, there are no adequate reasons for doubting that the flow of our ideas continues as uninterrupted as in a waking state. It is true, that some persons assert that they never dream; and others that they dream occasionally only. But there is a third class, to which I myself belong, who continually dream, and who always, on waking, distinctly discern the fugitive rearguard of their last sleep thoughts. The simplest view of these diversified instances, is to suppose that all persons in sleep are always dreaming, and that the spaces seemingly vacant of dreams, are only gaps in the memory; that all persons asleep always dream, but that all persons do not always remember their dreams.

The suggestive influences that modify the current of ideas in sleep, are not so numerous as those in operation in our waking state.

The principal, indeed in general the exclusive, impulse to our dreaming thoughts, is our past

experience and existing character, from and in obedience to which, imagination moulds our dreams.

Not that sensation is suspended in sleep. On the contrary, it appears to have its usual acuteness; and impressions made upon our senses—the feelings produced by an uneasy posture, for instance, or the introduction of sudden light into the room, or a loud and unusual noise, or even whisperings in the ear—will give a new and corresponding direction to the dreaming thoughts. Sensation is only commonly not called into play in sleep: we shut our eyes; we even close the pupils; we cover up our ears; court darkness and quiet; knowing that the more we exclude sensible impressions the better we shall sleep.

But the great difference between sleeping and waking, that which indeed constitutes the essence of the former state, psychically considered, is the suspension of the attention—all the leading phenomena of sleep are directly traceable to this cause: for example—

In sleep we cease to support ourselves, and fall, if we were previously standing or sitting. That is, we cease to attend to the maintenance of our equilibrium. We forget the majority of our dreams: attention is the soul of recollection.

Our dreams are often nonsense, or involve absurdities or ideas which we know to be false. The check of the attention is absent.

Our ideas whirl with unwonted rapidity in our dreams; the fly-wheel of the attention has been taken off.

When we are being overcome with sleep, we are conscious of not being able to fix our attention.

When we would encourage sleep, we endeavour to avoid thoughts which would arouse the attention.

Though the sensibility of our organs is really undiminished, *it seems to be lowered* in sleep, because then no attention is given to common sensation.

Sleep, however, it should be added, may be either profound, or light, or imperfect; in the two latter cases, the attention seems to be less completely suspended.

So, in sleep, it is the attention alone that really sleeps; the rest of the mental powers and impulses are on the contrary in motion, but free and unchecked, obtaining their refreshment and renovation from gambolling about and stretching themselves. The inspector only slumbers; or, to use a closer figure, he retires to a sufficient distance from them, not to be disturbed by any common noise they may make; any great disturbance calls him back directly; likewise, he sits with his watch in his hand, having a turn for noting the flight of time.

In contrast with the above conception of the states of sleeping and waking, the alternations of which compose our ordinary being, I have now to hold up another conception, resembling the first, of which it is the double,—but vaguer, more shadowy, of larger and gigantic proportions, from its novelty astonishing, like the mocking spectre of the Hartz; which is yet but your own shadow cast by the level sunbeams on the morning mist.

All the phenomena embodied in this conception, I propose to denominate Trance. But let me premise that all do not belong to every instance of trance. If I undertook to specify the external [Pg 549] appearances of the human species, I must enunciate among other things, as colours of the skin, white, yellow, brown, black; as qualities of the hair, that it is flowing, soft, lanky, harsh, frizzled, woolly; but I should not mean that every human being presented all these features.

Then, as our ordinary being presents an alternation of sleeping and waking, so does trance-existence. There is a trance-sleep and a trance-waking to correspond with ordinary sleep and ordinary waking.

As natural sleep has different degrees of profoundness, so has trance sleep. They present a latitude so extensive, that it is convenient and allowable to lay down three different degrees or states of trance-sleep.

Then, of trance-sleep first, and of its three degrees.

The deepest grade of trance-sleep extinguishes all the ordinary signs of animation. It forms the condition in which many are buried alive. It is the so-called vampyr state in the vampyr superstition. [See Letter II. of this series.]

The middle grade presents the appearance of profound unconsciousness; but a gentle breathing and the circulation are distinguishable. The body is flexible, relaxed, perfectly impassive to ordinary stimuli. The pupils of the eyes are not contracted, but yet are fixed. This state is witnessed occasionally in hysteria, after violent fits of hysteric excitement.

In the lightest degree of trance-sleep, the person can sustain itself sitting; the pupils are in the same state as above, or natural; the apparent unconsciousness profound.

Two features characterise trance-sleep in all its grades. One, an insensibility to all common stimulants, however violently applied; the other, an inward flow of ideas, a dream or vision. It is as well to provide all words with a precise meaning. The term vision had better be restricted to mean a dream during trance-sleep.

The behaviour of Grando, who had been buried in the vampyr state, when they were clumsily cutting his head off, makes no exception to the first of the above positions. He had then just emerged out of his trance-sleep, either through the lapse of time, or from the admission of fresh air, or what not.

It will not be doubted that the mind may have visions in all the grades of trance-sleep, if it can be proved capable of them in the deepest; therefore, one example will suffice for all three cases.

Henry Engelbrecht, as we learn in a pamphlet published by himself in the year 1639, after a most ascetic life, during which he had experienced sensorial illusions, was thrown for a brief period into the deepest form of trance-sleep, which event he thus describes:—

In the year 1623, exhausted by intense mental excitement of a religious kind, and by abstinence from food, after hearing a sermon which strongly affected him, he felt as if he could combat no more, so he gave in and took to his bed. There he lay a week without tasting any thing but the bread and wine of the sacrament. On the eighth day, he thought he fell into the death-struggle; death seemed to invade him from below upwards; his body became rigid; his hands and feet insensible; his tongue and lips incapable of motion: gradually his sight failed him, but he still heard the laments and consultations of those around him. This gradual demise lasted from mid-day till eleven at night, when he heard the watchmen; then he lost consciousness of outward impressions. But an elaborate vision of immense detail began; the theme of which was, that he was first carried down to hell, and looked into the place of torment; from thence, quicker than an arrow, was he borne to paradise. In these abodes of suffering and happiness, he saw and heard and smelt things unspeakable. These scenes, though long in apprehension, were short in time, for he came enough to himself by twelve o'clock, again to hear the watchmen. It took him another twelve hours to come round entirely. His hearing was first restored; then his sight, feeling, and motion followed; as soon as he could move his limbs, he rose. He felt himself stronger than before the trance.

Trance-waking presents a great variety of phases; but it is sufficient for a general outline of the subject to make or specify but two grades—half-waking and full-waking. [Pg 550]

In trance half-waking, the person rises, moves about with facility, will converse even, but is almost wholly occupied with a dream, which he may be said to act, and his perceptions and apprehensions are with difficulty drawn to any thing out of the circle of that dream.

In trance full-waking, the person is completely alive to all or most of the things passing around him, and would not be known by a stranger to be otherwise than ordinarily awake.

I propose to occupy the latter half of this letter with details of cases exemplifying these two states. Those which I shall select, will be instances either of somnambulism, double consciousness, or catalepsy, the popular phenomena of which I take this occasion of displaying. By these details the following features will be proved to belong to trance-waking.

1. Common feeling, taste, and smell, are generally suspended in trance-waking. In trance half-waking, sight is equally suspended. In trance full-waking, every shade of modified sensibility up to perfect possession of sensation, presents itself in different cases, and sometimes in successive periods of the same cases.

2. The general diminution or suspension of sensation is, as it were, made up for, either by an intense acuteness of partial sensation, often developed in an unaccustomed organ, or by some new mode of perception.

3. The memory and circle of ideas are curiously circumscribed.

4. To make up for this, some of the powers of the mind acquire concentration and temporary increase of force, and occasionally new powers of apprehension appear to be developed.

5. Spasms of the muscles, generally tonic or maintained spasms, but sometimes, having the character of convulsive struggles, are occasionally manifested in trance. And they may bear either of two relations to it. They may occur simultaneously with trance-waking or alternately with it, and occupying the patient's frame in the intervals of trance.

In the ordinary course of things, trance-sleep precedes trance-waking, and follows it. So that some have described trance-waking as waking in trance. Trance-sleep may come on during ordinary sleep, or during ordinary waking. By use the introductory and terminal states of trance-sleep become abridged; and sometimes, if either exist, it is so brief, that the transition to and from trance-waking out of and into ordinary waking, *appears* immediate.

Now to illustrate the phenomena of trance half-waking, by describing somnambulism.

A curious fate somnambulism has had. When other forms of trance have been exalted into mystical phenomena and figure in history, somnambulism has had no superstitious altars raised to her—has had no fear-worship—has at the highest been promoted to figure in an opera. Of a quiet and homely nature, she has moved about the house, not like a visiting demon, but as a maid of all work. To the public, the phenomenon has presented no more interest than a soap-bubble or the fall of an apple.

Somnambulism is a form of half-waking trance which usually comes on during the night, and in ordinary sleep. When it occurs in the daytime, the attack of trance is still ordinarily preceded by

a short period of common sleep.

The somnambulist then, half waking in trance, is disposed to rise and move about. Sometimes his object seems a mere excursion, and then it is remarked that he shows a disposition to ascend heights. So he climbs, perhaps, to the roof of the house, and makes his way along it with agility and certainty: sometimes he is observed, where the tiles are loose, to try if they are secure before he advances. Generally these feats are performed in safety. But occasionally, a somnambulist has missed his footing, fallen, and perished. His greatest danger is from ill-judged attempts to wake and warn him of his perilous situation. Luckily, it is not easy to wake him. He then returns, goes to bed, sleeps, and the next morning has no recollection of what he has done. In other cases, the somnambulist, on rising from his bed, betakes himself to his customary occupations, either to some handiwork, or to composition, or what not. [Pg 551]

These three points are easily verifiable respecting his condition. He is in a dream, which he, as it were, acts after his thoughts; occasionally he remembers on the following day some of the incidents of the night before, as part of a dream.

But his common sensibility to ordinary impressions is suspended: he does not feel; his eyes are either shut, or open and fixed; he does not see; he does not observe light, and works as well with as without it; he has not taste or smell: the loudest noise makes no impression on him.

In the mean time, to accomplish the feats he performs, the most accurate *perception* of sensible objects is required. Of what nature is that of which he so marvellously evinces the possession? You may adopt the simple hypothesis,—that the mind, being disengaged from its ordinary relations to the senses, does without them, and perceives things directly. Or you may suppose, if you prefer it, that the mind still employs sensation, using only impressions that in ordinary waking are not consciously attended to, for its more wonderful feats; and otherwise common sensation, which, however generally suspended, may be awakened by the dreaming attention to its objects.

The following case of somnambulism, in which the seizure supervened, in a girl affected with St Vitus's dance, and combined itself with that disorder, is given by Lord Monboddo:—

The patient, about sixteen years of age, used to be commonly taken in the morning a few hours after rising. The approach of the seizure was announced by a sense of weight in the head, a drowsiness which quickly terminated in sleep, in which her eyes were fast shut. She described a feeling beginning in the feet, creeping like a gradual chill higher and higher, till it reached the heart, when consciousness or recollection left her. Being in this state, she sprang from her seat about the room, over tables and chairs, with the astonishing agility belonging to St Vitus's dance. Then, if she succeeded in getting out of the house, she ran at a pace with which her elder brother could hardly keep up, to a particular spot in the neighbourhood, taking the directest but the roughest path. If she could not manage otherwise, she got over the garden-wall with surprising rapidity and precision of movement. Her eyes were all the time fast closed. The impulse to visit this spot she was often conscious of during the approach of the paroxysm, and, afterwards, she sometimes thought she had dreamed of going thither. Towards the termination of her indisposition, she dreamed that the water of a neighbouring spring would do her good, and she drank much of it. One time they tried to cheat her by giving her water from another spring, but she immediately detected the difference. Towards the end, she foretold that she would have three paroxysms more, and then be well—and so it proved.

The following case is from a communication by M. Pigatti, published in the July Number of the *Journal Encyclopédique* of the year 1762. The subject was a servant of the name of Negretti, in the household of the Marquis Sale.

In the evening, Negretti would seat himself in a chair in the anteroom, when he commonly fell asleep, and would sleep quietly for a quarter of an hour. He then righted himself in his chair, so as to sit up. [This was the moment of transition from ordinary sleep into trance.] Then he sat some time without motion, as if he saw something. Then he rose and walked about the room. On one occasion, he drew out his snuff-box and would have taken a pinch, but there was little in it; whereupon he walked up to an empty chair, and addressing by name a cavalier whom he supposed to be sitting in it, asked him for a pinch. One of those who were watching the scene, here held towards him an open box, from which he took snuff. Afterwards he fell into the posture of a person who listens; he seemed to think that he heard an order, and thereupon hastened with a wax-candle in his hand, to a spot where a light usually stood. As soon as he imagined that he had lit the candle, he walked with it in the proper manner, through the *salle*, down the steps, turning and waiting from time to time, as if he had been lighting some one down. Arrived at the door, he placed himself sideways, so as to let the imaginary persons pass, and he bowed as he let [Pg 552] them out. He then extinguished the light, returned up the stairs, and sat himself down again in his place, to play the same farce over again once or twice the same evening. When in this condition, he would lay the tablecloth, place the chairs, which he sometimes brought from a distant room, and opening and shutting the doors as he went, with exactness; would take decanters from the *beauffet*, fill them with water at the spring, put them on a waiter, and so on. All the objects *that were concerned in these operations*, he distinguished where they were before him with the same precision and certainty as if he had been in the full use of his senses. Otherwise he seemed to observe nothing—so, on one occasion, in passing a table, he upset a waiter with two decanters upon it, which fell and broke, without exciting his attention. The dominant idea had entire possession of him. He would prepare a salad with correctness, and sit down and eat it. Then, if they changed it, the trick passed without his notice. In this manner he

would go on eating cabbage, or even pieces of cake, seemingly without observing the difference. The taste he enjoyed was imaginary; the sense was shut. On another occasion, when he asked for wine, they gave him water, which he drank for wine, and remarked that his stomach felt the better for it. On a fellow-servant touching his legs with a stick, the idea arose in his mind that it was a dog, and he scolded to drive it away; but the servant continuing his game, Negretti took a whip to beat the dog. The servant drew off when Negretti began whistling and coaxing to get the dog near him; so they threw a muff against his legs, which he belaboured soundly.

M. Pigatti watched these proceedings with great attention, and convinced himself by many trials that Negretti did not use his senses. The suspension of taste was shown by his not distinguishing between salad and cake. He did not hear the loudest sound, when it lay out of the circle of his dreaming ideas. If a light was held close to his eyes, near enough to singe his eyebrows, he did not appear to be aware of it. He seemed to feel nothing when they inserted a feather into his nostrils. The ordinary sensibility of his organs seemed withdrawn.

Altogether, the most interesting case of somnambulism on record, is that of a young ecclesiastic, the narrative of which, from the immediate communication of an Archbishop of Bordeaux, is given under the head of somnambulism in the French Encyclopædia.

This young ecclesiastic, when the archbishop was at the same seminary, used to rise every night, and write out either sermons or pieces of music. To study his condition, the archbishop betook himself several nights consecutively to the chamber of the young man, where he made the following observations.

The young man used to rise, to take paper, and to write. Before he wrote music, he would take a stick and rule the lines with it. He wrote the notes, together with the words corresponding with them, with perfect correctness. Or, when he had written the words too wide, he altered them. The notes that were to be black, he filled in after he had written the whole. After completing a sermon, he read it aloud from beginning to end. If any passage displeased him, he erased it, and wrote the amended passage correctly over the other; on one occasion he had to substitute the word "*adorable*" for "*divin*;" but he did not omit to alter the preceding "*ce*" into "*cet*," by adding the letter "*t*" with exact precision to the word first written. To ascertain whether he used his eyes, the archbishop interposed a sheet of pasteboard between the writing and his face. He took not the least notice, but went on writing as before. The limitation of his perceptions to what he was thinking about was very curious. A bit of aniseed cake, that he had sought for, he eat approvingly; but when, on another occasion, a piece of the same cake was put in his month, he spit it out without observation. The following instance of the dependance of his perceptions upon, or rather their subordination to, his preconceived ideas is truly wonderful. It is to be observed that he always knew when his pen had ink in it. Likewise, if they adroitly changed his papers, [Pg 553] when he was writing, he knew it, if the sheet substituted was of a different size from the former, and he appeared embarrassed in that case. But if the fresh sheet of paper, which was substituted for that written on, was exactly of the same size with the former, he appeared not to be aware of the change. And he would continue to read off his composition from the blank sheet of paper, as fluently as when the manuscript itself lay before him; nay, more, he would continue his corrections, and introduce the amended passage, writing it upon exactly the place on the blank sheet which it would have occupied on the written page.

The form of trance which has been thus exemplified may be therefore well called half-waking, inasmuch as the performer, whatever his powers of perception may be in respect to the object he is thinking of, is nevertheless lost in dream, and blind and deaf to every thing without its scope.

The following case may serve as a suitable transition to instances of full-waking in trance. The subject of it alternated evidently between that state and half-waking. Or she, could be at once roused from the latter into the former by the conversation of her friends. The case is recorded in the Acta Vratisl. ann. 1722, Feb. class iv., art. 2.

A girl seventeen years of age was used to fall into a kind of sleep in the afternoon, in which it was supposed, from her expression of countenance and her gestures, that she was engaged in dreams which interested her. After some days, she began to speak when in this state. Then, if those present addressed remarks to her, she replied very sensibly; but then fell back into her dream-discourse, which turned principally upon religious and moral topics, and was directed to warn her friends how a female should live, Christianly, well-governed, and so as to incur no reproach. When she sang, which often happened, she heard herself accompanied by an imaginary violin or piano, and would take up and continue the accompaniment upon an instrument herself. She sewed, did knitting, and the like. But on the other hand, she imagined on one occasion that she wrote a letter upon a napkin, which she folded with the intention of sending it to the post. Upon waking, she had not the least recollection of her dreams, or of what she had been doing. After a few months she recovered.

I come now to the exemplification of full-waking in trance, as it is very perfectly manifested in the cases which have been termed double consciousness. These are in their principle very simple; but it is not easy in a few words to convey a distinct idea of the condition of the patient. The case consists of a series of fits of trance, in which the step from ordinary waking to full trance-waking is sudden and immediate, or nearly so, and either was so originally, or through use has become so. Generally for some hours on each day, occasionally for days together, the patient continues in the state of trance; then suddenly reverts to that of ordinary waking. In the perfectest instances of double consciousness, there is nothing in the bearing or behaviour of the entranced person which would lead a stranger to suppose her (for it is an affection far commoner in young women

than in boys or men) to be other than ordinarily awaked. But her friends observe that she does every thing with more spirit and better—sings better, plays better, has more readiness, moves even more gracefully, than in her natural state. She has an innocent boldness and disregard of little conventionalisms, which imparts a peculiar charm to her behaviour. In the mean time, she has two complete existences separate and apart, which alternate but never mingle. On the day of her first fit, her life split into a double series of thoughts and recollections. She remembers in her ordinary state nothing of her trance existence. In her trances, she remembers nothing of the intervening hours of ordinary waking. Her recollections of what she had experienced or learned before the fits began is singularly capricious, differing extraordinarily in its extent in different cases. In general, the positive recollection of prior events is annulled; but her prior affections and habits either remain, and her general acquirements, or they are quickly by association rekindled [Pg 554] or brought into the circle of her trance ideas. Generally she names all her friends anew; often her tone of voice is a little altered; sometimes she introduces with particular combinations of letters some odd inflection, which she maintains rigorously and cannot unlearn.

Keeping before him this conception, the reader will comprehend the following sketch of a case of double consciousness, communicated by Dr George Barlow. To one reading them without preparation, the details, which are very graphic and instructive, would appear mere confusion:—

"This young lady has two states of existence. During the time that the fit is on her, which varies from a few hours to three days, she is occasionally merry and in spirits; occasionally she appears in pain and rolls about in uneasiness; but in general she seems so much herself, that a stranger entering the room would not remark any thing extraordinary; she amuses herself with reading or working, sometimes plays on the piano and better than at other times, knows every body, and converses rationally, and makes very accurate observations on what she has seen and read. The fit leaves her suddenly, and she then forgets every thing that has passed during it, and imagines that she has been asleep, and sometimes that she has dreamed of any circumstance that has made a vivid impression upon her. During one of these fits she was reading Miss Edgeworth's tales, and had in the morning been reading a part of one of them to her mother, when she went for a few minutes to the window, and suddenly exclaimed, 'Mamma, I am quite well, my headach is gone.' Returning to the table, she took up the open volume, which she had been reading five minutes before, and said, 'What book is this?' she turned over the leaves, looked at the frontispiece, and replaced it on the table. Seven or eight hours afterwards, when the fit returned, she asked for the book, went on at the very paragraph where she had left off, and remembered every circumstance of the narrative. And so it always is; as she reads one set of books during one state, and another during the other. She seems to be conscious of her state; for she said one day, 'Mamma, this is a novel, but I may safely read it; it will not hurt my morals, for, when I am well, I shall not remember a word of it.'"

This state of double consciousness forms the basis of the psychical phenomena observed in the extraordinary cases which have been occasionally described under the general name of catalepsy. The accounts of the most interesting of these that I have met with, were given by M. Petatin in 1787; M. Delpet, 1807; Dr Despine, 1829. The wonderful powers of perception evinced by the patients when in this state of trance-waking would exceed belief, but for the respectable names of the observers, and the internal evidence of good faith and accuracy in the narratives themselves. The patients did not see with their eyes nor hear with their ears. But they heard at the pit of the stomach, and perceived the approach of persons when at some distance from their residence, and read the thoughts of those around.

I am, my dear Archy, no wonder-monger; so I am not tempted to make a parade to you of these extraordinary phenomena. Nor in truth do they interest me further than as they concur with the numerous other facts I have brought forward to show, and positively prove, that under certain conditions the mind enters into new relations, spiritual and material. I will, however, in conclusion, give you the outline of a case of the sort which occurred a few years ago in England, and the details of which were communicated to me by the late Mr Bulteel. He had himself repeatedly seen the patient, and had scrupulously verified what I now narrate to you:—

The patient was towards twenty years of age. Her condition was the state of double consciousness, *thus* aggravated, that when she was not in the trance, she suffered from spasmodic contraction of the limbs. In her alternate state of trance-waking, she was composed and apparently well; but the expression of her countenance was slightly altered, and there was some peculiarity in her mode of speaking. She would mispronounce certain letters, or introduce consonants into words upon a regular system; and to each of her friends she had given a new [Pg 555] name, which she only employed in her trance. As usual, she knew nothing in either state of what passed in the other. Then in her trance she exhibited three marvellous powers: she could read by the touch alone: if she pressed her hand against the whole surface of a written or printed page, she acquired a perfect knowledge of its contents, not of the substance only, but of the words, and would criticise the type or the handwriting. A line of a folded note pressed against the back of her neck, she read equally well: she called this sense-feeling. Contact was necessary for it. Her sense of smell was at the same time singularly acute; when out riding one day, she said, "There is a violet," and cantered her horse fifty yards to where it grew. Persons whom she knew she could tell were approaching the house, when yet at some distance. When persons were playing chess at a table *behind her*, and intentionally made impossible moves, she would smile, and ask them why they did it.

Cases of this description are no doubt of rare occurrence. Yet not a year passes in London without something transpiring of the existence of one or more of them in the huge metropolis.

Medical men view them with unpardonable indifference. Thus one doctor told me of a lady, whom he had been attending with other physicians, who, it appeared, always announced that they were coming some minutes before they drove to her door. It was very odd, he thought, and there was an end of it.

"M. l'Abbé," said Voltaire to a visitor, who gave him a commonplace account of some remarkable scenes, "do you know in what respect you differ from Don Quixote?"—"No," said the Abbé, not half liking the look of the question. "Why, M. l'Abbé, Don Quixote took the inns on the road for castles, but you have taken castles for inns."

Adieu, dear Archy.—Yours, &c.
MAC DAVUS.

FOUR SONNETS BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I. LIFE.

Each creature holds an insular point in space;
Yet, what man stirs a finger, breathes a sound,
But all the multitudinous beings round
In all the countless worlds, with time and place
For their conditions, down to the central base,
Thrill, haply, in vibration and rebound;
Life answering life across the vast profound,
In full antiphony, by a common grace?—
I think this sudden joyaunce, which illumes
A child's mouth sleeping, unaware may run
From some soul breaking new the bond of tombs:
I think this passionate sigh, which, half begun,
I stifle back, may reach and stir the plumes
Of God's calm angel standing in the sun.

II. LOVE.

We cannot live, except thus mutually
We alternate, aware or unaware,
The reflex act of life: and when we bear
Our virtue outward most impulsively,
Most full of invocation, and to be
Most instantly compellant, certes, there,
We live most life, whoever breathes most air
And counts his dying years by sun and sea!
But when a soul, by choice and conscience, doth [Pg 556]
Show out her full force on another soul,
The conscience and the concentration, both,
Make mere life, Love! For life in perfect whole
And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,
As nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole.

III. HEAVEN AND EARTH. 1845.

"And there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour."—*Revelation.*

God, who with thunders and great voices kept
Beneath thy throne, and stars most silver-paced
Along the inferior gyres, and open-faced
Melodious angels round, canst intercept
Music with music, yet, at will, hast swept
All back—all back—(said he in Patmos placed)
To fill the heavens with silence of the waste,
Which lasted half an hour! Lo! I, who have wept
All day and night, beseech Thee by my tears,
And by that dread response of curse and groan
Men alternate across these hemispheres,
Vouchsafe as such a half-hour's hush alone,
In compensation of our noisy years!
As heaven has paused from song, let earth, from moan.

IV. THE PROSPECT. 1845.

Methinks we do as fretful children do,

Leaning their faces on the window-pane
To sigh the glass dim with their own breath's stain,
And shut the sky and landscape from their view.
And thus, alas! since God the maker drew
A mystic separation twixt those twain,
The life beyond us and our souls in pain,
We lose the prospect which we are called unto,
By grief we are fools to use. Be still and strong,
O man, my brother! hold thy sobbing breath,
And keep thy soul's large window pure from wrong,
That so, as life's appointment issueth,
Thy vision may be clear to watch along
The sunset consummation-lights of death.

ROSAURA: A TALE OF MADRID.

[Pg 557]

Fourteen years have elapsed since there dwelt in Madrid a certain student, who went by the name of El Rojo, or the Red. Not by his acquaintances and intimates alone was he thus designated, but by all the various classes of idlers with whom the Spanish capital abounds; by the listless loiterers at the coffee-house doors, by the lounging gossips of the Puerta del Sol, and by the cloaked saunterers who, when the siesta is over, pace the Calle Alcala, puffing their beloved Havanas, retailing the latest news, discussing the chances of a change of ministry, or the most recent and interesting scandalous anecdote current in that gallant metropolis. It would be wrong to infer, from his somewhat ambiguous appellation, that the student's skin had the copper hue of a Pawnee or an Osage, or his hair the ruddy tint usually deemed detrimental and unbecoming. The name implied no sneer—it was given and taken as a compliment; and Federico was at least as proud of it as of the abundant golden curls to which he owed it, and that flowed in waving luxuriance down his graceful neck and over his well-formed shoulders.

In southern climes, where the ardent sun embrowns the children of the soil, fair locks and eyes of azure are prized in proportion to their rarity. No wonder, then, that Federico found favour in the sight of the dark-browed and inflammable Madrileñas. Many were the tender glances darted at him from beneath veil and mantilla, as he took his evening stroll upon the Prado; oftentimes, when he passed along the street, white and slender fingers, protruded through half-closed *jalousies*, dropped upon his handsome head a shower of fragrant jasmin blossoms. Amongst the dames and damsels who thus signified their favour and partiality, not a few—so it is certified by the veracious authority whence we derive this history—dwelt in stately mansions, and went abroad in brave equipage, drawn by prancing steeds and comely mules, all glittering with trappings of silk and gold. These, it may be thought, condescended overmuch thus to notice an humble student. But the love-breathing daughters of Castile reck little of rank and station; and Federico, by all personal endowments, well deserved the distinction he obtained. Poor hidalgo though he was, no count or duke, or blue-blooded grandee, from Cadiz to Corunua, bore himself better, or had more the mien of a well-born and thorough-bred *caballero*. None more gallantly wore the broad-leafed sombrero, none more gracefully draped the ample cloak; and all Spain might have been searched in vain to match the bright and joyous glance of the student's dark-blue eye. Excepting on the coast, and in certain districts where Mahomedan forefathers have bequeathed their oriental physiognomy and tall slender frame to their Christian descendants, Spaniards are rarely of very lofty stature. Federico was from the flat and arid province of La Mancha, where, as in compensation for the unproductiveness of the parched soil, handsome men and beauteous women abound. Of the middle height, his figure was symmetrical, elastic, and muscular, formed for feats of agility and strength; his step was light, but firm; his countenance manly,—the expression of his regular and agreeable features denoted a passionate nature and lofty character. Like most of his countrymen, he was quickly roused, but easy to appease. Generosity and forbearance were prominent amongst his good qualities; and he had nobly displayed them in more than one encounter with antagonists, whose feebleness placed them at his mercy, and rendered them unworthy of his wrath. For in the use of arms, as in all manly exercises, Federico was an adept; and whether with Toledo blade, or *Majo's* knife, there were few men in Spain who would not have found in him a formidable and dangerous adversary.

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Strange to tell of so young a man, and of a Spaniard, in one respect our student appeared passionless. He met the advances of his female admirers with the utmost coldness—seemed, indeed, to avoid the society of the fair sex, threw love-letters into the fire, unread and unanswered, neglected invitations, went to no rendezvous. Favours which other men would gladly have purchased with years of life, he disdainfully rejected. The wrinkled duennas, who under various pretexts brought him tender messages and tempting assignations, met, instead of the golden guerdon with which such Mercuries are usually rewarded, harsh rebuffs and cutting sarcasm at the hands of the stoic of two-and-twenty. And with so much scorn did this Manchegan Joseph repel on one occasion the amorous attentions of a lady of birth and station, that her indiscreet love was changed into bitter hate, and Federico narrowly escaped a dagger-stab and a premature death. From that day, he was more inaccessible than ever, not only to women, but to men. Gradually he withdrew from intercourse with his former associates and was seldom seen in the streets or public places, but sat at home, buried amongst books, and diligently studying, with

the intention, he was heard to declare, of going to Ciudad Real, and passing his examination as advocate in the royal courts. And thus, little by little, it happened with Federico as it does with most persons who neglect and forget the world, the world forgot him. His old intimates—joyous, light-hearted lads, revelling in the enjoyments and dissipation of the capital—voted him a spoil-sport and a pedant, and thought of him no more: friends, in the true sense of the word, he had none; and so, after a very short time, the list of visitors to the gloomy old apartment in which the eccentric youth mused and studied was reduced to one man, and that a very odd one, but whom Federico loved, because he in some sort owed him his life.

This second hero of our tale was one of those strange characters to be met with in Spain only. Don Geronimo Regato was a little wizened old creature, blind of an eye, and with a very ugly face, whose life had been a series of extraordinary adventures and bustling incidents. He had served his country in the most opposite capacities. In 1808, he fought the French in the streets of Madrid; two years later, he headed a guerilla band in the wild passes of the Sierra Morena; another two years, and he took the oath to the constitution of Cadiz, and was seen at Wellington's head-quarters as colonel of the Spanish line, and delegate from the Cortes. In 1814, he changed his colours, and was noted, after the return of Ferdinand VII., as a stanch royalist. But variety was his motto; and the revolution of 1820 saw him in the ranks of the Liberals, to whom he continued faithful until their cause was ruined and hopeless. That was the signal, with this Talleyrand on a small scale, for another *vuelta casaca*: once more he turned his coat; and as an earnest of penitence for past offences, opened to the Royalist troops the gates of a small Estremaduran fortress. Notwithstanding this act of tardy allegiance, he was thrown into prison at Madrid, and owed it entirely to the intercession and good offices of an old schoolfellow, the influential Father Cyrillo, that his neck was not brought into unpleasant contact with the iron hoop of the *garrote*. Either warned by this narrow escape, or because the comparatively tranquil state of Spain afforded no scope for his restless activity, since 1823 this political Proteus had lived in retirement, eschewing apparently all plots and intrigues; although he was frequently seen in the very highest circles of the capital, where his great experience, his conversational powers, and social qualities sufficiently accounted for the welcome he at all times met.

Returning late one night from a tertulia at the house of Ferdinand's prime minister, Don Geronimo heard the clash of steel and sound of a scuffle, and hurrying to the spot, saw a young man defending himself against the attack of two bravos. Forthwith Regato set himself to shout out words of command, as if he had a whole regiment at his back, and the ruffians, thinking the patrol was upon them, instantly took to flight. Federico was the person assailed; and although he [Pg 559] boldly asserted and doubtlessly fully believed, that, left to himself, he would speedily have defeated his cowardly opponents, he was still not altogether sorry to be relieved from such odds by the old gentleman's timely arrival and ingenious stratagem. This was the origin of his acquaintance with Regato. From that night forward they visited each other, and soon Geronimo took particular pleasure in the society of the handsome youth, whose earnestness and vigour of mind, he said, were refreshing to contemplate in a century when the actions of most men made them resemble beasts and apes, rather than beings formed in the image of their Creator. The young student, for his part, found much to interest him in his new friend, the only person who now varied the monotony of his solitude. He listened eagerly to Regato's discourse, as he alternately poured out his stores of knowledge and experience, and broke into a vein of keen and bitter sarcasm on the men, parties, and circumstances of distracted and unhappy Spain. Federico enthusiastically loved his country, and his proud eyes often filled with tears when the old man placed its former greatness in striking contrast with its present degradation. In spite of all the veerings and weathercock variations of his political life, Regato was at heart a Liberal. He set forth in glowing colours the evils and tyranny of Ferdinand's government, expatiated on the barbarous executions of Riego, Torrijos, and other martyrs to freedom's cause, and exposed the corruption and villany of the men who retained their country in the bonds of slavery and fanaticism; until Federico's cheeks glowed, and heart beat quick with patriotic indignation, and he felt that he too, when the battle-hour should strike, would joyfully draw his sword and lose his life for the liberation of the land he loved so well. At times the student would take down his guitar, and sing, with closed doors and windows—for Ferdinand's spies were, a quick-eared legion—the spirit-stirring Hymn of the Constitution, or the wild Tragala—that Spanish Marseillaise, to whose exciting notes rivers of blood have flowed. And then old Regato beat time with his hand, and his solitary eye gleamed like a ball of fire, whilst he mingled his hoarse and suppressed bass with Federico's mellow tenor.

Notwithstanding their vast difference of age and character, and although the one was but commencing, whilst the other had nearly run, the up-hill race of life, the more these two men saw of each other the stronger grow their sympathy and friendship. Don Geronimo's visits to the student became more and more frequent, and often, forgetful or careless of the time, they would sit talking till far into the night. It seemed a relief to Regato to disburden his heart and mind of their innermost secrets; and he rejoiced to have found a man to whose honour, truth, and secresy, he felt he could safely entrust them. Federico repaid his confidence with one equally unlimited. He not only told his friend the history of his short life from infancy upwards, but he made him his father confessor, informed him of the progress of his studies, confided to him his doubts and hopes, his religious creed and political aspirations, and even his connexion with some of the secret orders and societies, of which, at that period, notwithstanding the vigilance of the police, a multitude existed in Spain.

"And can it be, my young friend," said Geronimo one evening, when a brief pause succeeded to some of the fiery Federico's vehement political diatribes—"can it be," he said, fixing his

penetrating eye upon the flushed and impassioned countenance of the student, "that you have reached your present age and never loved woman?"

"Pshaw!" replied the student, "you have asked the question before, and I have answered it."

"But 'tis incomprehensible, and out of nature," cried the old Don. "Why have you a heart in your bosom, blood in your veins, strong limbs, and bright eyes?"

"Was all that given me that I might love woman?" retorted Federico with a merry laugh.

"Certainly: what is life worth, without love to sweeten it? Nothing, worse than nothing. It is that [Pg 560] gentle sympathy of hearts, that strange fever of the soul, those sweet hopes and joyous transports, and tremors scarce less pleasing, that render life endurable, and reconcile man to the vileness of mortality. The nearest approach to paradise on earth, is found in bright eyes that beam for us alone—in gentle lips that murmur to our ears words of pure tenderness and unselfish affection."

"By the Virgin!" cried Federico, "I am neither of wood nor stone. Yes, there are creatures of heavenly beauty whom I *could* love. But I am like the Moorish Prince of Granada, who was too proud to eat common food, and fed on gold. The metal was over hard for his royal stomach, and so he starved."

"Which means that what you could have, you don't like, and what you would like, you can't get."

"Possible," replied Federico smiling. "I strike high."

"And why not? To dare is often to succeed. For the bold and the prudent, no aim is too lofty. But tell me more."

"Nonsense!" cried the student. "I did but jest. It occurred to me that this very day I saw a lady whose fair face I shall not easily forget. She was richly dressed, and sat in an open carriage, drawn by magnificent horses."

"What colour was the carriage?"

"Brown, lined with purple velvet. The arms on the panels were supported by coroneted griffins; and on the luxurious cushions my goddess reclined, in a robe of rose-coloured satin. A black lace mantilla floated over her alabaster shoulders, further veiled by a cloud of glossy ebon hair; and her eyes, friend Geronimo—her beauteous eyes, were soft and heavenly as a spring day in the almond groves of Valencia."

"You are poetical," said Regato. "A good sign. Federico, you are in love; but, by our Lady, you are audacious in your choice."

"Do you know her?" eagerly exclaimed Federico.

"Did she appear to notice you?" inquired Geronimo, leaving the question unanswered.

"Paralysed by her exceeding beauty," replied the student, "I stood dumb and motionless in the carriage-way, and was nearly run over. I sprang aside, but just in time. She observed me, and smiled: I almost think she blushed. One thing I am sure of, she could not help seeing that her wondrous beauty had turned my head."

"And that is all?" said Regato, slyly.

"What more could there be?" cried the young lawyer, indignantly. "Would you have such an angel throw flowers at me, or appoint a rendezvous? When the carriage turned out of the street towards the Prado, she looked back. Holy Mother of Sorrows! even at that distance, the sunshine of those eyes scorched my very heart!—But this is folly, sheer folly! Next week I go to Ciudad Real, and amongst dusty deeds and dry folios I shall soon forget eyes and their owner."

Señor Regato assumed a thoughtful countenance, took a large pinch of snuff, and lit a fresh cigar. After three or four puffs, emitted through his nostrils with the delectation of a veteran smoker, he broke silence.

"You will not go to Ciudad Real."

"And why not?" cried Federico.

"Because, if I am not greatly mistaken, you will remain here."

"Strange if I do!" laughed the student.

"Less so, perhaps, than you imagine. Would you go if the rose-coloured lady bid you stay? What if she sent a tender billet to the young woman-hater, and said, 'Come and love me, if you have the heart and courage of a man.' I think I see you then, though ten thousand devils barred the way. Ciudad Real and the royal courts would soon be forgotten."

"Perhaps," replied Federico. "But you tantalise me with impossibilities."

Don Geronimo put on his hat, took his young friend's hand, and said with great gravity, —"Nothing is impossible. And as regards love, nought in this world can withstand it—no bolt, or lock, or bar, or rank, or power. Bear that in mind, and be of good courage, if you again fall in with her of the rose-coloured robe. I should not wonder if you saw her this very night. Be happy whilst [Pg 561]

you may, whilst youth and beauty last. They quickly pass, and never return; and in love be adventurous and bold, like a true Spaniard and gallant gentleman. Daring wins the day."

He departed. Federico remained alone. With a smile at his friend's advice, the young man sat down to study. But he soon started up, and gazed like one in a dream at the massive volumes encumbering his table. He knew not how it happened, but the well-known letters of the alphabet seemed changed into inexplicable hieroglyphics. The simplest passages were wholly unintelligible; the paragraphs were all rose-coloured; black locks and brilliant eyes twined and sparkled through the quaint arabesques and angular capitals that commenced each chapter of the code, confusing and dazzling his brain. At last he angrily slammed the parchment-bound volume, muttered a curse on his own folly, then laughed aloud at the recollection of that comical old fellow, Geronimo Regato, and went to bed. There he found little rest. When he closed his eyes, the slender form of the incognita glided before them. Her white hand, extended from beneath her mantilla, beckoned him to follow; nay, he felt the pressure of the tiny fingers, her warm breath upon his cheek, her velvet lips gently laid to his. And when he started from his sleep, it was to fancy the rustle of a dress, and a sweet low voice that timidly uttered his name. So passed the night, and only towards daybreak did he sink into a sounder and more refreshing slumber. But when he arose, he found, to his consternation, that she who had haunted his dreams was equally present to his waking imagination. The fascinating image of the beautiful stranger had established itself in his heart, and Federico felt that all efforts to dislodge it would be as fruitless as painful.

"If I believed in sorcery," he soliloquised, "I should think that old rogue Geronimo had cast a charm over me. He predicted that she would visit me this night, and truly she has done so, and here remains. Whether it be for the best, I greatly doubt."

