

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine - Volume 62, No. 384, October 1847

Author: Various

Release date: May 29, 2008 [eBook #25633]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Brendan OConnor, Paul Dring, Jonathan Ingram and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Library of Early Journals.)

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE - VOLUME 62, NO. 384, OCTOBER 1847 \*\*\*

# BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

---

No. CCCLXXXIV.    OCTOBER, 1847.    Vol. LXII.

---

## CONTENTS

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN	387
The Emperors New Clothes	406
THE VISION OF CAGLIOSTRO	408
Tiberius	411
Agrippa	413
Milton	415
Mirabeau	417
Beethoven	419
MAGA IN AMERICA	422
THE TIMES OF GEORGE II	431
ART IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN AGES	446
THE PORTRAIT	457
Chapter I	457
Chapter II	475
HOUNDS AND HORSES AT ROME	485
English Kennel	485
The Steeple-chase	487
Roman Dogs	489
SONG	493
MY FRIEND THE DUTCHMAN	494

---

## WORKS OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.<sup>[1]</sup>

If our readers have perchance stumbled upon a novel called "The Improvisatore" by one HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN, a Dane by birth, they have probably regarded it in the light merely of a foreign importation to assist in supplying the enormous annual consumption of our circulating libraries, which devour books as fast as our mills do raw cotton;—with some difference, perhaps, in the result, for the material can rarely be said to be worked up into any thing like substantial

raiment for body or mind, but seems to disappear altogether in the process. As the demand, here, exceeds all ordinary means of supply, they may have been glad to see that our trade with the North is likely to be beneficial to us, in this our intellectual need. Its books may not be so durable as its timber, nor so substantial as its oxen, but then they are articles of faster growth, and of easier transportation. To free-trade in these productions of the literary soil, not the most jealous protectionist will object; and they have, perhaps, been amused to observe how the mere circumstance of a foreign origin has given a cheap repute, and the essential charm of novelty, to materials which in themselves were neither good nor rare. The popular prejudice deals very differently with foreign oxen and foreign books; for, whereas an Englishman has great difficulty in believing that good beef can possibly be produced from any pastures but his own, and the outlandish beast is always looked upon with more or less suspicion, he has, on the contrary, a highly liberal prejudice in favour of the book from foreign parts; and nonsense of many kinds, and the most tasteless extravagancies, are allowed to pass unchallenged and unproved, by the aid of a German, or French, or Danish title-page.

Nay, the eye is sometimes tasked to discover extraordinary beauty, where there is nothing but extraordinary blemish. Where the shrewd translator had veiled some absurdity or rashness of his author, the more profound reader has been known to detect a meaning and a charm, which "the English language had failed adequately to convey;" and he has, perhaps, shown a sovereign contempt for "the bungling translator," at the very time when that discreet workman had most displayed his skill and judgment. The idea has sometimes occurred to us—Suppose one of these foreign books were suddenly proved to be of genuine home production—suppose the German, or the Dane, or the Frenchman, were discovered to be a fictitious personage, and all the genius, or all the rant, to have really emanated from the English gentleman, or lady, who had merely professed to translate—presto! how the book would instantly change colours! What a reverse of judgment would there be! What secret *misgivings* would now be detected and proclaimed! What sudden outpourings of epithets by no means complimentary! How the boldness of many a metaphor would be transformed into sheer impudence! How the profundities would clear up, leaving only darkness behind! They were so mysterious—and now, throw all the light of heaven upon them, and there is nothing there but a blunder or a blot.

[Pg 388]

If our readers, we say, have fallen upon this, and other novels of Andersen, they have probably passed them by as things belonging to the literary *season*: they have been struck with some passages of vivid description, with touches of genuine feeling, with traits of character which, though imperfectly delineated, bore the impress of truth; but they have pronounced them, on the whole, to be unfashioned things, but half made up, constructed with no skill, informed by no clear spirit of thought, and betraying a most undisciplined taste. Such, at least, was the impression their first perusal left upon our mind. Notwithstanding the glimpses of natural feeling and of truthful portraiture which caught our eye, they were so evidently deficient in some of the higher qualities which ought to distinguish a writer, and so defaced by abortive attempts at fine writing, that they hardly appeared deserving of a very critical examination, or a very careful study. But now there has lately come into our hands the autobiography of Hans Christian Andersen, "The True Story of my Life," and this has revealed to us so curious an instance of intellectual cultivation, or rather of genius exerting itself without any cultivation at all, and has reflected back so strong a light, so vivid and so explanatory, on all his works, that what we formerly read with a very mitigated admiration, with more of censure than of praise, has been invested with quite a novel and peculiar interest. Moreover, certain tales for children have also fallen into our hands, some of which are admirable. We prophesy them an immortality in the nursery—which is not the worst immortality a man can win—and doubt not but that they have already been read by children, or told to children, in every language of Europe. Altogether Andersen, his character and his works, have thus appeared to us a subject worthy of some attention.

We insist upon coupling them together. We must be allowed to abate somewhat of the austerity of criticism by a reference to the life of the author. We cannot implicitly follow the unconditioned admiration of Mrs Howitt for "the beautiful thoughts of Andersen," which she tells us in her preface to the Autobiography, "it is the most delightful of her literary labours to translate." We must be excused if we think that the mixture of praise and of puff, which the lady lavishes so indiscriminately upon the author whose works she translates, is more likely to display her own skill and dexterity in author-craft, than permanently to enhance the fame of Andersen. In the works which Mrs Howitt has translated, (with the exception of the Autobiography,) there is a great proportion of most unquestionable trash, which, we should imagine, it must be a great affliction to render into English.

It is curious, and perhaps necessary, to watch this new relationship which has sprung up in the world of letters, between the original author and his translator. A reciprocity of services is always amiable, and one is glad to see society enriched by another bond of mutual amity. The translator finds a profitable commodity in the genius of his author; the author, a stanch champion in his foreign ally, who, notwithstanding his community of interest, can still praise without blushing. Many good results doubtless arise from this alliance, but an increased chance of impartial criticism is not likely to be one of them.