Musing on the fair apparition that thus pertinaciously intruded upon him, the young lawyer dressed himself. It was late, and to atone for lost time, he resolved to remain at home, and study hard the whole day. But somehow or other, exactly at the same hour as on the previous one, he found himself in the Calle Alcala; and scarcely was he there, when the brown carriage and the splendid horses came rattling by. And there, upon the purple cushions, sat, more beautiful than ever, the divinity who for the last twenty-four hours had monopolised so large a share of the love-sick student's thoughts. He gazed at her with rapture, and involuntarily bowed his head, as to a being not of the earth. She smiled: her look had something inquiring and mysterious; then, as if by accident, she placed her hand upon the edge of the carriage, and let a flower fall. Almost before it reached the ground, Federico caught and concealed it in his bosom, as though it had been some precious jewel which all would seek to tear from him. It was an almond blossom, a symbol of love and hope. Like a criminal, he hurried away, lest his prize should be reclaimed, when he suddenly found himself face to face with Geronimo, who gravely took off his hat and greeted his friend.

"How goes it?" said the old Don, his widowed eye twinkling significantly as he spoke. "How have you slept? Did the lady visit you or not?"

"You saw her!" cried Federico imploringly. "For heaven's sake, her name?"

"Bah!" replied Geronimo; "I saw nothing. But if it be she who sits in yonder carriage, beware, young man! 'Tis dangerous jesting with giants, who can crush us like straws beneath their finger. Your life is in danger," he continued in a whisper; "forget this folly. There are plenty of handsome faces in the world. Throw away the silly flower that peeps from your vest, and be off to Ciudad Real, where scores of pretty girls await you."

He turned to depart; Federico detained him.

"Let me go," said Geronimo: "I am in haste. I will call upon you presently, and you shall hear more." [Pg 562]

But, notwithstanding his promise, and although Federico remained all day at home, impatiently expecting him, Geronimo came not. Never had the student been so out of temper. He bitterly reproached himself as a dreamer, a fool, an idiot; and yet there he remained, his thoughts fixed upon one object, his eyes riveted on the almond blossom, which he had placed in water, and whose delicate cup, now fully open, emitted a delightful perfume. And as he gazed, fancy played her wildest pranks with the enamoured youth. Small fairy-like creatures glided and danced between the dusty stamina of the graceful flower. At times, its leaves seemed partly to close, and from out the contracted aperture, the lady of his thoughts smiled sweetly upon him. Then the welcome vision vanished, and was succeeded by stern frowning faces of men, armed from head to heel, who levelled daggers at his heart.

"By St Jago!" the bewildered student at last exclaimed, "this is too much. When will it end? What ails me? Have I so long withstood the fascinations of the black-eyed traitresses, to be thus at last entrapped and unmanned? Geronimo was right; at daybreak, I start for Ciudad Real. I will think no more of that perilous syren." He plucked the almond blossom from its vase. "And this flower," he pensively murmured, "has touched her hand, perhaps her lips! Oh! were it possible that she loves me!" As he spoke, he pressed the flower so impetuously to his mouth, that its tender leaves were crushed and tarnished. He laughed scornfully. "Thus is it," he exclaimed, "with woman's love; as fair and as fragile as this poor blossom. Begone, then! Wither, and become dust, thou perishable emblem of frailty!" Approaching the open window, he was about to throw away the flower, when something flew into the room, struck his breast, and rolled upon the ground.

Federico started back, and his eye fell upon the clock that regulated his studies. The hands were on the stroke of midnight, and for a moment, in his then excited state, a feeling of superstitious fear stole over him. The next instant he was again at the window, straining his eyes through the gloom. He could see nothing. The night was dark: a few large stars twinkled in the sable canopy, the jasmin bushes in his balcony rustled in the breeze, and brushed their cool leaves against his heated temples. "Who is there?" he cried. His question was unanswered. Closing the *jalousies*, he took a light and sought about the room till he perceived something white under a table. It was a paper wrapped round a small roll of wood, and secured by a silken thread. Trembling with eagerness, he detached the scroll. Upon it were traced a few lines in a woman's delicate handwriting. "If you are willing," so ran the missive, "to encounter some risk for an interview with her who writes this, you will repair, to-morrow evening at nine o'clock, to the western door of the church of St James. One will meet you there in whom you may confide, if he asks you what flower you love best."

"And though death were in the path," exclaimed Federico, with vehement passion—"though a thousand swords opposed me, and King Ferdinand himself—" He paused at that name, with the habitual caution of a Manchegan. "I will go," he resumed, in a calmer but equally decided tone, "I will go; and though certain to be stabbed at her feet, I still would go."

Lazily, to the impetuous student's thinking, did the long hours loiter till that of his rendezvous arrived. Tormented by a thousand doubts and anxieties, not the least of these arose from the probability that the assignation came not whence he hoped, and was, perhaps, the work of some mischievous jester, to send him on a fool's errand to the distant church of St James. Above all things, he wished to see his friend Geronimo; but although he passed the day in invoking his presence, and heaping curses on his head, that personage did not appear. Evening came; the sun went down behind the gardens of Buen Retiro; at last it was quite dark. Federico wrapped himself in his cloak, pressed his hat over his brows, concealed in the breast of his coat one of those forbidden knives whose short strong triangular blade is so terrible a weapon in a [Pg 563] Spaniard's hand, and crossing the Plaza Mayor, glided swiftly through streets and lanes, until, exactly as the clock of St James's church struck nine, he stood beneath the massive arches of the western portico. All was still as the grave. The dark enclosure of a convent arose at a short distance, and from a small high window a solitary ray of light fell upon the painted figure of the Virgin that stood in its grated niche on the church wall.

His back against the stone parapet, in the darkest corner of the portico, Federico posted himself, silent and motionless. He had not long waited, when he heard the sound of footsteps upon the rough pavement. They came nearer; a shadow crossed the front of the arched gateway and was merged in the gloom, as its owner, muttering indistinctly to himself, entered the portico. It was a man, closely muffled in a dark cloak. To judge from his high and pointed hat, he belonged to the lower class of the people; a wild black beard, a moment visible in the light from the convent window, was all of his physiognomy discernible by the student. He might be any thing; a Gallego, a muleteer, or a robber.

After a moment, Federico made a slight noise, and advanced a step from his corner. "Who is there?" cried the stranger. "Who is there?" he said. "Answer, in God's name. What do you here at this hour of the night?"

"Who questions me?" boldly demanded the young man. And at the same time he approached the speaker.

For a moment the two men gazed suspiciously at each other; then the stranger again spoke. "Night and solitude enjoin prudence, señor," said he; "and so, keep your distance. What brings you to this gloomy church door? At this hour such gay cavaliers are oftener found in the Prado or the Delicias, plucking flowers for their mistresses."

"I love flowers," replied Federico, "but I also love solitude."

"And what flower, my gallant young gentleman, do you best love?"

"Enough! enough!" joyfully exclaimed the student. "'Tis you I seek: I am ready to follow."

Without reply, the stranger produced a long black cloth.

"What is that?" said Federico, who vigilantly observed his movements.

"To blindfold you."

"Why?"

"Señor, that you may not see whither I conduct you."

"Not so!" cried the student suspiciously. "I will follow, but with open eyes."

The Gallego threw the skirt of his large cloak over his left shoulder, touched his pointed hat by way of salutation, and said courteously, "*Buenas noches, señor.* May you sleep well, and live a thousand years."

"Stop!" cried Federico; "you are mad. Whither away?"

"Home."

"Without me?"

"Without you, señor. The truth is, you are wanted blind, or not at all."

The result of the colloquy that ensued was, that the Gallego twisted his cloth thrice round the student's eyes, ears, and nose, and led him carefully across the Plaza, down a street and round sundry corners and turnings, till at last he deposited him in a carriage, which instantly set off at a rapid pace. After a tolerably long drive, by no means a pleasant one for our adventurer, whose guide held his hands firmly in his—probably to prevent his removing the bandage—the coach stopped, the two men got out, and Federico was again conducted for some distance on foot. He knew that he was still in Madrid, for he walked over pavement, and in spite of the thick cloth that impeded his hearing, he could distinguish the distant sound of carriages and hum of life. Presently a door creaked, and he apparently entered a garden, for there was a smell of flowers and a rustling of leaves; then he ascended a staircase, and was conducted through cool lofty apartments, and through doors which seemed to open and shut of themselves. Suddenly his companion let go his hand. Federico stood for a minute in silent expectation, then, groping around him with extended arms, he said in a low voice—"Am I at my journey's end? Answer!" But nobody replied. [Pg 564]

By one decided pull, the student tore the bandage from his eyes and gazed around him in wonder and bewilderment. He was alone in a spacious and magnificent apartment, whose walls were tapestried with striped blue and white satin, and whose carved ceiling was richly gilt and decorated. The tall Venetian mirrors, the costly furniture, the beautifully fine Indian matting, every thing in the room, in short, convinced him that he was in the favoured abode of wealth, and rank, and luxury. A lamp, suspended by silver chains, shed a soft light over the apartment. Federico's position was a doubtful, probably a dangerous one; but love emboldened him, and he felt the truth of a saying of Geronimo's, that courage grows with peril. Happen what might, there he was, and he knew no fear. The only perceptible exit from the room was by the large, folding-doors through which he had entered. He tried them—they were fastened. His mother-wit suggested to him that his retreat had perhaps been thus cut off, that he might seek another outlet. He did so, and presently perceived hinges under the tapestry. A silver handle protruded from the wall; he grasped it, a door opened, and a cry of astonishment and delight burst from the student. Beaming with loveliness, a blush upon her cheek, a soft smile upon her rosy lips, the lady of his thoughts stood before him.

For a moment the pair gazed at each other in silence, their looks telling more eloquently than any words, the love that filled their hearts. But soon Federico started from his brief trance, threw himself at the feet of the incognita, and, seizing her hand, pressed it ardently to his lips, murmuring the while, in low and passionate accents, such broken and rapturous sentences as only lovers speak and love alone can comprehend. The lady stood over him, her graceful form slightly bowed, her large lustrous eyes alternately fixed upon the kneeling youth and roving anxiously round the apartment.

"Don Federico," she said, in tones whose sweetness thrilled his blood, "may the Holy Virgin forgive my unmaidenly boldness. I have yielded to an impulse stronger than my reason, to the desire of seeing you, of hearing—"

"That I love you," interrupted Federico—"that I adore you since the first hour I beheld you,—that I will die at your feet if you refuse me hope!"

She bent forward, and laid her small rosy hand upon his throbbing forehead. The touch was electric, the fiery glow of passion flashed in her glance. "Light of my eyes!" she whispered, "it were vain to deny that my heart is thine. But our love is a flower on the precipice's brink."

"I fear not the fall," Federico impetuously exclaimed.

"Dare you risk every thing?"

"For your love, every thing!" was the enthusiastic reply.

"Listen, then, to the difficulties that beset us, and say if they are surmountable."

The maiden paused, started, grew pale.

"Hark!" she exclaimed—"what is that? He comes! Be still! be silent!" With wild and terrified haste, she seized Federico's hand, dragged him across the room, and opened a door. The student felt a burning kiss upon his lips, and before he knew where he was, the door was shut, and he was in total darkness. All that had happened since he entered the house had occurred so rapidly, was so mysterious and startling, that he was utterly bewildered. For a moment he thought himself betrayed, groped round his prison, which was a narrow closet, found the door, and, grasping his stiletto, was about to force his way through all opposition, when he suddenly heard heavy steps on the other side of the tapestried screen. Motionless, he listened.

"Bring lights!" said a deep commanding voice; "the lamp burns dim as in a bridal chamber."

"It anticipates its office," replied another male voice, with a laugh. "Is not your wedding-day fixed?"

"Not yet; in the course of next week, perhaps," answered the first speaker, striding up and down the apartment.

"You are in small haste," returned his companion, "to enjoy what all envy you. Never did I behold

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beauty more divine and captivating."

"Beautiful she certainly is," was the reply; "but what is woman's beauty? The vision of a day; snow, sullied and dispelled in a night."

"You are in exceeding good humour," said the friend of this morose and moralising bridegroom.

A pause ensued, during which Federico's heart beat so strongly that he thought its throbbings must surely be audible through the slight barrier separating him from the speakers. A servant brought lights, and a slender bright ray shot through a small opening in the tapestry, previously unobserved by the student. Applying his eye to the crevice, he obtained a view of the apartment, and of the persons whose conversation he had overheard. One of these wore a uniform glittering with embroidery; the other was dressed in black, with several stars and orders on his breast. Both were in the middle period of life: the one in uniform was the youngest and most agreeable looking; the dark features of the other were of a sombre and unpleasing cast.

The servant left the room, and the man in black suspended his walk and paused opposite his friend.

"You had something to communicate?" he said, in a suppressed voice.

"Are we secure from listeners?" asked the officer, in French.

"Entirely; and doubly so if we speak French. Rosaura herself, did she overhear us, would be none the wiser."

"Count," said the soldier, "I sincerely wish you joy of this marriage."

"A thousand thanks! But with equal sincerity I tell you that I am heartily weary of such congratulations. In marrying, one gives and takes. I give Rosaura my name and rank, titles and dignities, honours and privileges."

"And you take your lovely ward and a rich estate. A fair exchange, Excellency. I can only say that the world wonders at the delay of so suitable a union, and even inclines to the belief that a certain disinclination——"

"The world is greatly mistaken," interrupted the Count. "I ardently love Rosaura, and I have his Majesty's consent to the marriage. But what a fool men take me for, if they suppose——" he stopped short, and tossed his head with a scornful smile.

"Well?" said the officer.

"Solve the riddle yourself."

"I understand! Your position is uneasy, the future dark, the decisive moment at hand. With one's feet on a volcano, one is little disposed to enjoy a honeymoon."

"But when the mine explodes, and one is tossed into the air, it is pleasant to fall in the soft lap of love, there to forget one's wounds."

"Bravo! But what if the lap refuse to receive the luckless engineer?"

"*Amigo!*" replied the Count—"I thought you knew me better. Under all circumstances, Rosaura remains mine. For myself, I have trained and nurtured this fair and delicate plant, and to me, as the gardener, it belongs."

"She loves you, then?"

"Loves me? What a question! Of course she does. She has grown up with the idea that she is to be my wife. Her heart is pure and unblemished as a diamond: it shall be my care to keep it so."

"You fear rivals."

"Fear!" repeated the Count, a smile flitting over his dark countenance. "But we trifle precious time. What have you to tell me?"

"Something important to our cause," replied the officer, drawing nearer to his companion. "But first, how goes it yonder?"

He pointed with his finger in the direction of the closet. Federico instinctively started back, but again applied his eye to the loophole on hearing the Count's answer. "I have just come thence," he said, "and must soon return. The hand of death is upon him—in vain would he parry the blow. Still the struggle is a hard one; he persists in discrediting his danger, and will abandon none of his habits. But the remorseless tyrant is there, soon to claim him for his own."

"Then we must take our measures without delay," said the officer.

"They are already taken," was his companion's quiet answer.

"Your colleagues are agreed?"

"Fully agreed."

"And now?"

"Read that," said the Count, taking a large folded paper from a portfolio, and spreading it before his friend, who devoured its contents with every demonstration of extreme surprise. [Pg 566]

"His handwriting! his signature!" he cried. "A revocation, annihilating the shameless intrigues and machinations of years! Now, Heaven be praised, our country and religion—the faith, honour, and dignity of Spain are rescued! How was it obtained? How possible? My noble friend, you are indeed a great statesman!"

"Take this priceless document," calmly replied the Count; "convey it to your master. Only in his hands is it entirely safe. The future welfare of Spain, the salvation of us all, is suspended to its seal. That I obtained it," he continued, his voice sinking to a whisper, "is the work of Providence. During the last two days, he has had spasms and fainting fits that have weakened his mind and energies. The secret is well kept, and without the palace gates nought is known of these dangerous symptoms. In such moments of agony and depression, the weary soul recalls the past, and trembles for the future. Then, in vivid colours, I placed before him the confusion and unhappiness, and infernal mischief, to which his deplorable decision must give rise; I urged the injustice he had committed, the sin that would lie at his door; and showed how, almost before his eyes had closed, the work he had achieved at peril to his soul, would sink and crumble in an ocean of blood and tears. Alcudia supported me; the others chimed in; this document was ready, and—he signed."

"And now we have got it," cried the officer triumphantly, "we will hold it fast with hands and teeth. How long, think you, may he still live?"

"Castillo says not more than two days, and that he will hardly regain the full use of his intellects." The eyes of the conspirators met; for a moment they gazed at each other, and then broke into a smile.

"Well," said the officer, "I came commissioned to assure you special favour and high reward, but, by my honour as a soldier, no gain or recompense can worthily requite such service as yours."

"For me little can be done," replied the Count. "My desires tend to the peaceful existence in the arms of my young wife, far removed from cares of state. Such is the reward I promise myself. Let your acts be speedy and decided, for it might well happen that—" his brow contracted into deeper folds, and his voice assumed a discordant harshness—"I have decimated the ranks of the scoundrels, but enough yet remain to give much trouble. Take sure measures, and muster your resources. You will need them all."

"Fear not," replied the confident soldier. "We, too, have been active, and have good and steady friends. At a word, the Realista volunteers and the trusty Agraviados fly to their arms. Romagosa, Caraval, Erro, Gonzalez, and the venerable Cyrillo, still live. The Guards are for us. So are the civil authorities and captains-general of eleven provinces. Let the moment come, and you will see that, with this document in our hand, all is done. Confidence for confidence," he continued. "Read this list of names. It contains those of our most approved friends, and will reassure you as to the chances of the future."

He handed a paper to the Count, who, barely looking at it, said thoughtfully—

"Leave it with me till to-morrow. At the critical moment, it will be of immense weight with many waverers. 'Tis late; in a few minutes I must go out. Place me at the feet of your gracious master, and tell him he will have no more faithful subject than his humble slave."

"Will you see him?" said the officer gently. His companion shook his head.

"'Twere not wise," he replied. "The time is not yet come. When it arrives, I shall be the first to bend knee before him. Be watchful, prudent, and prompt. Yet one word. You have confided somewhat in that fellow Regato. Trust him not too far. I deem him a traitor. Let him be proved such, and he shall not escape the rope he has long deserved. And now, farewell!"

The two men parted, and, as the Count returned from the door, Federico heard a rustling of silks that materially increased the rapidity of his heart's pulsations. [Pg 567]

"My fair bride!" gallantly exclaimed his Excellency, "I am enchanted to see you. How lovely you look, Rosaura! and how deeply I regret that important affairs leave me but a few moments to devote to you."

"It would seem," said the lady, with cold severity, "that your Excellency has converted my poor apartment into an audience chamber."

"A thousand pardons, dear Rosaura," was the reply. "A particular friend craved a short interview."

"It is late," said the lady pointedly. "I wish your Excellency a good night."

"What!" cried the Count impatiently. "You dismiss me thus?"

"I am indisposed to-night."

"You are a cruel tyrant, Rosaura."

"I, Excellency? They say worse things of you."

"Who, and what?"

"No matter. May your Excellency live a thousand years!"

"With you, Rosaura," replied the Count, assuming an air of tenderness which, as Federico thought, sat supremely ill upon him, and endeavouring to take her hand. She drew it quickly back.

"*Veremos, Excelencia.* We shall see."

"The devil take the Excellency!" cried the Count, losing all self-command, and stamping angrily with his foot. Rosaura curtsied low.

"You forget my rights over you, Rosaura. I came to tell you that in a few days, as I hope, my dearest wishes will be accomplished."

"We shall see, Excellency," repeated the provoking beauty.

The Count stepped up to her, and said, with his sullen smile, "You rejoice not at it, Rosaura?"

"No," was her laconic, reply.

"You love me not?"

"Love *you*, Excellency? a great statesman like you! Certainly not, Excellency."

"I grieve to hear it, my beautiful bride; but, fortunately, love often comes with marriage. You shall learn to love me, Rosaura. Our existence shall be a happy and envied one. You detest state affairs: I will leave them and devote myself solely to you. Far from the capital, we will lead a pastoral life, amidst myrtles and meadows, flocks and shepherds, in all the sweet tranquillity of a terrestrial paradise."

Whether sketched in jest or in earnest, this picture of rustic felicity had evidently few charms for Rosaura, at least in the companionship proposed. Suddenly she stepped up to the Count, took his hand, looked full into his dark serious countenance, and laughed aloud and most musically.

"What do I hear, Excellency?" she exclaimed; "*you* in myrtle groves and smiling meadows—*you* leading a shepherd's tranquil life! Oh, ye Saints! *he* a shepherd in the Alpuxarras. Ah! the flocks would fly and scatter themselves, when they beheld the gloomy lines upon your brow. Where are sheep to be found who would be tended by that ensanguined hand? Where could *you* find repose? Is there a place free from the echoes of the curses that martyred Liberals have heaped upon you? Where is the domestic hearth around which would not range themselves the spectres of the wretches who, at your command, have been blotted from the book of life. Count, I shudder at the thought! Holy Mother of God! is that the happy future you would compel me to share? No, no, never!—though the garrote were to encircle my neck, as it did that of the unhappy lady at Granada, who refused to betray her husband, and whom you sent to the scaffold in his stead! Has she never appeared to your Excellency, cold and pale, and with sightless eyes? For Quito's treasures would I not behold her—her and the whole ghastly train; hundreds, ay hundreds of them, in the long, black-bordered shrouds, and the barefooted friars with their fearful *misericordia*! Mercy, mercy, Excellency! with me would come the evil spirits, and a thousand——but, good-night, good-night, Excellency."

With a graceful movement of hand and head she glided from the room. The Count attempted not to detain her. He stood motionless, his hand thrust into his breast, and followed her with his eyes in mute astonishment. [Pg 568]

"The silly child!" he at last murmured. "But how lovely she is! I, whom all fear—even HE," he emphatically added—"I almost quail before her mad petulance. Well, well!" he continued after a pause, "the priest first, and discipline afterwards. A man who has bowed and broken so many stubborn spirits, will hardly be vanquished by the humours of a wilful girl. Good-night, my lovely bride. 'We shall see,' you said; and assuredly we *will* see."

He took his hat, and was about to leave the room, when, by an inadvertent movement, Federico let fall his poniard. The Count was quick of hearing, and the noise, slight as it was, drew his attention. He turned sharply towards the spot where the student was concealed.

"What was that?" he cried. "Something fell in the closet. Have we listeners here?"

For an instant he hesitated; then, taking one of the massive silver candlesticks, he stepped briskly to the closet, and was almost knocked down by the door, which Federico pushed violently open. The waxlights fell to the ground; like a winged shadow, the student sprang past the astonished Count, reached the door before the latter recovered from his alarm, and would doubtless have got clear off, had he not, in hurry and ignorance, turned the wrong handle. The Count grasped his coat-skirt, and pulled him back.

"Scoundrel!" he cried. "What do you here?"

For sole reply, Federico seized his assailant by the throat, and a struggle began, which, although speedily decided in favour of the active student, was destined to have most important results. The Count was vigorous, and defended himself well. He had little opportunity of calling out, closely grappled as he was, but he dealt his antagonist more than one heavy blow. At last Federico dashed him to the ground, and disappeared from the room, leaving behind him one of his coat-

skirts, torn off in the contest. In falling, the Count's head struck against a table, and he lay for a few seconds stunned by the shock. Recovering himself, he sprang to his feet, foaming with rage, his dark visage black with shame and anger. "Seize him!" he cried, hurrying down the corridor. Twenty servants flew to obey the order. But it was too late. The student passed like a fire-flash before the porter, and made good his escape from the house. "Follow him!" shouted the Count —"a hundred ounces for his captor!" And, stimulated by this princely reward, the eager domestics ran, like hounds after a deer, on the track of the student, who soon heard the shouts of his enemies, and the shrill whistle of the *serenos*, around and on all sides of him.

Although panting from his brief but violent struggle with the Count, Federico traversed with extreme swiftness several streets and squares, until want of breath at last compelled him to a moment's pause. He looked around, and observed the locality. Before him lay the massive buildings of the royal palace, favoured by whose shadow he continued his flight, now up-hill. But the numbers of his pursuers, their intimate knowledge of the ground, and of the short cuts and by-lanes, gave them a great advantage; and, to his dismay, he found himself so closely and accurately followed, that capture appeared inevitable.

"Had I but my knife," he exclaimed aloud, pausing in despair, "I would keep them off or die! Fool that I have been! Sentries on all sides! They have taken alarm! What can I do?"

"Go to Ciudad Real, if not too late," said a man, wrapped in a cloak, and wearing a small three-cornered hat, who suddenly stepped from behind a massive stone column, close to where the student stood.

Federico at once recognised the speaker.

"For God's sake, Geronimo!" he cried, "assist me in this strait. If they catch me, I am lost. And hark! yonder they come! I hear the baying of the menial pack. On all sides the way is barred!"

Geronimo seized Federico's hand, and hurried him behind the pillar. "There is only one chance," he said, "muffle yourself in my cloak, take my hat, assume a stoop, and walk slowly, like an old man." [Pg 569]

"What is your plan?" cried the student.

"Ask no questions. Do as I bid you. Do you see yonder door?"

"Of the palace?"

"Go in there."

"Into the palace?"

"Of course. Look neither right nor left; cross the first court to the great portal. There await me. Quick, quick—here they come!" And he pushed him away.

Not without doubt and disquietude did Federico obey the orders of the old man, who displayed, in this conjuncture, a promptitude and decision rare at his age. But the student had no alternative. Wrapped in Regato's cloak, and feigning a feeble gait, he passed slowly and unquestioned before the soldiers of the royal guard. This impunity in a palace where the strictest watch and ward were usually kept, was an enigma to Federico; and he was still more puzzled, when, whilst waiting at the portal, several persons, shrouded like himself in dark cloaks, passed before him, greeting him as they went with a muttered "*buenas noches*," and disappeared in the corridors of the palace. At last came Geronimo. He had provided himself in the interval with another cloak. His appearance was an immense relief to the student.

"Are they gone?" said Federico. "May I venture out?"

"Thank the saints that you are here!" replied Geronimo. "And now, tell me what has happened."

Federico told his adventures; and old Regato listened to the narrative with marks of the strongest interest. Now he nodded his head, then beat the ground with his heel, or threw back his cloak and gesticulated with his arms. When he heard what the Count had said of him and of his probable fate, he laughed heartily. "Bah!" said he; "threatened men live long. I have had hotter broth cooked for me, and cooled it with my breath. I hope to die in my bed, like a good Christian; and as for my chance of a rope, I would not change with his Excellency. The infernal schemer! I'll pay him off now. *Madre de todas gracias!* had we but the list of the conspirators, what a blow might be struck!"

"The list!" repeated Federico. "Stay, let me remember!" and, plunging his hand into his pocket, he pulled out a torn paper. "When I threw the man down, this remained sticking between my waistcoat and neckcloth, where he had grappled me. I noticed it when I got outside, and thrust it into my pocket."

Without listening to this explanation, Geronimo seized the paper, and, by the light of a lamp under the portal, examined it with eager curiosity. At sight of its contents, a savage joy sparkled in his eye.

"Ah, *maldito!*" he exclaimed with a laugh of triumph; "we have you now. Federico, the rose-coloured lady is ten times more surely yours, than if you had remained in the closet and his Excellency had not discovered you. Follow, and be silent. Whatever happens, not a word till I bid you; then speak boldly, and tell what you know."

Through winding corridors, up and down stairs, along galleries where sentries stood like statues, Geronimo led the way, until he reached a room whose door was opened by a gigantic lackey in the gaudy royal livery. Federico, who followed close upon his heels, suddenly found himself in the presence of a number of men, for the most part elderly and of grave respectable aspect, who stood in small knots about the apartment, or sat at tables on which were wine and refreshments, conversing in a low tone. Amongst these a hum of interest arose on Regato's entrance; and under cover of the attention he attracted, his companion passed unnoticed.

It at once flashed upon Federico, that he had penetrated into that notorious Camarilla or secret council of King Ferdinand VII., so much spoken of, so often cursed and scoffed at, so greatly feared, and justly hated. This was the cringing and pernicious conclave, of whose vile proceedings so many tales were told; these were the men, of all ranks and classes, who poured into the jealous despot's ear the venom of calumny and falsehood; these the spies and traitors who, by secret and insidious denunciations, brought sudden arrest and unmerited punishment upon their innocent fellow-citizens, and who kept the King advised of all that passed in Madrid, [Pg 570] from the amorous intrigues of a grocer's wife, to the political ones concerted in the cabinet of the Infante Don Carlos.

The student's first uneasiness at finding himself upon such new and perilous ground, vanished when he saw that he was wholly unheeded. He remembered to have heard that persons once admitted to the camarilla, and honoured by the King's confidence, were at liberty to return when they thought fit, at short or long intervals; and thus it might well happen that some of the members were unknown to each other. And on that night, these illicit counsellors of majesty were evidently preoccupied with some pressing and important matter. They crowded round Regato, took his arm, seized him by the button, whispered so eagerly, and questioned him so fast, that the little man lost all patience.

"Hands off, gentlemen!" he cried. "Which of you will buy me a new coat when you have torn mine? 'Tis true that this morning our gracious lord the King was very ill: but I hear that he is now better; and by the grace of our blessed Lady, he will rejoice his humble and loving slaves, and dispel their deep anxiety, by the sunshine of his presence."

The words had scarce left Geronimo's lips, when the opening of a side-door proved the signal for a respectful silence in the apartment. The whole assembly bowed profoundly, and preserved that posture, although no cause was yet apparent for such extraordinary greeting. At last one showed itself, in the person of a man who tottered slowly and feebly into the room, supported on the arms of two attendants, his livid and bloated countenance distorted by a smile as painful to behold as if compelled by thumbscrews. The face of the new comer, who nodded in reply to the humble salutation of the camarilla, might once have been handsome, but it could never have been intellectual or prepossessing, and now it was hideously cadaverous and ghastly. The features were those characterising a well-known family, world-renowned for the high places it has filled, rather than for the virtues or abilities of its members. The eyes were sunk deep in their sockets, the straight, scanty black hair shaded a brow blue and transparent from disease; the tall person and once well-formed limbs were swollen and unwieldy. The sick man's dress would have suited some plain burgher of Madrid, taking his use in his summer-house: it consisted of a light nankeen jacket, a white neckcloth knotted loosely round the throat, linen trousers, and large shoes. He seemed scarcely able to set foot to ground, and the agony each step occasioned him betrayed itself in spasmodic twitchings of the nerves and muscles. Still there was a violent effort of the will to conceal the pangs that racked the enfeebled frame; a fruitless attempt, by the assumption of smiling case and gracious condescension, to hide, even from himself, the approach of that equalising hour when human greatness and human misery sink to one level.

The sick man propped himself against a table, beside which stood an easy-chair, and with an affable wave of his hand, addressed the company.

"Good evening, señores!" he said: "we have felt ourselves somewhat unwell, and our careful physician Castillo, as also our trusty Grijalva, was solicitous on our account. But we would not put off this meeting. We love to meet our good friends, and are not to be kept from them, by slight bodily inconvenience. Men fancy us more ailing than we are. You can refute such reports. What say you, Mexas—and you, Salcedo? Is our aspect so very sickly? We know that many build hopes upon our death; but they are mistaken, and by Our Lady, they shall be disappointed."

"God preserve our gracious lord a thousand years!" exclaimed several voices.

"An example should be made," said the man appealed to as Salcedo, "of the traitors who dare spread lying reports concerning the royal health."

"'Tis too true," observed another, "that such rumours are used to the most criminal ends."

"We will sit down," said the sick monarch. And with the assistance of his attendants, he deposited his exhausted person in the elbow-chair. "Drink, my friends, and tell me the news. Give me a [Pg 571] cigar, good Castillo. Señor Regato, how goes it? what is new in our fair city of Madrid?"

"Little is heard," replied Geronimo, "save lamentations for the indisposition of our beloved master."

"The good people!" exclaimed Ferdinand. "We will have care of their happiness."

"And yet," said a little old man with a countenance of repulsive ugliness, "there be reprobates

who laugh whilst all true and faithful subjects weep. There is my neighbour, the merchant Alvaro. Yesterday he married his daughter to a young nobleman, Don Francisco Palavar, who claims relationship with the Marquis of Santa Cruz. The wedding-guests were numerous; they sang and danced, and rejoiced beyond measure. Señor Alvaro, said I, are you not ashamed to be so joyous at such a time? 'Friend,' was his answer, 'let the times wag—they are certainly bad enough, but must soon change. All things have an end. We rejoice in hopes of a better future.'"

"The wretch!" exclaimed another of the camarilla. "I know him well; he was always a *negro*."

"A knave grown gray in the sins of the Exaltados," cried a third.

"He must be looked to," said the sick King. "Salcedo, what have you to tell?"

"I have gathered intelligence," replied Salcedo, "from an equerry of a certain illustrious personage." He paused, and looked meaningly at the King, whose brow contracted, and whose lips muttered a well-known name. "The equerry," Salcedo said, "tattled of great bustle and many visits at his master's palace. For days past its court-yard had been filled with carriages, bringing generals, ministers, dignitaries of the church, and many officers, chiefly of the Royal Guard." On hearing this, a feverish and uneasy flush reddened Ferdinand's pale countenance, and his dim eyes glared angrily.

"I know them," he said, "the old conspirators, the Catalan volunteers, the *agraviados*. Why have I not heard this sooner? But I will take order with them. Ha, Tadeo!—you there? Why has this been kept from me?"

Uttering these last words, the King looked directly at the spot where Federico stood. So, at least, it seemed to the student, who, much confused, and apprehensive of discovery, averted his eyes from the royal gaze. But his embarrassment was exchanged for consternation, when he beheld, in the person addressed by Ferdinand as Tadeo, his recent antagonist, the affianced of Rosaura. The Count, who stood at his elbow, gave him but one look, but that one comprised every thing—astonishment, anger, hatred, confidence of power, and a fixed determination of revenge. A chill came over the poor student, and he debated in his mind whether to rush from the room, or to fall at the King's feet and reveal all he knew. His first surprise over, and seeing that Don Tadeo took no further notice of him, he thought it wisest to follow Geronimo's directions and remain quiet.

"My gracious liege," said Tadeo to the King, with his usual gloomy decision of manner, "it was unnecessary to importune your majesty by such reports, seeing that they are merely lying devices of the evil-disposed. And even were it true that many visits are paid to that palace, its master has right and reason to receive them, without—"

By an impatient gesture, the King interrupted the speaker.

"It needs but to name the visitors," said Regato, with a quick sharp glance at Tadeo. "Eguia is one of them; San Juan, O'Donnel, Moreno, Caraval, are others."

"Has it not been remarked," said Mexas, with a sarcastic smile, "that in the apartments of a certain illustrious lady, meetings are also held, to which repair the Dukes of San Lorenzo and Fernando, Martinez de la Rosa, Cambronero, and many others? What can be said against that?"

A dead silence followed this bold remark: all knew well who the illustrious lady was who thus assembled round her the leaders of the Liberals. Suddenly the ominous pause was broken by the voice of Federico, to whom Regato had made a sign, significant although barely perceptible.

"Don Tadeo," cried the audacious student, his mellow manly tones ringing through the apartment, "is a traitor to his King. This very night he delivered an all-important document to an agent of the Infante Don Carlos." [Pg 572]

The words were an electric shock to the camarilla. The King started, and showed symptoms of extraordinary agitation. "What is that? Who says that?" he cried, rising from his chair with the vigour of sudden excitement. "Who knows of the document? where is it? Seize him—he shall explain,—confess!"

"Seize the scoundrel," cried Tadeo, "who has dared intrude himself hither."

"My guards! my guards!" cried the King, his eyes rolling wildly, his features frightfully convulsed. "Where is the paper? Tadeo, I *will* have it back! Ha! what is this! mercy! blessed Virgin, mer——!" The word was unfinished; and Ferdinand, doubly tortured by bodily pain and mental anguish, fell back into the arms of his physician.

"The King is dead!" exclaimed Tadeo. "Help here!"

The camarilla crowded round Ferdinand, who lay without sense or motion. "What is it, Señor Castillo?" said Tadeo. The physician let fall his patient's wrist.

"A sudden paroxysm, your Excellency," he replied in a low voice. "It was to be apprehended—all is over!"

The Count turned away, and his eye fell upon Federico, who, seeing resistance useless, stood passive in the custody of several of the camarilla. With a vindictive frown, Tadeo pulled open the student's cloak, and pointed to his skirtless coat.

"You cannot deny it," he said. "The proof of your guilt is in my possession. Who is the fellow?"

Geronimo Regato stepped forward and stared in the student's face.

"What!" cried he, "is not that Don Federico, the young advocate, well known in the coffee-houses as a virulent Exaltado, a determined scoffer, a propagator of atrocious doctrines?"

"I thought as much," said the Count. "None but such an unprincipled scoundrel would dare to act the spy in the very palace. Call the guard, and away with him to prison. Let this man be securely ironed," he added, to the soldiers who now entered; "and let none have speech of him."

The order was promptly obeyed. A very brief space elapsed before Federico found himself in a narrow dungeon, stretched on damp straw, with manacles on hands and feet. In total darkness, and seated despondingly upon his comfortless couch, the events of the evening appeared to him like some frightful nightmare. But in vain did he rub his eyes and try to awake from his imaginary sleep; the terrible reality forced itself upon him. He thought of Rosaura, the original cause of his misfortunes, and almost doubted whether she were indeed a woman, or some demon in angel's form, sent to lure him to destruction. Of Geronimo, too, he thought with feelings of inexpressible bitterness. He, the friend in whom he had placed such implicit reliance, to betray him thus; for his own advantage, doubtless, and to draw his own head out of the noose! There were none, then, to whom he could now look for succour. The King was dead; his successor, the apostolical ruler, the partisan and defender of the Inquisition, whose name, for years past, had been the rallying-cry of the disaffected, owed his crown to the powerful Tadeo whom the student had offended and ill treated, whose love he had dared to cross, whose revenge he must now encounter. Federico felt that his fate was sealed. Already he heard, in imagination, the clank of ponderous fetters in the dismal halls of the Inquisition; already he saw the terrible machines—the screws and weights, the ladder and iron couch, and felt the burning sulphur, as it was dropped hissing upon his naked flesh by the masked and pitiless executioner. He thought of Arguelles, the Divine, whom he had seen an animated corpse, his limbs crushed and distorted by similar tortures; and in spite of his natural courage, a shudder came over him as he heard the bars of his dungeon door withdrawn, and the heavy bolts shot back into their sockets. The next instant he closed his eyes, dazzled by a glare of light.

When he re-opened them, the Count, or Tadeo, whichever was his most fitting appellation, stood before him. With the courage of pride and despair, Federico boldly met his searching gaze. For [Pg 573] some moments they looked at each other in silence, broken at last by Tadeo.

"I come to question you," he said: "answer truly, and your captivity may be very brief. Deceive me, and your life shall be yet shorter. Your crimes shall meet their just reward."

"I am guilty of no crime," retorted Federico. "I am the victim of circumstances."

"And what are they?" eagerly inquired the Count.

Federico was silent.

"Do you know me, Señor?" said the Count.

"No," was the reply.

"Beware, then, lest you learn to know me too well. What did you, concealed in yonder closet? Where is the paper you robbed me of? Who admitted you into the house? Do you belong to a secret society? Were you sent as a spy? A dagger was found in the closet: did you come to assassinate me?"

He paused after each question, but Federico answered none of them, save the last, to which he replied by a stern negative. "You had best confess," resumed Tadeo. "If you are no political offender, if no criminal project led you where I found you, I pledge my word, Señor—and I pledge it only to what I can and will perform—you shall at once be released."

"I can say but this," replied the prisoner; "it was not my object to overhear you: an accident conducted me where you discovered me, and I heartily regret that a casual noise betrayed my presence."

"Is that all you will say?"

"All."

"You know not with whom you deal," cried the Count. Then, lowering his voice, and with a smile that he strove to render amiable. "It was, perhaps, a love-affair," he said. "Young man, which of Doña Rosaura's handmaidens did you seek? Who introduced you into that apartment? Tell me this, satisfy me on a point that concerns myself personally, and not only will I forget all, but remain your debtor."

Whilst thus he spoke, the Count's features expressed very different sentiments from those announced by his smooth and placable speech. In their convulsive workings, and in the savage fire of his eyes, jealousy and hatred were plainly to be read; he looked like a tiger about to spring upon its prey.

"Señor," said Federico contemptuously, "you waste time. If a lady did introduce me into your house, rest assured I am not base enough to reveal her name. From me you get no further answer. Do with me as you will. In this unhappy land, might is above right."

"Wretch!" exclaimed the Count, fiercely advancing upon his undaunted captive; "you have

betrayed yourself. I will destroy you, knave, like an insect. A lady conceal you! What audacious slander is this?" He struggled with his rage, and, mastering himself, resumed. "It has been proved that you are the spy of a dangerous and treasonable association. Where is the paper you stole?"

"I have no paper," replied Federico, "and will answer no more questions. I am in your power; do your worst."

The Count stepped to the dungeon door, and summoned two men in waiting outside. Whilst one of them searched Federico, closely examining each pocket and fold of his dress, but without discovering the much-coveted document, the other listened respectfully to the Count, who gave him instructions in a low voice. His last words, which reached the ear of the student, were not calculated to reassure him as to the future. "Be it so," said Don Tadeo. "The necessary warrant shall at once be made out, and then—despatch." And with a vindictive glance at his prisoner, he left the prison.

It was some consolation to the unfortunate Federico, when again in dismal solitude, and with the prospect of a cruel death before his eyes, to reflect on the firmness he had shown, and on the agony of jealous doubt he had inflicted on his rival. In his defenceless and desperate circumstances, such revenge was doubly sweet; and for a while he dwelt on it with pleasure. Then his thoughts took other direction, and an active and excited imagination transported him [Pg 574] from that gloomy cell to the chamber of the beautiful cause of his misfortunes. She knelt before a crucifix, and wept and prayed for him. He heard her breathe his name, and invoke the saints to his assistance; and in a transport of love and gratitude he extended his arms to clasp her to his heart. They were rudely checked by the chain that linked them to the wall. And now pale spectres flitted through the gloom, and grinned at him with their skeleton mouths, and murmured in his ear that he must die, and never again see her whose kiss was yet hot upon his lips. And the last ominous words and deadly look of his foe recurred to him, chasing all hope. Who would miss him, the humble and friendless student; who inquire where or how he had met his fate? Far greater than he, the wealthy, the titled, the powerful, had met the fate he anticipated, at hangman's hands, in the dark and silent recesses of Spanish dungeons. To the long list of illustrious victims, he, an insignificant one, would be added unnoticed. And the remembrance of those who had preceded him, ennobling an ignominious death, gave Federico courage. "Yes!" he exclaimed aloud. "I will die, as so many great and good men have died before me! Would that I had done service to my poor oppressed country, something to deserve the tyrant's hate! But for thee, Rosaura, will I gladly perish, and to thee only shall my last sigh be given."

His words yet echoed in the dungeon, when he heard steps at the door, and its fastenings again withdrawn. This time, he doubted not it was his death-warrant and the executioner. Nerving himself to endure the worst, he gazed sternly and steadily at his visitors.

"That is he," said the turnkey, to a tall, sullen-looking man.

"Take off his chains," was the answer; "and you, señor, follow me."

"Quick with your work," cried Federico. "Call your aids. I am prepared."

"Silence and follow!" harshly replied the stranger. "Lucky for you if you are prepared for all."

Without the dungeon stood a third man, muffled in a short mantle. Federico shuddered. "Another of the hangman brood!" he murmured. "Lead on, I fear thee not!" The man followed without a word. After traversing several corridors, they ascended a lofty staircase. Behind each door Federico fancied a torture chamber or a garrote, but none of them revealed what he expected. At last his conductor paused.

"Are you ready," he said, "to appear before your Supreme Judge?"

"I am ready," Federico solemnly replied.

"Then enter here."

A door opened, the student set foot across the threshold, and uttered a cry of surprise. Instead of the garrote, instead of racks and torturers, he beheld a gorgeous saloon, brilliantly lighted up with a profusion of wax tapers. Five or six men of distinguished mien and elegant appearance, with stars and orders upon their breasts, were grouped round a large carved chair, and looked curiously and expectantly at Federico. But he scarcely observed them. Even on a lady of great beauty and majestic aspect, who sat in the chair, wrapped in a costly mantle of embroidered velvet, his attention was fixed but for an instant, for behind her stood another lady, somewhat pale and anxious-looking, but who yet bore so strong a resemblance to the cause of his sufferings, to her of the rose-coloured robe, to Rosaura herself, that all the blood in his veins rushed to his heart. Her name hovered on his lips, and, forgetting everything but love and newly-revived hope, he was about to spring forward and throw himself at her feet, when the lady in the chair addressed him.

"Remain there, señor," she said with a smile and gracious movement of her head, as if she divined the impulse to which the impetuous student so nearly yielded. "You have had strange adventures, I am told, within the last few hours. They will terminate happily for you, if you tell me the whole truth, and relate without reserve all that has occurred. Where have you passed this night? What took you to the house in which you were found hidden? What heard you there?"

"Señora," replied Federico, respectfully, but firmly; "I have already preferred death to the revelation of a secret that is not mine. My resolution is unchanged. I can answer no questions." [Pg 575]

The lady cast a friendly and approving glance at the steadfast youth.

"Now, by our Lady," she said, turning to the gentlemen around her, "this is a chivalrous fidelity, right pleasant to behold in these unchivalrous days. I doubt not, young Sir, that the lady of your affections will know how to repay it. But here are great interests at stake, and your excuse may not avail. You must relate all, truly and without reserve. And to remove your scruples, know that the secret you have so bravely kept is no longer one for any here present. Proceed!"

A look from Rosaura confirmed this assurance, and without farther hesitation, Federico told his adventures, and repeated the dialogue he had heard from the closet. At times the listeners seemed surprised; at times they smiled, or looked significantly at each other, and spoke together in brief whispers. Twice had the student to tell his tale, and his words were taken down by one of the gentlemen present. That done, the lady rose quickly from her chair, laid a hand upon his shoulder, and fixing her keen bright eyes searchingly upon his face, pointed to the deposition.

"Can you swear to that?" she cried. "Is it all true? Before God and his saints, did all pass as you have said? No word too much or too little? Saw you the document with your own eyes? *Santa Madre!* Is it possible? Surely it cannot be; and yet—my friends, what say you? What think you, Duke of San Fernando, and you, Marquis of Santa Cruz? What says his Grace of San Lorenzo, and our discreet friend, Martinez de la Rosa? No, I need not fear, whilst thus surrounded by the best and wisest in the land. Cambronero, advise us. How may we defeat the machinations of our crafty foes?"

The gentleman who had written down the deposition, raised his head, and Federico recognised the features of one renowned throughout Spain as a wise counsellor and learned lawyer. With surprise and respect the student gazed at the distinguished and illustrious persons he had just heard named.

"Much depends," said Cambronero, "on his Majesty's health. If unhappily he departs this life without regaining consciousness, we must recover the surreptitiously obtained document at point of sword. No other course will then be open to us. But if, by God's gracious mercy, the king's senses return, not a moment must be lost in obtaining from his hand a revocation of the act. He must be told every thing; he must be shown how his confidence has been abused, and what base advantage has been taken of a momentary weakness. He must hear the witnesses whom Heaven has raised up for your Majesty."

"Ha!" cried the lady, with an impatient and energetic gesture, "you are right, Cambronero; we must act! All that can be done, Christina will do. They shall not triumph by weakness of hers! Don Fernando still lives, can yet retract. He shall hear how they have laboured to bring shame upon his name; shall learn the perfidy of those who have environed him with their snares! I go to tell him."

The Queen left the room. "To me it seems, Señores," said Cambronero, a quiet smile playing on his shrewd features, "that things have happened for the best, and that the result of all this is not doubtful, provided only the king be not already dead. The Apostolicals have been active. Their creatures have worked their way even into the cabinet and the camarilla. The guards, the captains-general, and many officers of state are long since gained over. In all cases, on King Ferdinand's death, a war is inevitable. The succession to the throne is a Gordian knot, to be cut only by the sword. The Infante will never yield his claim, or admit as valid the abrogation of the ancient Salic law.[5] And doubtless the crown would be his, were not the people and the spirit of [Pg 576] the times opposed to him. He is retrograde; the Spain of to-day is and must be progressive. The nation is uneasy; it hates despotic government and the inquisition; it ferments from north to south, from Portugal to the Mediterranean; but that fermentation would lack a rallying point without the decree which commands all to cling to Christina and her children, and repel the Infante. The partisans of Carlos have striven to obtain by craft what they could not hope to conquer by the strong hand, and they have succeeded in making a dying monarch revoke in a moment of delirium or imbecility that all-important act. The revocation is in the hands of the Infante; the Salic law is once more the law of the land, and Christina's children are in their turn disinherited. And if it is impossible to restore the king to consciousness, I fear——"

"What?" cried the Marquis of Santa Cruz.

"That we are on the eve of a great revolution."

"Hush!" said the Duke of San Lorenzo, looking anxiously around him. "These are dangerous words, my friend." And his eye fell upon the handsome countenance of Martinez de la Rosa, who smiled thoughtfully.

"Call it reform, Cambronero," he said; "wise progress of the times, moderate, cautious, adapted to the circumstances; not rash, reckless, sweeping revolution."

The lawyer cast a keen glance at the former minister of the Cortes.

"Reform!" he cried. "Ay, certainly; but what reform? Does Señor de la Rosa mean such reform as he helped to bring about? I bid him beware: these are no times for trifling. Here we stand, but a few paces from the death-bed of a powerful prince. He fettered this revolution or reform; but, Señores, it was only for a while and in appearance. Like the mole, it has laboured and advanced,

surely and unseen. Happy for our king if he expires before the vanity of his efforts, and the inutility of the bloodshed and misery they have occasioned, are demonstrated; before he learns that a principle never dies, though all the artillery of the world be brought to bear upon it. History judges the dead; nations judge the living. Let us so act that we may stand with honour before both tribunals."

"The subject leads us too far," said the poet and minister, rising from his chair and glancing at Federico, who, struck and delighted by Cambronero's words, gazed at him with expanded brow and flashing eyes. "Let us beware of kindling fanaticism: coolness and prudence are becoming to men, and, God knows, we need both."

He took Cambronero's arm, and led him to the other end of the spacious apartment. The noblemen followed, and the conversation was resumed in a lower tone. So enthralling had been the interest with which Federico had listened to the words of these influential Liberals, that for an instant he had neglected Rosaura, who stood nearly concealed behind the swelling cushions and high gilt back of the throne-like chair. Her beautiful face wore an anxious, inquiring expression, which seemed to reproach him with forgetting her; but as he drew near, she smiled, and rays of love and hope broke from beneath her long dark lashes. And under the magic influence of those beaming eyes, Federico's doubts and fears vanished like frost before mid-day sun, and were replaced by a transport of blissful emotion.

"Rosaura!" he exclaimed, "what unspeakable joy is this! Strange, indeed, have been the events of the night! The wonders of Arabian tales are realised. A moment ago, I awaited death in a dungeon; and behold I am in a king's chamber, and at your feet, Rosaura. Explain these things, adored mistress of my heart! How do we thus meet? How came you hither?"

"With our friend, Geronimo Regato," replied the lady.

"The traitor!" indignantly exclaimed Federico. "No thanks to him if I escape with life."

"Judge not so hastily," cried Rosaura: "you know not all you owe Regato. From him I first heard your name. He was my confidant; he knew my aversion to the detested man, who considered me already his own. My father, of an old family, although not of the highest nobility, was President of [Pg 577] the Burgos Tribunal, and by commercial transactions in the time of the Constitution, he acquired great wealth. My hated suitor is also sprung from the people. My father was his friend, and at one time had to thank his influence for escape from persecution. Out of gratitude he promised him my hand, and, dying a year ago, left him my guardian. In that capacity he administered my estates, and had me in his power. But, thanks to the Virgin, I am at last free from his odious control."

She gazed tenderly at Federico, and held out her hand, which he covered with kisses. But she hastily withdrew it, on becoming aware that their proceedings were observed by the group of politicians.

"Is this the time and place?" she said, with a smile of sweet confusion and arch reproach. "And yet, Federico, best beloved, why should I feign indifference, or conceal that my heart is wholly yours?"

"Angel!" cried the enraptured student, trembling with ecstasy.

"Hush!" whispered Rosaura. "Cambronero looks and laughs at us. Hear me, Federico. The decisive moment approaches; but I fear it not—I love and hope. It was Geronimo, disguised as a Gallego, who brought you to my abode; Geronimo, hates him whom we hate; he knew me as a child, was my father's friend, and loves us both. He spoke to me of you long before I saw you; he told me the hour of your walks in the Prado. At the first glance I recognised you."

"And where is that singular man?" Federico inquired.

"I know not, but doubtless at no great distance. This night, a few hours ago, I lay sleepless on my pillow, anxious for your fate, when a carriage stopped at the door. It was surrounded with guards and torch-bearers, and I was told that my presence was instantly required at the palace. My alarm at so untimely a summons was dissipated by the arrival of Geronimo. 'Fear nothing,' he said: 'the hour of happiness is at hand. He whom you hate is vanquished. Federico is his conqueror.'"

"I his conqueror!" cried the student. And then, recalling all that had occurred. "Strange destiny!" he continued. "Yes, I now see that the secret intrigues of a dangerous and powerful man have been revealed by my means. But who is he? I in vain conjecture."

"You do not know him?" cried Rosaura, greatly astonished—"not know——?" She suddenly paused, for at that moment the door burst open, and the Queen entered the room, in extreme haste and violent agitation.

"His Majesty is recovered," she exclaimed, her voice shrill and quivering with contending emotions; "his swoon is over, God's grace be thanked. I have spoken, my noble friends, and not in vain. The King will himself hear the witnesses. These young people must come with me. Call Geronimo Regato. Remain here, Cambronero, and all of you; I must see you again, I need your counsel—desert me not!"

"When your majesty next honours us with your presence," said Cambronero, bowing low, and

raising his voice, "it will be as Queen Regent of Spain."

Regato entered the room, and Federico rubbed his eyes in fresh astonishment. It was the same man in the dark mantle who had followed him from his dungeon to the Queen's audience chamber, and whom he had taken for an executioner. Gradually the mysteries of the night unravelled themselves. He understood that if Regato had accused him, it had been to avert suspicion from himself, and that he might work more effectually for both, by revealing to the Queen or to Cambronero what he had learned from Federico, and by placing before them the list of the conspirators. Musing upon this, and each moment more convinced of Geronimo's wisdom and good faith, he followed the Queen, who, with rapid step, led him and Rosaura through a suite of splendid apartments. Stopping before a door, she turned to the student.

"Speak fearlessly," she said: "suppress no word of truth, and reckon on my favour and protection."

Federico bowed. The door turned noiselessly on its hinges, and the Queen paused a moment as in [Pg 578] anger and surprise, whilst a dark glow flushed her excited and passionate countenance. From the door a view was commanded of the whole apartment, which was dimly lighted, and occupied by several persons, standing in a half circle, round a bed placed near a marble chimneypiece. Upon this bed, propped by cushions into a half sitting posture, lay Ferdinand VII., his suffering features and livid complexion looking ghastly and spectral in the faint light, and contrasted with the snow-white linen of his pillow. A black-robed priest knelt at his feet, and mumbled the prayer for the dying; Castillo the physician held his arm, and reckoned the slow throbs of the feeble pulse. At the bed-side sat a lady, her hands folded on the velvet counterpane, her large dark eyes glancing uneasily, almost fiercely, around the room—her countenance by no means that of a sorrowing and resigned mourner.

"The document!" groaned the sick man, with painful effort; "the document, where is it? To your hands I intrusted it; from you I claim it back. Produce it instantly."

"My gracious sovereign," replied the person addressed—and at the sound of that sinister voice, Federico felt Rosaura's hand tremble in his—"my gracious sovereign, that paper, that weighty and important document, signed after wise and long deliberation, cannot thus lightly be revoked by a momentary impulse."

"Where is it?" interrupted the King angrily.

"In the safest keeping."

"In the hands of the Infante," cried the Queen, entering the room, and approaching the bed.

"Traitor!" exclaimed Ferdinand, making a violent but fruitless effort to raise himself. "Is it thus you repay my confidence?"

"Hear me, gracious sir," cried Tadeo; but his tongue faltered, and he turned deadly pale, for just then he perceived Rosaura, Federico, and Regato standing at the door.

"Hear these," said the Queen, placing her arm affectionately round her suffering husband, and bowing her head over him, whilst tears, real or feigned, of sympathy or passion, fell fast from her eyes. "They have betrayed you, Sire; they have abused your confidence; they have conspired against me, against you, against your innocent children. Approach, Don Federico; speak freely and fearlessly. You are under the safeguard of your King, who demands of you the entire truth."

"Enough!" said Ferdinand; "I have read the young man's deposition. Look at it, sir," he added, to Tadeo, pointing to the paper, "and deny it if you can."

Tadeo obeyed; as he read, his hand visibly shook, and at last he dropped the paper, and sank upon his knee.

"I cannot deny it," he said, in a troubled voice, "but let your majesty hear my justification. I implore permission to explain my conduct."

The little lady who sat beside the King's bed sprang to her feet, her countenance flaming with wrath, and rushed upon the kneeling man. Unbridled rage flashed from her eyes, and distorted each feature of her face.

"Traitor!" she cried, "where is the document? what have you done with it? You stole it, to deliver to men as vile and base as yourself! Traitor, produce it!"

"Madam!" exclaimed the astonished object of this furious apostrophe.

His remonstrance was cut short, for, quick as lightning, the ungovernable Infanta raised her hand, and let it fall upon his face with such vigour and good will, that the minister, unprepared for so unwomanly an assault, staggered backwards, and narrowly avoided a fall.

"Carlotta!" cried the Queen, seizing her sister's arm, and restraining her from further violence.

"The villain! the traitor!" shrieked the Infanta, in tones that resounded through the palace.

"Away with him from my sight!" cried Ferdinand, his voice growing fainter as he spoke. "The Queen, whom I appoint Regent during my illness, will decide upon his fate. I myself strip him of all offices and honours. Away with him, and for ever! You are no longer my minister, Tadeo

CALOMARDE. Oh, God! what a bitter deception! He too! He too! By all the saints, he shall rue it. His treachery is my death-stroke!" [Pg 579]

The King sank back like a corpse upon his cushions; but presently recovered himself, and with all speed, before the assembled ministers, the extorted decree was annulled, the Pragmatic Sanction again declared in full force, and the Queen nominated Regent. Whilst this took place, Federico, unheeded in the bustle of such important business, remained like one entranced. It was Calomarde, then, the man whose ruthless hand had been so pitilessly stretched forth over the suffering land—it was the all-powerful minister, the curse of Spain, the butcher of the noble Torrijos and his unhappy companions, whom he, the insignificant student, had cast down from his high state! The giant had succumbed before the pigmy; the virtual ruler of the kingdom had fallen by the agency of one whom, a day previously, he might with impunity have annihilated. Events so extraordinary and of such rapid occurrence, were hard to comprehend; and Federico had scarcely convinced himself of their reality, when he received, a few hours afterwards, a summons to the Queen's presence.

The morning sun shone into the royal apartment, revealing the traces of a sleepless night and recent agitation upon the handsome features of the newly-made Regent. She received the student with a smile, and placed Rosaura's hand in his.

"Fear nothing from Calomarde," she said. "He has fled his well-merited punishment. Those sent for his arrest, sought him in vain. You are under my protection, Rosaura—and you also, Don Federico. You have established a lasting claim upon my gratitude, and my friendship shall never fail you."

It does not appear how long these fair promises were borne in mind by a queen whose word, since that time, has been far oftener pledged than redeemed. Perhaps she thought she had acquitted herself of all obligations when, three months later, she honoured with her presence the nuptials of Federico and Rosaura, and with her own hand twined a costly wreath of brilliants through the sable ringlets of the beautiful bride. And perhaps the young couple neither needed nor desired further marks of her favour; for they withdrew from Madrid to reside in happy retirement upon Rosaura's estates. Geronimo Regato went with them; and for a while was their welcome guest. But his old habits were too confirmed to be eradicated, even by the influence of those he loved best. The atmosphere of a court, the excitement of political intrigue, were essential to his existence, and he soon returned to the capital. There, under a very different name from that by which he has here been designated, he played an important part in the stirring epoch that succeeded the death of Ferdinand the Well-beloved.

FOOTNOTES:

[5] By the Pragmatic Sanction, promulgated during the first pregnancy of Christina, in May 1830.

THE VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE. [Pg 580]

A METAPHYSICAL FRAGMENT.

Those who have made their way through the German systems of idealism, from Kant to Hegel—destined in a future age to form one of the most curious chapters in the history, or romance, of philosophy—have probably, for the most part, come to the conclusion of their task, with the profound impression of the futility of the study of metaphysics, which, full of labour, is yet fruitless as idleness. *L'art de s'égarer avec methode*—such it has been wittily defined, and such our Teutonic neighbours have been resolved to demonstrate it. Yet, this is not altogether the impression, we think, which such a course of study ought to produce: a better lesson may be drawn from it. There is, after all, a right as well as a wrong method of philosophising. The one leads, it may be, but to a few modest results, of no very brilliant or original character, yet of sterling value and importance. The other may conduct to startling paradox, to applauded subtleties, to bold and novel speculations, but baseless, transient, treacherous. It evidently requires something more than intellectual keenness; it requires the virtue of forbearance, and a temperate spirit, to adhere to sober rectitude of thought, and eschew the temptations that a daring and self-willed philosophy displays. Such is the lesson which these "follies of the wise" ought to inculcate. They should lead us to intrench ourselves more securely than ever within the sound rules for the investigation of truth.

Philosophise men will—men must. Even the darkest paths, and the most labyrinthine of metaphysics, must be perpetually trodden. In vain is it proclaimed that they lead back only to the point of ignorance from which they started; in vain is it demonstrated that certain problems are indemonstrable. If the same race of men lived for ever upon the earth, such inextricable problems might at length be set at rest. But each new generation finds them as fresh and attractive as if they had never been touched, never probed and tortured by fruitless examination; to each generation they appear in all the unabated charms of mystery; to each generation must their solution at least be shown to be unattainable. In vain you write over the portal *Lasciate ogni*

speranza! there is always a band of *youth* newly arrived before the gates, who will rush in.

It is futile, therefore, to think of discarding metaphysics; if a good system is not adopted, its contrary will speedily prevail. "A good physician," says Paul Richter, "saves us—from a bad one—if from nothing else." And a rational method of philosophising has, at all events, the same negative merit. Good sense, cries one, is sufficient for all the purposes of life, and even for all the useful walks of literature. The remark might be pertinent enough if you could secure a man in the quiet, uninterrupted possession of his plain good sense. But he who has not studied philosophy in his youth, will probably plunge into it, without study, in his old age. There is no guarantee against the infection of speculative thought. Some question suddenly interests the man of hitherto quiescent temper—invades his tranquillity—prompts him to penetrate below the surface of the matter—to analyse its intricacies—to sound its depths. Meanwhile, untutored, undisciplined for such labours, he speedily involves himself in inextricable difficulties—grasps at some plausibility that had been a thousand times before seized on and relinquished—tilts valiantly at his men of straw—thrice slays the dead—and in short, strong-limbed as he is, and with all his full-grown thews and sinews, plays upon this new arena all the vagaries of a child. It may be said of philosophy, as it has been said of love,—it is, or it has been, or it will one day be, your master.

We have seen reverend doctors of divinity present no very dignified spectacle when they have suddenly bethought them of paying their somewhat late devotions to philosophy. Accustomed to [Pg 581] receive, as their due, a profound respect from others, they assume with easy confidence the cloak of the philosopher; and while they are thinking only how to arrange its folds with classic grace, they are unconsciously winding round their sturdy limbs what will sadly entangle their feet, and bring them, with shame and sore contusions, to the ground. Some will parade an ancient theory of morals, and introduce to us with all the pride of fresh discovery what now looks "as pale and hollow as a ghost." Others explain the beautiful; and with a charming audacity, a courage that is quite exhilarating, propound some theoretic fancy which has the same relation to philosophy that Quarle's Emblems bear to that pictorial art they especially delight to descant upon. But the greater number of these belated wanderers in the paths of philosophy, enter through the portals of religion. How could it be otherwise? Religion and philosophy touch at so many points—have so many problems in common—that the first moment the good man bethinks him he will be profound, sees him plunged in all the darkest enigmas of speculative thought, there to lose himself in we know not what heretical delusions.

Therefore, there is no one thing on which we are more disposed to congratulate Scotland than on her chairs of philosophy. Occupied by her most distinguished men, and teaching a sound system of psychology, they early train her youth to the severest and most useful discipline of thought. They have given its tone and its strength to the intellect of Scotland. They teach it to face all difficulties manfully, and to turn with equal manliness from vain and presumptuous speculations, which, under a boastful show of profundity, conceal invariably an arrant dogmatism. We turn with hearty satisfaction from the tissue of false subtleties which the German professor lays before his youth, to the careful and modest analysis of mental phenomena by which a professor in our northern universities at once enlightens and fortifies the mind. Scotland, may well be proud of the position she has now long held in the philosophical world. Her oscillations of error she, too, has no doubt exhibited—a necessary condition this of vitality and progress—but nowhere has a body of philosophers so systematically adhered to the sound canons of reasoning and research, and that upon a subject where there is the greatest facility and temptation to depart from them.

M. Cousin, and others who take that discursive light-tripping philosopher for their guide, have represented the Scotch as a sort of half Germans, and have both praised them, and praised them coldly, on this very account, that they have travelled half-way, and only half-way, towards the region of "high *a priori*" speculation. With M. Cousin's permission, the Scotch come of quite another house. His praise we should beg leave to decline: he may carry it to Alexandria, if he will. The method of philosophising pursued in Germany is fundamentally different from that which happily obtains in Scotland. No two schools of philosophy could resemble each other less. For ourselves, we regard the whole history of modern German speculation—the most remarkable instance, in our judgment, of great mental powers ill applied which the world has ever witnessed—as one continuous comment upon this text, the necessity of adhering to careful, honest observation of mental phenomena, however homely may be the results of such observation, and the astounding conclusions to which a train of thought rigidly pursued may conduct us, if, at its very point of departure, it has broken loose from this the first obligation of philosophy. The whole career of German speculation manifests a disregard of some of those fundamental principles of human belief, which, according to M. Cousin himself, it is the peculiar merit of the Scotch to have seized and held with tenacity.

These observations we will illustrate by a glance at the theories propounded on the great subject of perception—on the nature of our knowledge of the external world, this *visible and tangible* creation.

To a plain unsophisticated man, a stranger to the subtleties of metaphysical thought, it appears quite inconceivable, when he is told that the existence of the visible and palpable scene before [Pg 582] him should be converted into a problem of apparently invincible difficulty. Yet so it is. The metaphysician first carries off in triumph what are called its secondary qualities, as colour and heat, proving them to be no qualities of matter, but of mind, or the sensitive being. He next assails what had been pronounced to be its primary or essential qualities; the dark tangible mass that he had left behind is not suffered to retain its inert existence; extension, the power to fill space or resist pressure, what are these, he asks, but our own sensations or remembered

sensations of touch, which have got associated, embodied together, agglomerated round some occult cause? What, after all, he exclaims, do we know of matter but as a *something* which possesses certain influences over *us*?—a something which is utterly unrepresented to us by the senses. And now this word "substance," which formerly expressed a thing so well known, and every moment handled and looked at, is transformed to an invisible, intangible, imperceptible substratum—an unknown upholder of certain qualities, or, in more exact language, an unseen power clothing itself in *our* attributes—an existence far more resembling what is popularly understood by spirit than by matter. At length, even this unseen substratum is drawn within the world of thought, and becomes itself mere thought. There is *no* matter, there is no space, save what the mind creates for, and out of itself. Our man of simple apprehension, much bewildered, not at all convinced, breaks from the chain of sophistry, opens wide his eyes, and declares after all that "seeing is believing."

We think so too.

On this subject of *perception* it is well known that Reid and Stewart, refusing to be drawn into any hypothesis or unsatisfactory analysis, contented themselves with stating, in the preciser language of the schools, the *fact* as it appears to the plain unsophisticated observer. Reid's explanations are unfortunately mingled up with his controversy against the old hypothesis of *ideas* or *images* of things perceived in the mind—an hypothesis combated by him with unnecessary vehemence—but this detracts little from their substantive correctness or utility. This strange notion of images emanating from the external object, entering the mind, and being there perceived, was, after all, in its origin, rather a physical than a metaphysical hypothesis. The ancient speculator upon the causes of things felt, as we feel at this moment, the necessity for some medium of communication between the eye and the distant object, and not having detected this medium in the light which traverses or fills the space between them, he had recourse to this clumsy invention of *images* or *species* raying out from the surfaces of things. At the time when Reid wrote, this hypothesis, in its crude form, cannot be said to have existed; but it had left its traces in the philosophical language of the period, and there was certainly a vague notion prevalent that the idea of an object was a *tertium quid*, a something that was neither the mind nor the object.

We will quote the statement which Dugald Stewart makes of Reid's doctrine of perception. As he himself adopts the statement, it will embrace at once the opinion of both these philosophers:—

"To what, may it be asked, does this statement (of Reid's) amount? Merely to this, that the mind is so formed that certain impressions produced on our organs of sense by external objects, are followed by correspondent sensations, and that these sensations (which have no more resemblance to the qualities of matter, than the words of a language have to the things they denote) are followed by a perception of the existence and qualities of the bodies by which the impressions are made; that all the steps of this progress are equally incomprehensible; and that for any thing we can prove to the contrary, the connexion between the sensation and the perception, as well as that between the impression and the sensation, may be both arbitrary; that it is therefore by no means impossible that our sensations may be merely the occasions on which the correspondent perceptions are excited; and that at any rate the consideration of these [Pg 583] sensations, which are attributes of mind, can throw no light on the manner in which we acquire our knowledge of the existence and qualities of body. From this view of the subject, it follows that it is the external objects themselves, and not any species or images of these objects (*or, we may add, any mere agglomeration of present and remembered sensations*) that the mind perceives; and that although, by the constitution of our nature, certain sensations are rendered the constant antecedents of our perceptions, yet it is just as difficult to explain how our perceptions are obtained by their means, as it would be upon the supposition that the mind were all at once inspired with them, without any concomitant sensations whatever."—(*Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. i. p. 92.)

It is seen here that both Reid and Stewart considered perception as a simple elementary fact or phenomenon of the human mind, and refused their assent to that analysis which would resolve it into sensation, accompanied with certain acts of memory and judgment. This last, however, has been the most popular amongst modern psychologists, who have many of them expressed an extreme impatience at the apparent sluggishness of these veterans in philosophy. We remember the time when we shared the same feeling of impatience, and thought it a most useless encumbrance to maintain this *perception* amongst the simple elements of the human mind: we now think otherwise, and see reason to acquiesce in the sound judgment, which took up the only safe, though unostentatious position, which this embarrassing subject affords.

Dr Brown, it is well known, departed from his predecessors at this point, and may here be considered as one of the ablest representatives of the *sensational* school. He expended much ingenuity in his analysis of perception, though in our opinion with very little result. No one saw more distinctly than he, that sensation alone could never give us the idea of an external object, or of space, or any thing external to the mind. No one has more satisfactorily shown that the notion of an extended resisting body, supposed by many to be resolved into the sensations of touch, cannot be derived from this source alone, but must have some other origin than the pure sensation, which is a mere mental phenomenon or state of the consciousness. But he imagined he had overcome the difficulty by introducing to us a new sensation, the *muscular*, that which we experience when we move our limbs. What he could not derive from the old sense of touch, he thought himself able to deduce from the reasonings of the mind on this muscular sensation; but the same difficulties which he himself so lucidly set forth when treating upon touch, will be found

to pursue him here also. This muscular sensation, like every other, is in itself a mere state of the consciousness, begins and ends in a mere pleasure or pain. That it terminates abruptly, and contrary to our volition, in a feeling of resistance, (as when our arm is arrested in its motion,) is saying nothing more than that one sensation gives place to another without our willing it; a statement which might be made in a thousand other cases of sensation with equal propriety. But the author shall explain his own theory.

"The infant stretches his arm for the first time, by that volition without a known object, which is either a mere instinct or very near akin to one; this motion is accompanied with a certain feeling; he repeats the volition, which moves his arm, fifty or one thousand times, and the same progress of feeling takes place during the muscular action. In this repeated progress he feels the truth of that intuitive proposition, which in the whole course of the life that awaits him is to be the source of all his expectations, and the guide of all his actions—the simple proposition that *what has been* as an antecedent, will be followed by *what has been* as a consequent. At length he stretches out his arm *again*, and instead of the accustomed progression, there arises, in the resistance of some object opposed to him, a feeling of a very different kind, which, if he persevere in his voluntary effort, increases gradually to severe pain, before he has half completed the usual progress. There [Pg 584] is a difference, therefore, which we may without any absurdity suppose to astonish the little reasoner; for the expectation of similar consequents from similar antecedents, is observable even in his earliest actions, and is probably the result of an original law of mind, as universal as that which renders certain sensations of sight and sound the immediate result of certain affections of our eye or ear. To any being who is thus impressed with belief of similarities of sequence, a different *consequent* necessarily implies a difference of the *antecedent*. In the case at present supposed, however, the infant, who as yet knows nothing but himself, is conscious of no previous difference; and the feeling of *resistance* seems to him, therefore, something *unknown*, which has its *cause in something that is not himself*."—(Vol. i. p. 514.)

There is a certain pre-arrangement here of the circumstances to suit the convenience of explanation. The little arm of the infant being very closely fastened to its own little body, it could hardly move it fifty or a thousand times in succession, or even once, without its muscular sensation terminating in the sense of resistance, or pressure, which is but another form of the sense of touch. In short, this would be always sooner or later the consequent upon this muscular sensation. And it appears very evident that "the little reasoner," more especially if he held the same doctrine as Brown on the nature of cause and effect, would look no further than the *first* sensation for the cause of the *second*. There would be few instances in his limited experience more marked of invariable antecedence and consequence than this,—that the muscular sensation would sooner or later be followed by a tactual one. If we could suppose it possible, that the infant logician had to make the discovery of an external world by an effort of reasoning upon its sensations, we should say that this case was the least likely of any to lead him to the discovery—the least likely to impel him to look out of the circle of sensations for a cause of them.

Mere sensation of any kind, reason on it how we will, cannot account for the perception of external objects, which is another and separate fact. We are reduced to admit that it is by a simple primary law of our constitution that the organs of sense (which may with equal propriety be called the organs of perception) convey to us a knowledge of the external world. We touch, and a tangible extended body is made known to us; we open our eyes, and a visible body is before us.

Dr Brown, adopting and refining upon Berkeley's theory of vision, attributes originally nothing more than the mere sensation of colour to the eye, which sensation, by association with that of touch, becomes extended, so to speak, over an external surface, and defined into limited figures. We are not disposed to lay any greater stress than Dr Brown himself upon the *image* said to be traced upon the retina; but we say that the eye, as well as the touch, immediately informs us of external surface and definite figure.

There is, it is true, a *sensation* of colour apart from the *perception*. This may be separated, in our reflection, from all external surface. It is a *pleasure* which colour gives, and which enters largely into the complex sentiments of beauty. But our notion of colour itself we cannot dissociate from external surface: we cannot think of colour but as something outward. And if it comes to us originally under the condition of external surface, it must also present itself originally under certain forms and figures; for only where the whole field of vision is occupied by one unvaried colour, as when the eye is fixed upon a cloudless sky, could there be the perception of surface without some figure, more or less defined on it.

And why is it, that on a subject of this nature the manifest facts witnessed in the whole animal creation are to be overlooked? If other animals evidently, on the first opening of their eyes, see form, and movement, and the whole world before them; does not this sufficiently intimate the instantaneous knowledge which it is the nature of vision to bestow? The human infant arrives, indeed, more slowly at the perfect use of its senses. It arrives, also, more slowly at the perfect [Pg 585] use of its limbs. But we never conclude because it does not rise and skip about the fields like a dropped lamb, that there is any essential difference between its muscular powers and those of other animals of creation. Why should we suppose that its vision is regulated by different laws merely because it obtains the perfect use of its eyesight somewhat later?

Let us now turn from the imperfect analysis which the *sensational* school presents, to the speculations of the *idealist*. It will be seen that the hasty conclusions of the first gave a sort of basis for the strange results to which the second would conduct us.

Kant looked in vain for the idea of extension, or of space, where the philosophers had been seeking it, in the phenomena of sensation. He pronounced, therefore, that it was not derivable from experience, did not come to us from without, through any direct communication from the senses. Not finding this idea of space where the analytical psychologist had been searching for it, he drew it at once from the mind itself. He described it as a product of the *subject* man, a *form of the sensibility* with which he invests his own sensations.

We must first remark, that to this description of what perception really is, there lies the same objection that may be urged against the account of the sensationalist. A sensation clothed in space!—is this intelligible? is it by any means an account of the matter? To invest sensation with space, is it not as if we spoke of a *pleasure* that was *square*, or of a *circular pain*?

So far, however, as this internal origin of the idea of space is concerned, the statement of Kant, though expressed in unusual terms, is not opposed to the general belief of mankind, or to our irresistible convictions. It may merely convey this meaning, that the mind has an immediate knowledge (drawn from the laws of its own cogitation) of space, or extension. But then, according to the universal and unalterable convictions of mankind, this idea of space, though it may be derived from the innate resources of the mind, is in fact the knowledge of an external reality—of an *objective* truth. Kant decided otherwise. He pronounced this *form of the sensibility* to be merely and only a mode of thought—that space had, in fact, no other existence, was solely a *subjective* truth.

This one decision has been the cause of, or at least has served as the starting-point for a series of the wildest speculations that perhaps philosophy has to record. And this decision, how arbitrary! —how dogmatic!

It must be manifest, we think, to every intelligent person, that, granting we cannot demonstrate the *objective truth* of the existence of space, it is equally impossible to prove its *subjective* nature. We cannot conceive of space but as existing really around us. The metaphysician says we may be deceived. This universal and irresistible conviction—this fundamental law of human belief, may not be correspondent with absolute truth, may not be trustworthy. Granted that we *may* be deceived, that there is footing here for his *scepticism*, he cannot proceed a step further, and show that we *are* deceived. When, in his turn, he would assert, or dogmatise, he at all events is as open to our scepticism as we were to his. If a fundamental belief of this kind is not to be trusted, so neither can it be convicted of falsehood. We cannot launch ourselves out of our own nature; we *cannot test* our own faculties of cognition. This could only be done by some superior intelligence who could survey apart the object and the percipient subject.

We *may be* deceived in believing that we ourselves exist—that there is any permanent being we call ourselves—but there is no demonstrating that we *are* so deceived. The two cases are strictly analogous. We have just the same proof of the existence of the external object as of the thinking and percipient subject. The very first sensation or perception we experience brings with it instantaneously the two correlates, object and subject; they are made known in the same act or feeling; they are made known the one by means of the other—for unless through the means of the antagonist idea of object we should not have that of subject, nor *vice versâ*. In our judgment, therefore, there is as little philosophy in denying the external existence of matter as the internal existence of mind. The two ideas, as we have said, rise instantaneously, synchronously, and are in such manner correlates that it is only by the presence of the one that the other reveals itself.[6] [Pg 586]

When Kant advanced from doubting of the *objective* truth of our knowledge of space, to deciding against it—to asserting that it was purely *subjective*—he was exceeding the limits of the human faculties, and offering a mere dogmatism which can never be brought to any test whatever. He was asking us to judge of the trustworthiness of our faculties of cognition—by what?—by our faculties of cognition. He was elevating what is at best a strange suspicion, a mere *guess*, into a doctrine.

And the whole superstructure of the systems of idealism which his German followers have reared, rests upon this guess!

Kant left nothing of the material world but an indescribable *noumenon*, which did not even exist in space. Of course the categories of Aristotle, classifying as they did those relations which constitute our knowledge of this world, were converted by him into mere forms of the *understanding*, moulding the given products of the *sensibility*. Certain other regulative modes of thought predominating, in their turn, over the products of the *understanding*, he called ideas of the *pure reason*.

His successor, Fichte, it will be seen, advanced but little further when he pronounced for a system of *idealism*. The subjective nature of our knowledge had been laid down; there was nothing left of the real world but this *noumenon* which had been ejected from the realm of space; he acted, therefore, a consistent and charitable part, in taking this forlorn and banished entity into the region, at least, of thought. All the external world is now but a projection from the individual mind—the *non-ego* is but another development of the *ego*—the *object* is nothing but a sort of limitation or contrast which the subject throws out, to make a life for itself; the web it spins in the blank infinitude. Of the whole material world we have for ever got rid.

Here it might be supposed that speculation in this direction had reached its extreme point; and as idealism is a system in which the mind cannot long rest, contradicting, as it does, its ineradicable convictions, that here would commence a philosophical revolution, and a return to a

more sober and accurate method of investigation. But the German mind has put forth at this point an astonishing fertility. It has played with this idealism, refined upon it, varied it, produced new phases of it; reviving the strangest paradoxes of the Alexandrian school; and teaching—in this, the nineteenth century—with the gravest confidence in the world—with all the assurance of an ancient Scald chanting forth his mythological fables, a whole system of idealistic cosmogony!

Schelling, in his idealism, in some measure reinstated the *object*; not by reviving the vulgar notion of its reality, but declaring it to be in its essence identical with the *subject*, and pronouncing both to have an equally real or equally ideal existence. He thus got rid of the embarrassment which encounters us in the ordinary systems of idealism, of the subjective *Ego* [Pg 587] producing the objective *Ego*. *Thought* and *thing* are identical. But this identity is to be recognised only in the mind of God, in the absolute—which develops what in itself is unity in the form of a duality. As if (to use a rude illustration) the same image should be shot from the interior of a magic lantern through two diverging tubes, making that twofold which was itself identical.