[Pg 389]

When Andersen writes *for* childhood or *of* childhood, he is singularly felicitous—fanciful, tender, and true to nature. This alone were sufficient to separate him from the crowd of common writers. For the rest of his works, if you will look at them kindly, and with a friendly scrutiny, you will find many a natural sentiment vividly reflected. But traces of the higher operations of the intellect, of deep or subtle thought, of analytic power, of ratiocination of any kind, there is absolutely none. If,

therefore, his injudicious admirers should insist, without any reference to his origin or culture, on extolling his writings as works submitted, without apology or excuse, to the mature judgment and formed taste—they can only peril the reputation they seek to magnify. They will expose to ridicule and contempt one who, if you allow him a place apart by himself, becomes a subject of kindly and curious regard. If they insist upon his introduction, unprotected by the peculiar circumstances which environ him—we do not say amongst the literary magnates of his time, but even in the broad host of highly cultivated minds, we lose sight of him, or we follow him with something very much like a smile of derision.

We remember being told of a dexterous stratagem, by which a lady cured her son of what she deemed an unworthy passion for a rustic beauty. We tell the story—for it may not only afford us an illustration, but a hint also to other perplexed mammas, who may find themselves in the like predicament. She had argued, and of course in vain, against his high-flown admiration of the village belle. She was a goddess! She would become a throne! Apparently acquiescing in his matrimonial project, she now professed her willingness to receive his bride-elect. Accordingly, she sent her own milliner—mantua-maker—what you will,—to array her in the complete toilette of a lady of fashion. The blushing damsel appeared in the most elegant attire, and took her place in the maternal drawing-room, amongst the sisters of the enraptured lover. Alas! enraptured no more! The rustic beauty, where could it have flown? The belle of the village was transformed into a very awkward young lady. Goddess!—She was a simpleton. Become a throne!—She could not sit upon a chair. The charm was broken. The application we need hardly make. There may be certain uncultivated men of genius on whom it is possible to practise a like malicious kindness.

We would rather preface our notice of the life and works of Andersen, by a motto taken from our own countryman Blake, artist and poet, and a man of somewhat kindred nature:—[2]

"Piping down the valleys wild,  
Piping songs of pleasant glee,  
On a cloud I saw a child,  
And he laughing said to me—

'Pipe a song about a lamb;'  
So I piped with merry cheer.  
'Piper, pipe that song again!—'  
So I piped—he wept to hear.

'Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,  
Sing thy songs of happy cheer—'  
So I sang the same again,  
While he wept with joy to hear.

'Piper, sit thee down and *write*,  
In a book that all may read.'  
Then he vanished from my sight;  
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,  
And I stained the water clear,  
And I wrote my happy songs,  
Every child may joy to hear."

Such was the form under which the muse may be said to have visited and inspired Andersen. He ought to have been exclusively the poet of children and of childhood. He ought never to have seen, or dreamed, of an Apollo six feet high, looking sublime, and sending forth dreadful arrows from the far-resounding bow; he should have looked only to that "child upon the cloud," or rather, he should have seen his little muse as she walks upon the earth—we have her in Gainsborough's picture—with her tattered petticoat, and her bare feet, and her broken pitcher, but looking withal with such a sweet sad contentedness upon the world, that surely, one thinks, she must have filled that pitcher and drawn the water which she carries—without, however, knowing any thing of the matter—from the very well where Truth lies hidden.

[Pg 390]

We should like to quote at once, before proceeding further, one of Andersen's tales for children. We *will* venture upon an extract. It will at all events be new to our readers, and will be more likely to interest them in the history of its author than any quotation we could make from his more ambitious works. Besides, the story we select will somewhat foreshadow the real history which follows.

A highly respectable matronly duck introduces into the poultry-yard a brood which she has just hatched. She has had a deal of trouble with one egg, much larger than the rest, and which after all produced a very "ugly duck," who gives the name, and is the hero of the story.

"So, we are to have this tribe, too!" said the other ducks, 'as if there were not enough of us already! And only look how ugly one is! we won't suffer that one here.' And immediately a duck flew at it, and bit it in the neck.

"Let it alone," said the mother; 'it does no one any harm.'

"Yes, but it is so large and strange looking, and therefore it must be teased.'

"These are fine children that the mother has!" said an old duck, who belonged to the noblesse, and wore a red rag round its leg. 'All handsome, except one; it has not turned out well. I wish she could change it.'

"That can't be done, your grace," said the mother; 'besides, if it is not exactly pretty, it is a sweet child, and swims as well as the others, even a little better. I think in growing it will improve. It was long in the egg, and that's the reason it is a little awkward.'

"The others are nice little things," said the old duck: 'now make yourself quite at home here.'

"And so they did. But the poor young duck that had come last out of the shell, and looked so ugly, was bitten, and pecked, and teased by ducks and fowls. 'It's so large!' said they all; and the turkey-cock, that had spurs on when he came into the world, and therefore fancied himself an emperor, strutted about like a ship under full sail, went straight up to it, gobbled, and got quite red. The poor little duck hardly knew where to go, or where to stand, it was so sorrowful because it was so ugly, and the ridicule of the whole poultry-yard.

"Thus passed the first day, and afterwards it grew worse and worse. The poor duck was hunted about by every one; its brothers and sisters were cross to it, and always said, 'I wish the cat would get you, you frightful creature!' and even its mother said, 'Would you were far from here!' And the ducks bit it, and the hens pecked at it, and the girl that fed the poultry kicked it with her foot. So it ran and flew over the hedge.

"On it ran. At last it came to a great moor where wild-ducks lived; here it lay the whole night, and was so tired and melancholy. In the morning up flew the wild-ducks, and saw their new comrade; 'Who are you?' asked they; and our little duck turned on every side, and bowed as well as it could. 'But you are tremendously ugly!' said the wild-ducks. 'However, that is of no consequence to us, if you don't marry into our family.' The poor thing! It certainly never thought of marrying; it only wanted permission to lie among the reeds, and to drink the water of the marsh.