As it is hard for common apprehension to conceive this *absolute*, and seize upon this identity of thought and thing, Schelling invented a faculty of mind expressly for the comprehension of such profound doctrines of philosophy. He called it *intellectual intuition*. Those who possess it not—and it is by no means general—must be content to live without philosophy. Nor can those on whom nature has failed to bestow this intellectual intuition, acquire it by any study or industry of their own. *Philosophus nascitur, non fit*.

Viewed from one aspect, Schelling's philosophy is not without a certain charm. "Spirit is invisible nature, nature is visible spirit." In this view of things, if mind loses its pre-eminence, nature, or the visible world, is exalted and spiritualised. It is a system likely to fascinate the poet and the artist, and we believe it has had a recognised influence on the cultivation of the fine arts in Germany. It awakens our enthusiasm for nature. More than ever is mind, is deity, seen in the visible world. Nature is, in fact, deified, whatever other sacrifices are made.

But if there was something for enthusiasm to lay hold of in the system of Schelling, there was much wanting, it seems, to satisfy the rigid demands of philosophy. *His* cosmogony, his manner of tracing, *a priori*, the development of all things from the absolute, was considered, by those who understand such profundities, to be deficient in accuracy. Hegel next trod

"with wandering feet
The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss."

And we are told gravely, by grave expositors, how, beginning with *nothing*, he showed, with logical precision, how every thing had regularly proceeded from it!

In the system of Hegel, object and subject are both lost sight of: nothing exists but the relation between them. As the thing and the thought of it are identical, and as the essence of a thought is the relation between two terms, it follows very logically that this relation is all, and that nothing really exists but relations. We should have supposed this to be a fair *reductio ad absurdum*, proving (if the matter could need of proof) that the *thing* and the *thought* were not identical. But the march of ideal philosophy was not to be so easily arrested.

We have now reached what is distinguished as *absolute idealism*.

"They (the three idealisms) may be thus illustrated," (writes Mr Lewes in his *History of Philosophy*.) "I see a tree. Fichte tells me that it is I alone who exist; the tree is a modification of my mind. This is *subjective* idealism. Schelling tells me that both the tree and my *ego* are existences equally real, or ideal, but they are nothing less than manifestations of the absolute. This is *objective* idealism. But Hegel tells me, that all these explanations are false. The only thing really existing is the idea—the relation. The ego and the tree are but two terms of the relation, and owe their reality to it. This is *absolute* idealism."[7]

If Martinus Scriblerus were alive, he also might be tempted to give an illustration of these three forms of idealism.

The crowd of spectators at a fair, he might say, if they see a man dancing upon the tight-rope, [Pg 588] strained between two posts—have no doubt in the world that the rope, and the man on it, are equally supported by the same two posts, which, moreover, they presume to stand up there in veritable substantiality before them. Were our three sages at the fair, they would reason otherwise. Fichte would say—these people think there are two posts! There is but one. That left-hand post is but the shadow of the other. It is the right-hand *subjective* post which has projected it forth.

Schelling, gravely looking on, observes they are *both shadows*: nay, they are identical. If you were to stand in the centre of the rope, in the *point of indifference* between them, and to turn round till the intellectual intuition were sufficiently excited, you would find the right-hand and the left-hand post blended together—undistinguishable—you would perceive their absolute identity.

Shadows! identical! Very true, says Hegel, slowly stepping forward, but what a mistake have both philosophers and the vulgar been making all this time! They have presumed that these posts support the rope! It is the rope which upholds the posts; which are indeed but its opposite ends. You may see that, separately, each post is good for nothing; it is the relation between them that is every thing; the rope is all. This alone can be said to exist. Every thing about us is plainly at one

end or the other end of this, or some other rope. There runs, he would add, a vulgar tradition that man made the rope. I will demonstrate that the rope made the man and every thing else in the whole fair.

But it is not our object at present to enter further into the labyrinth of German metaphysics; at a future time, if our readers should endure the subject, we will endeavour to act as guide and interpreter through some of its more curious passages; we are here concerned only with the points of view taken of the material world. Have we not said enough to support our thesis? to prove what strange results may be arrived at if philosopher, following after philosopher, bases his speculations on what is current in the school-room, instead of recurring to honest and simple-minded observations of nature—and to show that on this subject of *perception* our veterans Reid and Stewart have taken up the only safe position our present knowledge admits of?

FOOTNOTES:

[6] "Relatives are known only together: the science of contraries is one. Subject and object, mind and matter, are known only in correlation and contrast, and in the same common act: which knowledge is at once a synthesis and an antithesis of both, and may be indifferently defined an antithetic synthesis and a synthetic antithesis of the terms. Every conception of *self* necessarily implies a conception of *not self*; every perception of what is different from me, implies a recognition of the percipient subject in contradistinction from the object perceived. In one object of knowledge, indeed, the object is the prominent element, in another the subject; but there is none in which either is known out of relation to the other. The immediate knowledge which Reid allows of things different from the mind, and the immediate knowledge of mind itself, cannot, therefore, be split into two distinct acts. In perception, as in other faculties, the same indivisible consciousness is conversant about both terms of the relation of knowledge."—*Edinburgh Review*, No. 103, p. 165.—A very able and elaborate paper, attributed to Sir William Hamilton.

[7] *Lewes' Biographical History of Philosophy.* Vol. iv., p. 209. In every way a remarkable work. Written with great vivacity and clearness, comprising a world of matter in the briefest possible space,—and, O reader, and O author, forgive the anticlimax!—at the least possible cost. In fact it forms part of the Series known as "*Knight's Weekly Volume*." To find a strictly original work of so much ability given to the world in this form, proves that the publisher and the man of letters are, in this mercantile age, second to none in the activity and enterprise with which they render *their* service to the public.

CHARLES DE BERNARD.

[Pg 589]

The position of French novels and novelists in the appreciation of the English public, has undergone, within the last few years, a notable change. We need revert to no distant period to recall the day when the word "Paris" on the title-page of a book of fiction, was, to the work so inscribed, virtual sentence of exclusion from respectable library and decent drawing-room this side the Channel. It was the foul-bill of health, the signal of a moral quarantine, interminable and hopeless of pratique. French novels came to England and were read; but the arrivals were comparatively rare, the readers scarce more numerous; whilst by the masses they were condemned as contraband and dangerous merchandise, and eschewed as religiously as Lyons silks by the humane, when Spitalfields are starving. The wilful and wicked minority who took pleasure in their pungent pages, did so clandestinely, and with precaution. In carefully-locked desk, or on topmost shelf of bookcase, lurking behind an honourable front-rank of history and essay, the disreputable literature was bestowed. Nor was its reception more openly hospitable when arrayed in English garb. Translators there were, who strove to render into the manly, wholesome Anglo-Saxon tongue, the produce—witty, frivolous, prurient, and amusing—of Gallic imagination. But either the translations shared the interdict incurred by the objectionable originals, or the plan adopted to obtain their partial acceptance, destroyed pith and point. Letters from plague-ridden shores are fitted for the perusal of the uninfected by fumigation and other mysterious processes. They reach us reeking with aromatics and defaced by perforations, intended doubtless to favour the escape of the demon of pestilence bodily imprisoned within their folds. But their written contents are uninjured by the salutary operation; the words of affection, the combinations of commerce, the politician's plans, are still to be read upon their stained and punctured surface. Not so with the French novels that underwent fumigation and curtailment at the hands of decorous translators. The knife that extirpated the gangrene, unavoidably trenched upon the healthy flesh: in rooting up the abundant tares, the scanty grain was shaken out, and chaff and straw alone remained.

We speak of times past, although still recent; glance we at the present, and, Heaven help us! what a change is here! Tempora mutantur et *libri*—or it were perhaps more proper to say, *et lectores*. With headlong velocity, one extreme has been abandoned for its opposite. The denounced of yesterday is the favoured of to-day; the scouted is now the cherished; the rejected stone has a lofty place in the literary edifice. French novels, translated, if not original, are as

commonly seen in the "best regulated families" as comfits at the confectioner's or poison on potter-carriers' shelves. The ban is removed, the anathema revoked; either the Upas has been discovered to be less baneful than was imagined, or the disease lurking at the core has been forgotten in the bright colours and pleasant flavour of the appetible fruit. We take up the newspaper. What heads the column? Half a score advertisements of the "Mysteries of Paris"—a new edition of the "Wandering Jew," "illustrated by the first artists"—"Memoirs of a Physician," in twopenny numbers and shilling volumes; French novels, in short, at all prices and in every form. We step into the club; the produce of Paris and Brussels presses strews the table, and an elderly gentleman, with a solemn face and quakerish coat, searches amongst them for the nine-and-twentieth volume of "Monte Christo," or of some other French romance of longitude equally sea-serpentine. We call upon our friend Tom Sterling, a worthy fellow, much respected on 'Change. Miss Sterling is deep in a natty duodecimo, whose Flemish aspect speaks volumes in favour of international copyright. Our natural clearsightedness enables us to read, even from the door, [Pg 590] "Société Belge de Librairie" upon its buff paper cover. Is the book hastily smuggled under sofa-cushions, or stealthily dropped into the neglected work-basket? By no means. The fair student deliberately marks her place, and engages us in a controversy as to the merits, faults, and beauties of a score of French romancists, in whose lucubrations she assuredly is far better read than ourselves. In short, English aversion for French modern literature has disappeared, and been replaced by partiality—not to say affection. Dumas is a staple commodity; Sue is voted delightful; English authors of talent and standing translate or "edite"—to use the genteel word now adopted—the works of French ones; even George Sand finds lady-translators, and, we fear, lady readers; French books are reprinted in London, and the Palais Royal is transported to the arcade of Burlington. We shall not take upon ourselves to blame or applaud this change in public taste, to decide how far such large importation and extensive patronage of foreign wares are advantageous or deplorable—to tax with laxity those who write, or with levity those who read, the lively and palatable productions of the present French school. Without encouraging, we will venture to direct, the prevailing appetite, by pointing the attention of Maga's readers—whose name is Legion—to the writings of an author not the best known, but certainly one of the most accomplished, of his class. In France, his reputation stands very high; and if in England it is not yet equally well-established, it must be attributed to his having written little, and to the absence of that charlatanry and egotism which has brought other cultivators of the Belles Lettres into such universal notice here and on the Continent. M. Dumas, for instance, even had his writings, and those of the numerous staff of literary aid-de-camps to whose bairns he stands godfather, been less diverting, would still have commanded readers in every country where French is understood, and which the post from Paris reaches. The man is his own advertisement; his eccentricities are worth, at a moderate estimate, a dozen advertising vans, a daily paragraph in a score of newspapers, and a cartload of posters. He is a practical puff, an incarnate stimulant to popular curiosity. Let the public appetite for his weekly volumes flag ever so little, and forthwith he puts in practice, for the renewal of his vogue, devices so ingenious, that proceeding from any but the privileged monarch of romance-writers, they would be looked upon as the tricks of a lunatic. One day in a court of assizes, the next at that of a king, on the morrow before a civil tribunal, the illustrious inheritor of the marquisate of La Pailleterie parades his graces, jogs the world's memory as to the fact of his existence, and bids it read his books and bow before his footstool. To-day he is on the Corso, to-morrow on the sunny banks of Rhine; the next day he peeps into Etna's crater, or gasps beneath the brazen sky of shadeless Syria. Now we hear of him in Spanish palaces, figuring at royal weddings, and adding one more to the countless ribbon-ends that already grace his button-hole; and scarcely has our admiration subsided, when a Mediterranean breeze murmurs sweet tidings of his presence on African shores, taking his coffee with Beys, commanding war-steamers, riving the captive's fetters, and rivetting his claims on his country's gratitude. Wherever he goes, he stands, a modern Gulliver, pre-eminent in moral giantship, amidst surrounding pigmies, who

> "Walk under his huge legs, and peep about To find themselves dishonourable graves."

And the seeming ubiquity of the famous quadroon[8] is not more marvellous than the multiplicity of characters he assumes. "Dumas at Home and Abroad" offers an inexhaustible theme and a [Pg 591] boundless field for pen and pencil caricaturists. Alternately dramatist, novelist, tourist, ambassador, the companion of princes, the manager of theatres, an authority in courts of justice, a challenger of deputies, and shining with equal lustre in these and fifty other capacities equally diverse, what wonder that the slightest work flowing from the pen of so remarkable a genius, though it be but a forgotten "trifle of twelve thousand lines," is received with intense gratitude, and caught at like manna by a famished multitude? Eugène Sue is another writer who has taken the world by storm, but in quite a different fashion. The ex-lieutenant of marine does not obtrude his personality upon public notice, and relies more upon the powerful calibre of his guns than upon their number. Two books, lengthy ones certainly, established his reputation. He had been many years a cultivator of literature, and had produced sundry romances of little more than average merit, when he suddenly burst upon the public, in the widely spread *feuilleton* of the *Débats*, with a work which, however objectionable in some respects, is unquestionably of extraordinary power and interest. Like the Pickwick Papers, the "Mystères de Paris" at once established their author in popular estimation, not only in the land in whose language they were written, but in all the reading countries of Europe. It was the opening of a new vein in the literary mine, and though the metal might have been purer, it had all the glitter that captivates the multitude. The "Juif Errant," inferior to its predecessor, was scarcely less successful. Its bitter attacks on the Jesuits, and the consequent anathemas fulminated against it, with more zeal than

wisdom, by certain of the French clergy, doubtless contributed to its vogue. After Sue and Dumas, Balzac is (with the exception, perhaps, of Madame Dudevant,) the best known, and most read, out of France, of all the living French novelists. We hold him much over-rated, but his great fertility, and the real excellence of a few of his books, have made him a widely-spread reputation. His early efforts were less successful than those of Sue; and his first thirty volumes scarcely attained mediocrity. At last he made a start, and took his place on the first line of his class, in virtue of a few masterpieces, scanty diamonds glittering in a cinder-heap. Over-production, the crying vice of the literature of the day, and an over-weening conceit, prevented Honoré de Balzac from maintaining the position he might and ought to have occupied. Such gems as the "Père Goriot" and "Eugenie Grandet" were buried and lost sight of under mountains of rubbish. True that he now denied a number of books published under supposititious names, and which had been universally attributed to him; but enough remained, which he could not deny, to tarnish, if not to cancel his fame. To these he has since, with the reckless and inconsiderate greed that [Pg 592] cares not for the public, so long as it finds a publisher, considerably added. His self-sufficiency is unparalleled; and in the preface to an edition of his works published under the comprehensive and presumptuous title of "La Comédie Humaine," he puts himself on a level with the first of poets and philosophers, proposing himself the modest aim of portraying human nature in every variety of its moral physiognomy.

Less prolific, more unassuming, and far less universally known than the three authors at whose character and writings we have thus briefly glanced, Charles de Bernard need fear comparison with none of them. That he is faultless we do not assert; that he in great measure eschews the errors of his contemporaries, will be patent to all who peruse his pages. The objections that English readers will make to his books are to be traced to no aberrations of his, but to those of the society whose follies he so ably and wittily depicts. He faithfully sketches, and more often amusingly caricatures, the vices, foibles, and failings of French men and women. If those are to be delineated at all—and, with a view to their amendment, surely they may—the task could hardly be executed with a chaster and less offensive pencil. De Bernard paints immorality—it would be unjust to say that he encourages it. He neither deals in highly-coloured and meretricious scenes *à la* Sue and Dumas; nor supports, with the diabolical talent and ingenuity of a Sand, the most subversive and anti-social doctrines. His works are not befouled with filth and obscenity, such as that impure old reprobate Paul de Kock delights and wallows in—or disgraced by the irreligion, and contempt of things holy, found in the writings of scores of French authors whom we could name, were they worth the naming. It is undeniable that the ingenious plots of his very entertaining books turn, for the most part, on matters difficult to touch upon with propriety, and which English writers usually avoid; frequently, for instance, on illicit passion and conjugal infidelity. And therefore many Englishmen, with whatever interest and amusement they themselves might read his volumes, would hesitate to recommend them to their sisters and daughters. Some few of his tales, especially of the shorter ones, are in all respects unexceptionable. We instance "La Peau du Lion," translated as "The Cossack's Grave;" and "L'Anneau d'Argent," which has also appeared in English. Gerfaut, one of this author's earliest works, and unquestionably his masterpiece, has little that can justly offend, although its translation met, we believe, a cold reception. The plot turns on an attachment between a married woman and the hero of the story. But if M. de Bernard falls readily enough into the easy, matter-of-course tone in which his countrymen habitually discuss amatory peccadilloes—and he could hardly have attained his present popularity in France had he assumed the prude—he does not disdain or neglect to point a moral after his own fashion. In administering a remedy, a wise physician has regard to the idiosyncrasy of the patient as well as to the nature of the disease. A nation whose morality is unhealthy, must not be treated like a sick horse, whose groom crams a ball down his throat, and holds his jaws together, and his head back, to prevent its rejection. The dose must be artfully disguised, wrapped in a sweetmeat, and the invalid will take it kindly, and sooner or later feel the benefit. We would fain discern, in some of M. de Bernard's books, under a perfumed envelope of palatable trifle, a tendency worthy of applause; a design to combat, by quiet and implied ridicule, the moral maladies of his country. It is not his wont, as with many of his competitors, to make the vicious interesting and the virtuous fools. His husbands are not invariably good-natured, helpless noodles, with whom, even in their direst calamities, the most right-thinking have difficulty to sympathise: the Lovelaces who pursue married women with their insidious and dangerous attentions, are not by him for ever exalted into heroes, redeeming their pleasant vices by a host of high and chivalrous qualities. On the contrary, the apparently easy-going husband often proves a smart fellow, and thorough Tartar—the brilliant lover an [Pg 593] emancipated bagman, or contemptible *chevalier d'industrie*. Of this we have an example in "Le Gendre," in some respects one of the most objectionable of De Bernard's novels, certainly not well suited for a birth-day present to misses in their teens. A seemingly tame, insipid clown of a husband counteracts the base manœuvres of a dashing Paris *roué*; and finally, after refusing to fight the would-be seducer, whom he has ascertained to be an arrant swindler, takes truncheon in hand, and belabours him in presence of his intended victim and of a roomful of company. But setting aside any moral tendency which goodwill towards such a vastly pleasant author as De Bernard may induce us, by the aid of our most complaisant spectacles, to discover in his writings, his gentlemanly tone is undeniable, his pictures of French life, especially in Paris, are beyond praise. In the most natural and graphic style imaginable, he dashes off a portrait typifying a class, and in a page gives the value of a volume of the much-vaunted "Physiologies." And this he does, like all he does, in a sparkling, well-bred, impertinent style, peculiar to himself, and peculiarly attractive.

We have already remarked, that M. de Bernard has written little. The assertion was comparative;

we meant that he has produced, since the commencement of his literary career—not yet very remote—an average of only three or four volumes per year. This rate, in days when French scribes carry on five romances at a time, in the daily feuilletons of five newspapers, and when certain English authors, emulous of Gallic fecundity, annually conceive and elaborate their dozen or two of octavos—says little for his industry, or much for his judicious forbearance. Latterly, however, we regret to observe in him a disposition to increase the length of his books, and abandon the pleasant one, two, and three volume tales with which he began. In this he is wrong; books of so very light a description as his will not bear great prolongation. Things agreeable enough in small quantities, pall and cloy if the ration be overmuch augmented. However fragrant and well-spiced, syllabub is not to be drunk by the bucketful; neither would it be satisfactory to dine off a *soufflé au marasquin*, though compounded by the philanthropical Regenerator himself. In England, custom has decided that three volumes are the proper length for a novel, and they have become, as a maximum, a rule rarely departed from. We are content that it should be so, and, indeed, heartily rejoice at it, when we see works of fiction spun out by indefatigable French manufacturers into interminable series, through which, at twelve hours a-day, the most insatiable devourer of the romantic needs a month to toil. Following the fashion of the times, and encouraged by the example of his successfully diffuse brethren, M. de Bernard, weary of launching trim corvettes and dashing frigates, has taken to build line-of-battle ships. He had better have kept to the small craft, which he found to float so well. Two of his recent works, "Le Beaupère," and "Le Gentilhomme Campagnard," have lost in merit what they have gained in length. The subject of the former is most unpleasant: its catastrophe unnecessarily painful. And the "Gentilhomme Campagnard," just now concluded, although containing, as do all his books, much spirited dialogue, many well-drawn characters, and well-contrived incidents, is weakened by being spun out, and at times, by its tediousness of detail, reminds us of De Balzac. And here we will remark, that there is a certain general resemblance between the styles of De Bernard and De Balzac; so much so, that when the former first wrote, some persons conjectured his name to be a pseudonyme adopted by the latter, to the detriment of publishers, to whom, it was said, he had contracted to deliver all he should produce. And the malignant hinted, that the author of "Eugenie Grandet" was sufficiently unscrupulous and hungry of gain to render such a stratagem on his part any thing but improbable. Whether Charles de Bernard be an assumed name or not, it has long since been evident, that the books published under it proceed from a more guarded and uniformly sprightly pen, than that of M. de Balzac. [Pg 594]

The plot of the "Gentilhomme Campagnard," is based on the dissensions of two villages, or more properly speaking, of a hamlet and a very small town, situated within a mile of each other, and which had once constituted two separate parishes, but had been amalgamated at the revolution of '89, greatly to the detriment and indignation of the weaker party. It is in 1836 that M. de Bernard takes up the imaginary history of their jealousy and squabbles, as a canvass on which to embroider the flowers of his invention. The hamlet, Châteaugiron-le-Vieil, is inhabited, and virtually governed, by the Gentilhomme Campagnard, the Baron de Vaudrey—a retired colonel of cuirassiers, whose services under the empire do not prevent his stanch adherence, under the citizen monarchy of July, to the legitimate and exiled sovereigns of France. His nephew, the Marquis of Châteaugiron, less addicted to the fallen Bourbons, arrives, at the opening of the tale, at his family mansion in Châteaugiron-le-Bourg, with certain electioneering projects, highly displeasing to the baron, who resolves vigorously to oppose them, and accordingly gives the whole weight of his influence to a neighbouring iron-master, M. Grandperrin, also a candidate. The iron-master has married a second wife, a heartless vindictive woman, and former mistress of the marquis. She plays an important part in the clever plot, which, although complicated, is perfectly clear. To sketch at any length even the principal of the numerous characters in the amusing comedy, would lead us much too far; we can barely afford to glance at a few of them. On the foremost line—after the Gentilhomme Campagnard himself, a fine, generous-hearted veteran, an excellent compound of the soldier and the nobleman, possessed of great good sense and shrewdness, and altogether one of those personages of whom, whether real or imaginary, one reads with pleasure—stands Madame Bonvalot, or *de* Bonvalot, as she best loves to be styled, the *parvenue* widow of a Bordeaux wine merchant. Her beautiful and amiable daughter, an excellent model of a virtuous French lady, gracefully and delicately drawn, is married to the Marquis of Châteaugiron. The mother, an affected, frivolous, rouged, bejewelled dowager of fifty, who, through ambition to figure at the Tuileries, has extorted from her noble son-in-law a promise that he will adhere to the new order of things, is followed from Paris by one Pichot, ex-clerk to a notary, also a former lover of Madame Grandperrin, and self-styled Viscount de Langerac. This fortune-hunter has managed to worm himself into the intimacy of the marquis, and to kindle, in the too-susceptible breast of Madame Bouvalot, a tender flame, which he diligently fans. Then we have a young country-lawyer, Froidevaux, an honest, independent fellow, and desperate sportsman, who gives advice gratis, thinks more of partridges than parchments, prefers a day's shooting to a profitable lawsuit, and is consequently as poor as he is popular, and, to all appearance, has very little chance of obtaining the hand of Mademoiselle Victorine, the iron-master's only daughter and heiress, a plump little beauty, who views Froidevaux with special favour and affection, and with whom he is deeply in love. Amongst the personages of a lower class, the most prominent is Toussaint Gilles, landlord of the Cheval Patriote, and son of one of the revolutionary butchers of the Reign of Terror; a furious republican, who wears a *carmagnole* and a red cap, inherits his father's hatred of the vile aristocrats, and prides himself on his principles, and on a truculent and immeasurable mustache. Amoudru, a pusillanimous mayor; Bobilier, a fiery old justice of the peace, and devoted vassal of the house of Châteaugiron; and Rabusson, once a sergeant in M. de Vaudrey's regiment, now his game-keeper, must not be forgotten. A festival got up by Bobilier to celebrate the marquis's arrival at the castle of his

ancestors, stirs the bile of Toussaint Gilles, who sees in it a base adulation of the *çi-devants*. As president of the republican club of Châteaugiron-le-Bourg, he, on the following day, incites a few [Pg 595] discontented spirits to a popular demonstration, to consist in burning down the triumphal arch erected by the servile justice of peace, and in hoisting a brand-new tricolored flag on the tree of liberty—a poplar planted, during the glorious days of July, close to the gate of the marquis's château, but which had long since withered into a dry and unsightly maypole. A number of bad characters mingle in the crowd, and the demonstration assumes a more turbulent and criminal aspect than its original promoters had contemplated. The outer gate of the château is forced, and stones are thrown, one of which grazes the cheek of the Viscount de Langerac, who receives the wound, so he affirms, whilst heroically interposing his person between Madame de Bonvalot and the shower of missiles. At last the marquis arms his servants, and repels the rioters, already frightened at their own deeds; the justice of peace menaces them with the assizes, Froidevaux exerts his influence, and the disturbance is nearly at an end, when the flames communicate from the triumphal arch to the tree of liberty. Toussaint Gilles, as captain of the firemen, hurries to extinguish the conflagration that menaces the flag-staff, on whose summit Picardet the blacksmith, another zealous member of the democratic club, is busy fastening the tricolored symbol of freedom. The following scene, one of the most detachable in the book, will give a notion of M. de Bernard's lively and pointed style.

"The by-standers, whether firemen or not, hurried after the captain to a shed adjoining the Town-hall. Some of them harnessed themselves to the engine, and dragged it at full speed to the scene of the fire; others seized the buckets, and hastened to fill them; soon a line was formed from the well to the burning tree. Quickly as this was done, the progress of the flames was still more rapid, and Picardet soon found his post untenable. On first perceiving the fire, the smith had climbed, like a frightened cat, to the very top of the poplar, at risk of breaking the tapering stem by the weight of his body; but the refuge was a very precarious one, for the fire followed him, and he required wings to rise higher than the place he had attained. Three expedients offered themselves to him; all equally unpleasant. To leap from the poplar—he would inevitably break his neck; to slide down the blazing trunk—he would reach the ground roasted; to wait till assistance reached him—would it arrive in time? If not immediate, the tree would be on fire from bottom to top.

"Under such circumstances, the most intrepid might well hesitate, and Picardet, although naturally brave, remained for a moment undecided; but when he saw the flag catch fire close to his feet, he understood that delay was mortal, and heroically made up his mind. Relaxing his hold, he glided with lightning velocity from top to bottom of the tree.

"At the very moment that the smith, blinded and suffocated by the smoke, his hair blazing like the tail of a comet, his hands bleeding, and his clothes torn, rolled upon the ground, roaring with pain, a stream of water, issuing from the engine, and directed by Toussaint Gilles, inundated him from head to foot, time enough to save a part of his singed locks.

"'Now that Picardet is put out,' cried the captain of the firemen, 'save the tree of liberty! Come, men! Steady, and with a will!'

"As he spoke, Toussaint Gilles levelled the flexible hose at the poplar, and his assistants pumped vigorously; but before a single drop of water had reached its destination, the firemen saw, with surprise and alarm, the engine rise under their hands, and fall heavily on one side, deluging their legs with the whole of its contents. All eyes fixed themselves in astonishment on M. de Vaudrey, who had fallen amongst them like a bomb, and whose herculean strength had just performed this feat. The country gentleman was perfectly calm, but his complexion was high, and his brow moist with perspiration, as if he had walked very fast. A few paces in his rear stood the faithful Rabusson, motionless and in a martial attitude; in one hand he grasped a knotted stick, more like [Pg 596] a mace than a walking-cane; with the other he led Sultan, the baron's enormous watch-dog.

"The stupified silence that ensued was at last broken by Toussaint Gilles.

"'What means this?' he demanded, his voice trembling with rage.

"'It is easy to understand,' coolly replied M. de Vaudrey.

"'Why have you upset our pump?'

"'To prevent your pumping.'

"'And why do you prevent our pumping?'

"'Because those who lighted the fire shall not put it out. It pleased you to see yonder wooden columns burn, it pleases me to see the poplar blaze.'

"'Raise the pump,' said the captain to his men, with an imperious air. 'We will see who dares upset it again.'

"'And we will see who dares raise it, when I forbid!' retorted the baron, calmly folding his muscular arms across his vast chest.

"A murmur was heard; but nobody stirred.

"'Cowards!' cried Toussaint Gilles, with a furious glance at his friends; 'are you all afraid of one man?'

"'In the first place, there are two of them,' said the prudent Laverdun to his neighbour, 'and two who are worth ten; to say nothing of their monster of a dog, who demolishes a wolf with a single bite.'

"'M. Toussaint Gilles,' said the baron, smiling ironically, 'when an officer gives an order, and is not obeyed, do you know what he should do?'

"'I want none of your advice,' cried the captain of firemen, in a brutal tone.

"'He should execute his order himself,' said M. de Vaudrey with immovable calmness.

"'So I will,' said Toussaint Gilles, advancing roughly. But at the very moment that he stooped to raise the engine, the baron grasped his collar, and compelled him to stand upright.

"'M. Toussaint Gilles,' he said, 'listen to me. You are a bad fellow, needing correction, and I undertake to correct you.'

"'To correct me!' cried the captain, struggling, as ineffectually as a hare in the clutches of an eagle, in the powerful grasp that restrained him.

"'He is strangling the captain! Help the captain!' exclaimed several of the spectators.

"But words were all the help they offered to their chief, so greatly were the boldest awed by the colossal figure and well-known strength and courage of the old officer. Gautherot the butcher, constitutionally brave and pugnacious, was the only one who went to his friend's assistance. He rushed upon M. de Vaudrey, when Rabusson barred his passage.

"'One to one,' said the sergeant; 'if you want a thrashing, here am I.'

"'You've a dog, and a cudgel,' replied the butcher; 'I have only my fists.'

"'True.'

"With a generosity bordering on imprudence, Rabusson placed his heavy stick in the dog's mouth.

"'Keep that, Sultan,' said he imperatively, 'and don't stir.' Then turning to the butcher with an air of defiance—

"'Now,' he said, 'are you ready?'

"'Ready,' replied Gautherot, putting himself on guard, with the steadiness of an experienced boxer.

"The circle which had formed round the baron and the captain, enlarged itself to leave space for the new antagonists. After a few preliminary evolutions, Gautherot assumed the offensive.

"'Guard that,' he cried, dealing his adversary a blow that would have floored an ox. Rabusson guarded it with his left arm, and repaid it with such a smashing hit in the face, that the bold butcher rolled upon the ground, blood gushing from his nose and mouth.

"Although Gautherot had numerous friends amongst the rioters, and although he was then in some sort their champion, a roar of laughter accompanied his overthrow, and all eyes were fixed admiringly upon the conqueror. Popular favour, ever ready to abandon a falling hero, is rarely withheld from him who triumphs.

"At this moment an unexpected incident increased the confusion of the stormy scene. Excited by the shouts of the mob, and by the fight he had witnessed, Sultan forgot his orders, dropped the club confided to his care, and without a bark or other notification of his intentions, sprang furiously upon the person nearest him. This unlucky individual chanced to be Laverdun the grocer. [Pg 597]

"Under any circumstances, the honourable vice-president of the Châteaugiron club would have been utterly unable to contend against a dog as big as a lion, and almost as formidable; but on this occasion, attacked without warning, and petrified by fear, he did not even attempt resistance. The consequence was, that in less than a second he lay upon the ground, pale as death, and half strangled, by the side of his friend Gautherot, who, stunned by his fall, made no attempt to rise.

"Whilst this occurred, M. de Vaudrey addressed the following admonition to Captain Toussaint Gilles, who strove in vain to escape from his hands.

"'I well know, Mr Innkeeper, that you have long been in the habit of speaking against me and my nephew, and hitherto I have treated your insolence with the contempt it merited. But though I care nothing for your bark, I shall not allow you to bite. Bear this in mind: to-day I pardon you, but if you value your mustaches and your ears, don't begin again.'

"So saying, M. de Vaudrey destroyed, by an irresistible shock, the equilibrium of Toussaint Gilles, and hurled him to the ground to keep company with Gautherot and Laverdun.

"Of the five principal members of the club, three were thus humbled to the dust; the fourth, singed like a fowl in preparation for the spit, was in no condition to show fight; Vermot, the turbulent clerk of the justice of peace, who completed this political quintet, had long since abandoned the field of battle. On beholding the discomfiture of their leaders, the rioters stared at

each other with a disconcerted air.

"'*Messieurs les bourgeois de Châteaugiron*,' said Monsieur de Vaudrey, looking round at the crowd with a mixture of calm assurance and ironical contempt—'I thank you, in my nephew's name, for having burned the absurd tree which obstructed the entrance to his château; you planted it, and it was for you to destroy it.'

"'It was not done on purpose,' said a bystander, with great *naiveté*.

"'We will plant another,' cried a voice from the crowd.

"'In the same place?' asked the baron.

"'Yes, in the same place,' replied the voice.

"'Then I beg to be invited to the ceremony,' said M. de Vaudrey, with imperturbable phlegm; 'some of you seem to have very confused notions with regard to other people's property, and I undertake to complete your education.'

"At that moment the poplar, into whose heart the flames had eaten, gave a loud crack, quivered above the heads of the startled crowd, and broke in the middle. The lower half remained erect, whilst the upper portion fell blazing upon the ruins of the triumphal arch, as, in a duel, a desperately wounded combatant falls expiring upon the body of his slain foe.

"Toussaint Gilles, Gautherot, and Laverdun had all risen from their recumbent attitude, but none of them showed a disposition to recommence the engagement. The butcher wiped his bleeding muzzle with a cotton handkerchief, and seemed to count, with the end of his tongue, how many teeth he had left; the grocer, pale as his own tallow candles, examined his throat with a trembling hand, to make sure that the fangs of the terrible Sultan had not penetrated beyond the cravat; finally, the Captain gnawed his mustache, but dared not manifest his fury otherwise."

This energetic interference of the baron and his two aid-de-camps, biped and quadruped, and the fall of the tree of liberty, which the rioters, superstitious in spite of their republicanism, look upon as a bad omen, put an end to the disturbance. The disaffected disperse, and M. de Vaudrey enters his nephew's house, where an amusing scene occurs between him and Madame de Bonvalot. Then come a robbery and a fire, and abundance of incidents—some tolerably new in conception, all very pleasant in narration. The good sense, perspicacity and straightforward [Pg 598] dealing of the baron, subjugate every one. He unmasks the fictitious viscount, cures his nephew of his electioneering ambition, and the painted dowager of her longing for an invite to the Tuileries; and adopts Froidevaux—whose father had saved his life at Leipsic, and who has himself picked the baron out of a burning house—as his son and heir, thus rendering him a suitable husband for the pretty Victorine. The story ends, as all proper-behaved novels should end, with the discomfiture of the wicked, and a prospect of many years of happiness for the virtuous. In this agreeable perspective, Madame de Bonvalot is a sharer. Having, by the adoption of Froidevaux, alienated the greater part of his fortune from his nephew's children, the baron is resolved to secure them the reversion of their grandmother's ample jointure. But Madame de Bonvalot, whose wrinkles are hidden by her rouge, forgets the half century that has passed over her head, and hankers after matrimony. To preserve her from it, M. de Vaudrey commences a course of delicate attentions, sufficiently marked to prevent her favouring other admirers, but duly regulated by thermometer, and warranted never to rise to marrying point. And the fall of the curtain leaves the humorous old soldier of fifty-five and the vain coquette of fifty, fairly embarked upon the tepid and rose-coloured stream of flirtation; he quizzing her, she admiring him—she thinking of her wedding, he only of her will. A new and ingenious idea, worthy of a French novelist, and which, we apprehend, could by no possibility have occurred to any other.

We shall close this paper with a tale, appended, as make-weight, to the final volume of the "Gentilhomme Campagnard", and whose brevity recommends it for extraction. It is too short and slight to be a fair specimen of M. de Bernard's powers, but, as far as it goes, it is as witty and amusing as any thing he has written. It is entitled—

A CONSULTATION.

Towards the beginning of last autumn, amongst a number of persons assembled in Doctor Magnian's waiting room, sat a man of about forty years of age, fair complexioned, thin, pale, with a slight stoop in his shoulders, and altogether of a weak and sickly aspect, that would have convinced any one he was in the house of a physician. On his entrance, this person had established himself in a corner with an uneasy air, and there waited until all the other patients had had their consultations. When the last had departed, the master of the house approached him with a friendly smile.

"Good morning, Bouchereau," said the doctor; "excuse me for making you wait; but my time belongs in the first instance to the sick, and I trust you have no such claim on an early audience."

"The sufferings of the mind are worse than those of the body," said the pale man, with a stifled sigh.

"What's the matter?" cried the doctor. "You look haggard and anxious. Surely Madame Bouchereau is not ill?"

"My wife is in robust health," replied Bouchereau, smiling bitterly.

"Then what is the cause of your agitation? The mind, say you? If you do not speak, how am I to tell what passes in yours? Come, how can I serve you?"

"My dear doctor," said the other, sitting down with a most dejected countenance, "we have known each other for twenty years. I look upon you as my best friend, and in you I have unlimited confidence."

"Well, well!" said the doctor—"enough of compliments."

"They are not compliments; I speak from my heart. And the strange confession I have resolved to make to you will be sufficient proof of my esteem for your character."

"To the point!" cried Magnian impatiently.

"The fact is melancholy for me, and may even appear ridiculous. That is why I hesitate. Promise me, in the first place, never to reveal what I am about to tell you."

"The secret of the confessional is as sacred for the physician as for the priest," said Doctor Magnian gravely.

Bouchereau again sighed, bit his lips, and gazed up at the ceiling. "You know Pelletier?" he at last said, looking piteously at his friend. [Pg 599]

"The captain on the staff? Of course I do. Sanguine habit, short neck, more shoulders than brains, organisation of a bull! I have always predicted he would die of apoplexy."

"Heaven fulfil your prophecy!"

"You astonish me! I thought you friends."

"Friends!" repeated Bouchereau, with mingled irony, and indignation.

"*Que diantre!* Speak out, or hold your tongue. I am no Œdipus to guess your riddle."

The impatience that sparkled in the doctor's eyes brought his doleful friend to the substance of his intended confession.

"Well, my dear Magnian," said he, in an agitated voice, "in two words, here is the case: Pelletier makes love to my wife."

To conceal a smile, the doctor protruded his under-lip, and nodded his head several times with affected gravity.

"Who would have thought it?" he at last exclaimed. "I never suspected the great dragoon of such good taste. But are you quite sure? Husbands are usually the last persons to discover those things."

"I am only too sure; and you shall hear how. My wife is at Fontainbleau, passing a few days with her mother. The day before yesterday I happened to remark that the key of my desk fitted her drawers. Mechanically, I opened one of them, and in a sort of mysterious pigeon-hole I found several letters from Pelletier."

"The deuce you did! But why open drawers belonging to your wife?"

"It is my right. Besides, do not judge hastily. From the tenor of the correspondence, I am convinced Virginia's only fault is to have received the letters and concealed the fact from me. I am pretty sure she has given the writer no encouragement, and I am therefore much less angry with her than with Pelletier. Him I will never pardon. A man to whom I have thrown open my house! an old comrade at Sainte Barbe! A friend, in short; at least I thought him so!"

"You forget that one is never betrayed but by one's friends."

"I called upon him yesterday."

"Ah!"

"I reproached him with his shameful conduct. Can you guess his answer?"

"He denied the fact."

"At first. But when I showed him his letters he saw it was useless to lie. 'My dear Bouchereau,' he said, in his impertinent manner, 'since you know all about it, I will not take the trouble to contradict you. It is perfectly true that I am in love with your wife; I have told her so already, and I cannot promise you that I will not tell her so again, for very likely I should not keep my promise. I perfectly understand my conduct may be disagreeable to you, but you know I am too much the gentleman not to accept the responsibility of my acts and deeds. And if you feel offended, I am at your orders, ready to give you satisfaction, when, where, and how you like.'"

"Very cool indeed!" said the physician, struggling violently to keep his countenance. "What! he had the effrontery to tell you that?"

"Word for word."

"And what was your answer?"

"That he should hear from me shortly. Then I left him, deeming further discussion unbecoming. And so the matter stands."

The Doctor looked grave. After walking once up and down the room, his eyes on the ground, his hands behind his back, he returned to his visitor.

"What shall you do?" he said, looking him steadily in the face.

"What do you advise?"

"Such behaviour is very hard to put up with, but on the other hand, I should be sorry to see you engaged in a duel with that bully Pelletier."

"A professed duellist," cried Bouchereau, his eyes opening wider and wider; "a man who passes his mornings in the shooting gallery and fencing room, and has a duel regularly once a quarter!"

"And you," said the Doctor with a piercing look, "have you ever fought a duel?"

"Never," replied the married man, looking paler even than his wont; "not but that I have had opportunities, but duelling is repugnant to my principles. The idea of shedding blood shocks me; it is a barbarous custom, a monstrous anomaly in these civilised days." [Pg 600]

"In short, you have no very strong desire to enter the lists?"

"Were I positively outraged, had I a mortal injury to revenge, the voice of passion would perhaps drown that of humanity; for, in certain moments, the wisest man cannot answer for himself. But in this instance, the affair not being so serious, if Pelletier, instead of affecting an arrogant tone, had made the apology to which I think I have a right, and had promised to behave better in future, then—all things considered—to avoid scandal—don't you think it would have been possible and honourable—"

"Not to fight?" interrupted Magnian; "certainly. If you go out with Pelletier, ten to one that he bleeds you like a barn-door fowl, and that would be unpleasant."

"Doctor, you misunderstand me."

"Not at all. And to prove the contrary, you shall not fight, and the Captain shall make you a satisfactory apology. Is not that what you want?"

The Doctor's penetration called up a faint flush on the cheek of the lover of peace.

"Pelletier is a brute," resumed Magnian, as if speaking to himself. "Staff officers have generally more breeding than that. To make love to the wife, well and good; but to defy the husband is contrary to all the rules of polite society."

"You advise me, then, to let the matter be arranged?" said Bouchereau, in an insinuating tone.

"Certainly," replied the physician laughing, "and what is more, I undertake the negotiation. I repeat my words: to-morrow Pelletier shall retract his provocation, make you a formal apology, and swear never again to disturb your conjugal felicity. This is my share of the business; the rest concerns you."

"The rest?"

"It is one thing to promise, another to perform. It would be prudent to facilitate the observance of the Captain's vow by a little tour, which for a few months would remove Madame Bouchereau from the immediate vicinity of this military Adonis. His duty keeps him at Paris; you are free. Why not pass the winter in the South: at Nice, for instance?"

"It has already occurred to me that a short absence would be desirable, and I rejoice to find you of my opinion. But why Nice, rather than any other town?"

"The climate is extremely salutary, especially for a person whose chest is rather delicate."

"But my chest is very strong,—at least I hope so," interrupted Bouchereau, in an uneasy tone, and trying to read the Doctor's thoughts.

"Certainly; I say nothing to the contrary," replied Magnian gravely; "I have no particular motive for my advice; but precautions never do harm, and it is easier to prevent than cure."

"You think me threatened with consumption!" cried Bouchereau, who, as has been shown, entertained the warmest affection for Number One.

"I said nothing of the sort," replied the physician, as if reproaching himself for having said too much. "If you want to know why I proposed Nice, I will tell you: it is from a selfish motive. I shall probably pass part of this winter there, and my stay would be made very agreeable by the society of yourself and Madame Bouchereau."

"Well, we will see; the thing may be arranged," replied Bouchereau. And he left the house, more uneasy than he entered it; for to the apprehension of a duel was superadded the fear of a dangerous disease, by which he had never before contemplated the possibility of his being attacked.

At six o'clock that evening, Doctor Magnian entered the Café Anglais, where he made pretty sure

to find Pelletier. Nor was he mistaken; the gallant Captain was there, solitarily installed at a little table, and dining very heartily, without putting water in his wine. He was a tall, stout, vigorous fellow, square in the shoulder, narrow in the hip, with a bold keen eye, a well-grown mustache, a high complexion, and a muscular arm; one of those men of martial mien who would seem to have missed their vocation if they were not soldiers, and whose aspect inspires the most presumptuous with a certain reserve and modesty. More doughty champions than the cadaverous Bouchereau might have shrunk from an encounter with a lion of such formidable breed. [Pg 601]

The physician and the officer saluted each other cordially, and after exchanging a few compliments, took their dinner at different tables. They left the coffee-house at the same time, and meeting at the door, walked arm in arm along the boulevard, in the direction of the Madeleine.

"Well, Doctor," said Pelletier jocosely, "have you found me what I have asked you for at least ten times: a pretty woman—maid or widow, fair or dark, tall or short, all one to me—who will consent to make me the happiest of men, by uniting her lot with mine? I ask only a hundred thousand crowns: you must own I am modest in my expectations."

"Too modest! you are worth more than that."

"You are laughing at me?"

"Not at all; besides the moment would be ill chosen to jest, for I have a serious affair on hand. Bouchereau has commissioned me to speak to you."

"And you call that a serious affair?" said the Captain, laughing scornfully.

"A matter that can only end in bloodshed, appears to me deserving of the epithet," said the Doctor, with assumed gravity.

"Ah! M. Bouchereau thirsts for my blood?" cried Pelletier, laughing still louder; "hitherto, I took him to be rather herbivorous than carniverous. And with what sauce does he propose to eat me—sword or pistol?"

"He leaves you the choice of arms," replied M. Magnian, with imperturbable seriousness.

"It's all one to me. I told him so already. Let me see: to-morrow I breakfast with some of my comrades; it is a sort of regimental feed, and I should not like to miss it, but the day after to-morrow, I'm your man. Will that do?"

"Perfectly. The day after to-morrow, seven in the morning, at the entrance of the forest of Vincennes."

"Agreed," said the Captain, familiarly slapping his companion's arm with his large brawny hand. "So you meddle with duelling, Doctor? I should have thought a man of your profession would have looked upon it as a dangerous competitor."

The physician replied to this very old joke, by a malicious smile, which he immediately repressed.

"At random you have touched me on the raw," he said, after a moment's silence. "Shall I tell you the strange, I might say the monstrous idea that has just come into my head?"

"Pray do. I am rather partial to monstrous ideas."

"It occurred to me that for the interest of my reputation, I ought to wish the projected duel to prove fatal to Bouchereau."

"Why so?" inquired the officer, with some surprise.

"Because if you don't kill him, in less than a year I shall have the credit of his death."

"I don't understand. Are you going to fight him?"

"Certainly not; but I am his physician, and as such, responsible for his existence in the eyes of the vast number of persons who expect medical science to give sick men the health that nature refuses them. Therefore, as Bouchereau, according to all appearance, has not a year to live——"

"What's the matter with him?" cried Pelletier, opening his great eyes.

"Consumption!" replied the Doctor, in a compassionate tone, "a chronic disease—quite incurable! I was about sending him to Nice. We, physicians, as you know, when we have exhausted the resources of medicine, send our patients to the waters or to the South. If nothing happens to him the day after to-morrow, he shall set out: God knows if he will ever return."

"Consumptive! he who is always as sallow as Debureau."

"Complexion has nothing to do with it."

"And you think he is in danger?"

"I do not give him a year to live; perhaps not six months."

The two men walked some distance, silent and serious.

"Yes, Captain," said the Doctor, breaking the pause, "we may look upon Poor Bouchereau as a

dead man, even setting aside the risk he incurs from your good blade. Before twelve months are past, his wife may think about a second husband. She will be a charming little widow, and will not want for admirers." [Pg 602]

Pelletier cast a sidelong look at his companion, but the Doctor's air of perfect simplicity dispelled the suspicion his last words had awakened.

"If Bouchereau died, his wife would be rich?" said the Captain, musingly, but in an interrogative tone.

"*Peste!*" replied Magnian, "you may say that. Not one hundred thousand, but two hundred thousand crowns, at the very least."

"You exaggerate!" cried the Captain, his eyes suddenly sparkling.

"Easy to calculate," said Magnian confidently—"Madame Bouchereau inherited a hundred thousand francs from her father, she will have a hundred and fifty thousand from her mother, and her husband will leave her three hundred and fifty thousand more: add that up."

"Her husband's fortune is secured to her, then, by marriage contract?" inquired Pelletier, who had listened with rapidly increasing interest to his companion's enumeration.

"Every *sou*," replied the physician, solemnly.

The two words were worth an hour's oration, and with a person whom he esteemed intelligent, M. Magnian would not have added another. But, remembering that the Captain, as he had said a few hours before, was more richly endowed with shoulders than with brains, he did not fear to weigh a little heavily upon an idea from which he expected a magical result.

"For you," he jestingly resumed, "who have the bump of matrimony finely developed, here would be a capital match. Young, pretty, amiable, and a fortune of six hundred thousand francs. Though, to be sure, if you kill the husband, you can hardly expect to marry the widow."

Pelletier forced a laugh, which ill agreed with the thoughtful expression his physiognomy had assumed; then he changed the conversation. Certain that he had attained his end, the Doctor pleaded a professional visit, and left the Captain upon the boulevard, struck to the very heart by the six hundred thousand francs of the future widow.

Without halt or pause, and with the furious velocity of a wounded wild-boar, Pelletier went, without help of omnibus, from the Madeleine to the Bastille. When he reached the Porte St Martin, his determination was already taken.

"Without knowing it," he thought, "the Doctor has given me excellent advice. Fight Bouchereau! not so stupid. I should kill him; I am so unlucky! and then how could I reappear before Virginia? The little coquette views me with no indifferent eye; and luckily I have made love to her for the last three months, so that when the grand day comes, she cannot suppose I love her for her money. Kill Bouchereau! that *would* be absurd. Let him die in his bed, the dear man—I shall not prevent it. I shall have plenty of fighting with my rivals, as soon as his wife is a widow. Six hundred thousand francs! They'll throng about her like bees round a honey-pot. But let them take care; I'm first in the field, and not the man to let them walk over my body."

The following morning, long before the consultations had begun, the Captain strode into Magnian's reception room.

"Doctor," said he, with military frankness, "what you said yesterday about Bouchereau's illness, has made me seriously reflect. I cannot fight a man who has only six months to live. Suppose I wound him: a hurt, of which another would get well, might be mortal to one in his state of health; and then I should reproach myself, all my life, with having killed an old friend for a mere trifle. Did he tell you the cause of our quarrel?"

"No," replied the Doctor, who, in his capacity of negotiator, thought himself at liberty to lie.

"A few hasty words," said Pelletier, deceived by Magnian's candid air; "in fact, I believe I was in the wrong. You know I am very hasty; à propos of some trifle or other, I was rough to poor Bouchereau, and now I am sorry for it. In short, I have had enough duels to be able to avoid one without any body suspecting a white feather in my wing. So if you will advise Bouchereau to let the matter drop, I give you *carte blanche*. Between ourselves, I think he will not be sorry for it." [Pg 603]

"You may find yourself mistaken, Captain," replied the Doctor, with admirable seriousness; "yesterday Bouchereau was much exasperated: although of peaceable habits, he is a perfect tiger when his blood is up. It appears that you hurt his feelings, and unless you make a formal apology ——"

"Well, well," interrupted Pelletier, "it is not much in my way to apologise, and this is the first time; but with an old friend, I will stretch a point. I would rather make concessions than have to reproach myself hereafter. Shall we go to Bouchereau?"

"Let us go," said the Doctor, who could hardly help smiling to see how the voice of interest instilled sensibility and humanity into the heart of a professed duellist.

When Magnian and the officer entered his drawing-room, Bouchereau, who had not shut his eyes the whole night, experienced all the sensations of the criminal to whom sentence of death is read.

But the first words spoken restored fluidity to his blood, for a moment frozen in his veins. The Captain made the most explicit and formal apology, and retired after shaking the hand of his old friend, who, overjoyed at his escape, did not show himself very exacting.

"Doctor, you are a sorcerer!" cried Bouchereau, as soon as he found himself alone with the physician.

"It is almost part of my profession," replied Magnian laughing. "However, the terrible affair is nearly arranged. I have done my share; do yours. When shall you set out for the south?"

The satisfaction depicted on Bouchereau's physiognomy vanished, and was replaced by sombre anxiety.

"Doctor," said he, in an altered voice, "You must tell me the truth; I have resolution to hear my sentence with calmness; my chest is attacked, is it not?"

"You mean your head."

"My head also!" cried Bouchereau, positively green with terror.

"You are mad," said the Doctor, shrugging his shoulders; "I would willingly change my chest for yours."

"You deceive me. I cannot forget what escaped you yesterday. I coughed all night long, and I have a pain between my shoulders which I never perceived before."

"All fancy!"

"I feel what I feel," continued Bouchereau gloomily; "I do not fear death; but I confess that I could not, without regret, bid an eternal adieu, in the prime of life, to my wife and family. It is my duty to be cautious for their sake, if not for my own. Instead of writing to Virginia to return home, I will join her at Fontainbleau, and start at once for Nice."

"Go," said the doctor, "the journey cannot hurt you."

"But do you think it will benefit me?"

"Without a doubt."

"It is not too late, then, to combat this frightful malady."

"Oh, you are not very far gone," said Magnian ironically. "I shall be at Nice myself in less than six weeks, so that you are sure to be attended by a physician in whom you have confidence, if, contrary to all probability, your state of health requires it."

The two friends parted: the Doctor laughing at his patient's fears, the patient imagining himself in imminent peril, and almost doubting whether it would not have been better to fall by the terrible sword of Captain Pelletier than to linger and expire, in the flower of his age, upon an inhospitable foreign shore. In two days, Bouchereau, haunted by his funereal visions, had taken out his passport, arranged his affairs, and completed his preparations. Getting into a post-chaise, he made his unexpected appearance at Fontainbleau; and, exerting his marital authority to an extent he had never previously ventured upon, he carried off his wife, stupified by such a sudden decision, and greatly vexed to leave Paris, which Pelletier's languishing epistles had lately made her find an unusually agreeable residence. By the end of the week, the husband and wife, one trembling for his life, the other regretting her admirer, arrived at Nice, where, towards the close of the autumn, they were joined by Dr Magnian, who thus showed himself scrupulously exact in the fulfilment of his promise. [Pg 604]

On an evening of the month of April following, the tragedy of *Les Horaces* was performed at the *Théâtre Français*. Thanks to the young talent of Mademoiselle Rachel, rather than to the old genius of Corneille, the house was crowded. In the centre of the right-hand balcony, Captain Pelletier, accompanied by some blusterers of the same kidney, talked loud, laughed ditto, criticised the actors and spectators, and disturbed all his neighbours, without any one venturing to call him to order; so powerful, in certain cases, is the influence of an insolent look, a ferocious mustache, and an elephantine build.

After examining with his opera glass every corner of the theatre, from the pit to the roof, the Captain at last caught sight of a group, snugly installed in a comfortable box, which at once fixed his attention. It consisted of Monsieur and Madame Bouchereau, in front, and of Doctor Magnian, seated behind the lady. The appearance and attitude of these three persons were characteristic. With his usual pallid complexion and unhappy look, his eyes adorned with a pair of blue spectacles—a new embellishment, which he owed to an imaginary ophthalmia—the pacific husband whiled away the *entr'acte* by the study of a play-bill, which he abandoned when the curtain rose, to bestow his deepest attention on the actors, even though none but the inferior characters were on the stage. Madame Bouchereau trifled with an elegant nosegay, whose perfume she frequently inhaled, and whose crimson flowers contrasted so well with the fairness of her complexion, as to justify a suspicion that there was some coquetry in the manœuvre executed with such apparent negligence. Leaning back in her chair, she frequently turned her head, the better to hear Magnian's smiling and half-whispered remarks. The husband paid no attention to their conversation, and did not seem to remark its intimate and confidential character.

"Who is it you have been looking at for the last quarter of an hour?" inquired one of the Captain's comrades. "At your old flame, Madame Bouchereau? I thought you had forgotten her long ago."

"I did not know she had returned from Nice," replied Pelletier, with a reserved air.

"She has been at Paris a fort-night."

"Does not Bouchereau look very ill? The southern climate has not done him much good. He is twice as pale as before he went. Poor Bouchereau!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the officer, "have you been gulled by the story of the decline? That is really too good."

"What is too good?" asked the Captain abruptly.

"The trick that rogue Magnian played Bouchereau and you; for if I may judge from your astonished look, you also have been mystified."

"Berton, you abuse my patience," said Pelletier in a surly tone.

"Wolves do not eat one another," replied Berton laughing; "so let us talk without anger. The story is this:—all Paris, except yourself, has been laughing at it for a week past. It appears that on the one hand, although no one suspected it, the aforesaid Magnian was in love with Madame Bouchereau, and that on the other, finding himself threatened with a pulmonary complaint, he thought it advisable to pass the winter in a warm climate. What did the arch-schemer? He persuaded Bouchereau that it was he, Bouchereau, whose chest was affected; sent him off to Nice with his pretty wife, and, at his leisure, without haste or hurry, joined them there. You have only to look at them, as they sit yonder, to guess the *denoûement* of the history. The appropriate label for their box would be the title of one of Paul de Kock's last novels; *la Femme*, *le Mari*, *el l'Amant*. Magnian is a cunning dog, and has very ingenious ideas. Fearing, doubtless, that the husband might be too clear-sighted, he threatened him with an ophthalmia, and made him wear blue spectacles. Clever, wasn't it? and a capital story?"

"Charming, delightful!" cried the Captain, with a smile that resembled a gnashing of teeth.

The tragedy was over. Dr Magnian left his box; Pelletier followed his example. The next minute the two men met in the lobby. [Pg 605]

"Doctor, a word with you," said the officer sternly.

"Two, if you like, Captain," was Magnian's jovial reply.

"It appears, that in spite of your prognostics, Bouchereau is in perfect health."

"*Voudriez-vous qu'il mourût?* Would you have him die?" said the Doctor, parodying with a comical emphasis the delivery of Joanny, who had taken the part of the father of the Horatii.

"I know you are excellent at a joke," retorted Pelletier, whose vexation was rapidly turning to anger; "but you know that I am not accustomed to serve as a butt. Be good enough to speak seriously. Is it true that Bouchereau was never in danger?"

"In great danger, on the contrary. Was he not about fighting you?"

"So that when you sent him to Nice——?"

"It was to prevent the duel. As a physician, I watch over the health of my clients; and it was my duty to preserve Bouchereau from your sword, which is said to be a terrible malady."

"One of which you will perhaps have to cure yourself before very long," exclaimed the Captain, completely exasperated by the Doctor's coolness. "The idiot Bouchereau may die of fear, or of any thing else. I certainly shall not do him the honour to meddle with him; but you, my friend, so skilled in sharp jests, I shall be glad to see if your valour equals your wit."

The part of an unfortunate and mystified rival is so humiliating, that Pelletier's vanity prevented his stating his real ground of complaint, and mentioning the name of Madame Bouchereau. The Doctor imitated his reserve, and listened to the officer's defiance with the same tranquil smile which had previously played upon his countenance.

"My dear Captain," he said, "at this moment you would particularly like to pass your good sword through my body, or to lodge a ball in my leg—for, in consideration of our old friendship, I presume you would spare my head. You shall have the opportunity, if you positively insist upon it. But if you kill me, who will arrange your marriage with Mademoiselle Nanteuil?"

Pelletier stared at his adversary with an astonished look, which redoubled the Doctor's good humour.

"Who is Mademoiselle Nanteuil?" he at last said, his voice involuntarily softening.

"An amiable heiress whom I attend, although she is in perfect health; who has two hundred thousand francs in possession, as much more in perspective, and who, if an intelligent friend undertook the negotiation, would consent, I think, to bestow her hand and fortune upon a good-looking fellow like yourself."

"Confound this Magnian!" said the Captain, taking the Doctor's arm, "it is impossible to be angry

with him."

FOOTNOTES:

[8] It is pretty generally known—even to those to whom it has not been granted to stand in the imposing presence of our fast friend and ancient ally, Monsieur Alexandre Dumas—that there is a slight tinge of black in the blood of that greatest of French *romanciers*, past, present, or to come. In connexion with the fact, we will cite an anecdote:—

A person more remarkable for inquisitiveness than for correct breeding—one of those who, devoid of delicacy and reckless of rebuffs, pry into every thing—took the liberty to question M. Dumas rather closely concerning his genealogical tree.

"You are a quadroon, M. Dumas?" he began.

"I am, sir," quietly replied Dumas, who has sense enough not to be ashamed of a descent he cannot conceal.

"And your father?"

"Was a mulatto."

"And your grandfather?"

"A negro," hastily answered the dramatist, whose patience was waning fast.

"And may I inquire what your great-grandfather was?"

"An ape, sir," thundered Dumas, with a fierceness that made his impertinent interrogator shrink into the smallest possible compass. "An ape, sir—my pedigree commences where yours terminates."

The father of Alexander Dumas, the republican general of the same name, was a mulatto, born in St Domingo, the son of a negress and of the white Marquis de la Pailleterie. By what legitimatizing process the bend sinister was erased, and the marquisate preserved, we have hitherto been unable to ascertain.

Transcriber's note: The Greek in the footnotes of this article was very hard to read. An asterisk indicates an illegible letter.

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BELISARIUS,—WAS HE BLIND?

The name of Belisarius is more generally known through the medium of the novel, the opera, and the print-shop than by the pages of history. Procopius, Gibbon, and Lord Mahon have done less for his universal popularity than some unknown Greek romancer or ballad-singer in the middle ages. Our ideas of the hero are involuntarily connected with the figure of a tall old man, clad in a ragged mantle, with a stout staff in his left hand, and a platter to receive an obolus in his right, accompanied by a fair boy grasping his tattered garments, and carefully guiding his steps.

We shall now venture to investigate the relationship between the Belisarius of romance, and the Belisarius of history; and we believe we shall be able to prove that the historical hero died in full possession of his sight several centuries before the birth of his blind namesake, the hero of romance; that he was not more directly related to the unfortunate sufferer, than our disreputable acquaintance Don Juan of the opera, was to the gallant and presumptuous Don Juan of Austria, the hero of Lepanto; and that in short, as we say in Scotland, there was no connexion but the name. In this case, however, the connexion has proved a pretty close one; for a noble, accomplished and accurate English historian, Lord Mahon, in his "Life of Belisarius" has considered it strong enough to advance a plea of identity between the warrior of history and the beggar of romance.

Such an authority renders the labour of brushing the dust from a few volumes of Byzantine Chronicles to us "a not ungrateful task;" and one that we hope will not prove entirely without interest to our readers. Our object is to re-establish the truth of history, and to restore to some Greek Walter Scott of the middle ages the whole merit of constructing an immortal tale, which for centuries has tinged the stern annals of the Eastern empire with an unwonted colouring of pathos. Lord Mahon has so fairly stated his case, that we believe his candour has laid criticism to sleep, and his readers have generally adopted his opinions.

The truth is, the Belisarius of history, the bold and splendid general of Justinian, is a hero of the Roman empire, of the Eastern or Byzantine empire, if you please, but still historically a Roman hero. Now, on the other hand, the Belisarius of romance, the vision of a noble victim of imperial ingratitude, is a creation of Greek genius, of modern Greek genius, if you prefer adding the depreciating epithet, but still of Greek genius placed in its undying opposition to Roman power.

We must now introduce to our readers the Belisarius of history as he really lived, acted, and suffered. It is not necessary for this purpose to recite his military exploits. They are described in the immortal pages of Gibbon, and minutely detailed in the accurate biography by Lord Mahon. It

will suffice for our purpose to collect a few authentic sketches of his personal conduct and character, and some anecdotes of his style of living, from the works of his secretary Procopius, the last classic Greek writer, and an historian of no mean merit.

Belisarius was born in the city of Germania, a metropolitan see on the frontiers of the Thracian and Illyrian nations.[9] Thus, though strictly speaking he was neither a Roman nor a Greek, he considered himself, and was considered by his contemporaries, a Roman. The dialect of the inhabitants of Thrace and Illyria is supposed still to possess a representative in the modern [Pg 607] Albanian; but in the time of Justinian, the language of the higher classes in the cities was Latin, and there can be no doubt that Belisarius spoke both Latin and Greek with equal fluency. As far as race was concerned, it seems, however, tolerably certain, that he was more closely allied in blood to Scanderberg and Miaoulis than to Scipio or Epaminondas. As he was a man of rank and family, he became an officer of the imperial guard at an early age.[10] His tall and vigorous frame, smooth and handsome face, joined to a smoother tongue, a calm and equable disposition, and a stout heart, made him the very man to rise rapidly in the Roman service. Accordingly, as early as the year 526, he appears in a high military command.[11] Like Marlborough, to whom he bears some resemblance in personal character, he strengthened his position at court by marrying the Lady Antonina, the beautiful favourite of the Empress Theodora, though she was as fierce a shrew as the Duchess Sarah, and wherewithal not so modest, if we give credit to her husband's secretary.

It was the fashion at the Horse-guards of Constantinople during the reign of Justinian, to encourage barbarian usages in military affairs. Hussars from the country of the Gepids, cuirassiers from Armenia and the ancient seats of the Goths, and light cavalry from the regions occupied by the Huns, were the favourite bodies of troops. The young nobles of the Roman empire adopted the uniforms of these regiments; wore long hair, inlaid armour, and tight nether garments, and never condescended to invest their persons in the modest equipments of the old Roman dragoons, or of the modern legionaries whose ranks were officered by mere provincials.

The reasons which compelled the imperial government to prefer foreign mercenaries to native troops were based at first on principles of internal policy, and at last on absolute necessity. Augustus feared the Roman senators and knights; Constantine had not the means of paying for good Roman soldiers; and Justinian could not have found a sufficient number of suitable recruits among the citizens of his wide-extended empire. The pivot of the administration of Imperial Rome, as of Imperial Britain, was the treasury, not the Horse-guards. The taxes paid by the citizens filled that treasury: but a soldier was exempt from taxation; consequently, it became a measure of unavoidable necessity on the part of the Roman government to prevent citizens escaping their financial burdens by becoming soldiers. Had the citizens got possession of arms, Rome could not have remained a despotism.

On the other hand, the system of Roman tactics rendered it necessary to procure military recruits of a degree of physical strength far above the average standard of mankind. When the population of the empire had been divided into two widely separated social classes of wealthy citizens and poor cultivators, serfs, or slaves, the supply of recruits furnished by the richest portions of the empire became very small. The danger of employing foreign barbarians, who remained isolated amidst an innumerable population, and surrounded by hundreds of walled towns, manned by [Pg 608] their own municipal guards, was evidently less than that of entrusting legions of slaves with arms, and teaching them habits of combination and discipline. The servile wars, which inflicted a mortal wound on the Republic, would have been renewed, and would probably have soon destroyed the Empire.[12]

It is customary with historians to discourse on the impolicy of the Roman emperors in employing barbarian mercenaries; but the fact is, that their finances did not admit of their purchasing the thews and sinews required for the service any where but among the barbarians. The system certainly answered admirably for the imperial government. It upheld the tyranny of the Cæsars and the terror of the Roman arms for more than a thousand years; and it might have rendered Rome immortal had she not committed suicide.

If the system really be so bad as it is often represented, it seems strange that it should have been adopted with all its imperfections in British India. But the truth is this; the mercenaries of the Roman armies were more faithful to their contract than the emperors. It is by sovereigns and ministers of state, not by generals of mercenaries, that empires are prepared for destruction. Our Indian empire is always in greater danger from a conceited Foreign secretary or a foolish Governor-general than from a rebellion of the native troops. If our administration be only as wise as that of Imperial Rome, somewhat more just, and a great deal less avaricious, there seems no reason why a British government should rule at Calcutta for a shorter period than a Roman one at Constantinople. The laws of Rome still survive in the courts of justice of the greater part of Europe; the spirit of the Roman Republic breathes, at the present hour, in full energy in the Papal councils; and are we to suppose that the institutions of a more Catholic philanthropy, in the progress of development under the British constitution, are less capable of acquiring an inherent vitality?

The age of Belisarius was deeply imbued with the military spirit of the middle ages; and Belisarius was himself as proud of his accomplishments as a daring horseman, a good lance, and a stout bowman, as of his military science. Cavalry was the favourite portion of the army in his day, and he shared in the general contempt felt for infantry. The horsemen were sheathed in

complete steel; and their helmets, breast-plates and shields, were impenetrable even to the shafts of the Persians, who drew their bow-strings to the right ear, and threw discredit on the prowess of the Homeric archers.[13] The Roman officers, as must always be the case where cavalry is the principal arm, were remarkable for personal courage and impetuous daring; and perhaps in the whole annals of Rome there cannot be found another period in which headlong rashness was so universally the characteristic of the generals of the Roman armies. [Pg 609]

"How concise—how just—how beautiful is the whole picture! I see the attitudes of the archer—I hear the twanging of the bow." The figures of the archers in the Æginetan marbles at Munich, admirably illustrate the genius of Homer and the taste of Gibbon.]

The favourite position of Belisarius on the field of battle was to figure like Richard Cœur-de-Lion as a colonel of cuirassiers, not like Marlborough, to perform the duties of a commander-in-chief. Procopius prefaces an account of one of his rashest combats by declaring that he was not in the habit of exposing himself unnecessarily, but on the occasion in question, he owns that Belisarius fought too much like a mere soldier in the front rank.

The whole Gothic army advancing to besiege Rome had passed the Tiber before Belisarius was aware that his troops, stationed to defend the Milvian bridge, had abandoned their post. On going out to reconnoitre, he fell in with the enemy. Instead of retreating, he led on the cavalry that attended him to the charge. He was mounted on his favourite charger; the Greeks called it Phalion, the barbarians Balan, from its colour: it was a bay with a white face. Balan was perfectly broken to his hand, and his armour, wrought by the skill of Byzantine artists, was too light to incommode his powerful frame, yet tempered to resist the best-directed arrow or javelin. The person of Belisarius was soon recognised in the Gothic army, and the shout spread far and wide to the javelin-men and the archers, "At the bay horse! At the bay horse!" The bravest of the Gothic chiefs placed their lances in rest, and rushed forward to bear down the Roman general. The guards of Belisarius, in that trying hour, showed themselves worthy of their own and, their general's fame. They closed up by his side, so well as to leave him only a single enemy. It is ridiculous to attempt describing a personal encounter thirteen centuries after the event. The duties of Procopius did not place him at the elbow of Belisarius at such an hour, and even if he had been there he could have seen but little of what others were about.

The result of the encounter is matter of history. A thousand Goths fell in the skirmish, and the bravest of the veteran guards of Belisarius perished by his side. The barbarians were driven back to their camp; but when Belisarius imprudently followed them, he was repulsed by the Gothic infantry forming before the lines, and the Romans were compelled to make a precipitate retreat. They galloped back to the gates of Rome closely pursued by fresh squadrons of Gothic cavalry. But as they reached the walls in disorder, the garrison refused to open the gates, fearing lest the Goths might force their way into the city with the fugitives, and believing that Belisarius had perished in the battle. There was now nothing left for the commander-in-chief but to form a small squadron of his faithful guards, and make a desperate and sudden charge on the advancing Goths. The manœuvre was executed with consummate skill, and the leading ranks of the enemy were broken, thrown into confusion, and forced back on the succeeding squadrons by the impetuous charge. The cry spread that the garrison had made a sally; the obscurity of evening was commencing, the Goths commenced their retreat; and Belisarius and his wearied troops were at last allowed to enter Rome. In this desperate encounter, their respective enemies allowed that Belisarius was the bravest of the Romans, and Wisand of the Goths. The Roman general escaped without a wound, but the valiant Goth, borne down in the combat around the person of Belisarius, was left for dead on the field, where he remained all the next day, and it was only on the third morning, in taking up his body for interment, that he was discovered to be still alive. He recovered from his wounds and lived long afterwards.[14]

Belisarius, unlike the noble barons of more modern days, who were all pride and presumption in their iron shells, mounted on their dray horses, but useless when dismounted, did not disdain to add to his knightly accomplishments that of a most skilful archer. This skill saved Rome in a dangerous attack. When the Goths advanced their movable towers against the walls, drawn forward by innumerable yokes of oxen, Belisarius, placing himself on the ramparts, ordered the garrison to allow the towers to advance unmolested by the machines to within bow-shot. Then taking up a long bow, which might have graced the hand of Robin Hood, and choosing two shafts of a yard in length, he drew the bowstring to his ear, and shot his shaft at the tower. The Gothic captain, who was directing its movements from the summit, had trusted too much to the workmanship of his Milan armour. The fabric was not equal to that of Byzantium. The shaft pierced him to the heart; he tottered a moment on the edge of the tower, and then fell headlong forward. The second shaft brought down another Goth. Belisarius then ordered his archers to shoot at the oxen, which soon fell, pierced by a thousand arrows; and the towers that the Gothic army counted on to enable them to make a general assault, remained immovable until the Romans could burn them.[15] [Pg 610]

Belisarius, fond of cavalry, seems to have overlooked, nay, even to have neglected, the discipline of the Roman infantry. While besieged in Rome, he defended the place by a series of cavalry skirmishes, and allowed all the officers of the infantry who could mount themselves to serve on horse-back. Some of the native officers of the legionaries, jealous of their reputation, offered to lead their troops on foot. Belisarius would hardly allow them to quit the walls, and plainly expressed his want of confidence in the Roman infantry on the field of battle, while he showed his utter contempt for the city militia, by keeping it carefully shut up within the walls. The battle in

which the infantry took part proved unsuccessful; but the officers who led it died bravely, sustaining the combat after the cavalry had fled.[16]

Yet Belisarius knew well how to appreciate the tactics of the old Roman legion; and he made use of a singular method of obtaining the great military advantages to be derived from the possession of a body of the best infantry. At the battle of Kallinikon, when his cavalry was broken by the iron-cased horsemen of Persia—the renowned *kataphraktoi*, or original steel lobsters—the Roman general, with the genius of a Scipio or a Cæsar, saw that the steadiness of a body of infantry could alone save his army. He immediately ordered the heavy lancers of his own guard to dismount, and form square before the feebler and less perfectly equipped soldiers of the legions of the line. With this phalanx, presenting its closely serried shields and long lances to the repeated charges of the *kataphraktoi*, he foiled every attack of the victorious Persians, and saved his army.[17]

Belisarius, however, acquired more favour at the court of Justinian, and secured the personal affection of the Emperor more, by slaughtering the people of Constantinople in a city rebellion, originating out of the factions of the Circus, than by his exploits against the distant enemies of the empire. The affair was called the Day of Victory. The scene was repeated on the 4th of October 1795, in the city of Paris, and was called the Day of the Sections. The part of the Thracian Belisarius was then performed by the Corsican Bonaparte. In the tragedy of old, three thousand citizens were massacred by the mild Belisarius, in that of Paris, hardly three hundred perished by the inexorable Napoleon.

The personal conduct of Belisarius is presented to us under two totally different points of view, in the works of his Secretary Procopius. In the authentic history of the Persian, Vandal, and Gothic wars, he appears as the commander-in-chief of the Roman armies, his actions are narrated by a Roman historian, and his conduct is held up to the admiration of Roman society. In the secret history, on the contrary, we have, it is true, the same man described by the same author, but the [Pg 611] work is addressed to the Greek race, and not to their Roman rulers, and it presents Belisarius as the instrument of a corrupt and tyrannical court, engaged in plundering the people, while crouching under the oppression of which he was the minister. The history of Procopius was written for the libraries of the Byzantine nobles; the anecdotes for the clubs of the Greek people. Though composed in the same language, they belong not only to two different classes of literature, but even to the literature of two different races of men.[18]

Belisarius was a fortunate, as well as a great general. His victories over the Vandals and the Goths prove his military talents; but the spectacle of their kings, Gelimer and Witiges, the representatives of the dreaded Genseric and the mighty Theoderic, walking as captives through the streets of Constantinople, made a deeper impression on men's minds than the slaughter of the bloodiest battle. Nor was the restoration of the sacred plate of the Temple of the Jews to the city of Jerusalem, an event of less importance, in a superstitious age, than the destruction of a barbarian monarchy. Among the spoils of the Vandals at Carthage, Belisarius had found in the treasury those sacred vessels which Titus, nearly five centuries before, had carried away to Rome from the ruins of Jerusalem. Genseric had transported these relics to Africa, when he plundered Rome in the year 455. Justinian was generous enough to revive the long forgotten ceremony of a Roman triumph in order to augment the glory of Belisarius; and the sacred plate of the Jews was exhibited to the people of Constantinople amidst the pomp of the gorgeous pageant. The emperor then commanded them to be removed to Jerusalem, to be preserved in a Christian church.[19]

The restoration of the sacred spoils of Jerusalem rendered the name of Belisarius renowned in the eastern world, far beyond the bounds of the Roman empire; the glory of refusing the throne of the Cæsars of the west, amazed the barbarians of Europe as far as the filiation of the Gothic and Germanic races extended. The glory of being deemed worthy of the empire, was eclipsed by the singular display of personal dignity which could refuse the honour. When Belisarius was on the eve of putting an end to the Gothic monarchy by the conquest of Ravenna and the capture of Witiges, the Goths, reflecting on their national position in the days of Alaric and Theoderic, when they were only the soldiers of the empire, offered their submission to Belisarius, and invited him to assume the dignity of Emperor of the West. Belisarius refused the offer. He had seen in his Italian campaigns, that the Gothic nobles of Italy were no longer the same soldiers as the Gothic mercenaries of the imperial armies.[20] The merit of refusing the empire must have been deeply felt by Justinian; but the jealousy excited by the renown, which conferred the option of accepting such power, gradually effaced the impression of that merit in the breasts both of the feeble emperor, and of his energetic and ambitious consort, Theodora. Though Belisarius loved money and splendour, and had more of Pompey than Cæsar in his character, still the boldest cabinet minister must have felt that lie could no longer safely be entrusted with the whole military power of the empire. Though his fidelity remained inviolable, a seditious army could compel him, even if unwilling, to become its instrument. From the day, therefore, that Belisarius refused the Empire of the West, a cloud fell over his military career. It was determined by the imperial administration never again to entrust him with a force sufficient to proceed in a career of conquest. [Pg 612]

It is needless to dwell on the military events of the life of Belisarius. Lord Mahon states it as the purpose of his work, to show how the genius of one man averted the dangers, and corrected the defects, which beset the tottering empire.[21] Gibbon, in gorgeous phrase, exalts him to the dignity of being the Africanus of New Rome; and speaks of the Roman armies as being animated by the spirit of Belisarius, one of those heroic names which are familiar to every age and to every

nation.[22] But if history is to be composed from the facts recorded by historians, rather than from their opinions and their distribution of flattery and censure, it must be owned that Belisarius was only the greatest in a constellation of gallant warriors. Hilbud, Germanos, and Salomon, were his worthy companions in arms; and the eunuch Narses was all but his equal as a general, and greatly his superior as a statesman.

We must now turn to examine the personal conduct of Belisarius. He was unfortunately too much under the influence of his beautiful wife, though she was a few years older than her husband. Her close friendship with the Empress Theodora, her talents, her bold character, and the devoted attachment she displayed to Belisarius, excuses his too servile affection. She embarked with him in the African expedition, though Procopius says that the boldest Roman generals feared the enterprise; and she accompanied him in Italy. In the historical works of Procopius, she is represented as an excellent wife; in his secret libel, as a shameless and profligate woman.

The presence of the Lady Antonina at Carthage and Rome, compelled Belisarius to keep up a splendid and expensive court. The commander-in-chief was fond of wealth, Antonina of splendour. The fortunes of private individuals were still enormous, and rivalled the wealth of Crassus and the debts of Cæsar.[23] Belisarius, like a noble Roman, availed himself of his commands in Africa, and Italy, to become master of sums equalling in amount the mighty accumulations of extortion collected by the consuls and proconsuls of old Rome, when they plundered Syria, Egypt, Pontus and Armenia. Of this wealth Belisarius made no inconsiderable display when at Constantinople. He passed along the streets, and appeared in the Hippodrome, attended by a numerous and brilliant suite of Gothic, Vandal, and Mauritanian chiefs, mounted on the finest horses, and clad in the richest armour, that wealth could command. In the days of his greatest prosperity, his own guards amounted to 7000 horsemen; and they were more formidable from their discipline and military experience than from their numbers. To this band of well-trained veterans, he owed many of his victories over the Goths in Italy.[24]

The civil administration of Belisarius was never very successful. His bad financial management involved his African army in revolt; and in Italy he overlooked disorders, which at last produced indiscipline in his own ranks, and famine among the Italians. The expense of supporting his cohorts of personal guards, and the necessity of securing the services of the most experienced and boldest troopers in this chosen corps, induced him to wink at irregularities in Africa and Italy, that he would have been obliged to punish severely near Constantinople or in Greece. At Abydos, he had ordered two Huns of the mercenary cavalry to be hanged for committing a murder; at Rome, he ran the risk of being murdered himself in the midst of a council of war, by one of his generals, from having neglected too long to cheek the rapacity and injustice every where perpetrated under the sanction of his authority.