"Bang! bang!" was heard at this moment, and several wild-ducks lay dead amongst the reeds, and the water was as red as blood. There was a great shooting excursion. The sportsmen lay all round the moor; and the blue smoke floated like a cloud through the dark trees, and sank down to the very water; and the dogs spattered about in the marsh—splash! splash! reeds and rushes were waving on all sides; it was a terrible fright for the poor duck.

"At last all was quiet; but the poor little thing did not yet dare to lift up its head; it waited many hours before it looked round, and then hastened away from the moor as quickly as possible. It ran over the fields and meadows, and there was such a wind that it could hardly get along.

"Towards evening, the duck reached a little hut. Here dwelt an old woman with her tom-cat and her hen; and the cat could put up its back and purr, and the hen could lay eggs, and the old woman loved them both as her very children. For certain reasons of her own, she let the duck in to live with them.

"Now the tom-cat was master in the house, and the hen was mistress; and they always said, 'We and the world.' That the duck should have any opinion of its own, they never would allow.

[Pg 391]

"Can you lay eggs?" asked the hen.

"No!"

"Well, then, hold your tongue."

"Can you put up your back and purr?" said the tom-cat.

"No."

"Well, then, you ought to have no opinion of your own, where sensible people are speaking."

"And the duck sat in the corner, and was very sad; when suddenly it took it into its head to think of the fresh air and the sunshine; and it had such an inordinate longing to swim on the water, that it could not help telling the hen of it.

"What next, I wonder!" said the hen, 'you have nothing to do, and so you sit brooding over such fancies. Lay eggs, or purr, and you'll forget them.'

"But it is so delightful to swim on the water!" said the duck—'so delightful when it dashes over one's head, and one dives down to the very bottom.'

"Well, that must be a fine pleasure!" said the hen. 'You are crazy, I think. Ask the cat, who is the cleverest man I know, if he would like to swim on the water, or perhaps to dive, to say nothing of myself. Ask our mistress, the old lady, and there is no one in the world cleverer than she is; do you think that she would much like to swim on the water, and for the water to dash over her head?'

"You don't understand me," said the duck.

"Understand, indeed! If we don't understand you, who should? I suppose you won't pretend to be cleverer than the tom-cat, or our mistress, to say nothing of myself? Don't behave in that way, child; but be thankful for all the kindness that has been shown you. Have you not got into a warm room, and have you not the society of persons from whom something is to be learnt? But you are a blockhead, and it is tiresome to have to do with you. You may believe what I say; I am well disposed towards you; I tell you what is disagreeable, and it is by that one recognises one's true friends.'

"I think I shall go into the wide world," said the duckling.

"Well then, go!" answered the hen.

"And so the duck went. It swam on the water, it dived down; but was disregarded by every animal on account of its ugliness.

"One evening—the sun was setting most magnificently—there came a whole flock of large beautiful birds out of the bushes; never had the duck seen any thing so beautiful. They were of a brilliant white, with long slender necks: they were swans. They uttered a strange note, spread their superb long wings, and flew away from the cold countries (for the winter was setting in) to warmer lands and unfrozen lakes. They mounted so high, so very high! The little ugly duck felt indescribably—it turned round in the water like a mill-wheel, stretched out its neck towards them, and uttered a cry so loud and strange that it was afraid even of itself. Oh, the beautiful birds! the happy birds! it could not forget them; and when it could see them no longer, it dived down to the very bottom of the water; and when it came up again it was quite beside itself.

"And now it became so cold! But it would be too sad to relate all the suffering and misery which the duckling had to endure through the hard winter. It lay on the moor in the rushes. But when the sun began to shine again more warmly, when the larks sang, and the lovely spring was come, then, all at once it spread out its wings, and rose in the air. They made a rushing noise louder than formerly, and bore it onwards more vigorously; and before it was well aware of it, it found itself in a garden, where the apple-trees were in blossom, and where the syringas sent forth their fragrance, and their long green branches hung down in the clear stream. Just then three beautiful white swans came out of the thicket. They rustled their feathers, and swam on the water so lightly—oh! so very lightly! The duckling knew the superb creatures, and was seized with a strange feeling of sadness.

"To them will I fly!" said it, "to the royal birds. Though they kill me, I must fly to them!" And it flew into the water, and swam to the magnificent birds, that looked at, and with rustling plumes, sailed towards it.

"Kill me!" said the poor creature, and bowed down its head to the water, and awaited death. But what did it see in the water? It saw beneath it its own likeness; but no longer that of an awkward grayish bird, ugly and displeasing—it was the figure of a swan.

"It is of no consequence being born in a farm-yard, if only it is in a swan's egg.

"The large swans swam beside it, and stroked it with their bills. There were little children running about in the garden; they threw bread into the water, and the youngest cried out, 'There is a new one!' And the other children shouted too; 'Yes, a new one is come!'—and they clapped their hands and danced, and ran to tell their father and mother. And they threw bread and cake into the water; and every one said, 'The new one is the best! so young, and so beautiful!'

[Pg 392]

"Then the young one felt quite ashamed, and hid its head under its wing; it knew not what to do: it was too happy, but yet not proud—for a good heart is never proud. It remembered how it had been persecuted and derided, and now it heard all say it was the most beautiful of birds. And the syringas bent down their branches to it in the water, and the sun shone so lovely and so warm. Then it shook its plumes, the slender neck was lifted up, and, from its very heart, it cried rejoicingly—'Never dreamed I of such happiness when I was the little ugly duck!'"

It is not only in writing for children that our author succeeds; but whenever childhood crosses his path, it calls up a true pathos, and the playful tenderness of his nature. The commencement of his serious novels, where he treats of the infancy and boyhood of his heroes, is always interesting. Amongst the translated works of Andersen is one entitled "A Picture-Book without Pictures." The author describes himself as inhabiting a solitary garret in a large town, where no one knew him, and no friendly face greeted him. One evening, however, he stands at the open casement, and suddenly beholds "the face of an old friend—a round, kind face, looking down on him. It was the moon—the dear old moon! with the same unaltered gleam, just as she appeared when, through the branches of the willows, she used to shine upon him as he sat on the mossy bank beside the river." The moon becomes very sociable, and breaks that long silence which poets have so often celebrated—breaks it, we must confess, to very little purpose. "Sketch what I relate to you," says the moon, "and you will have a pretty picture-book." And accordingly, every visit, she tells him "of one thing or another that she has seen during the past night." One would think that such a sketch-book, or album, as we have here, might easily have been put together without calling in the aid of so sublime a personage. But amongst the pictures that are presented to us, two or three, where the moon has had her eye upon children in their sports or their distresses, took hold of our fancy. Here Andersen is immediately at home. We give one short extract.