His own personal conduct, and the manner in which he governed Italy, cannot be better illustrated than by two examples recorded, not in the secret libel, but in the public history of his secretary Procopius. [Pg 613]

Belisarius deposed the Pope of Rome, as well as the Kings of the Vandals and the Goths. The account Procopius gives us of this extraordinary act, is conveyed in so few and in such cautious words, that it is necessary to notice their brevity. "The Pope Silverius was suspected of holding treasonable communication with the Goths, who at that time besieged Rome. Belisarius seized him, and banished him to Greece."[25] But even if the fact that Pope Silverius had really held treasonable communication with the Goths, be admitted, still the manner in which he was condemned by Belisarius affords irrefragable evidence of the injustice of his civil administration.

As the representative of the emperor, Belisarius held a court with all the pomp of a sovereign prince. Yet when the Pope, accompanied by his clergy, presented himself at the palace to answer the summons of the imperial lieutenant, he was compelled to enter alone into the cabinet, where the affairs of Italy were decided by the governor-general. In this hall of audience, the Pope found Belisarius seated, while Antonina was reclining on a sofa, in the midst of the assembly, and taking an active part in the business transacted. It was she, and not Belisarius, who interrogated the pontiff. The general's wife insulted the representative of Saint Peter with reproaches, while the general remained a silent spectator of the lady's arrogance, and did not even investigate the evidence of the Pope's guilt. Prejudged by the suspicions of Belisarius, and condemned by the anger of Antonina, Silverius was allowed no opportunity of repelling the accusations brought against him. In the very presence of the commander-in-chief, his pontifical robes were torn off; and as he was hurried away, he was hastily covered with the garb of a monk, and immediately embarked for Greece, to die an exile.

Now, whether it be true or not that Belisarius and Antonina persecuted the Pope to gratify the revenge of Theodora, who had vainly demanded his approbation of an heretical favourite, or that they committed this act of injustice to participate in a large bribe paid by his successor, there can be no doubt that the manner of the Pope's condemnation, without trial, must have destroyed all confidence in the justice of Belisarius throughout Italy, and from this moment every calumny against his administration would readily find credence.

The second example of the arbitrary government of Belisarius, affords the means of estimating the extent to which the officers of the army were allowed to carry their peculation and extortion, as well as the total disregard of all the principles of judicial administration displayed by the commander-in-chief himself, in compelling them to disgorge their plunder. The details of this singular event are reported by Procopius with minuteness and simplicity, and he concludes his

narration with a distinct condemnation of the injustice of his patron's conduct. He says, it was the only dishonourable act of his life, but adds, that in spite of the usual moderation of Belisarius, Konstantinos was murdered.[26]

Konstantinos, a Thracian general, was one of the bravest and most active of the Byzantine officers. He led a division of the army against Perugia and Spoleto; and during the assault of Rome by the Goths, the defence of the tomb of Hadrian had been confided to him. He defended this strange fortress with great valour, though his proceedings have been the subject of execration for the lovers of ancient art ever since, as he used the innumerable statues with which the tomb was adorned, to serve as missiles against the enemy.[27]

Præsidius, a Roman of Italy, and a man of some distinction, resided at Ravenna under the dominion of the Goths. Wishing to escape from their power, he fled, and sought refuge in a [Pg 614] church near Spoleto. The only objects of great value he had carried away with him, were two splendid daggers set in gold, and richly adorned with valuable gems. Konstantinos, hearing of this booty, sent his adjutant to take away the daggers. Præsidius hastened to Rome, and on arriving complained to Belisarius, who only requested Konstantinos to arrange the affair. Such conduct appeared to Præsidius a mockery of justice; and one day, as Belisarius was riding through the Agora, he laid hold of the reins of the general's horse, and called with a loud voice, "Is it permitted, Belisarius, by the laws of the Roman empire, that a suppliant who implores your protection against the barbarians be plundered by Roman generals?" In vain the staff officers around ordered Præsidius to let go the general's bridle, and threatened him with punishment; he refused, until he received a promise from Belisarius that he should receive justice. There is something truly Oriental in all this, and very little in accordance with the principles of the Justinian code: the promise of Belisarius is considered of more value than the laws of the empire. He appears in the character of a vizier or a sultan in the Arabian Nights.

Next day a council of the principal officers of the army was convoked in the palace of Belisarius; and, in the presence of the assembled generals, Konstantinos was summoned to restore the jewelled daggers to Præsidius. The attempt to discountenance military license, which had so long been tolerated, appeared to the rude Thracian a parade of justice, assumed merely for the purpose of imposing on the Italians; he conceived, that while surrounded by his colleagues, he might safely despise what he considered to be a farce. He therefore refused to give up his plunder, and said gaily that he would rather throw the daggers into the Tiber than restore them. Belisarius, enraged at the insolent boldness of his proceeding, exclaimed, "Are you not bound to obey me?" The reply was, "Yes, in every thing else according to the Emperor's commission; but not in this matter." On receiving this answer, the commander-in-chief ordered his guards to be summoned. The order astonished Konstantinos, who saw the affair was assuming a more serious aspect than he had foreseen. Well aware that peculation and extortion were not very heinous offences in the Roman armies, he immediately suspected the existence of a project to ruin him for some other reason, and cried out, "Are the guards ordered in to murder me?" "No," said Belisarius, "only to compel you to restore the plunder which your adjutant seized in the church at Spoleto." Konstantinos saw the commander-in-chief enraged, and knew the Byzantine government well enough to feel his life insecure under the turn affairs seemed taking. With the quick determination of the daring chiefs who then led the fierce soldiers of the empire, he resolved to secure revenge, and perhaps make it the means of escape. Suddenly drawing his sword, he sprang at Belisarius, and made a thrust at his heart. The commander-in-chief, struck with amazement, only contrived to escape by jumping back and dodging behind Bessas, a Thracian Goth of high rank in the Roman army.[28] Konstantinos turned to escape, but was seized by the generals Ildiger and Valerian; and the guards entering dragged him from the council chamber to another room, where he was shortly after murdered by the order of Belisarius.[29]

Now it must be recollected that we have an account of these two remarkable events in the life of [Pg 615] Belisarius from an eye-witness. The very reserve of Procopius, who, in the affair of the Pope, omits all mention of Antonina, and glides over the injustice of the proceedings from dread of the feminine ferocity of the lady, and the priestly persecution of the successor of Silverius, who still continued to occupy the Papal chair when the history was written, affords us an indubitable warrant for the accuracy of the graphic description of the impressive scene which attended the murder of Konstantinos. When the History of the Gothic War was published, many of the generals who had been present at the council were still living.

These pictures of Belisarius and his times are not very favourable. A governor-general sitting in council, with his wife on the sofa directing the despatch of business, and a commander-in-chief holding a council at which one of his generals of division rushes at him with a drawn sword, do not give us an exalted idea of the order maintained in society during the brilliant conquests of Justinian's reign. Reasoning from analogy, it may appear natural enough that such a governor-general and commander-in-chief should end his career by having his eyes put out and by begging his bread.

There was another circumstance which very much increased the probability of Belisarius dying a beggar. We do not wish to deprive the tale of the smallest portion of the just sympathy of the latest posterity. The fact is, Belisarius grew enormously rich during his successful campaigns against Gelimer and Witiges, and even contrived to accumulate treasures during his unsuccessful wars with Chosroes and Totila.[30] Like his friend Bessas and his enemy Konstantinos, as the truth must be spoken, he did not neglect the golden opportunities he enjoyed of gaining golden spoils from all sorts of men. Now, from the days of Sylla, to those of Justinian, not to say a good

deal earlier and later, it was the avowed system of the financiers of Rome to increase the budget by confiscations. The Ottoman empire, heir to most of the vices and some of the grandeur of Imperial Constantinople, cherished the system as a part of its strength, until it adopted the more pitiful vices of Western Europe. Anastasius—not the ecclesiastical historian of the earlier Popes, but the hero of the "Memoirs of a Greek," by Mr Thomas Hope—in his ratiocination on the principles of Ottoman finance, gives us a compendious abstract of those of Imperial Rome during eleven centuries, from Augustus to Constantine Dragoses:—

"Regarding each officer of the state only in the light of one of the smaller and more numerous reservoirs, distributed on distant points to collect the first produce of dews, and drip, and rills, ere the collective mass be poured into the single greater central basin of the Sultan's treasury, you give yourself no trouble to check the dishonesty of your agent, or to prevent his peculations. You rather for a while connive at, and favour and lend your own authority to his exactions, which will enable you, when afterwards you squeeze him out, to combine greater profit with a more signal show of justice. In permitting a temporary defalcation from your treasury, you consider yourselves as only lending out your capital at more usurious interest. Nine long years, while your work is done for you gratuitously, you feign to sleep, and the tenth you wake from your deceitful slumber; like the roused lion, you look round where grazes the fattest prey, stretch your ample [Pg 616] claw, crush your devoted victim, and make every drop of his blood, so long withheld from your appetite, at last flow into the capacious bowels of your insatiable *hazné*"—(treasury).[31]

Belisarius was certainly a fatted prey, and it is no wonder that his inordinate wealth excited the cravings of the minister of finance of the lavish Justinian and the luxurious Theodora. After his return from the conquest of Italy, he lived at Constantinople in a degree of magnificence unrivalled by the proudest modern sovereign. His household consisted, as we have already seen, of a small army; and as he was fond of parade, he rarely appeared in public without a splendid staff of mounted officers. His liberality and his military renown ensured him the applause of the people whenever he presented himself among them. Such wealth, such a train of guards, and such popularity, not unnaturally excited both envy and alarm. Accordingly, when the unsuccessful issue of the campaigns against the Persians under Chosroes, in 541 and 542, had diminished the popularity of Belisarius, the Emperor seized the occasion of rendering him less an object of fear by depriving him of a considerable number of his guards and great part of his treasures.[32] The picture Procopius has drawn of Belisarius in his disgrace, is by no means flattering to the general; it represents him as a mean-spirited and uxorious courtier. "It was a strange spectacle, and incredible, had we not been eye-witnesses of the fact, to behold Belisarius, deprived of all his official rank, walking in the streets of Constantinople almost alone, dejected, melancholy, and fearing for his life."[33]

Shortly after, Belisarius was partially reinstated in favour and sent to command in Italy against Totila. In 548, he quitted that country for the second time, after struggling unsuccessfully against the Gothic monarch. The jealousy of Justinian had prevented his receiving the supplies necessary for carrying on the war with vigour; and the want of success is not to be considered as any stain on the military reputation of Belisarius. Though he returned ingloriously to Constantinople, still, even amidst the misfortunes of the Roman arms in Italy, he had not neglected to save or accumulate wealth, and he was enabled to pass the rest of his life in great if not in regal splendour.[34]

He enjoyed the glory of his earlier exploits, and the popularity secured by his equable temperament, undisturbed for eleven years. In the year 559, an incursion of the Huns was pushed forward to the very walls of Constantinople. The weakness of Justinian, the avarice of his ministers, and the rapacity of his courtiers, had introduced such abuses in the military establishments of the capital, that in this unexpected danger the city appeared almost without a regular garrison. In this difficulty, all ranks, from Justinian to the populace, turned to Belisarius as the champion of the empire. The aged hero, finding the imperial guards useless as a military corps, since it had been converted into a body of pensioners, appointed by the favour of ministers and courtiers, and its ranks filled up with shopkeepers and valets—assembled such of the provincial troops and of his old guards as were living in the capital.[35] With a small body of experienced veterans, and an army in which fear at least ensured obedience to his orders, he [Pg 617] took the field against the Huns. Victory attended his standard. He not only drove back the barbarians, but overtook and destroyed the greater part of their army.

There was nothing of romance in this last campaign of Belisarius. He could no longer lead his gallant guards to display his own, and their valour, in some rash enterprise. His war-horse, Balan, was in its grave, and his own strength no longer served him to act the colonel of cuirassiers. But he was, perhaps, all the better general for the change; and his manœuvres effected a more complete destruction of the Huns, than would have resulted from the defeat of their army by the bold sallies of his youthful tactics.

The glory of the aged hero, and the proofs it afforded of his great popularity and extensive authority over the military classes throughout the empire, again revived the jealousy of the court. The ministers of Justinian perhaps dreaded that the affection of the emperor for his former favourite might recall Belisarius into public life, and effect a change in the cabinet. To prevent this, they calumniated him to the feeble prince, and worked so far on his timidity as to induce the emperor to withhold those testimonials for great public services which, it was customary to bestow. The fact that he was persecuted by the court, endeared Belisarius to the people and augmented the aversion of the emperor.[36]

Belisarius was now an object of suspicion to the government. And at this interesting period of his life, all cotemporary history suddenly fails us. The events of his latter days are recorded by writers who lived more than two hundred years after his death.[37]

In the year 562, a plot against the life of Justinian was discovered, and Belisarius was accused by some of the conspirators as privy to it. The accusation was sure to please the party in power. Several of his dependents, on being put to the torture, gave evidence against him. He was suspected by the government; but his conduct during a long life rendered the charge improbable, and the Roman law never placed any great reliance on evidence extracted by torture.[38] In this bitter hour, it must be confessed that Justinian treated Belisarius with more justice than he had treated the Pope Silverius. A privy council was convoked, at which the principal nobles, the patriarch, and some of the officers of the imperial household, were present with the emperor in person. Belisarius was summoned, and the cause of the conspirators was heard. Justinian was induced for a moment to believe in his guilt. The order was given to place him under arrest. He was deprived of the guards that still attended him, his fortune was sequestered, and he was confined a prisoner in his palace. Six days after the first examination, the business of the conspiracy was again investigated, and Justinian did not retract his previous suspicions. [Pg 618] Belisarius was kept under arrest in his own palace without any further proceedings being directed against him. These examinations took place on the 5th and 11th of December; and the text of Malalas must be received as convincing evidence that Justinian took no stronger measures against Belisarius before the commencement of the year 563.[39]

On the 19th of July of that year Belisarius was restored by Justinian to all his honours. Some months of cool reflection had convinced the emperor, that the extorted evidence of a few dependents against an opposition leader, ought not not to outweigh the testimony of a long life of unstained loyalty. The remainder of that life was passed in tranquillity; and in the month of March of the year 565, the patrician Belisarius terminated his glorious career, and his fortune reverted to the imperial treasury. Such is the brief account which we possess of the last days of the conqueror of the Vandals and the Goths—the restorer of the spoils of Jerusalem—the deposer of a Pope—the destroyer of the tomb of Hadrian—and the last of the Romans who triumphed, leading kings captive in his train.[40] Antonina survived her husband, and lived in retirement with Vigilantia, the sister of Justinian, but in the enjoyment of wealth. Before her death she reconstructed the church of St Procopius, which had been destroyed by fire; and it received, from her affection for Justinian's sister, the name of Vigilantia.[41]

We must now notice the accounts of the modern Byzantine writers. George Cedrenus was a monk of the eleventh century, who has left us a history of the world to the year 1057. It contains many popular stories, but often transcribes or abridges official documents as well as ancient historians. In this work we might expect to find any fable, generally accredited, concerning Belisarius; but the account of his latter days is in exact conformity with those of Theophanes and Malalas.[42]

John Zonaras had been Grand Drungary, or First Lord of the Admiralty at Constantinople, before he retired to end his days in a monastery on Mount Athos. His Chronicle extends from the Creation to the year 1118, and contains much information not found elsewhere. He is considered as among the most valuable of the Byzantine historians. He mentions that Belisarius was compromised in the plot against the life of Justinian; that he was deprived of his guards and kept prisoner in his house; and that, when he died, his fortune was taken by the imperial treasury.[43] Consequently Belisarius was in possession of his fortune at the time of his death, and it is possible that Justinian may have been his legal heir.[44]

The chronicle published under the name of Leo Grammaticus, which dates from the twelfth century, states that Belisarius, having been accused of plotting against the Emperor Justinian, died of grief.[45]

Such are the historical accounts which the annals of the Byzantine empire furnish concerning the fate of Belisarius. But, attached to the collection of Justinian's laws, there is a rescript, which would alone afford conclusive evidence of the restoration of Belisarius to all his honours, if we could place implicit reliance on the date it bears. Unfortunately, however, for our purpose, the authority on which Cujacius published it, is not sufficiently established to give satisfactory [Pg 619] authenticity to its date. This date is 565, and in the month of March of this year Belisarius died; and in the month of November Justinian also followed him. The rescript speaks of Belisarius incidentally as "our most glorious patrician;" an expression incompatible with his having suffered any great indignity, or remained in permanent disgrace.[46]

We must now turn from examining public history, to consider popular feeling. Belisarius, as we have already observed, was the hero of the Roman world; but another society existed in the very heart of that world, which hated every thing Roman. This society was Greek; it had its own feelings, its own literature, and its own church. Of its literature, Procopius has left us a curious specimen in his Secret History, where the facts of his public Roman history are presented to the discontented Greeks, richly spiced with calumny and libels on the Roman administration. Peculiar circumstances gave the reign of Justinian a prominent position in the history of the world, as the last great era of Roman history, and its memory was long cherished with a feeling of wonder and awe.[47] We must, however, remark, that from the death of Justinian to the accession of Leo III. the Isaurian, the government of the Eastern empire was strictly Roman. From the reign of Leo III.

to that of Basil I. the Macedonian (867) if not quite Roman, it was very far from Greek.

Three centuries after the death of Belisarius and Justinian, new feelings arose. The Greeks then looked back on the authentic history of Belisarius as they did on that of Scipio and Sylla,—as a history unconnected with their own national glory, but marking the last conquests which illustrated the annals of the Roman empire, and affording one of those mighty names admirably adapted

"To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

We must now endeavour to prove that its use for this purpose, in the manner transmitted to us, was subsequent to the accession of Basil the Macedonian.

We believe that the blindness and beggary of Belisarius, as recorded in the Greek romance, of which the memory has become a part of the tradition of Western Europe, was suggested to the novelist by the fate of Symbat, an Armenian noble in the Byzantine service, who married the daughter of the Cæsar Bardas, the uncle of the Emperor Michael III. The catastrophe of the romance is mentioned by two writers of the twelfth century. One is the anonymous author of a description of Constantinople, who was a cotemporary of Zonaras. The other is John Tzetzes, who wrote a rambling work consisting of mythological and historical notices in Greek political, civil, or profane verse, as it may be called, (*versus politici*)—the epic poetry of modern Greece; correctly compared by Lord Byron to the heroic strain of

"A captain bold of Halifax who lived in country quarters."

This poet flourished at the end of the twelfth century.

The anonymous Guide-Book, relates that Justinian, envying the glory of Belisarius, put out his eyes, and ordered him to be placed in the Lauron with a bowl of earthenware in his hand, that the charitable might bestow on him an obolus.[48] Tzetzes repeats the same story in his learned doggrel, only he gives Belisarius a wooden dish in his hand, and stations him to beg in the Milion or Stadium of Constantinople. But Tzetzes, who piqued himself on his historical knowledge, [Pg 620] candidly tells his readers, that other chronicles say that Belisarius was restored to all his former honours.[49]

The notices of a Greek guide-book, and the tales of a popular versifier, concerning a Roman general, ought certainly to be received with great caution, when they are found to be at variance with all historical evidence. In this case, tradition cannot be admitted to have had any existence for many centuries after the death of Belisarius. The supposed tradition is Greek,—the authentic history is Roman. But historical evidence exists to show that all the details concerning the blindness and beggary of Belisarius have been copied by the author of the romance, from circumstances which occurred at Constantinople in the year 866.

In that year, the Armenian, Symbat, after assisting his wife's cousin the Emperor Michael III. (who rejoiced in the jolly epithet of the Drunkard,) and the future emperor Basil the Macedonian, (who subsequently murdered his patron the Drunkard,) to assassinate his own father-in-law Cæsar Bardas, rebelled against his connexion the Drunkard.[50] He engaged Peganes, the general of the theme of Opsikion, or the provinces on the Asiatic shore of the Hellespont, in his rebellion. Peganes was soon taken prisoner by the imperial troops, and the Drunkard ordered his eyes to be put out and his nose to be cut off, and he then sent him to stand in the Milion for three days successively, with a bowl in his hand, to solicit alms. A month after, the news that Symbat was captured was brought to the emperor, while he was feasting in the palace of St Mamas. He ordered Peganes to be led out to meet the new prisoner, that Symbat might be conducted into Constantinople with every possible indignity. The blind and mutilated Peganes was compelled to walk before his friend, with a bowl of earthenware in the form of a censer, filled with sulphur, as if burning incense to perfume him. The right eye of Symbat was put out, and his right hand cut off, and in this state he was placed in the Lauron, like a beggar, with a bowl hung before his breast to receive charity. Three days after, the two rebels were allowed to return to their houses, where they were kept prisoners. Symbat regained possession of his sequestered fortune when Basil the Macedonian became emperor.

Now, even if we admit the possibility of the politic Justinian having treated Belisarius as Michael the Drunkard treated the unprincipled Symbat, still it is impossible to compare the words in which the Guide-book and Tzetzes commemorate the misfortunes of the hero with the narratives of the punishment of Peganes and Symbat, without feeling that the former are transcribed from the latter.

To prove this, if necessary, we could quote the words of our authorities. The earliest account of the punishment of Peganes and Symbat is given by George the Monk, a Byzantine writer whose chronicle ends with the year 920. The chronicle of Simeon Metaphrastes, which also belongs to the tenth century, and that of Leo Grammaticus, give the same account, almost in the same words. There can be no doubt that they are all copied from official documents; the style is a rich specimen of the monastic state-paper abridgment.[51]

The state-paper style was retained in the romance from which the Guide-book was copied, to impress the feeling of reality on the minds of the people; while the mention of the obolus, an [Pg 621] ancient coin, marked the antique dignity with which the tale was invested. The obolus had been, for centuries, unknown in the coinage of Constantinople; and the word was no longer in use in

the public markets of Greece. But besides this, if the Guide-book is to be admitted as an authority for a historical fact, it very soon destroys the value of its own testimony concerning the blindness and beggary of Belisarius; for, only a few lines after recording his disgrace, it mentions a gilt statue of the hero as standing near the palace of Chalce.

Such is fame. The real Belisarius, the hero of the history and the libels of Procopius, being a Roman general, owes his universal reputation to the creation of an imaginary Belisarius by some unknown Greek romance-writer or ballad-singer. The interest of mankind in the conquests and records of Byzantine Rome has become torpid; but the feelings of humanity, in favour of the victims of courtly ingratitude, are immortal. The unextinguishable aversion of the Hellenic race to tyranny and oppression, has given a degree of fame to the name of Belisarius which his own deeds, great as they were, would never have conferred. This is but one proof of the singular influence exercised by the Hellenic mind over the rest of the world during the middle ages. It may be continually traced in the literature both of the east and the west. Whenever the sympathies are awakened by general sentiments of philanthropy among the emirs of the east, or the barons of the west, there is reason to suspect that the origin of the tale must be sought in Greece. Europe has been guided by the mind of Hellas in every age, from the days of Homer to those of Tzetzes; and its power has been maintained by addressing the feelings common to the whole human race—feelings long cherished in Greece after they had been banished from western society by Goths, Franks, and Normans.[52]

There is yet one important reflection which, if the study of the age of Belisarius and Justinian does not suggest, we have failed to comprehend its true spirit. In spite of its glory—of its legislative, its legal, its military, its administrative, its architectural, and its ecclesiastical greatness, it was destitute of that spiritual power which rules and guides the souls of men. It was an age entirely material and selfish. Religion was a mere formula: Christianity slept victorious amidst the ruins of extinguished paganism. Belisarius could depose one Pope, and sell the chair and the keys of St Peter to another, without rousing the indignation of the Christian world. Liberty was an incomprehensible term. That energy of individual independence and physical force which excited the barbarians of the north to conquer the western empire, and enabled the Romans of Byzantium to save the eastern, was sinking into lethargy. Patriotism was an unknown feeling. Indeed, what idea of nationality or love of country could be formed by the privileged classes of Constantinople? Their successors the Turks may be taken as interpreters of the sentiments of the Byzantine Romans on this subject, who, while vegetating in Stamboul, gravely tell you that Mecca is their country.

In short, the spirit of liberty and religion was torpid in the empire of Justinian, and perhaps in the soul of Belisarius. These two remarkable men were both governed by the material impulses of military discipline and systematic administration. Verily, the mission of Mahomet was necessary to awaken mankind, and rouse the Christian world from its lethargy to the great mental struggle which, from the hour of the unfolding of the banner of Islam, has left the minds of men no repose; and will henceforth compel them to unite the spirit of religion with all their restless endeavours to realise each successive dream of social improvement that the human soul shall dare to conceive.

Athens, March 20, 1847.

FOOTNOTES:

[9] *Procopius de Bello Vandalico*, lib. i. c. 11. Gibbon (vol. vii. p. 161. note *e*) says that he could not find the Germania, a metropolis of Thrace, mentioned by Alemanni, in any civil or ecclesiastical lists of the provinces and cities. Alemanni's authority may be found in *Notitiæ Græcorum Episcopatuum*, where Germania is the sixty-seventh metropolitan see dependent on the Patriarch of Constantinople.—(*Codinus de officiis Magnæ Ecclesiæ et Aulæ Constantinopolitanæ*, p. 380, ed. Paris.) It is probable that the city Germane of the *Edifices* of Procopius (iv. 3) is the same as Germania. There was a fort in its territory, called Germas. *De Ædif.* iii. 4. Germanos is still a favourite ecclesiastical name with the Greeks. There is a place on the Gulf of Corinth, in the territory of Megara, with splendid remains of the military architecture of an ancient burgh, now called Porto Germano, the ancient Ægosthenæ.—(*Leake's Travels in Northern Greece*, vol. i. p. 405.) Herodotus mentions Germanii, Γερμανιοι, as an agricultural tribe of Persians in the time of Cyrus.—(*Clio*, 125.) These various Germans and Germanians can hardly be blood relations of our Germany or Deutschland.

[10] *Lord Mahon's Life of Belisarius*, p. 3. *Procopius de Bello Vand.* ii. 6.

[11] *Procopius de Bello Persico*, i. 12. *Clinton's Fasti Romani*. From this time Procopius was the official secretary of Belisarius.

[12] A good soldier can only be formed from men between eighteen and forty years of age. In ancient times it required more strength to make a soldier than in modern. The demand for such men, in an improving state of society, makes them too valuable to be expended on the game of war, and hence despots in civilised ages are compelled to use an inferior class. Good troops must always be highly paid. A good heavy-armed soldier, in ancient Greece, had half the pay of his captain. The pay of the celebrated English archers, in the middle ages, was extremely high; as it required the service of a brave and vigorous yeomanry to give that corps the efficiency it displayed in so many hard-fought battles—(*Hallam's Constitutional History of England*, ch. ix. vol. 2.) Lord Brougham, however, overrates the pay of a mounted archer, in making it "equal to thirty shillings of our

money" a-day.—(*Political Philosophy*, part iii. p. 237.)

[13] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vii. 166. It is impossible to resist transcribing Gibbon's note.

Νευρην μεν μαζω Πελασεν τοξω δε σιδηρον.
Λιγξε βιος, νευρη δε μεγ ιαχεν αλτο δ'οιστος.

Iliad, iv. 124-125

[14] *Procopius de Bello Gotthico*, i. c. 18.

[15] *Procopius de Bello Gotthico,* i. c. 21.

[16] *Ibid.* 28-29.

[17] This singular military manœuvre was repeated more than once by Roman generals, and shows how admirably the troops were drilled in what are called the degenerate days of the Roman armies.—(*Finlay's Greece under the Romans*, p. 246.)

[18] The best edition of the works of Procopius is that published at Bonn in the new *Corpus Scriptorum Byzantinæ Historiæ* commenced under the auspices of Niebuhr. It is edited by W. Dindorff, and contains a corrected text with various readings, and a reprint of the notes of Alemanni on the Secret History. 3 vols. 8vo. 1833-8.

[19] *Procopius de Bello Vandalico*, ii. c. 9.

[20] *Procopius de Bello Gotthico*, ii. c. 28. Βασιλια τ*ς Εσπιριας βελισαριος α*ειπειν εγιωσαν

[21] *Life of Belisarius*, p. 1.

[22] *Decline and Fall*, vol. vii. 161.

[23] Crassus was in the habit of saying, that no man was rich who could not maintain an army.

[24] *Procopius de Bello Gotthico*, iii. 1.

[25] Compare *Procopius de Bello Gotthico*, i. c. 25, with *Anastasius de Vitis Pontificum Romanorum*, p. 38, ed., Paris.

[26] *De Bello Gotthico*, ii. c. 8.

[27] *Ibid.* i. 22.

[28] There is a touch of the malicious spirit of the Secret History in the narration of Procopius, caused probably by some in avoiding the stab aimed at him by Konstantinos. The whole scene could hardly fail to produce a profound impression on the coolest spectator, even in that age, when men were more accustomed to stabbing than in our delicate daysof gunshot wounds. Ὁ δε (Βελισάριος) καταπλαγεις ὀπισω τε ἀπέστη και Βίσσα ἰγγὺς του ἑστκατι περιπλακεις διαφυγειν ισχιος —(*De Bello Gotthico*, ii. 8.) Bessas was as great an extortioner as Konstantinos. (See *Ibid.* iv. 13.)

[29] Ildiger, doubtless a barbarian, from his name, was married to a daughter of Antonina by her first husband.—(*De Bello Vandalico*, ii. 8.) Valerian was also probably a barbarian, as he commanded a division of federate cavalry in the African war. He was general of the right wing of the Roman army under Narses at the battle of Taginas or Lentagio, which put an end to the life of the gallant Totila, and gave the mortal wound to the monarchy of the Ostrogoths.—(*De Bello Gotthico*, iv. 31.)

[30] Procopius would lead us to believe that a fine of 300 lbs. of gold (upwards of £140,000 in specie, and twice that sum in value) extorted from Belisarius in 543, was the produce of his profits during the Asiatic campaigns of 541 and 542. But it is difficult to know what confidence ought to be placed in the details of the Secret History.—C. 4, p. 32, l. 1, ed. Bonn. *Clinton's Fasti Romani*, p. 780.

[31] *Anastasius, or the Memoirs of a Greek, by Thomas Hope*, vol. ii. 393., first edition. The writer of these pages remembers reading *Anastasius* with singular pleasure, at the time of its publication. Now, after four-and-twenty years' intimate acquaintance with the East, and with the representatives of most of the classes of men depicted in the novel, he finds that its correctness of description and truth of character give it all the inexhaustible freshness of actual life.

[32] *Historia Arcana*, c. 4. Tom. iii. p. 34, ed. Bonn.

[33] Ibid, Tom. iii. p. 31.

[34] *De Bello Gotthico*, iii. 35.

[35] *Agathias*, lib. v. c. 6, p. 159, ed. Paris.—The conversion of royal guards into cheesemongers is by no means a very uncommon corruption. The dreaded janissaries degenerated into a corporation of hucksters and green-grocers. The Hellenic kingdom, founded as an incorporation of the spirit of anarchy and despotism, by the grace of the foreign secretaries of the three great powers of >Europe, possesses a more singular body of military than even the defunct Ottoman corps of green-grocers. It consists of officers without troops. Its inventor, Armansperg, the quintessence of Bavarian corruption in Greece, called it the Phalanx.

[36] *Agathias*, v. ii. p. 161, ed. Paris.

[37] The authentic history of the last events of the life of Belisarius must be gathered from Theophanes, p. 201, John Malalas, p. 239, and Cedrenus, p. 387. Though, perhaps, Cedrenus may be objected to as living too long after these events. Theophanes died in 817 at the age of 60. His chronography ends with the year 813. John Malalas lived in the

ninth century. The chronicle of Cedrenus ends with the year 1057.

[38] *Pandects*, xlvii. tit. 18. 1, s. 23.—Quæstioni fidem non semper, nec tamen nunquam habendum, constitutionibus declaratur; etenim res est fragilis, et periculosa, et quæ veritatem fallat.—Every one conversant with the social condition of the people of the East, (and probably it is the case under all despotic governments,) knows the extreme difficulty of obtaining judicial evidence that can be relied on, and the temptation judges incur to sanction torture. Hence the common assertion of public functionaries, that torture is absolutely necessary to secure the administration of justice; and of course people who require torture to persuade them to speak the truth, are unfit for self-government and constitutional liberty. Thus falsehood and oppression are perpetuated, and truth kept perpetually at bay.

[39] *Joannis Antiocheni cognomenti Malalæ Historia Chronica. Pars altera*, p. 84, ed. Venet.

[40] *Theophanis Chronographia*, p. 201, ed. Paris. The accounts of Theophanes and Malalas must be compared together, as the comparison establishes the fact that they were both drawn from official sources. See also p. 202, 203, and note.

[41] *Georgius Codinus de Originibus Constantinopolitanis*, p. 54.

[42] *Georgii Cedreni Compendium Historiarum*, p. 387.

[43] *Joannis Zonaræ Annales*, tom. ii. p. 69. ed. Paris.

[44] This may have resulted from the marriage of Joanna, the daughter of Belisarius, with Anastasius, the grandson of Theodora.—*Procopii Arcana*, c. 4, p. 34.

[45] *Leonis Grammatici Chronographia*, p. 132. Bonnæ: 1842. 8vo.

[46] *Corpus Juris Civilis. Aliæ aliquot Constitutiones*. Tom. ii. p. 511, ed. ster. 4to. *Privilegium pro Titionibus ex Cujac. Obss.* lib. x. c. 12. In a new edition of the *Corpus* there is the following note:—Hoc privilegium editum est in Cujac. Obss., sed ex quo fonte desumptum sit, non indicatur, nisi quod Cujacius a P. Galesio Hispano se id decepisse dicat. Non sine ratione addidit Beck. qui in App. Corp. Juris Civ. hanc constitutionem recepit, an genuina sit, dubio non carere.

[47] *Greece under the Romans*, p. 229.—If the writer of this article may presume to refer to his own authority.

[48] *Imperium Orientale: studio A. Banduri*. Tom. i. *pars tertia. Antiquitatum Constantinopolitanarum*, p. 7. ed. Paris.

[49] *Joannis Tzetzæ Historiarum Variarum Chiliades*, p. 94, ed. Kiesslingii, Lipsiæ, 1826, 8vo.

[50] Basil the Macedonian was originally a groom, and owed his first step in the imperial favour of the Drunkard to his powers as a whisperer. He broke an ungovernable horse belonging to the emperor, by the exercise of this singular quality, and rendered it, to the amazement of the whole court, as tame as a sheep. Leo Grammaticus says, Τη μεν μια χειρι τον χαλινον κρατησας, τη δε 'ετιρα του ωτος δραξαμενος εις εμ*ροτ*τα προβατου μεταβαλον. —P. 230, ed. Bonn.

[51] *Georgius Monachus*, p. 540. *Simeon Metaph.* p. 449. *Scriptores post Theophanem*, ed. Paris. *Leo Gramm.*, p. 469, ed. Paris, p. 247, ed. Bonn.

[52] Things have not changed in our day. Capodistrias lighted his pipe with Canning's treaties and King Leopold's renunciation; and Colettis makes game of the feeble acts and strong expressions of Viscount Palmerston.

ANCIENT AND MODERN BALLAD POETRY.[53]

The first day of April is a festival too prominent in the Kalendar of Momus to be passed over without due commemoration. The son of Nox, who, according to that prince of heralds, Hesiod, presides especially over the destinies of reviewers, demands a sacrifice at our hands; and as, in the present state of the provision market, we cannot afford to squander a steer, we shall sally forth into the regions of rhyme and attempt to capture a versifier.

The time has been when such a task was, to say the least of it, very simple. Each successive spring, at the season when "a livelier iris glows upon the burnished dove," Parnassus sent forth its leaves, and the voices of many cuckoos were heard throughout the land. Small difficulty then, either to flush or to bag sufficient game. But, somehow or other, of late years there has been a sort of panic among the poets. The gentler sort have either been scared by the improvisatore warblings of Mr Wakley, or terrified into silence by undue and undeserved apprehensions of the Knout. Seldom now are they heard to chirrup except under cover of the leaves of a sheltering magazine; and although we do occasionally detect a thin and ricketty octavo taking flight from the counter of some publisher, it is of so meek and inoffensive a kind that we should as soon think of making prize of a thrush in a bed of strawberries. We are much afraid that the tendency of the present age towards the facetious has contributed not a little to the dearth of sonnets and the extermination of the elegiac stanza. So long as friend Michael Angelo Titmarsh has the privilege of frequenting the house of Mrs Perkins and other haunts of fashionable and literary celebrity, Poseidon Hicks will relapse into gloomy silence, and Miss Bunion refrain from chanting her Lays of the Shattered Heart-strings. It a hard thing that a poet may not protrude his gentle sorrows for our commiseration, mourn over his blighted hopes, or rejoice the bosom of some budding virgin by celebrating her, in his Tennysonian measure, as the light-tressed Ianthe or sleek-haired

Claribel of his soul, without being immediately greeted by a burst of impertinent guffaws, and either wantonly parodied or profanely ridiculed to his face. So firm is our belief in the humanising influence of poetry that we would rather, by a thousand times, that all the reviews should perish, and all the satirists be consigned to Orcus, than behold the total cessation of song throughout the British Islands. And if we, upon any former occasion, have spoken irreverently of the Nincompoops, we now beg leave to tender to that injured body our heartfelt contrition for the same; and invite them to join with us in a pastoral pilgrimage to Arcadia, where they shall have the run of the meadows, with a fair allowance of pipes and all things needful—where they may rouse a satyr from every bush, scamper over the hills in pursuit of an Oread, or take a sly vizzy at a water-nymph arranging her tresses in the limpid fountains of the Alpheus. What say you, our masters and mistresses, to this proposal for a summer ramble?

Hitherto we have spoken merely of the gentler section of the bards. But there is another division of that august body by no means quite so diffident. Since our venerated Father Christopher paid, [Pg 623] some four years ago, a merited tribute to the genius of Mr Macaulay, commenting upon the thews and sinews of his verse, and the manly vigour of his Lays of Ancient Rome—ballad poetry in all its forms and ramifications has become inconceivably rampant. The Scottish poetry also, which from time to time has appeared in MAGA, seems to have excited, in certain quarters, a spirit of larcenous admiration; and not long ago it was our good fortune to behold in the Quarterly Review a laudation of certain lines which are neither more nor less than a weak dilution of a ballad composed by one of our contributors. It would be well, however, had we nothing more to complain of than this. But the ballad fever has got to such a height that it may be necessary to make an example. Our young English poets are now emulating in absurdity those German students, who dress after the costume of the middle ages as depicted by Cornelius, and terrify the peaceful Cockney on the Rhine by apparitions of Goetz of Berlichingen. They are no longer Minnesingers, but warriors of sanguineous complexion. They are all for glory, blood, chivalry, and the deeds of their ancestors. They cut, thrust, and foin as fiercely as fifty Francalanzas, and are continually shouting on Saint George. Dim ideas of the revival of the Maltese Order seem to float before their excited imaginations; and, were there the slightest spark of genuine feeling in their enthusiasm, either Abd-el-Kader or Marshal Bugeaud would have had by this time some creditable recruits. But the fact is, that the whole system is a sham. Our young friends care about as much for Saint George as they do for Saint Thomas Aquinas; they would think twice before they permitted themselves to be poked at with an unbuttoned foil; and as for the deeds of their ancestors, a good many of them would have considerable difficulty in establishing their descent even from a creditable slop-seller—"the founder of our family"—in the reign of George the Third. It is therefore a mystery to us why they should persevere in their delusion. What—in the name of the Bend Sinister—have they to do with the earlier Harrys or Edwards, or the charge of the Templars at Ascalon, or the days of the Saxon Heptarchy? Are they called upon by some irrepressible impulse to ransack the pages of English history for a "situation," or to crib from the Chronicles of Froissart? Cannot they let the old warriors rest in peace, without summoning them, like the Cid, from their honoured graves, again to put on harness and to engage in feckless combat? For oh!—weak and most washy are the battles which our esteemed young friends describe! Their war-horses have for the most part a general resemblance to the hacks hired out at seven-and-sixpence for the Sunday exhibition in the Park. Their armour is of that kind more especially in vogue at Astley's, in the composition of which tinfoil is a principal ingredient, and pasteboard by no means awanting. Their heroes fight, after preliminary parley which would do credit to the chivalry of the Hippodrome; and their lances invariably splinter as frush as the texture of the bullrush. Their dying chiefs all imitate Bayard, as we once saw Widdecomb do it, when struck down by the infuriated Gomersal; and the poem generally concludes with a devout petition to "Our Ladye," not only to vouchsafe her grace to the defunct champion, but to grant that the living minstrel may experience the same end—a prayer which, for the sake of several respectable young members of society, we hope may be utterly disregarded.

The truth is, that instead of being the easiest, the ballad is incomparably the most difficult kind of all poetical composition. Many men, who were not poets in the highest sense of the word, because they wanted the inventive faculty, have nevertheless, by dint of perseverance, great accomplishment, and dexterous use of those materials which are ready to the hand of every artificer, gained a respectable name in the roll of British literature—but never, in any single instance, by attempting the construction of a ballad. That is the Shibboleth, by which you can at once distinguish the true minstrel from mere impostor or pretender. It is the simplest, and at the same time the sublimest form of poetry, nor can it be written except under the influence of that [Pg 624] strong and absorbing emotion, which bears the poet away far from the present time, makes him an actor and a participator in the vivid scenes which he describes, and which is, in fact, inspiration of the very loftiest kind. The few who enjoy the glorious privilege, not often felt, nor long conferred, of surrendering themselves to the magic of that spell, cease for the time to be artists; they take no thought of ornament, or of any rhetorical artifice, but throw themselves headlong into their subject, trusting to nature for that language which is at once the shortest and the most appropriate to the occasion; spurning all far-fetched metaphors aside, and ringing out their verse as the iron rings upon the anvil! It was in this way that Homer, the great old ballad-maker of Greece, wrote—or rather chanted, for in his day pens were scarce, wire-wove unknown, and the pride of Moseley undeveloped. God had deprived the blind old man of sight; but in his heart still burned the fury of the fight of Troy; and trow ye not, that to him the silent hills of Crete many a time became resonant with the clang of arms, and the shouts of challenging heroes, when not a breath of wind was stirring, and the ibex stood motionless on its crag? What a difference between Homer and Virgil! Mœonides goes straight to work, like a marshal calling out his men.

He moves through the encampment of the ships, knowing every man by headmark, and estimating his capabilities to a buffet. No metaphor or nonsense in the combats that rage around the sepulchre of Ilus—good hard fighting all of it, as befits barbarians, in whose veins the blood of the danger-seeking demigods is seething: fierce as wild beasts they meet together, smite, hew, and roll over in the dust. Jove may mourn for Sarpedon, or Andromache tear her hair above the body of her slaughtered Hector; but not one whit on that account abstain their comrades from the banquet, and on the morrow, under other leaders, they will renew the battle—for man is but as the leaves of the forest, whilst glory abideth for ever.

Virgil, on the contrary, had but little of the ballad-maker in his composition. He was always thinking of himself, and of his art, and the effect which his Æneid would produce,—nay, we are even inclined to suspect that at times he was apt to deviate into a calculation of the number of sestertia which he might reasonably reckon to receive from the bounty of the Emperor. The Æneid is upon the whole a sneaking sort of a poem. The identity of Æneas with Augustus, and the studied personification of every leading character, is too apparent to be denied. It is therefore less an epic than an allegory; and—without questioning the truth of Hazlitt's profound apothegm, that allegories do not bite—we confess that, in general, we have but small liking to that species of composition. For in the first place, the author of an allegory strips himself of the power of believing it. He can have no faith in the previous existence of heroes whom he is purposely portraying as shadows, and he must constantly be put to shifts, in order to adapt his story, during its progress, to the circumstances which he attempts to typify. And, in the second place, he commits the error, equally palpable, of disenchanting the eyes of his reader. For the very essence of that pleasure which we all derive from fiction, lies in our overcoming to a certain extent the idea of its actual falsity, and in our erecting within ourselves a sort of secondary belief, to which, accordingly, our sympathies are submitted. Every thing, therefore, which interferes with this fair and legitimate credulity is directly noxious to the effect of the poem; it puts us back one stage further from the point of absolute faith, and materially diminishes the interest which we take in the progress of the piece. Spenser's Faerie Queen is a notable example of this. Could we but think that Una was intended, though only by the poet's fancy, to be the portraiture of a mortal virgin, unfriended and alone amidst the snares and enchantments of the world, would we not tremble for her sweet sake, knowing that some as innocent and as fair as she have fallen victims to jealousy less dark than Duessa's, and wiles less skilfully prepared than those of the hoary [Pg 625] Archimage? But Una never for one moment appears to us as a woman. From the first we feel that she is there, not exposed to temptation, but as a pure and holy spirit, in whose presence hypocrisy is unmasked, and all sin and iniquity unveiled. Nor fear we for the Red-Cross Knight, even when he seems to go astray, and turns from the side of her whom he had sworn to protect and guard; for he bears a talisman upon his shield and his bosom, expressive of his origin, and able to resist for ever the fiery darts of the wicked. Never rode knight and lady through earthly wilderness as these two journey together. For them we have no human interest—not even such tears as we might shed for the lapse of an erring angel. They have not put on mortality, nor do they meet or combat with mortal foes. Truth will do much for us, even in poetry where the mortal interest is most largely intermingled with the supernatural. Some belief we have even in the wildest flights of Ariosto. Astolfo does not cease to be one of ourselves when traversing the regions of air on his hippogriff, or conversing on the mount of terrestial Paradise with the beloved Apostle John. But which of us even in fancy can ride with the Red-Cross warrior, penetrate with Guyon into the cave of Mammon, or realise the dreary pageant that issued from the House of Pride?

Spenser's is the purer allegory—Virgil's but a secondary one. The Æneid is a hybrid poem, wherein the real and the ideal mingle. There is sufficient of the first to preserve for us some epic interest, and enough of the latter at times to stagger our belief. But apart from this, how inferior is the Æneid in interest to the masterpiece of Homer! It consists, epically speaking, of three divisions—the landing at Carthage, the Sicilian visit to Acestes, and the final campaign of Italy—and the two first of these have no bearing at all upon the third, and even that third is incomplete. Whatever homage we may be compelled to pay to the sweetness of Virgil's muse, and his marvellous power of melody, this at least is undeniable, that in inventive genius he falls immeasurably short of the Greek, and that his scenes of action are at once both tinselled and tame. One magnificent exception, it is true, we are bound to make from such a censure. The second book of the Æneid stands out in strong and vivid contrast from the rest; and few poets, whether ancient or modern, have written aught like the conflagration of Troy. Nor shall we, with the severer critics, darkly hint of works which had gone before, but of which the substance long ago has perished—of the Cyclic poem of Arctinus, said to have been of all others the nearest in point of energy to the Iliad, or of the songs of Lesches and Euphorion. Rather let us be thankful for this one episode, without which the great tale of Ilium would have been incomplete, and the lays of Demodocus in the Odyssey remained mere hints of the woful catastrophe of Priam. But if you wish to see how Homer could handle a ballad, turn up the eighth book of your Odyssey until you come to the Minstrel's son—or if haply you are somewhat rusted in your Greek, and yearn for the aid of Donnegan, listen to the noble version of Maginn, who alone of all late translators has caught the true fire and spirit of Mœonides.

"The Minstrel began as the Godhead inspired:
He sang how their leaguer the Argives had fired,
And over the sea in trim barks bent their course,
While their chiefs with Odysseus were closed in the horse,
Mid the Trojans who had that fell engine of wood

Dragged on, till in Troy's inmost turret it stood;
There long did they ponder in anxious debate
What to do with the steed as around it they sate.

Then before them three several counsels were laid:
Into pieces to hew it by the edge of the blade;
Or to draw it forth thence to the brow of the rock,
And downward to fling it with shivering shock;
Or, shrined in the tower, let it there make abode [Pg 626]
As an offering to ward off the anger of God.
The last counsel prevail'd; for the moment of doom,
When the town held the horse, upon Ilium had come.

The Argives in ambush awaited the hour
When slaughter and death on their foes they should shower.
When it came, from their hollow retreat rushing down
The sons of th' Achivi smote sorely the town.
Then, scattered, on blood and on ravaging bent,
Through all parts of the city chance-guided they went.
And he sung how Odysseus at once made his way
To where the proud towers of Deiphobus lay.

With bold Menelaus he thitherward strode,
In valour in equal to War's fiery god,
Then fierce was the fight—dread the deeds that were done,
Till, aided by Pallas, the battle he won.
So sung the rapt Minstrel the blood-stirring tale,
But the check of Odysseus waxed deadly and pale;
While the song warbled on of the days that were past,
His eyelids were wet with the tears falling fast.[54]"

If we go on twaddling thus about the Greeks and Romans, we shall lose the thread of our discourse, and possibly be found tripping on the subject of Wolf's *Prolegomena*. Let us, therefore, get back as fast as we can to the Moderns.

Unless the poet is imbued with a deep sympathy for his subject, we would not give sixpence for his chance of producing a tolerable ballad. Nay, we go further, and aver that he ought when possible to write in the unscrupulous character of a partisan. In historical and martial ballads, there always must be two sides; and it is the business of the poet to adopt one of these with as much enthusiasm and prejudice, as if his life and fortunes depended upon the issue of the cause. For the ballad is the reflex of keen and rapid sensation, and has nothing to do with judgment or with calm deliberative justice. It should embody, from beginning to end, one fiery absorbing passion, such as men feel when their blood is up, and their souls thoroughly roused within them; and we should as soon think of moralising in a ballad as in the midst of a charge of cavalry. If you are a Cavalier, write with the zeal of a Cavalier combating for his king at Naseby, and do not disgust us with melancholy whinings about the desolate hearths of the Ironsides. Forget for a time that you are a shareholder in a Life Assurance Company, and cleave to your immediate business of emptying as many saddles as possible. If you are out—as perhaps your great-grandfather was—with Prince Charles at Prestonpans, do not, we beseech you, desert the charging column of the Camerons, to cry the coronach over poor old Colonel Gardiner, fetched down from his horse by the Lochaber axe of the grim Miller of Invernahyle. Let him have the honourable burial of a brave man when the battle is over; but—whilst the shouts of victory are ringing in our ears, and the tail of Cope's horse is still visible over the knowe which rises upon the Berwick road—leave the excellent Seceder upon the sod, and toss up your bonnet decorated with the White Rose, to the glory and triumph of the clans! If you are a Covenanter and a Whig, we need not entreat you to pepper Claverhouse and his guardsmen to the best of your ability at Drumclog. You are not likely to waste much of your time in lamentations over the slaughtered Archbishop: and if you must needs try your hand at the execution of Argyle, do not mince the [Pg 627]
matter, but make a regular martyr of him at once. In this way should all ballads be written; and such indeed is the true secret of the craft as transmitted to us by the masters of old.

We have warned you against moralising: let us now say a word or two on the subjects of description and declamation. Upon one or other of these rocks, have most of our modern ballad-writers struck and foundered. What can be in worse taste than the introduction of an elaborate landscape into the midst of a poem of action, or an elaborate account of a man's accoutrements when he is fighting for life or death? A single epithet, if it be a choice one, can indicate the scene of action as vividly and far more effectively than ten thousand stanzas; and, unless you are a tailor and proud of your handiwork, what is the use of dilating upon the complexion of a warrior's breeches, when the claymore is whistling around his ears? Nevertheless, even our best ballad-writers, when their soul was not in their task, have fallen into this palpable error. None of Sir Walter's ballads commences more finely than "The Gray Brother,"—none has been more spoiled in its progress by the introduction of minute description. We pass from the high altar of Saint Peter to the bank of the Eske, and there we are regaled with a catalogue of the modern seats and villas, utterly out of place and inconsistent with the solemn nature of the theme. But "The Gray Brother" is a mere fragment which Scott never would complete—owing, perhaps, to a secret consciousness, that he had already marred the unity of the poem by sketching in a modern

landscape behind his antique figures. Give him, however, a martial subject—let his eye but once kindle, and his cheek flush at the call of the trumpet, and we defy you to find his equal. Read—O ye poetasters who are now hammering at Crecy—read the "Bonnets of Dundee," and then, if you have a spark of candour left, you will shove your foolscap into the fire. Or tell us if you really flatter yourselves that, were your lives prolonged to the perpetuity of the venerable Parr, you ever would produce ten stanzas worthy of being printed in the same volume with these:—

"The Coronach's cried on Bennachie,
And down the Don and a',
And Hieland and Lawland may mournfu' be,
For the sair field of Harlaw.

They saddled a hundred milk-white steeds,
They hae saddled a hundred black,
With a chafron of steel on each horse's head,
And a good knight upon his back.

They hadna ridden a mile, a mile,
A mile, but barely ten,
When Donald came branking down the brae,
Wi' twenty thousand men.

Their tartans they were waving wide,
Their glaives were glancing clear,
The pibrochs rung frae side to side,
Would deafen you to hear.

The great Earl in his stirrups stood,
That Highland host to see;
'Now here a knight that's stout and good,
May prove a jeopardie.

'What would ye do, my squire so gay,
That rides beside my rein,
Were ye Glenallan's Earl this day,
And I were Roland Cheyne? [Pg 628]

'To turn the rein were sin and shame,
To fright were wondrous peril:
What would ye do now, Roland Cheyne,
Were ye Glenallan's Earl?'

'Were I Glenallan's Earl this tide,
And ye were Roland Cheyne,
The spear should be in my horse's side,
The bridle upon his mane.

'If they hae twenty thousand blades,
And we twice ten times ten,
Yet they hae but their tartan plaids,
And we are mail-clad men.

'My horse shall ride through ranks sae rude,
As through the moorland fern,
Then ne'er let gentle Norman blude
Grow cauld for Hieland kerne!'"

Scott was no declaimer. Although bred a barrister, he estimated the faculty of speech at its proper value, and never thought of making his heroes, on the eve of battle, address their soldiery in a harangue which would do credit to a President of the Speculative Society. In certain positions, eloquence is not only thrown away, but is felt to be rank impertinence. No need of rhetorical artifice to persuade the mob to the pumping of a pickpocket, or, in case of a general row, to the assault of an intoxicated policeman. Such things come quite naturally to their hands without exhortation, and it is dangerous to interfere with instinct. The Homeric heroes are, of any thing, a little too much given to talking. You observe two hulking fellows, in all their panoply of shield and armour, drawing nigh to one another at the fords of the Scamander, each with a spear about the size of a moderate ash-tree across his shoulder. The well-greaved Greek, you already know, is deep in the confidences of Minerva; the hairy Trojan, on the contrary, is protected by the Lady Venus. You expect an immediate onslaught; when, to your astonishment, the Greek politely craves some information touching a genealogical point in the history of his antagonist's family; whereat the other, nothing loath, indulges him with a yarn about Assaracus. Tros being out of breath, the Argive can do nothing less than proffer a bouncer about Hercules; so that, for at least half an hour, they stand lying like a brace of Sinbads—whilst Ajax, on the right, is spearing his proportion of the Dardans, and Sarpedon doing equal execution among the unfortunate Achivi on the left. Nor, until either warrior has exhausted his patriarchal reminiscences, do they heave up the boss and the bull-hide, or make play for a thrust at the midriff. Now, unless the genealogy of

their opponents was a point of honour with the ancients—which it does not appear to have been—these colloquies seem a little out of place. In the middle ages, a knight would not enter the lists against an opponent of lesser rank; and in such a case, explanation is intelligible. But in battle there was no distinction of ranks, and no man cared a stiver about the birth and parentage of another. Genealogies, in fact, are awkward things, and should be eschewed by gentlemen in familiar discourse, as tending much less towards edification than offence. Many people are absurdly jealous on the subject of their coffined sires; nor is it wise in convivial moments to strike up an ancestral ditty to the tune of—

"Green grows the grass o'er the graves of my governors."

It was an unfortunate accident of this kind which led to the battle of the Reidswire.

"Carmichael bade him speak out plainly,
And cloke no cause for ill nor gude; [Pg 629]
The other, answering him as vainly,
Began to reckon kin and blude.
He rase, and raxed him, where he stude,
And bade him match him with his marrows:
Then Tynedale heard them reason rude,
And they loot off a flight of arrows."

Scott's heroes are unusually terse and taciturn. They know their business better than to talk when they should be up and doing; and accordingly, with them, it is just a word and a blow.

"But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He marked the crane on the Baron's crest;
For his ready spear was in its rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That marked the foemen's feudal hate;
For question fierce and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know,
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
To give each knight his vantage ground.

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sighed a sigh, and pray'd a prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint—
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sigh'd nor pray'd,
Nor saint nor ladye called to aid;
But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
And spurr'd his stead to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud."

This, you observe, is practical eloquence,—the perfect pantomime of rhetoric; and, when your eyes have recovered the dazzling shock of the encounter, you shall see William of Deloraine lying on the green sward, with the Baron's spear-head sunk a foot within his bosom. Nothing, in short, can be more conclusive or satisfactory.

Let us now take an instance to the contrary. Few men have written with more fire and energy than Mr Macaulay; and, in the heart of a battle, he handles his falchion like a Legionary. Still, every now and then, the rhetorician peeps out in spite of himself, and he goes through the catalogue of the topics. Nothing can be better or more ballad-like than the blunt declaration by Horatius of his readiness to keep the bridge:—

"Then out spoke bold Horatius,
The captain of the gate:
'To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods?'"

Not one other word should stout old Cocles have uttered, of apology for claiming to himself the post of danger and of death. No higher motive need he have assigned than those contained in the last two lines, which must have gone home at once to the heart of every Roman. But the poet will not leave him there. He interpolates another stanza, which has the effect of diluting the strength of the passage. [Pg 630]

"'And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,

And for the wife who nurses
  Her baby at her breast;
And for the holy maidens
  Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus
  That wrought the deed of shame?'"

The whole of this stanza is bad;—the last four lines of it simply and purely execrable. Mr Macaulay is far too judicious a critic not to be fully aware of the danger of any weak passage in a short poem of incident; and we trust, in the next edition, to see this palpable eye-sore removed. But it is in the ballad of Virginia that his besetting tendency towards declamation becomes most thoroughly apparent. You are to suppose yourself in the market-place of Rome;—the lictors of Claudius have seized upon the daughter of the centurion; the people have risen in wrath at the outrage; and, for a moment, there is hope of deliverance. But the name of the decemvir still carries terror with it, and the commons waver at the sound. In this crisis, Icilius, the betrothed of the virgin, appears, and delivers a long essay of some fifty double lines, upon the spirit and tendency of the Roman constitution. This is a great error. Speeches, when delivered in the midst of a popular tumult, must be pithy in order to be effective: nor was Appius such an ass as to have lost the opportunity afforded him by this dialectic display, of effectually securing his captive.

There is no literary legacy the people of Scotland ought to be so thankful as for their rich inheritance of national ballads. In this respect they stand quite unrivalled in Europe; for, although the Scandinavian peninsula has a glorious garland of its own, and Spain and England are both rich in traditionary story, our northern ballad poetry is wider in its compass, and far more varied in the composition of its material. The high and heroic war-chant, the deeds of chivalrous emprise, the tale of unhappy love, the mystic songs of fairy-land,—all have been handed down to us, for centuries, unmutilated and unchanged, in a profusion which is almost marvellous, when we reflect upon the great historic changes and revolutions which have agitated the country. For such changes, though tending essentially towards the production of the ballad, especially in the historical department, cannot possibly be favourable to its preservation; and no stronger proof of the intense nationality of the people of Scotland can be found than this—that the songs commemorative of our earlier heroes have outlived the Reformation, the union of the two crowns, the civil and religious wars of the revolution, and the subsequent union of the kingdoms; and, at a comparatively late period, were collected from the oral traditions of the peasantry. Time had it not in its power to chill the memories which lay warm at the nation's heart, or to efface the noble annals of its long and eventful history. There is a spell of potency still in the names of the Bruce and the Douglas.

By whom those ballads were written, is a question beyond solution. A large portion of them were, we know, composed long before the Press was in existence—some, probably, may date so far back as the reign of Alexander the Third—and to their own intrinsic merit are they indebted for preservation. But we are in ignorance of the authorship even of those which are much nearer to our own immediate period. Much of the Jacobite minstrelsy, and of the songs commemorative, of the Fifteen and the Forty-five, is anonymous; and we cannot tell whether those ditties, which have still the power to thrill our hearts so strangely, were written by gentle or by simple, in the hall or by the cottage fire. After all, it matters not. The poet of Otterbourne will be greater without a name, than fifty modern versifiers whom it would be odious to particularise, notwithstanding the blazon of their Christian and patronymic prefix. Better to live for ever innominate in a song, than to be quoted for a life-time by one's friends, as a self-marked and immolated driveller. [Pg 631]

"Give me," said Fletcher of Saltoun, "the making of a nation's ballads, and I will let you make its laws." This was, in our opinion, a speech of considerable boldness; and if Fletcher really made it, he must have had a high estimate of his own poetical powers. Why then, in the name of Orpheus, did he not set about it incontinently? We presume that there was nothing whatever to have prevented him from concocting as many ballads as he chose; or from engaging, as engines of popular promulgation, the ancestors of those unshaven and raucous gentlemen, to whose canorous mercies we are wont, in times of political excitement, to intrust our own personal and patriotic ditties. Seldom, indeed, have we experienced a keener sense of our true greatness as a poet, than when we encountered, on one occasion, a peripatetic minstrel, deafening the Canongate with the notes of our particular music, and surrounded by an eager crowd demanding the halfpenny broadsheet. "This is fame!" we exclaimed to a legal friend who was beside us; and, with a glow of triumph on our countenance, we descended the North Bridge, to indite another of the same. Notwithstanding this, we cannot aver from experience that our ballads have wrought any marked effect in modifying the laws of the country. We cannot even go the length of asserting that they have once turned an election; and therefore it is not unnatural that we should regard the dogma of Fletcher with distrust. The truth is, that a nation is the maker of its own ballads. You cannot by any possibility contrive to sway people from their purpose by a song; but songs—ballads especially—are the imperishable records of their purpose. And therefore it is that they survive, because they are real and not ideal. It is no feigned passion which they convey, but the actual reflex of that which has arisen, and wrought, and expended itself; and each historical ballad is, in fact, a memorial of a national impulse; and wo be to the man who would attempt to illustrate the past, if he cannot again create within himself the sympathies and the motives which led to the deeds he must celebrate. Wo be to him, we say—for as sure as there is truth in the retributive justice of posterity, he will attain an eminent position, not in the roll of beatified bards, but in that of the British blockheads, and be elected by unanimous consent as a proper

Laureate for the Fogie Club.

It is now a good many years since Sir Walter Scott compiled his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Previous to the publication of that work, several excellent collections of the older Scottish ballads had been made, and industrious gleaners have since gathered up every stray traditionary ear of corn which still lay unnoticed in the furrow. Our excellent friend Robert Chambers, availing himself of all these labours, has given, in a popular form, the essence and spirit of the whole; nor does there, we believe, exist a single fragment of the least merit which has escaped so rigorous a search. We understood that the English ballads had long ago been collected. These were neither so numerous nor so romantic as ours; but they had fallen at a much earlier date into the hands of the antiquaries, and we hardly expected in our day to be told of a considerable addition. Therefore it was with no little astonishment, and some curiosity, that we perused the announcement of a new work entitled, "The Minstrelsy of the English Border; being a collection of ballads, ancient, remodelled, and original—founded on well-known Border legends. With illustrative notes by Frederick Sheldon."

Predisposed though we certainly were to do every justice to the original strains of Mr Sheldon, he will forgive us when we own that the ancient ballads were the primary objects of our quest. We were eager to discover what kind of materials—what snatches of antique song, he had rescued from oblivion among the wild moors of Northumberland; and his preface gave us ample hope of the choice nature of his budget.

"No doubt," says Mr Sheldon, alluding to Sir Walter's literary researches upon the Border—"no doubt many ballads *did* escape, and still remain scattered up and down the country side, existing, probably, in the recollection of many a sun-browned shepherd, or the weather-beaten brains of [Pg 632] ancient hinds, or 'eldern' women; or in the well-thumbed and nearly illegible leaves of some old book or pamphlet of songs, snugly resting on the 'pot-head,' or sharing their rest with the 'great ha' bible,' 'Scott's Worthies,' or 'Blind Harry's' lines. The parish dominie, or pastor of some obscure village amid the many nooks and corners of the Borders, possesses, no doubt, treasures in the ballad ware, that would have gladdened the heart of a Ritson, a Percy, or a Surtees; in the libraries, too, of many an ancient descendant of a Border family, some black-lettered volume of ballads doubtlessly slumbers in hallowed and unbroken dust. From such sources I have obtained many of the ballads in the present collection. Those to which I have stood godfather, and so baptised and remodelled, I have mostly met with in the 'broadside' ballads, as they are called; but notwithstanding their fire and pathos, I found so much obscenity and libertinism mingled with their beauties, that I was compelled with a rash hand to pluck the nettles away that choked the healthy growth of the young, fresh, and budding flowers; preserving, as nearly as I could, their ancient simplicity and diction. Others, by local and nameless poets, I have given as I found them. Those ballads, virtually my own, are stated to be so in the notes, and these, with great fear and tribulation, I hang as a votive wreath on the altar of the Muses." This is explicit and satisfactory, and we shall now proceed to see how our author has redeemed his promise.

We have read every one of the thirty-seven ballads contained in this volume, and the following is our synoptical view. Of "original" ballads—by which Mr Sheldon means those which must be attributed to his own inspired pen, and which constitute, as aforesaid, his votive wreath—there are no less than thirteen; four ballads are taken from the works of Messrs Mackay, Wilson, Telfer, and Hall—bards who have flourished during the last twenty years upon the Border; four are "remodelled" by Mr Sheldon; and *sixteen*, having no other distinguishing mark upon them, must be set down as "ancient" compositions. The man who can bestow upon us at the present time sixteen authentic and hitherto unknown ballads, is indeed a public benefactor!

Out of courtesy to Mr Sheldon, we shall, in the first instance, dispose of his own particular garland; and as it would be a pity to dismember such a posy, we shall merely lay before our readers the following *morceau* from the ballad of "Seton's Sons."

"Seton he gaspit and he girn'd,
And showed his teeth sae whyte,
His een were glaikit like a man's
That's strycken wi' affryghte.

Quo' he, 'Lorde Percy, dinna think
I speak your lugs to blaw;
But let him spare my twa brave sonnes
And at his feet I'll fa!

'And wat them wi' these happing tears
That wash my auld, auld een,—
That channel down these wrynkelets,
Gin he will list bedeen.'

'My bairnies,' quo' the mother then,
'That I have kist sae aft,
Canna we save them frae their death,
But sic a pryce we coft?

'Thare pretty necks I've slibbered sae
Ah! Percy, gentil lord,

To hae them raxed upon a tree,
And strangled wi' a cord!'"

Admirers of the ancient ballad—what do you say to that? There is the fine old Scots dialect in all its purity with a vengeance! In what part of the island such a jargon is spoken, we are fortunately at present unaware. Certain we are that our fathers never heard it; and as for ourselves, though reasonably cognizant of the varieties of speech which are current in Gilmerton, Aberdeen, the Crosscauseway and the Gorbals, we protest that we never yet met with any thing so cacophonous as this. It is impossible, however, to deny Mr Sheldon the merit of pure originality. Nobody but himself could have written the first glorious stanza, which embodies so perfect a picture of despair, or the second, in which the old familiar phrase of "blawing intill his lug" is so appositely adapted to verse, and put into the mouth of a knightly Scottish commander. Lady Seton, too, is exquisite in her way. The "slibbering" reminiscence—which, we presume, is equivalent to slobbering—is one of those natural touches which, once uttered, can never be forgotten. [Pg 633]

It will, we opine, be sufficient to quench the curiosity of our readers, when we state that the above is a fair average specimen of Mr Sheldon's original productions. We presume that few will thirst for another draught from this pitcherful of the Border Helicon; and—as time presses—we shall now push forward to the consideration of the remodelled poetry. The first of these is called "Halidon Hill," and, as we are informed in the notes, it dates back to the respectable antiquity of 1827. The following magnificent stanzas will convey some idea of the spirit and style of that production.

Glower'd the Scot down on his foe:
'Ye coof, I cam not here to ride;
But syne it is so, give me a horse,
I'll curry thee thine English hide.'

Quod Benhal, 'I cam to fight a man
And not a blude mastyff,—
Were ye a man and no a pup,
Saint Bride I had as lief.'

'Foam not, or fret, thou baby knicht,
Put some food in thy wame,
For thou art but the champion
Of some fond Norfolk dame.

'My dog shall shake thy silken hide,
Thy brainis prove his fee,
Gif in that bagie skull of thine
There any brainis be.'

'Thou art a bragging piece of clay,
Sae fyrst wise prove thy threat;'
Loud geckit Trummall as he cried,
'I'll mak' thee haggish meat!!'"

Yes, reader—you may well stare! but such is absolutely the rubbish which has been shot from the Chiswick Press. Next—hear it, ye powers of impudence!—Allan Cunningham's beautiful ballad of Lady Anne, makes its appearance as "Lady Nell." We need scarcely add that in such hands the virgin degenerates into a drab. The other remodelments are trash. The "Merchant's Garland" is a new version by Sheldon of a street ditty called the "Factor's Garland," of which we happen to have a copy in a collection of penny histories. It is as much an ancient ballad as the Murder of William Weare—is dear at the ransom of a brass farthing—and commences thus:

Behold, here's a ditty that's new, and no jest,
Concerning a young gentleman in the East,
Who, by his great gaming came to poverty,
And afterwards went many voyages to sea.

[Pg 634]

Being well educated, and one of great wit,
Three merchants of London, they all thought it fit,
To make him their captain, and factor also,
And for them to Turkey a voyage he did go."

This is sorry enough doggrel, as every one who has the capacity of reckoning feet upon his fingers must allow; but Sheldon fairly trumps it. In a fit of enthusiasm, he has enlisted the name of a friend in the service, and that gentleman must doubtless feel infinitely obliged for the honour of such immortalisation.

"Syr Carnegie's gane owre the sea,
And's plowing thro' the main,
And now must make a lang voyage,
The red gold for to gain.

Now woe befall the cogging die,

And weary the painted beuks,
A Christian curse go with all naigs,
And eke all hounds and cocks.

Three merchants of great London town,
To save the youth were bent,
And they sent him as factor to Turkish ground,
For the gaming has hym shent."

Poets of the Isle of Muck, did ye ever listen to such a strain? Now let us take a look at the works of the ancients. The first in point of order is the "Laidley Worm of Spindleston Heugh," touching which Mr Sheldon gives us the following information. "This ballad was made by the old mountain bard, Duncan Fraser of Cheviot, who lived A.D. 1320, and, was first printed some years ago, from an ancient MS., by Robert Lambe, vicar of Norham." We do not know what exact time maybe meant by the phrase "some years ago," but the fact is that the "Laidley Worm,"—which is neither more nor less than a very poor version of the old Scots Ballad, "Kempion"—was, according to Sir Walter Scott, "*either entirely composed, or rewritten*, by the Rev. Mr Lamb of Norham," and had been so often published, that it was not thought worth while to insert it in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. For the same reason, and for its inferior quality, it was kept out of Mr S. C. Hall's "Book of British Ballads." Intrinsically it is so bad, that Mr Sheldon himself might have written it in a moment of extraordinary inspiration; indeed the following three verses, are in every way worthy of his pen;—

"He sprinkled her with three drops o' the well,
In her palace where she stood;
When she grovelled down upon her belly,
A foul and loathsome toad.

And on the lands, near Ida's towers,
A loathsome toad she crawls,
And venom spits on every thing,
Which cometh to the walls.

The virgins all of Bamborough town,
Will swear that they have seen
This spiteful toad of monstrous size,
Whilst walking in the green."

We are now coolly asked to believe that this stuff was written in the fourteenth century, and reprinted, seven years ago, from an ancient manuscript. But we must not be surprised at any thing from a gentleman who seems impressed with the idea that the Chronicles of Roger Hoveden are written in the English language. [Pg 635]

We next come to a ballad entitled "The Outlandish Knight," whereof Mr Sheldon gives us the following history. "This ballad I have copied from a broadsheet, in the possession of a gentleman of Newcastle; it has also been published in 'Richardson's Table Book.' *The verses with inverted commas*, I added at the suggestion of a friend, as it was thought that the Knight was not rendered sufficiently odious, without this new trait of his dishonour."

So far well; but Mr Sheldon ought, at the same time, to have had the candour to tell us the source from which he pilfered those verses. His belief in the ignorance and gullibility of the public must indeed be unbounded, if he expected to pass off without discovery a vamped version of "May Collean." That fine ballad is to be found in the collections of Herd, Sharpe, Motherwell, and Chambers; and seldom, indeed, have we met with a case of more palpable cribbage, as the following specimen will demonstrate:—

MAY COLLEAN.	**OUTLANDISH KNIGHT.**
"'Loup off your steed,' says fause Sir John, 'Your bridal bed you see— Here have I drowned eight ladies fair, The ninth one you shall be.	"'Alight thee, from thy milk-white steed, And deliver it unto me; Six maids have I drowned where the billows sound, And the seventh one thou shalt be.
'Cast off,' says he, 'thy jewels fine, Sae costly and sae brave; They are ower gude, and ower costly, To throw in the sea-wave.	'But first pull off thy kirtle fine, And deliver it unto me; Thy kirtle of green is too rich I ween To rot in the salt, salt sea.
'Cast off, cast off, your Holland smock, And lay it on this stone; It is ower fine and ower costly, To rot in the saut sea-foam.'	'Pull off, pull off thy bonny green plaid, That floats in the breeze so free, It is woven fine with the silver twine, And comely it is to see.'
'Oh! Turn ye then about, Sir John, And look to the leaf of the tree,—	'If I must pull off my bonny silk plaid, Oh turn thy back to me,

It is not comely for a man
A naked woman to see.'

He turned himself straight round about,
To look to the leaf o' the tree;
She has twined her arms about his waist,
And thrown him into the sea."

And gaze on the sun which has just begun
To peer owre the salt, salt sea.'

He turned his back on the fair damselle,
And looked upon the beam,—
She grasped him tight with her arms so white
And plunged him in the stream."

This, it must be acknowledged, is, to use the mildest phrase, an instance of remarkable coincidence.

Notwithstanding the glibness of his preface, and the scraps of antique information which he is constantly parading, Mr Sheldon absolutely knows less about ballad poetry than any writer who has yet approached the subject. As an editor, he was in duty bound to have looked over former collections, and to have ascertained the originality of the wares which he now proffers for our acceptance. He does not seem, however, to have read through any one compilation of the Scottish ballads, and is perpetually betraying his ignorance. For example, he gives us a ballad called "The Laird of Roslin's daughter," and speaks thus of it in his preface:-"This is a fragment of an apparently ancient ballad, related to me by a lady of Berwick-on-Tweed, who used to sing it in her childhood. I have given all that she was able to furnish me with. The same lady assures me that she never remembers having seen it in print, and that she had learnt it from her nurse, together with the ballad of Sir Patrick Spens, and several Irish legends, since forgotten."

This is a beautiful instance of the discovery of a mare's nest! Mr Sheldon's fragment is merely an imperfect version of "Captain Wedderburn's Courtship"—one of the raciest and wittiest of the Scottish ballads, which has been printed over and over again, and is familiar to almost every child in the country. It is given at full length by Robert Chambers, in his collection, with this note appended to it:—"This very ingenious and amusing poem, which has been long popular all over Scotland, first appeared in the 'New British Songster,' a collection published at Falkirk in 1785. The present copy is taken directly from Jamieson's 'Popular Ballads,' with the advantage of being collated with one taken from recitation by Mr Kinloch." Such are the consequences of relying upon the traditions of "eldern women!" [Pg 636]

We, have, moreover, a version of "Johnny Faa," of which ballad Mr Sheldon seems to consider himself the sole discoverer—at least he does not say one word of its notable existence elsewhere. And we are the more disposed to give him credit for this ignorance, as he hazards an opinion that "the incidents recorded in this ballad must have occurred in the reign of James the Fifth of Scotland, or possibly in that of his father James the Fourth, the King of the Commons;" whereas the story is an historical one, and took place in the times of the Covenant. Be that as it may, Sheldon's version is certainly the worst that we have seen; and the new stanzas which he has introduced are utterly loathsome and vulgar. Only think of the beautiful Lady Cassilis who eloped with a belted knight, being reduced to the level of a hedge-tramper, and interchanging caresses with a caird!

"The Countess went down to the ha'
To hae a crack at them, fairly, O;
'And och,' she cried, 'I wad follow thee
To the end o' the world or nearly, O.'

He kist the Countess' lips sae red,
And her jimp white waist he cuddled, O;
She smoothed his beard wi' her lovely hand,
And a' for her Gipsy laddie, O."

Really we do not think that we ever read any thing in print so intensely abominable as this.

We have no intention of wading through much more of Sheldon's lucubrations—nor is it necessary, as, after a close examination, we cannot discover one single ancient ballad which is new to us in the whole collection. One or two, as we have already shown, are old friends in filthy garments, whose acquaintance we accordingly repudiate. Two or three, such as "Sir John le Sprynge," are mere reprints, and the remainder may be shortly characterised as unmitigated trash. It is rather too much that ditties still redolent of ardent spirits, and distinctly traceable in their authorship to a drunken horse-couper in Hawick, should be presented to the public as genuine Border ballads. For example, we are favoured with an effusion called "Loudon Jock's Courtship," which Mr Sheldon avers to be "a very old ballad, now for the first time published," and states that he took it down "from the recital of an old drover, called A. Pringle, who attended Kelso market." We do not for a moment doubt that this valuable lay was actually pronounced by the baked lips of Sandy, over half-a-mutchkin of aqua-vitæ in a toll-house; but we decline to register it as ancient upon the authority of such a Pisistratus. On the contrary, the beast who composed it was manifestly free of the Vennel, acquainted with every nauseous close in the old town of Edinburgh, and frequently found at full length upon the Bridge, in a state of brutal intoxication. The localities are quite unequivocal, and mark the date of its composition. The "brig," unfortunately for Mr Sheldon, is by no means an ancient structure. No doubt the ditty is graphic in its way, and full-flavoured enough to turn the stomach of a Gilmerton carter, as the following specimen will testify:

"Jock lifted and fought, gat in mony a scrape,
But it was all the same thing to that rattling chiel,
He wad aye spoil the horn, or else mak' a spoon,
The crown o' the causey, a kirk or a mill.

He rade into Embro' wi' gowd in his pouch,
To look at the ferlies and houses sae grand; [Pg 637]
The Castle and Holyrood, the lang walk o' Leith,
Great joy for his coming soon Loudon Jock fand.

'Twas first hae this gill, and then aye anither,
Syne bottles o' sma' yill, and baups for his kite;
And then cam' the feyther o't, sister and brither,
And Jock stoited awa' at the heel o' the night.

Jock met wi' a hizzy upon the high brig,
That looks o'er the yard as he stoited away;
Jock aye lo'ed a blink o' a bonnie girl's eye,
And she speer'd at the reiver his fortune to spae.

But Jock cam' to questions, and being a fallow
Stout, buirdly and sonsy, he soon pleased her taste,
And awa' went the twasome, haup-jaup in their daffin',
Thro' wynds and blind alleys no time for to waste."

Ancient ballad indeed! the minstrel who would venture to chant such a ditty in the Cowgate, would be cheaply let off with a month's solitary imprisonment on a diet of bread and water.

We pass with pleasure from this medley of balderdash and drivel to the more sober tome of Mr Collier, because we know that whatever he gives us will at least have the merit of being genuine. Out of the thousand black-letter broadsides which constitute the Roxburghe collection, the editor has selected upwards of fifty, and thus states the object of their publication:—"The main purpose of the ensuing collection is to show, in their most genuine state, the character and quality of productions written expressly for the amusement of the lower orders, in the reign of Elizabeth, James, and Charles. Our volume consists of such ordinary materials as formed the stock of the English ballad-singer, during a period not far short of a century. Many traces will be found in them of the modes in which they were rendered acceptable to the crowd, when sung in our most frequented thoroughfares." We need hardly say that the volume is got up with great care; and it will doubtless be an acceptable addition to the libraries of our literary epicures: nevertheless, we are free to confess that we were somewhat disappointed with its contents. We did not, it is true, expect to find, in this quarto, any new historical, or even romantic ballads of the first or highest class. The literature of Elizabeth and James is remarkably sterile in productions of this nature; and the few which are intrinsically excellent have long since become familiar and have lost the gloss of novelty. But the didactic ballad and the canzonet were then extensively practised, and, with the fugitive poetry of Peele, Marlowe, Greene, and Lodge in our recollection, we had hoped to recover some valuable specimens of their more obscure contemporaries. In the voluminous records of the Elizabethan era, we find mention of many poets who enjoyed a reasonable celebrity at the time, but whose works, devoid of buoyancy, have since settled into oblivion. We find the names of some of these persons, such as Thomas Churchyard, who is spoken of in "The Return from Parnassus," attached to poems in Mr Collier's collection; but we are compelled on perusal to acknowledge that there is much justice in the critical decrees of time, and that very little which is at all worthy of preservation has been silently permitted to perish. In an æsthetical point of view, therefore, we cannot expect to derive much advantage from this reprint of the Roxburghe broadsides. But the antiquary, who has a natural taste for the cast-off raiment of the world, will doubtless fasten upon the volume; and the critical commentator may glean from it some scraps of obsolete information. To them accordingly we leave it, and pass into the glades of Sherwood.