"It was but yesternight (said the moon) that I peeped into a small court-yard, enclosed by houses: there was a hen with eleven chickens. A pretty little girl was skipping about. The hen chicked, and, affrighted, spread out her wings over her little ones. Then came the maiden's father, and chid the child; and I passed on, without thinking more of it at the moment.

"This evening—but a few minutes ago—I again peeped into the same yard. All was silent; but soon the little maiden came. She crept cautiously to the hen-house, lifted the latch, and stole gently up to the hen and the chickens. The hen chicked aloud, and they all ran fluttering about: the little girl ran after them. I saw it plainly, for I peeped in through a chink in the wall. I was vexed with the naughty child, and was glad that the father came and scolded her still more than yesterday, and seized her by the arm. She bent her head back; big tears stood in her blue eyes. She wept. 'I wanted to go in and kiss the hen, and beg her to forgive me for yesterday. But I could not tell it you.' And the father kissed the brow of the innocent child; and I kissed her eyes and her lips."

Our poet—we call him such, though we know nothing of his verses, for whatever there is of merit in his writings is of the nature of poetry—our poet of childhood and of poverty, was born at Odense, a town of Funen, one of the green, beech-covered islands of Denmark. It bears the name

of the Scandinavian hero, or demigod, Odin; Tradition says he lived there. The parents of Andersen were so poor that when they married they had not wherewithal to purchase a bedstead, or at least thought it advisable to make shift by constructing one out of the wooden tressels which, a little time before, had supported the coffin of some neighbouring count as he lay in state. It still retained a part of the black cloth, and some of the funeral ornaments attached to it, when in the year 1805 there lay upon it, not in any peculiar state, the solitary fruit of their marriage—the little Hans Christian Andersen. He was a crying infant, and when carried to the baptismal font, sorely vexed the parson with his outcries. "Your young one screams like a cat!" said the reverend official. The mother was hurt at this reflection upon her offspring; but a prophetic god-papa, who stood by, consoled her by saying, "that the louder he cried when a child, all the more beautifully would he sing when he grew older."

[Pg 393]

Those who are disposed to trace a hereditary descent in mental qualifications, will find an instance to their purpose in the case of Andersen. His mother, we are told, was utterly ignorant of books and of the world, "but possessed a heart full of love!" From her he may be said to have derived a singular frankness and amiability of disposition—a fond, open, affectionate temper. For the more intellectual qualities, by which this temper, through the medium of authorship, was to become patent to the world, he must have been indebted to his father. This poor and hapless shoemaker (such was his trade) seems to have been a singular person. To use a favourite phrase of Napoleon, "he had missed his destiny." His parents had been country people of some substance, but misfortune falling upon misfortune had reduced them to poverty. Finally, the father had become insane; the mother had been glad to obtain a menial situation in the very asylum where her husband was confined; and there was nothing better to be done for the son than to apprentice him to a shoemaker. Some talk there was amongst the neighbours of raising a subscription to send him to the grammar-school, and thus give him a start in life; but it never went beyond talk. A shoemaker he became. But to the leather and the last he never took kindly. He would read what books he could get—Holberg's plays and the Bible—and ponder over them. At first he would make his wife a sharer in his reflections, but as she, good woman, never understood a word of what he said, he learned to meditate in silence. On Sundays he would go out into the woods accompanied only by his child; then he would sit down, sunk in abstraction and solitary thought, while young Hans gathered flowers or wild strawberries. "I recollect," says the son, in his Autobiography, "that once, as a child, I saw tears in his eyes; and it was when a youth from the grammar-school came to our house to be measured for a new pair of boots, and showed us his books, and told us what he learned, 'That was the path on which I ought to have gone!' said my father; he kissed me passionately, and was silent the whole evening."

There surely went out of the world something still undeveloped in that poor shoemaker. At a subsequent period of the history we find him fairly abandoning his unchosen trade. The name of Napoleon resounded even in Odense—even in Odense could find a heart that is disquieted. He would follow the banner of him who had "opened a career to all the talents." But the regiment in which he enlisted got no further than Holstein. Peace was concluded; he had to return to his native place, and fall back as well as he could into the old routine. His march to Holstein had, however, shaken his health, and he died shortly after his return.

"I was," says our author, "the only child, and was extremely spoilt; but I continually heard my mother say how very much happier I was than she had been, and that I was brought up like a nobleman's child." No nobleman's child could, at all events, be brought up with less restraint, or more completely left to his own fancies. Poor as were his parents, he never felt want; he had no care; he was fed and clothed without any thought on his part; he lived his own dreamy life, nourished by scraps of plays, songs, and all manner of traditional stories. There was a theatre at Odense, and young Andersen was now and then taken to it by his parents. He himself constructed a puppet-show, and the dressing and drilling of his dolls was for a long time the chief occupation of his life. As he could rarely go to the theatre, he made friends with the man who sold the play-bills, who was charitable enough to give him one. With this upon his knee, he would sit apart and construct a play for himself; putting the *dramatis personæ* into movement as well as he could, and at all events despatching them all at the close; for he had no idea, he tells us, of a tragedy "that had not plenty of dying."

[Pg 394]

Of what is commonly called education he had little enough. He was sent to a charity-school, where, by a somewhat startling error of the press, Mrs Howitt is made to say "he learned only *religion*, writing, and arithmetic." Of the *reading*, writing, and arithmetic there taught, he seemed to have gained little; certainly the writing, and the arithmetic went on very slowly. To make amends, he used to present his master on his birth-day with a poem and a garland. Both the wreath and the verses seemed to have been but churlishly received, and the last time they were offered, he got scolded for his pains.

It would be difficult, however, to conceive of a life more suitable to the fostering of the imagination than that which little Hans was leading. Besides the play-house, and the scraps of dramas read to him by his father, himself a strange and dreamy man, we catch sight of an old grandmother, she who resided in the lunatic asylum where her husband was confined. Young Hans was occasionally permitted to visit her; and here he was a great favourite with certain old crones, who told him many a marvellous and terrible story. These stories, and the insane figures which he caught sight of around him, operated, he tells us, so powerfully upon his imagination that when it grew dark he scarcely dared to go out of the house. His own mother was extremely superstitious. When her husband was dying, she sent her son, not to the doctor, but to a wise-woman, who, after measuring the boy's arm with a woollen thread, and performing some other

ceremonies, bade him go home by the river side, "and if he did not see the ghost of his father, he was to be sure that he would not die this time." He did *not* see the ghost of his father—which, considering all things, was rather surprising; but his father died nevertheless.

After the death of her husband, the mother of Andersen found another object for her affections, for that "heart so full of love." She married again. But the stepfather was "a grave young man, who would have nothing to do with Hans Christian's education;" refused, we presume, all responsibility on so delicate a business. He was still left to himself. He had now grown a tall lad, with long yellow hair, which the sun probably had assisted to dye, as he was accustomed to go bare-headed. He continued to amuse himself with dressing his theatrical puppets. His mother reconciled herself to the occupation, as it formed, she thought, no bad introduction to the trade of a tailor, to which she now destined him. On the other hand, Hans partly reconciled himself to the idea of being a tailor, because he should then have plenty of cloth, of all colours, for his puppets. Meanwhile it was to a very different trade or destiny that these puppets were conducting him.

About this time, not for the money, said the warm-hearted mother, but that the lad, like the rest of the world, might be doing something, Hans was sent, for a short interval, to a cloth factory. But it was fated that he should never work. He had a beautiful voice, and could sing. The people at the factory asked him to sing. "He began, and all the looms stood still." He had to sing again and again, whilst the other boys had his work given them to do. He was not long, however, at the factory. The coarse jests and behaviour of its inmates drove out the shy and solitary boy.

And now came the crisis. He would go forth into the world. He would be famous. All his early aspirations for distinction and celebrity had become, as might be expected, associated with the theatre. But as yet he had not the least idea in what department he was to excel—whether as actor or poet, dancer or singer—or rather he seems to have thought himself capable of success in them all. The passion for fame, or rather for distinction, had been awakened before the passion for any particular art. All he knew was, that he was to be a celebrated man; by what sort of labour, what kind of performance, he had no conception. Indeed, the remarkable performance, the work to be done, was not the most essential thing in his calculation. "People suffer a deal of adversity, and then they become famous." It was thus he explained the matter to himself. He was on the right road, at all events, for the adversity.

We must relate his going forth in his own words. Never, surely, on the part of all the actors in it, [Pg 395] was there a scene of such singular simplicity.

"My mother said that I must be confirmed, in order that I might be apprenticed to the tailor trade, and thus do something rational. She loved me with her whole heart, but she did not understand my impulses and my endeavours, nor, indeed, at that time did I myself. The people about her always spoke against my odd ways, and turned me into ridicule. (They only saw the ugly duckling in the young swan.)

"We belonged to the parish of St Knud, and the candidates for confirmation could either enter their names with the provost or with the chaplain. The children of the so-called superior families, and the scholars of the grammar-school, went to the first, and the children of the poor to the second. I, however, announced myself as a candidate to the provost, who was obliged to receive me, although he discovered vanity in my placing myself among his catechists, where, although taking the lowest place, I was still above those who were under the care of the chaplain. I would, however, hope that it was not alone vanity that impelled me. I had a sort of fear of the poor boys, who had laughed at me, and I always felt as it were an inward drawing towards the scholars of the grammar-school, whom I regarded as far better than other boys. When I saw them playing in the churchyard, I would stand outside the railings, and wish that I were but among the fortunate ones—not for the sake of the play, but for the many books they had, and for what they might be able to become in the world.

"An old female tailor altered my deceased father's greatcoat into a confirmation suit for me; never before had I worn so good a coat. I had also, for the first time in my life, a pair of boots. My delight was extremely great; my only fear was that every body would not see them, and therefore I drew them up over my trousers, and thus marched through the church. The boots creaked, and that inwardly pleased me, for thus the congregation would hear that they were new. My whole devotion was disturbed. I was aware of it, and it caused me a horrible pang of conscience that my thoughts should be as much with my new boots as with God. I prayed him earnestly from my heart to forgive me, and then again I thought upon my new boots.

"During the last year I had saved together a little sum of money. When I counted it over, I found it to be thirteen rix-dollars banco (about thirty shillings.) I was quite overjoyed at the possession of so much wealth; and as my mother now most resolutely required that I should be apprenticed to a tailor, I prayed and besought her that I might make a journey to Copenhagen, that I might see the greatest city in the world.

"What wilt thou do there?" asked my mother.

"I will become famous," returned I; and I then told her all that I had read about extraordinary men. "People have," said I, "at first an immense deal of adversity to go through, and then they will be famous."

"It was a wholly unintelligible impulse that guided me. I wept and prayed, and at last my mother consented, after having first sent for a so-called wise-woman out of the hospital, that she might read my future fortune by the coffee-grounds and cards.

"Your son will become a great man!" said the old woman; "and in honour of him all Odense will one day be illuminated."