We wonder whether "Robin Hood, that archer good," is as great a favourite in the nursery now as he was in our younger days? We are afraid not. Our Robin was a mysterious sort of personage, [Pg 638] something between an outlaw and an earl,—a kind of Judge Lynch, who distributed arbitrary justice beneath the shade of an enormous oak-tree, and who was perpetually confiscating the moveables of abbots for the exclusive benefit of the poor. Maid Marian we could never distinctly realise. Sometimes she appeared to us as a soft flaxen-haired beauty, not unlike a lay-figure, once the property of Mr Giannetti, which we loved in our youth, and to whose memory we still are constant. Green as emerald was the garb she wore, and the sun loved to shine upon her as she glided from the shadow of the trysting-tree. But then this fairy personage did not tally well with the other figures of the group. We could not conceive her associating familiarly with the gaunt but good-natured Scathelock, and Mutch the miller's son. Summer, too, must pass away from Sherwood as it does from every sublunary scene. The leaves fall—the birds are mute—the grass has withered down—and there is snow lying two feet deep in the forest,—and then, wo is me for poor Marian, shivering in her slight silken kirtle in the midst of a faded bower! So that we were sometimes compelled per-force to change our fancy, metamorphose Marian into a formidable Girzy, and provide her with a suit of linsey-woolsey against the weather, and a pair of pattens big enough to have frightened all the fallow-deer of the forest with their clatter.

Ivanhoe, however, has played the deuce with our ideal creations, and Robin Hood is now fixed to us for ever in the guise of the yeoman Locksley. We do not like him half so well as we did before. He has, in some degree, compromised his character as an outlaw, by entering into an arrangement with him of the Lion-heart, and he now shoots deer under cover of the kingly license. The old warfare between Little John and the Sheriff of Nottingham is over, and the amicable diacylon conceals the last vestige of their feud. Allan-a-Dale has become a gentleman, and Friar Tuck laid down the quarter-staff, if he has not taken up the breviary.

But if any one wants to know bold Robin as he really was, let him straightway possess himself of those two delightful volumes for which we are indebted to Mr Gutch. We have here not only the consecutive series of ballads known as "The Lytell Geste of Robin Hode," but every ballad, tale, and song, relating to the famous outlaw; and the whole are beautifully illustrated. Mr Gutch thoroughly understands the duty of an editor, and has applied himself heart and soul to the task: in consequence, he has given us by far the best collection of English ballads which for years has issued from the press.

We have said that the English ballads, as a whole, are decidedly inferior to the Scottish. They are neither, in their individual kinds, so stirring, so earnest, so plaintive, nor so imaginative, and Chevy Chase is a tame concern when weighed against the Battle of Otterbourne. But many of them are of great merit, and amongst the very best are those which relate to Robin Hood, and the three stout bowmen of the North, Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudeslee. Robin has a fair right to be considered the yeoman hero of England, and the representative of what must have been a tolerably large class of persons throughout the wars of the Roses. In his history, we can trace a kind of tacit protest against absolute despotism and feudal oppression. He is the daring freeman of the soil, who will not live under arbitrary law, and who, in consequence, ends by setting all laws whatever at defiance. He is not a thief, but a free-booter, and is entitled to receive from posterity whatever credit may be attachable to such a character. His is, in many respects, a parallel case to that of Rob Roy Macgregor, though there is far more of deep tragedy as well as of patriotism, interwoven with the history of the Highland outlaw. Robin asserts no tangible principles beyond active opposition to the church, and determined hostility to the game-laws. For the first of these tenets Baines would have fallen down and worshipped him: for the second, John Bright would have clothed his whole company gratuitously in drab. He is fond of fighting, and ready to take up the cudgels with any chance customer; but, somehow or other, he [Pg 639] has invariably the worst of the encounter. Tinker, beggar-man, tanner, shepherd, and curtail friar, in succession, bring him to his knees, and his life would have been many times a forfeit, but for the timely assistance of his horn, which brought Little John and the rest to the rescue. Guy of Gisborne was, we believe, the only champion whom he slew unaided, and even in that meeting he was placed in sore jeopardy.

"Robin was reachless on a root,
And stumbled at that tide,
And Guy was quick and nimble withall,
And hit him upon the side.

Oh dear Ladye! said Robin Hood,
That art both mother and may,
I think it was never man's destiny
To dye before his day.

Robin thought on our Ladye dear,
And soon leapt up againe,
And straight he came with a backward stroke
And he Sir Guy hath slaine."

But there is a fine jovial rollocking spirit about the outlawed hero of Sherwood, which endears Robin to the popular heart of England: and we firmly believe that Shakspeare, when he went out poaching of a moonlight night, was more actuated by poetical precept and impulse than by any sensual covetise for the venison of old Sir Thomas Lucy.

Many ingenious persons—nay many excellent poets, have in modern times attempted to imitate the ancient Scottish ballad, but in no single case has there been a perfect fac-simile produced. The reason of the failure is obvious. An ingenious person, who is not a poet, could not for the dear life of him construct a ditty which, in order to resemble its original, must embody a strain of music, and a burst of heroic or of plaintive passion. It is not, however, by any means so difficult to imitate the diction: of which we have a notable example in the ballad of "Childe Ether," which is included in several of the collections. "Childe Alcohol," perhaps, would have been the better name, if all the circumstances which we have heard relating to its composition be true; nevertheless it is undeniable that our facetious friends who are chargeable with this literary sin, have succeeded in producing a very passable imitation, and that their phraseology at least is faultless. A poet, again, neither can nor ought to imitate, and when he is writing in earnest the attempt is absolutely hopeless. For every poet has his own style, and his own unmistakeable manner of thought and of expression, which he cannot cast off at will. If he imitates, he ceases for the time to be a poet, degenerates into a rhymster, and his flowers upon close inspection will be found to have been fabricated from muslin.

Very blind indeed must be the man who could mistake "Sir James the Rose" for an ancient Scottish ballad. Michael Bruce, the author, was more than an ingenious person: he was also a

poet, and had he lived a little longer, and at a period when simplicity in composition was rated at its true value, he would in all probability have executed something better. But he wanted power, and that pathos which is indispensable for the composition of a perfect ballad. Even Scott, when he attempted too close an imitation, failed. The glorious fragment which we have already quoted, "The Eve of Saint John," "Lochinvar," and others, are not to be considered in the light of imitations, but as pure outbursts of his own high chivalrous and romantic imagination. But the third part of "Thomas the Rhymer" is an adaptation to, or continuation of the ancient fragment, with which, however, in no respect can it possibly compare. Indeed the old ballad stands almost isolated in poetry, for its wild imaginative strain. [Pg 640]

"She's mounted on her milk-white steed,
  She's ta'en true Thomas up behind;
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
  The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and further on;
  The steed gaed swifter than the wind,
Until they reached a desart wide,
  And every land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
  And lean your head upon my knee,
Abide and rest a little space,
  And I will show you ferlies three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
  So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness
  Tho' after it but few inquires.

"And see ye not that braid, braid road,
  That lies across the lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
  Tho' some call it the road to heaven.

"And see ye not that bonny road
  That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elf land,
  Where thou and I this night maun gae.

"But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
  Whatever ye may hear or see;
For if ye speak word in Elfin land
  Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie."

O they rade on and farther on,
  And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither the sun nor moon,
  But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern-light,
  And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
  Rins through the springs o' that countrie."

The late ingenious Mr Cromek was not, so far as we know, physically blind, but most assuredly there hung a heavy cloud over his mental light, since he could not discern the burning stamp of original genius in the fragments which were communicated to him by Allan Cunningham, and which he published under the title of "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song." Poor Allan Cunningham has passed away from amongst us, not unknown indeed, nor unhonoured, but without having received that full meed of praise and fame which was justly his due. For Allan, though a most industrious man, was far too careless of his poetic reputation, and never could be prevailed on to collect together those scattered snatches of song, which he had sown with too liberal a hand in detached and distant places. But the service which he would not render to himself, has been performed by filial piety; and we now congratulate the public on their possessing, in a cheap and elegant form, the works of the most tender and pathetic of the Scottish Minstrels who have arisen since the death of Burns. If this little book does not become a favourite, and if it does not speedily make its way, not only into every library, but into every farm-steading of Scotland—if the poems of Allan Cunningham do not become as familiar to the lips, [Pg 641] and as dear to the hearts, of our shepherds and our peasantry, as those of his great predecessor —then we shall be constrained to believe that the age is indeed an iron one, that the heart of our beloved country has at last grown cold, and its impulses less fervid than of yore. It is now nearly thirty years ago—a long, long time to us—since Cromek's collection of Remains was noticed in this Magazine. Cunningham was then in the flush and zenith of his genius, with years, as we had fondly hoped, of fame before him, and all the early difficulties which beset the path of a youthful poet overcome. He was then urged to a diligent cultivation of the glorious talent he possessed,

and to a further development of the seeds of poetry which lay within his own bosom, and in the spirit of his native land. And surely had Allan acted thus, and confined himself to the range of literature within which he had few equals and no superior, he would ere now have gained a lofty and imperishable name. But a mistaken ambition diverted him to other tasks. He left the field of song to wander through the forest of romance, and we fear that he lost himself amidst its mazes.

It is upon the present collection of his poems and songs that Cunningham's fame must rest; and small as is the bulk of the volume, we yet do not hesitate to say that it would be difficult to point out another containing more lyrics of exquisite beauty, with fewer palpable blemishes. Cunningham's poetical style is both rare and remarkable. With a singular simplicity of diction, he combines imagery of the highest kind, and a pathos which at once finds its way to the heart of every reader. To many of our friends the following ballad may be familiar; but as a new generation who know less of Allan has arisen since the days of Cromek, we may be excused for transferring once more to our pages a gem of such purity and lustre.

"She's gane to dwall in heaven, my lassie,
  She's gane to dwall in heaven;
'Ye're owre pure,' quo' the voice o' God,
  'For dwalling out o' heaven!'

O what'll she do in heaven, my lassie?
  O what'll she do in heaven?
She'll mix her ain thoughts wi' angel's sangs,
  An' make them mair meet for heaven.

She was beloved by a', my lassie,
  She was beloved by a';
But an angel fell in love wi' her,
  An' took her frae us a'.

Lowly there thou lies, my lassie,
  Lowly there thou lies;
A bonnier form ne'er went to the yird
  Nor frae it will arise!

Fu' soon I'll follow thee, my lassie,
  Fu' soon I'll follow thee;
Thou left me nought to covet ahin',
  But took gudeness sel' wi' thee.

I look'd in thy death-cold face, my lassie,
  I look'd in thy death-cold face;
Thou seem'd a lily new cut i' the bud,
  An' fading in its place.

I look'd on thy death-shut eye, my lassie,
  I look'd on thy death-shut eye;
And a lovelier light, in the brow of heaven,
  Fell Time shall ne'er destroy.

[Pg 642]

Thy lips were ruddy and calm, my lassie,
  Thy lips were ruddy and calm;
But gane was the holy breath o' heaven
  That sang the evening psalm.

There's naught but dust now mine, lassie,
  There's naught but dust now mine;
My soul's wi' thee i' the cauld grave,
  An' why should I stay behin'!"

We really must find fault with Mr Peter Cunningham for calling this, and others of his father's choicest productions, "imitations of the old ballad." They are no more imitations than the finest poems of Burns, or Hogg, or Motherwell. They are, it is true, written in the Scots dialect, and they share, along with the old traditional strains, the charm of a sweet simplicity; but every one of them came direct from the heart of our beloved Allan, and are, in their way, as truly original compositions as any burst that ever yet was uttered by inspired poet under the canopy of heaven. Poor old Cromek, who knew as little about the Scottish ballads as Mr Sheldon, believed them to be ancient, and, we dare say, died in that belief. But every man here, who knew or cared about the matter, saw at once that such poems as "The Lord's Marie," or "Bonnie Lady Anne," were neither ancient nor imitated; and accordingly, by the common consent of his brethren, Allan Cunningham was at once enrolled on the list of the sweet singers of Scotland—and long and distant be the day when his name shall be forgotten on the flowery braes of Nithsdale, or the pleasant holms of Dalswinton, which in life he loved so well.

The last work which we have to notice is the collected edition of Motherwell's Poems, which has just issued from the Glasgow Press, under the auspices of Mr James M'Conechy. William Motherwell must always stand very high in the list of the minor Scottish poets, and one lyric of

his, "Jeanie Morrison," is as pathetic as any in the language. But of him so much has already been said in former numbers of MAGA, that we may dispense with present criticism: and we shall merely draw the attention of the lovers of the supernatural to a more terrific temptation of Saint Anthony than ever was painted by Teniers. Motherwell was a noted ghost-seer, and few could beat him in the magic circle. Witness "Elfinland Wud," which is enough to frighten, not a nursery of children, but a score of bearded callants out of their wits, if they heard it chanted, on an eerie night, in the dim forests of Glenmore.

THE DEMON LADY.

"Again in my chamber!
Again at my bed!
With thy smile sweet as sunshine,
And hand cold as lead!
I know thee! I know thee!
Nay, start not, my sweet!
These golden robes shrunk up
And showed me thy feet;
These golden robes shrunk up,
And taffety thin,
While out crept the emblems
Of Death and of Sin.

Bright beautiful devil!
Pass, pass from me now;
For the damp dew of death
Gathers thick on my brow;
And bind up thy girdle,
Nor beauties disclose,
More dazzlingly white
Than the wreath-drifted snows:
And away with thy kisses;
My heart waxes sick,
As thy red lips, like worms,
Travel over my cheek!

Ha! press me no more with
That passionless hand,
'Tis whiter than milk, or
The foam on the strand;
'Tis softer than down, or
The silken-leafed flower;
But colder than ice thrills
Its touch at this hour.
Like the finger of death,
From cerements unroll'd,
Thy hand on my heart falls
Dull, clammy, and cold.

Nor bend o'er my pillow—
Thy raven-black hair
O'ershadows my brow with
A deeper despair;
These ringlets, thick falling, [Pg 643]
Spread fear through my brain,
And my temples are throbbing
With madness again.
The moonlight! the moonlight!
The deep-winding bay!
There are TWO on that strand,
And a ship far away!

In its silence and beauty,
Its passion and power,
Love breathed o'er the land
Like the soul of a flower.
The billows were chiming
On pale yellow sands,
And moonshine was gleaming
On small ivory hands.
There were bow'rs by the brook's brink,
And flowers bursting free;
There were hot lips to suck forth
A lost soul from me.

Now mountain and meadow,
  Frith, forest, and river,
Are mingling with shadows—
  Are lost to me ever.
The sunlight is fading,
  Small birds seek their nest;
While happy hearts, flower-like,
  Sink sinless to rest.
But I!-'tis no matter;
  Ay, kiss cheek and chin;
Kiss—kiss—thou hast won me,
  Bright, beautiful Sin!"

And now we shall lay down our pen, and bid farewell for a season both to poet and to poetaster. If any of our young friends who are now setting up as ballad-writers upon their own account, have a spark of genius within them—and we do think that, with proper training, something might be made of the lads—let them study the distinctions which we have drawn above, and cultivate energy and simplicity as the cardinal virtues of composition. Also let them study, but not copy, the ancient ballad-book: for it is a domain which we have long preserved from poachers, and if we catch any of them appropriating, remodelling, or transferring from it, we shall beg an afternoon's loan of THE CRUTCH, and lay the delinquent as low as Sheldon. It may be that some do not know what is in that ballad-book: if so—let them read the Death of the Douglas at Otterbourne, and then, if they dare, indulge us with the catastrophe of Harry Hotspur.

"And then he called his little foot-page,
  And said, 'Run speedilie,
And fetch my ae dear sister's son,
  Sir Hugh Montgomerie.'

'My nephew gude,' the Douglas said,
  'What recks the death o' ane!
Last nicht I dreimed a drearie dreim,
  And I ken the day's thy ain.

'My wound is deep, I fain wad sleep;
  Tak thou the vanguard o' the three,
And bury me by the braken-bush
  That grows on yonder lily-lee.

O bury me by the braken-bush
  Beneath the bluming brier;
Let never living mortal ken
  That a kindly Scot lies here!'

He lifted up that noble lord,
  Wi' the saut tear in his e'e;
He laid him in the braken-bush,
  That his merrie-men might not see.

The moon was clear, the day drew near,
  The spears in flinders flew;
And mony a gallant Englishman
  Ere day the Scotsmen slew.

[Pg 644]

The Gordons gude in English blude
  They steep'd their hose and shoon;
The Lindsays flew like fire about
  Till a' the fray was dune.

The Percy and Montgomery met,
  That either of other were fain;
They swappet swords, and they twa swat,
  Till the blude ran down like rain.

'Now yield thee, yield thee, Percy,' he said,
  'Or else I shall lay thee low.'
'To whom shall I yield?' Earl Percy said,
  'Sin' I see it maun be so.'

Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loun,
  Nor yet shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the braken-bush
  That grows on yon lily-lee.'

This deed was dune at the Otterbourne
  About the breaking o' the day.

Earl Douglas was buriet at the braken-bush,
And Percy led captive away."

So died in his harness the doughty Earl of Douglas, and never was the fall of a warrior more greatly commemorated by minstrel, be his age, his land, his birth, or his language what they may!

FOOTNOTES:

[53] *The Minstrelsy of the English Border; being a collection of Ballads, ancient, remodelled, and original, founded on well-known Border Legends.* With illustrative notes by FREDERICK SHELDON. London: 1847.

A Book of Roxburghe Ballads. Edited by JOHN PAYNE COLLIER, Esq. London: 1847.

A Lytell Geste of Robin Hood. Edited by JOHN MATHEW GUTCH, F.S.A. 2 vols. London: 1847.

Poems and Songs of ALLAN CUNNINGHAM. London: 1847.

The Poetical Works of WILLIAM MOTHERWELL, Second Edition, Enlarged. Glasgow: 1847.

[54] We are indebted for the above extract to the Homeric Ballads, published some years since in *Fraser's Magazine*. We hope that some day these admirable translations may be collected together and published in a separate form.

EPITAPH OF CONSTANTINE KANARIS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF WILHELM MÜLLER.

I am Constantine Kanaris:
I, who lie beneath this stone,
Twice into the air in thunder
Have the Turkish galleys blown.

In my bed I died, a Christian,
Hoping straight with Christ to be;
Yet one earthly wish is buried
Deep within the grave with me.

That upon the open ocean
When the third Armada came,
They and I had died together.
Whirled aloft on wings of flame.

Yet 'tis something that they've laid me
In a land without a stain:
Keep it thus, my God and Saviour,
Till I rise from earth again!

W. E. A.

SCOTTISH MELODIES. BY DELTA.

[Pg 645]

THE MAID OF ULVA.

The hyacinth bathed in the beauty of spring,
The raven when autumn hath darken'd his wing,
Were bluest and blackest, if either could vie
With the night of thy hair, or the morn of thine eye,—

Fair maid of the mountain, whose home, far away,
Looks down on the islands of Ulva's blue bay;
May nought from its Eden thy footsteps allure,
To grieve what is happy, or dim what is pure!

Between us a foam-sheet impassable flows—
The wrath and the hatred of clans who are foes;
But love, like the oak, while the tempest it braves,
The firmer will root it, the fiercer it raves.

Not seldom thine eye from the watch-tower shall hail,
In the red of the sunrise the gleam of my sail,
And lone is the valley, and thick is the grove,

And green is the bower, that is sacred to love!

The snows shall turn black on high Cruachan Ben,
And the heath cease to purple fair Sonachan glen,
And the breakers to foam, as they dash on Tiree,
When the heart in this bosom beats faithless to thee!

LAMENT FOR MACRIMMON.

Mist wreathes stern Coolin like a cloud,
The water-wraith is shrieking loud,
And blue eyes gush with tears that burn,
For thee—who shall no more return!
  Macrimmon shall no more return,
  Oh never, never more return!
  Earth, wrapt in doomsday flames, shall burn,
  Before Macrimmon home return!

The wild winds wail themselves asleep,
The rills drop tear-like down the steep,
In forest glooms the songsters mourn,
For thee—who shall no more return!
  Macrimmon shall no more return, &c.

Even hoar old Ocean joins our wail,
Nor moves the boat, though bent with sail;
Fierce shrieking gales the breakers churn,
For thee—who shall no more return!
  Macrimmon shall no more return, &c.

No more, at eve, thy harp in hall
Shall from the tower faint echoes call;
There songless circles vainly mourn
For thee—who shall no more return!
  Macrimmon shall no more return, &c.

Thou shalt return not from afar
With wreaths of peace, or spoils of war;
Each breast is but affection's urn
For thee—who shall no more return!
  Macrimmon shall no more return,
  Oh never, never more return!
  Earth, wrapt in doomsday flames, shall burn,
  Before Macrimmon home return!

THE SCOTCH MARRIAGE BILL.

[Pg 646]

We trust we have no blind or bigoted admiration of our native institutions, and we willingly allow that the marriage law of Scotland is not incapable of amendment. Any measure, therefore, professing to have that object, would receive our attentive consideration; but we should expect it to be framed with a care and caution corresponding to the grave importance of the social relations which are to be affected, and in a spirit congenial to the deep moral and religious convictions which have always been cherished among our countrymen, and which, on this subject above all others, it is important to preserve unimpaired.

The Bill recently introduced into Parliament "to amend the law of Scotland affecting the constitution of marriage," appears to us not to possess the recommendations which we think essential to such an attempt. We consider it, though well intended, to proceed on a partial and imperfect view of the subject, and to threaten us with the introduction of greater evils than those which it professes to remedy. We regard it as calculated to destroy or deaden the sacred character of the conjugal union, and to diminish the solemnity of its obligations; to give new and dangerous encouragements to precipitate and improper connections; and, more especially as regards young persons, to create formidable temptations to imprudence or immorality, and fatal facilities to the designs of adventurers who may seek by marriage to obtain wealth or advancement.

As the Bill is short, we shall insert it as the text of our observations:

"*A BILL to amend the Law of Scotland affecting the Constitution of Marriage.*

"Whereas it is expedient that the law of marriage in Scotland should be amended as far as the same affects the constitution of marriage in that country; be it enacted, by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and

after the last day of March, One thousand eight hundred and Forty-eight, excepting as hereinafter excepted and provided, *no marriage* to be contracted in Scotland *shall be valid or effectual* unless it shall be registered by the parties contracting the same, in terms of an act passed in the present session of Parliament, intituled, "An Act for registering births, deaths and marriages in Scotland," by the said parties appearing in presence of the registrar, and then and there signing before witnesses the entry of their marriage in the register, and having the same otherwise registered in the manner provided by the said act, in the case of the registration of marriages by the parties themselves contracting marriage; *upon which registration only* the marriage shall be held to be contracted or valid or effectual to any effect or purpose whatever; and it is hereby declared that *such registration shall of itself constitute marriage*, and such parties shall thereafter be held and deemed to be married parties to all effects and purposes whatever.

"Provided always, and be it enacted, that nothing herein contained shall affect or be held or construed to affect the validity of any marriage where the marriage has been solemnised in presence of a clergyman, or of a party professing to be acting as, and believed to be a clergyman, or, in the case of Jews, has been solemnised according to the rites observed by persons professing the Jewish religion, or, in the case of Quakers, according to the rites or form observed by persons belonging to the Society of Friends commonly called Quakers.

"And be it enacted, that the word 'clergyman' shall include all clergymen or ministers of religion authorised to solemnise marriage, whether belonging to the established church, or to any other church, or to any sect or persuasion by whatever name or denomination known.

"And be it enacted, that this act may be amended or repealed by any act to be passed during the present session of Parliament." [Pg 647]

The operation of this Bill, it will be seen, depends so far on the machinery provided by another Bill which is also now before Parliament, "for registering births, deaths, and marriages, in Scotland." Into the details of that Bill, it is unnecessary here to enter; find we shall only mention that it provides for the establishment of resident officers in various districts and subdistricts in Scotland, who are to keep a book for the formal registration of the events specified in the title of the Bill. We are no enemies of a judicious system of registration, though we do not approve of all the enactments of the Bill in question, and we think that they will require special and close examination before they shall be sanctioned by the Legislature. But we shall merely insert at present the clause that seems most material for discussing the merits of the Marriage Bill.

"And be it enacted, that in all cases of marriage contracted in Scotland from and after the last day of December one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, the persons contracting such marriage, at the time of the contraction thereof, or within two months thereafter, shall sign along with two witnesses, in the presence of the registrar, the entry of such marriage in the register-book to be kept by the registrar, and the registrar shall make such entry according to the form of Schedule (C.) hereunto annexed; and if the person so contracting marriage, together with two witnesses as aforesaid, shall, within ten days thereafter, attend upon the registrar for the purpose of signing the entry in the register, the registrar shall for such entry be entitled to a fee of five shillings; and if such persons shall so attend after ten days and within two months of contracting the marriage, the registrar shall be entitled to a fee of ten shillings, or it shall be competent to the persons so contracting marriage to *require the registrar of the subdistrict within which such marriage has been contracted to attend at the contraction*, or within two months thereafter, at any place within such subdistrict; and such registrar is hereby required, upon a written notice of forty-eight hours given to him to that effect, to attend with the register-book accordingly, and to make the proper entry therein, and for such attendance and entry, if at the contraction or within ten days of the contraction of such marriage, the registrar shall be entitled to a fee of one guinea, besides the sum of sixpence for each mile which such registrar shall be obliged to travel in going from his place of abode to the place of such marriage; and if such attendance shall be required after ten days but within two months of the contraction of such marriage, the registrar shall for such attendance and entry be entitled to a fee of two guineas, besides the sum of sixpence for each mile which such registrar shall be obliged to travel as aforesaid; and any person contracting marriage and failing to register the same, and sign the entry thereof in manner herein prescribed during the period of two months thereafter, shall be liable in a penalty of fifty pounds, and in default of payment thereof to suffer imprisonment for one month."

We cannot help thinking that the Registration Bill, from which we have just quoted, has been framed without any view to the purpose which its machinery is to serve under the Marriage Bill, of not merely registering a marriage otherwise constituted, but also of actually constituting the marriage that is to be registered. There is a gap apparently left between the two Bills, and at least there is something that appears very blank and meagre in the provision made for extra-ecclesiastical marriages to be contracted in the registrar's presence. We presume that this officer is not to judge what ceremony or declaration shall constitute a marriage; if he were to do so new difficulties would arise: but we take it for granted that if asked by the contracting parties to register them as married persons, the registrar must immediately obey, when the entry will of itself marry them, whether they were married or not before.

There is certainly something startling in a system of registration which does not precisely settle the antecedent matter on which it is to act; and it is still more singular to consider mere registration as constituting in itself the very thing that is to be registered. But it seems to be so [Pg 648]

written in the Bill before us.

Various other observations will occur as to the imperfect structure of the two Acts thus taken in connexion; but we pass over these minor matters to point out the characteristic principles of this measure, and the consequences which we think it involves.

It will be seen, first, that it declares marriage to be constituted by mere registration to all effects and purposes, so that two parties thus entered in the register, are conclusively and irrevocably united by that simple fact. Second, that it professes no preference, and shows no favour for ecclesiastical marriages over those constituted by simple contract or mere registration, the old-fashioned mode of solemnising, them by a clergyman being merely saved from abolition, but shorn of all its privileges, and left, as it were, to die out in due time. Third, that in registration marriages, no proclamation of banns is required, and no notice of any kind is given to the public, nor any interval for deliberation forced upon the parties. Fourth, that no locality is assigned within which the parties may thus marry by registration, it being competent apparently to carry out the arrangement in any district however distant from their ordinary abode, by requiring, in a somewhat Irish fashion, "the registrar of the subdistrict within which such marriage HAS BEEN contracted to attend *at the contraction*."

Now we think it can require little argument to show that a system of this kind, introduced as the basis of *the marriage law of the land*, is, as has been predicted, much more likely to prove a bane than a blessing. Marriage is undoubtedly a civil contract, but in all enlightened Christian countries it has been looked upon as a solemn engagement, over which the church ought to preside, in order duly to impress the contracting parties with the religious origin from which it sprung, with the religious duties which it involves, and with the religious sanctions by which those duties are guarded. Considered as the foundation of society itself, as the source of all pure and kindly affections, as the introduction to the parental as well as to the conjugal relation, it is impossible that it can be lightly treated or hurried over as a matter of mere routine or ordinary business, without lowering its character, and weakening its obligations, and relaxing generally the moral tone of the community.

That under such a system, also, facilities must be given for the hasty contraction of imprudent or improper marriages, is too obvious to be pointed out. A transient resolution, a half frolic, a moment's submission to undue influence, may at once and for ever create the status of matrimony by the simple act of registration, from which there is to be no room for repentance or escape.

But we shall be told that these evils are not introduced for the first time by the present Bill, but already exist in their full extent under the common law. If this were the case, it would be a serious objection to the Bill, that while it professed to amend the law, it left such evils untouched. But on further examination, it will be found that the mischievous consequences to which we have alluded are wholly or almost wholly unknown under the law as now existing, and will either be called into operation by the present Bill, if it should pass into an Act, or will be fearfully aggravated by such a measure.

In the first instance, it must be observed that the law as it stands gives *no countenance* and *no facility* to extra-ecclesiastical marriages. It tolerates but it does not give the sanction of its approval to them. On the contrary, it considers them to be irregular and contrary to good order, and it provides punishment for those who celebrate or engage in them. The present act places them on an entirely new footing. It makes them part and parcel of the statute law. It provides a machinery and pays an officer, according to a settled and moderate tariff, for actually carrying through those summary connexions hitherto deemed irregular, but which can now be deemed irregular no longer. This change of itself involves a serious danger.

Whatever is left to depend on consuetudinary law, will derive its character from the feelings of [Pg 649] the people, among whom the law has been formed and preserved. The one custom, in its growth and progress, is checked and qualified by others of an opposite and counteracting tendency. As matters now stand in Scotland, marriages celebrated without the presence of a clergyman, or without the proclamation of banns, though held to be valid, are denounced as irregular and improper. All the feelings of the people are against them. No one, with any remains of decent pride, or a sense of propriety, would contract marriage in that way; and such a step would infer a loss of social position and respectability, even in the humblest ranks of life.

But, how long would this feeling last under the new bill? Could we rely on its continuance in reference to marriages, which can no longer be called contraband or clandestine, which are recognised and regulated by an Act of Parliament, as being on an equal footing with marriages *in facie ecclesiæ*, and which are henceforward to be performed by a statutory officer, intrusted with important and honourable duties? Are we sure that a change in this respect would not soon come over all but the very best among us; and at least that many thoughtless, and rash, and presumptuous persons, might not give to the registrar's book a position somewhat approaching to the clergyman's benediction? The statute is a clear and intelligible warrant for such a feeling, and may be cited as lending *a stamp and currency* to unclerical marriages, which they do not possess at present, but which it would afterwards be difficult to deny them.

If this change of opinion or practice takes place, and the framers of this bill cannot wonder or find fault if such a result should follow, let us consider what a safeguard would in that way be removed, and how deeply the national character might in time be deteriorated. At present, besides other obstacles and drawbacks, to be immediately noticed, there exists a strong barrier

against irregular marriages in their disreputable character. The stigma that attaches to them, *both in law and in fact*, deters all but the licentious from resorting to them. But let this reluctance once be diminished, and we cannot fail to see that extra-ecclesiastical marriages will be more frequent, particularly under the facilities afforded by this bill, and a wide opening will be made for the admission of all the evils attending them. The bill will thus have a double operation of a detrimental kind, first by removing the legal and moral objections to the marriages now called irregular, and next by providing the means of easily and safely contracting those marriages, by converting the registrar into *a marrying officer*, and, as has been truly said, establishing a popular Gretna-green in every parish.

And here it is proper to remark, that by the present law, irregular marriages are subject to other disadvantages, which operate to prevent them, but which will now be taken away. The very *uncertainty* which attaches to them under the existing law, though an evil in one way, is beneficial in another. Every apparent consent to marry, if irregularly declared out of the presence of the church, is at present liable to inquiry and explanation. The most formal written engagement or verbal declaration is of itself inconclusive; it being always competent to inquire, whether it was not interchanged in jest or in error, or for some other purpose than that of constituting marriage; and several cases have occurred where, upon evidence that there was no genuine and serious intention to marry, such documents or declarations have been wholly disregarded. It is obvious that the very fear of such contingencies, carries with it; some degree of good to the morals and welfare of society. Designing persons seeking to form matrimonial connexions for sordid purposes, cannot be sure that their plan will succeed even if they should entrap their victim into an apparent acquiescence in it; and females possessed of any principles or prudence, will not surrender their persons upon the faith of private contracts, which are not only disreputable in point of character, but doubtful in point of security. Under this Bill, however, all such difficulties would be removed. No interchange of consent, however hasty, however ill [Pg 650] considered, however improperly obtained, could ever be got the better of when once it was registered. A half-tipsy lad and a giddy lass, passing the registrar's house, after a fair, may be irrevocably buckled in three minutes, though they should change their minds before they are well out of the door. A fortune-hunter has only to prevail on a silly girl, who has a few thousand pounds, to walk with him to the office, and there, with two of his associates, make her sign her name in a book, and his purpose is fully and effectually accomplished; while the lady's maid of the family will find it as easy, on the other side, to make a match with her master's son, at any favourable moment that offers.

We do not pretend to know what sort of man the registrar is to be. But his office does not require him to be either a minister or a magistrate. It is not, therefore, necessary that he should offer any advice or remonstrance as to the necessity of due deliberation, or the consent of friends, in entering into the holy state of matrimony. And, indeed, such interference would be an impertinence and a breach of duty. We presume, at the same time, that, as he must be a mortal man, and is to be paid by fees, he will have no objection to encourage every thing that brings grist to the mill. He is not likely to grudge being knocked up at night when a gratuity is to be the result. And thus we conclude that all observance of canonical hours will be dispensed with; and that the great work of matrimonial registration will be practicable at any period of the civil day.

If we were to indulge in the ludicrous on such a subject, we should only have to imagine a marriage bazaar of this kind, opened at a watering-place or at the sea-side, where young ladies might be attended or waylaid by amorous exiles of Erin, watching the *mollia tempora* to wile the confiding fair one from the library to the pastry-cook's, and from the pastry-cook's to the registrar's shop, or else taking shelter within the statutory office during a shower of rain, or arranging to meet at that happy rendezvous after the concert or ball. Or take the converse case, of gawky country lads, hooked in by knowing widows or other female adventurers, and the chain riveted in an unguarded moment, before their unhappy parents, or even the witless victims themselves, had dreamed that it was forging. But even this kind of publicity is not necessary. As far as we see, the registrar may, at any hour, be summoned to attend at the most private spot of his district, and there be compelled to witness and *legalise* the most monstrous match that could be imagined, or the most infamous advantage that duplicity ever gained over simple folly or unsuspecting inexperience.

Who can doubt that scenes of this kind are not unlikely to occur under such a change of the law? When the restraints of moral customs and habits have been broken through by the interference of the legislature; and when an invitation is thus held out, and a mechanism provided for precipitate marriages, who can calculate the infinite evils that will ensue? The obvious fruits of such a system will be conjugal unhappiness and consequent infidelity, the neglect of children, and the weakening of all domestic affections. The worst mischiefs to the personal and social character of a people have always sprung from a disregard of the serious and solemn nature of the marriage tie; and the least risk of such laxity is to be deprecated.

"Fœcunda culpæ sæcula nuptias
Primum inquinavere, et genus et domos;
  Hoc fonte derivata clades
  In patriam populumque fluxit."

In the discussion on this subject out of doors, reference has been made, to the English registration act. It is not necessary for us to pronounce an opinion on the merits of that measure. But we will merely say that its character and provisions are essentially different from those of the

Scotch Bill we have been considering.

The English marriage act, which introduced a system of registration, is the 6 & 7 William IV., c. 85. It is at least a well-digested and well-developed measure, complete in itself, and laying down the grounds on which it proceeds, and the precise mode of its operation. It was introduced as a concession of religious toleration, being intended to relieve the scruples of Dissenters, who [Pg 651] objected to being married according to the ritual of the Church of England. In that light the present bill is wholly unnecessary. The fullest religious freedom already exists in Scotland; the celebration of marriage by a clergyman of any denomination, after proclamation of banns, being equally valid and regular as when the ceremony is performed by a minister of the Establishment. But the English registration act, so far from throwing ecclesiastical marriages into the shade, shows a studied anxiety to promote and encourage them, and contains numerous provisions directed to that object, as well as intended to give publicity and deliberation to the matrimonial contract to be entered into. It further provides a system by which the scruples of Dissenters are saved without destroying the religious character of the contract, by allowing sectarian places of worship to be registered for the purpose of solemnising marriage therein. It is only after all these provisions, and in order expressly to meet further religious scruples, that a marriage before the registering officer is sanctioned. But in this case also, the statutory period of public premonition is required, as well as the observance of the other precautions against precipitate and clandestine marriages. The clause on this subject is as follows:—

"And be it enacted, that any persons *who shall object to marry under the provisions of this Act, in any such registered building*, may, *after due notice and certificate issued* as aforesaid, contract and *solemnise* marriage at the office and in the presence of the superintendent registrar, and some registrar of the district, and in the presence of two witnesses, *with open doors*, and *between the hours aforesaid*, making the declaration, and using the form of words herein before provided in the case of marriage, in any such registered building."

A statute of this kind was not likely to undermine the public feeling in favour of the religious celebration of marriage; and we believe that it has not done so. But the Bill now proposed for Scotland is framed on a very different principle, and would in all probability involve very different results.

But indeed it is needless here to refer to the law of England, which in one essential respect is so widely distinguished from that of our own country. The restraints that, on the other side of the Tweed, have been provided against the marriage of minors without the consent of their parents and guardians, have no existence with us, and the merits of the Bill under consideration must be estimated in reference to that most material fact.

By the theory of the law of Scotland, a boy of fourteen and a girl of twelve may validly contract marriage by mutual consent, without the sanction, and in spite even of the opposition of their guardians. If such be the case, it may be asked, whether and why they do not actually marry at present as rashly and as indiscriminately as they are likely to do under the new bill? The answer is, that such is not the case, and the reason is to be found in the considerations we have already suggested. The law is neutralised, and made nearly a dead letter, by the state of feeling that prevails on the subject, and by the other obstacles to which we have referred. Some are preserved from the danger by ignorance, others by the scandal and discredit attaching to irregular marriages, and others by the doubt and difficulty attending them. If these preventives be taken away, what protection remains? If a statutory marriage by the registrar is not looked upon as discreditable—and why should it be so, since the law enacts it?—then the position of the young is indeed most hazardous. The feelings of shame and fear most likely to operate on youthful minds are withdrawn; and instead of difficulties being thrown in the way, facilities for the evil are created. An encouragement is held out—an office is opened,—a sure and certain method is provided and *advertised* for indulging precipitately the caprice of a moment at the expense of family peace and happiness and respectability for the rest of life.

We might say much more upon this subject had we not, as we believe, sufficiently suggested the mischiefs with which this measure is fraught. We are not satisfied that, as far as the young are [Pg 652] concerned, the existing law as to seduction under promise of marriage can be safely abrogated, unless some other protection is provided in its place; and we suspect that the apparent facility of registration at any time might be used as a means of temptation in the first instance, while it might afterwards be evaded with the most unjust consequences. Neither are we clear that long repute and cohabitation should not, at least, afford a *prima facie* presumption of marriage, so as to supply the want of due evidence of celebration, which may in some cases be lost, particularly by persons coming from other countries to reside in Scotland. We see difficulties, too, as to the effect of registration of marriage under feigned names, which will often be resorted to where there is a desire for concealment. If a marriage so registered is to be bad, what a door is to be opened for deception! If it is to be good, how little security may the registration afford! But we recur to the more comprehensive and radical objections which we have already stated to this Bill, that it destroys the sanctity and reverence attending marriage as a religious engagement, and that it affords dangerous facilities and temptations to the hasty contraction of improper marriages, which, more especially in the case of persons under age, may have a very wide and pernicious operation.

We are glad to see that the Church of Scotland has earnestly taken up this question in the same light with ourselves. But it equally concerns the parents and guardians of youth of every religious denomination. We shall not be suspected of claiming for the Established Church alone the

religious right to sanctify the marriage obligation. Every Christian Church in the land has a good claim and a deep interest to give its blessing and its sanction to its own members when so contracting. But all, indeed, who have the moral character and welfare of their country sincerely at heart, must feel as we do, if they share in the anticipations which we have expressed. Neither is the interest of the subject confined to those who are residents in Scotland. It also concerns every one whose children may enter or remain within our territory at a marriageable age; and if the Scotch law is ever to be thoroughly amended, it will be but imperfectly done unless the feelings and rights of our English neighbours are specially attended to in this important point.

If we were to offer our own views as to a measure that might be safely adopted on this subject, we should be disposed to make the following suggestions for consideration: 1st, That registration should be necessary to validate irregular marriages, but should not constitute marriage; 2d, That the registrar should not attend at the contraction of any irregular marriage; 3d, That a certain period of public cohabitation, in the same residence, as married persons, should constitute or presume marriage; 4th, That, at least in reference to young females, marriage by promise and subsequent connexion should be valid, if steps to declare it were taken within a certain time; 5th, That the marriage of English parties under age should be subjected to some reasonable restraint by requiring prior residence of some duration.

In the mean time however, we trust the Bill will not receive the countenance of the Legislature. Minor amendments upon it may be proposed, but we do not expect that the principle can be corrected. It has been introduced, no doubt, with a laudable desire to obviate the uncertainty at present attending irregular marriages. But in mitigating that evil, it appears to us to involve others of a much more serious and sweeping kind, which it must be the duty of all religious and reflecting men who see the danger to use every exertion to avert.

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