So, at the age of fourteen, with thirty shillings in his pocket, and his idea of becoming famous by going through a deal of adversity, he comes to Copenhagen—the Paris, the more than the Paris of Denmark, for, in respect to all that a great town collects or fosters, Copenhagen is literally Denmark. There never was a stranger history than this of young Andersen's. It is more like a dream than a life; it is like one of his own tales for children, where the rigid laws of probability are dispensed with in favour of a quite free and rapid invention. The theatre is his point of attraction: but he was by no means determined in what department, or under what form, his universal genius shall make its appearance. He will first try dancing. He had heard of a celebrated *danseuse*, a Madame Schall. To her he goes with a letter of introduction, which he had coaxed out of an old printer in Odense, who, though he protested he did not know the lady, was still prevailed upon to write the letter. Dressed in his confirmation suit, a broad hat upon his head, his boots, we may be sure, not forgotten, which were worn, however, this time under the trousers, he finds out the residence of Madame Schall, rings at the bell, and is admitted. "She looked at me with great amazement," writes our author, "and then heard what I had to say. She had not the slightest knowledge of him from whom the letter came, and my whole appearance and behaviour seemed very strange to her. I confessed to her my heartfelt inclination for the theatre; and upon her asking me what character I thought I could represent, I replied Cinderella. This piece had been performed in Odense by the royal company, and the principal character had so taken my fancy, that I could play the part perfectly from memory. In the mean time I asked her permission to take off my boots, otherwise I was not light enough for this character; and then, taking up my broad hat for a tambourine, I began to dance and sing—

[Pg 396]

'Here below nor rank nor riches  
Are exempt from pain and wo.'

My strange gestures and my great activity caused the lady to think me out of my mind, and she lost no time in getting rid of me."

We should think so. Only imagine some wild colt of a boy, one of those young Savoyards, for instance, who are in the habit of dancing round the organ they are grinding, apparently to convince the world how sprightly the tune is—imagine a genius of this natural description introducing himself into the drawing-room of a Taglioni or an Elssler, and commencing forthwith, "with great activity," to give a specimen of his talent! Just such as this must have been the part which young Andersen performed in the saloon of Madame Schall.

As the dancing does not succeed, he next offers himself as an actor—proceeding, quite as a matter of course, to the manager of a theatre to ask for an engagement. The manager was facetious—said he was "too thin for the theatre." Hans would be facetious too. "Oh," he replied, "if you will but engage me at one hundred rix-dollars banco salary, I shall soon get fat." Then the manager looked grave, and bade him go his way, adding, that he engaged only people of education.

But he had many strings to his bow—he could sing. It was at the opera evidently that he was destined to become famous. Here he met with what, for a moment, looked like success. A voice he certainly possessed, though uncultivated, and Seboni, the director of the Academy of Music, promised to procure instruction for him. But a short time afterwards he lost his voice, through insufficient clothing, as he thinks, and bad shoe leather. (Those boots could not be new always—doubtless got sadly worn tramping through the streets of Copenhagen.) Seboni dropped his *protégé*, counselled him to go back to Odense, and learn a trade.

As well learn a trade in Copenhagen, if it was to come to that. He still stayed in the capital, and still lingered round the theatre, sometimes getting a lesson in recitation, sometimes one in dancing, and overjoyed if only as one of a crowd of masked people he could stand before the scenes. There never surely was so irrepressible a vanity combined with so sensitive a temperament; never so strong an impulse for distinction accompanied with such vague notions of the means to attain it. At this period of his life his utter childishness, his affectionate simplicity, his superstition, his unconquerable vanity, present a picture quite unexampled in all biographies we have ever read. He has to make a bargain with an old woman (no better than she should be) for his board and lodging. She had left the room for a short time; there was in it a portrait of her deceased husband. "I was so much a child," he says, "that, as the tears rolled down my own cheeks, I wetted the eyes of the portrait with my tears, in order that the dead man might feel how troubled I was, and influence the heart of his wife."

Great as his susceptibility to ridicule, his vanity is always greater, can surmount it, and find a gratification where a sterner nature would have felt only mortification. In a scene of an opera where a crowd is to be represented, he edges himself upon the stage. He is very conscious of the ill condition of his attire: the confirmation coat did but just hold together; and he did not dare to hold himself upright lest he should exhibit the more plainly the shortness of the waistcoat which he had outgrown. He had the feeling very plainly that people would be making themselves merry with him; yet at this moment, he says, "he felt nothing but the happiness of stepping for the first time before the footlamps."

[Pg 397]

Of his superstition he records the following amusing instance. "I had the notion that as it went with me on New Year's Day, so would it go with me through the whole year; and my highest wishes were to obtain a part in a play. It was now New Year's Day. The theatre was closed, and only a half-blind porter sat at the entrance to the stage, on which there was not a soul. I stole



past him with a beating heart, got between the moveable scenes and the curtain, and advanced to the open part of the stage. Here I fell down upon my knees, but not a single verse for declamation could I recall to my memory. I then said aloud the Lord's Prayer. I went out with the persuasion that, because I had spoken from the stage on New Year's Day, I should, in the course of the year, succeed in speaking still more, as well as in having a part assigned to me."—(p. 50.)

We must quote the paragraph that immediately follows this extract, because it shows that, after all, there was something better stirring at his heart than this vague theatrical ambition, this empty vanity. There was the love of nature there. "During the two years of my residence in Copenhagen, I had never been out into the open country. Once only had I been in the park, and there I had been deeply engrossed by studying the diversions of the people and their gay tumult. In the spring of the third year, I went out for the first time amid the verdure of a spring morning. I stood still suddenly under the first large budding beech-tree. The sun made the leaves transparent—there was a fragrance, a freshness—the birds sang. I was overcome by it—I shouted aloud for joy, threw my arms around the tree, and kissed it. 'Is he mad?' said a man close behind me."

His good fortune provided him at length with a sincere and serviceable friend in the person of Collins—conference-councillor, as his title runs, and one of the most influential men at that time in Denmark. Through his means a grant was obtained from the royal purse, and access procured to something like regular education in the grammar-school at Slagelse. His place in the school was in the lowest class amongst little boys. He knew indeed nothing at all—nothing of what is taught by the pedagogue. At the age of eighteen, after having written a tragedy, which had been submitted to the theatre at Copenhagen, and we know not what poems besides,—after having versified a dance, and recited a song, he begins at the very beginning, and seats himself down in the lowest form of a grammar-school.

It is not our intention to pursue the biography of Andersen beyond what is necessary for understanding the singular circumstances in which his mind grew up; we shall not, therefore, detain our readers much longer on this part of our subject. His scholastic progress appears to have been at first slow and painful; the rector of the grammar-school behaved neither kindly nor generously towards him; and on him he afterwards took his revenge in the character of Habbas Dahdah, in "The Improvisatore." But he was docile, he was persevering, and passed through the school, and afterwards the college, not discreditably. In 1829, he was launched again into the world, a member of the educated class of society.

After supporting himself some time by his pen, he received from his government a stipend for travelling, which, it appears, in Denmark is bestowed on young poets as well as artists. And now he started on his travels—evidently the best school of education for a mind like his. For whatever use books may have been of to Andersen, in teaching him to *write*, they have had nothing to do with teaching him to *think*. No one portion of his writings of any value can be traced to his acquaintance with books. What knowledge he got from this source he could never rightly use. What his eye saw, what his heart felt—that alone he could work with. The slowly won reflection, the linked thought—any thing like a train of reasoning, seems to have been an utter stranger to his mind. Throughout his life, he is an observant child. From books he can gather nothing; severe analytic thinking he knows nothing of; he must see the world, must hear people talk, must remember how his own heart beat, and thus only can he find something for utterance.

[Pg 398]

What a change now in his destiny! The poor shoemaker's child, that wandered wild in the woods of Odense, and afterwards wandered almost as wild and as solitary in the streets of Copenhagen—who was next imprisoned in a school with dictionary and grammar—is now free again—may wander with wider range of vision—is a traveller—and in Italy! But the sensitive temper of Andersen, we are afraid, hardly permitted him to enjoy, as he might have done, his full cup of happiness. Vanity is an unquiet companion; he should have left it behind him at home; then the little piece of malice which he records of one of his friends would not have disturbed him as it appears to have done.

"During my journey to Paris, and the whole month that I spent there, I heard not a single word from home. Could it be that my friends had nothing agreeable to tell me? At length, however, a letter arrived; a large letter, which cost a large sum in postage. My heart beat with joy, and yearning impatience; it was indeed my first letter. I opened it, but I discovered not a single written word—nothing but a Copenhagen newspaper, *containing a lampoon upon me*, and that was sent to me all that distance with postage unpaid, probably by the anonymous writer himself. This abominable malice wounded me deeply. I have never discovered who the author was; perhaps he was one of those who afterwards called me friend, and pressed my hand. Some men have base thoughts; I also have mine."

Poor Andersen has all his life long been sorely plagued by his critics. Those who peruse his Autobiography to the close, and every part of it is worth reading, will find him in violent ill humour with the theatrical public, whom he describes as taking a malicious and diabolical pleasure in damning plays. To hiss down a piece, he declares, is one of the chief amusements that fill the house. "Five minutes is the usual time, and the whistles resound, and the lovely women smile and felicitate themselves like the Spanish ladies at their bloody bull-fights." His second journey into Italy seems to have been in part occasioned by some quarrel with the theatre. "If I would represent this portion of my life more clearly and reflectively, it would require me to penetrate into the mysteries of the theatre, to analyse our æsthetic cliques, and to drag into conspicuous notice many individuals who do not belong to publicity; many persons in my place

would, like me, have fallen ill, or would have resented it vehemently. Perhaps the latter would have been the most sensible."

Oh, no! Hans Christian—by no means the most sensible. Better even to have fallen ill. An author by his quarrel with the public, whether the reading or theatrical public, can gain nothing for himself but added torment. The more vehemently he contests and resents, the louder is the laugh against him. Whether the right is upon his side, time alone can show; time alone can redress his wrongs. When the poet has written his best, he has done all his part. If he cannot feel perfectly tranquil as to the result, let him at least affect tranquillity—let him be silent, and silence will soon bring that peace it typifies.

Henceforward, however, upon the whole, the career of Andersen is prosperous, and his life genial. We find him in friendly intercourse with the best spirits of the age. The lad who walked about Odense with long yellow locks, bare-headed, and bare-footed, and who was half reconciled to being a tailor's apprentice, because he should get plenty of remnants to dress his puppets with—is seen spending the evening with the royal family of Denmark, or dining with the King of Prussia, who decorates him with his order of the Red Eagle! He has exemplified his text—"people have a deal of adversity to go through, and then they become famous."

Those who have read "The Improvisatore," the most ambitious of the works of Andersen, and by far the most meritorious of his novels, will now directly recognise the materials of which it has been constructed. His own early career, and his travels into Italy, have been woven together in the story of Antonio. So far from censuring him—as some of his Copenhagen critics appear to have done—for describing himself and the scenes he beheld, we are only surprised when we read "The True Story of his Life," that he has not been able to employ in a still more striking manner, the experience of his singular career. But, as we have already observed, he betrays no habit or power of mental analysis; he has not that introspection which, in the phrase of our poet Daniel, "raises a man above himself;" so that Andersen could contemplate Andersen, and combine the impartial scrutiny of a spectator with the thorough knowledge which self can only have of self. So far from censuring him for the frequent use he makes of the materials which his own life and travels afforded him, we could wish that he had never attempted to employ any other. Throughout his novels, whenever he departs from these, he is either commonplace or extravagant,—or both together, which, in our days, is very possible. If he imitates other writers, it is always their worst manner that he contrives to seize; if he adopts the worn-out resources of preceding novelists, it is always (and in this he may be doing good service) to render them still more palpably absurd and ridiculous than they were before. He has dreams in plenty—his heroes are always dreaming; he has fevered descriptions of the over-excited imagination—a very favourite resource of modern novelists; he has his moral enigmas; and of course he has a witch (Fulvia) who tells fortunes and reads futurity, and reads it correctly, let philosophy or common sense say what it will. His Fulvia affords his readers one gratification; they find her fairly hanged at the end of the book.

[Pg 399]

We are far enough from attempting to give an outline of the story of this or any other novel—such skeletons are not attractive; but the extracts, and the observations we have to make, will best be understood by entering a few steps into the narrative.

Antonio, the Improvisatore, is born in Rome of poor parents. He is introduced to us as a child, living with his fond mother, his only surviving parent, in a room, or rather a loft, in the roof of a house. She is accidentally run over and killed by a nobleman's carriage. A certain uncle Peppo, a cripple and a beggar, claims guardianship of the orphan. Of this Peppo we have a most unamiable portrait. His withered legs are fastened to a board, and he shuffles himself along with his hands, which were armed with a pair of wooden hand clogs. He used to sit upon the steps of the Piazza de Spagna. "Once I was witness," says the Improvisatore, who tells his own story, "of a scene which awoke in me fear of him, and also exhibited his own disposition. Upon one of the lowest flights of stairs sat an old blind beggar, and rattled with his little leaden box that people might drop a *bajocco* therein. Many people passed by my uncle without noticing his crafty smile and the waivings of his hat; the blind man gained more by his silence—they gave to him. Three had gone by, and now came the fourth, and threw him a small coin. Peppo could no longer contain himself: I saw how he crept down like a snake, and struck the blind man in his face, so that he lost both money and stick. 'Thou thief!' cried my uncle, 'wilt thou steal money from me—thou who art not even a regular cripple—cannot see—that is all! And so he will take my bread from my mouth.'"

On great occasions Peppo could quit his board and straddle upon an ass. And now he came upon his ass, set Antonio before him, and carried him off to his home or den. The boy was put into a small recess contiguous to the apartment which his uncle occupied with some of his guests. He overheard this conversation: "Can the boy do any thing?" asked one; "Has he any sort of hurt?"

"No; the Madonna has not been so kind to him," said Peppo; "he is slender and well formed, like a nobleman's child."

"That is a great misfortune," said they all; and some suggestions were added, that he could have some little hurt to help him to get his earthly bread until the Madonna gave him the heavenly. Conversation such as this filled him with alarm; he crept through the aperture which served for window to his dormitory; slid down the wall, and made his escape. He ran as fast as he could, and found himself at length in the Coliseum.

[Pg 400]

Antonio, at this time, is a poor boy about nine or ten years old; we have seen from what sort of

guardian the terrified lad was making his escape. Now, observe the exquisite appropriateness, taste, and judgment of what follows. It is precisely here that the author makes parade of the knowledge he has lately gained in the grammar-school of Slagelse—precisely here that he throws his Antonio into a classical dream or vision!

"Behind one of the many wooden altars which stand not far apart within the ruins, and indicate the resting-points of the Saviour's progress to the cross,<sup>[3]</sup> I seated myself upon a fallen capital, which lay in the grass. The stone was as cold as ice, my head burned, there was fever in my blood; I could not sleep, and there occurred to my mind all that people had related to me of this old building; of the captive Jews who had been made to raise these huge blocks of stone for the mighty Roman Cæsar; of the wild beasts which, within this space, had fought with each other, nay, even with men also, while the people sat upon stone benches, which ascended step-like from the ground to the loftiest colonnade.

"There was a rustling in the bushes above me; I looked up, and fancied that I saw something moving. Oh, yes! my imagination showed to me pale dark shapes, which hewed and builded around me; I heard distinctly every stroke that fell, saw the meagre black-bearded Jews tear away grass and shrubs to pile stone upon stone, till the whole monstrous building stood there newly erected; and now all was one throng of human beings, head above head, and the whole seemed one infinitely vast living giant body.

"I saw the vestals in their long white garments; the magnificent court of the Cæsar; the naked bleeding gladiators; then I heard how there was a roaring and a howling round about, in the lowest colonnades; from various sides sprang in whole herds of tigers and hyænas; they sped close past the spot where I lay; I felt their burning breath; saw their red fiery glances, and held myself fast upon the stone upon which I was seated, whilst I prayed the Madonna to save me. But wilder still grew the tumult around me; yet I could see in the midst of all the holy cross as it still stands, and which, whenever I had passed it, I had piously kissed. I exerted all my strength, and perceived distinctly that I had thrown my arms around it; but every thing that surrounded me trembled violently together,—walls, men, beasts. Consciousness had left me,—I perceived nothing more. When I again opened my eyes, my fever was over."

Sadder trash than this it were almost impossible to write. It is necessary to make some quotations to justify the terms of censure, as well as of praise, which we have bestowed upon Andersen; but our readers will willingly excuse the infliction of many such quotations; they might be made abundantly enough, we can assure them.

On awaking from this vision, Antonio finds himself in the presence of some worthy monks. They take charge of him, and ultimately give him over to the protection of an old woman, a relative, Dominica, who is living the most solitary life imaginable, in one of the tombs of the Campagna. Here there is a striking picture presented to the imagination—of the old woman and the little boy, shut up in the ruined tomb, in the almost tropical heat, or the heavy rains, that visit the Campagna. He who erewhile had visions of vestals and captive Jews, Cæsar and the gladiators, is more naturally represented as amusing himself by floating sticks and reeds upon the little canal dug to carry the water from their dwelling;—"they were his boats which were to sail to Rome."

One day a young nobleman, pursued by an enraged buffalo, takes refuge in this tomb, and thus becomes acquainted with Antonio. He is a member of the Borghese family, and proves to be the very nobleman whose carriage had accidentally occasioned the death of his mother. Antonio becomes the protégé of the Borghese, returns to Rome, receives an education, and is raised into the high and cultivated ranks of society. He is put under the learned discipline of Habbas Dahdah—an excellent name, we confess, for a fool—in whose person, we presume, he takes a sly revenge upon his late rector of Slagelse. But he has not been fortunate in the invention of parallel absurdities in his Italian pedagogue to those which he may have remembered of some German prototype. He describes him as animated with a sort of insane aversion to the poet Dante, whom he decries on every occasion in order to exalt Petrarch. A Habbas Dahdah would be much more likely to feign an excessive admiration for the idol and glory of Italy. However, his pupil stealthily procures a Dante; reads him, of course *dreams* of him; in short, there is an intolerable farago about the great poet.

[Pg 401]

But the time now comes when the great business of all novels—love—is brought upon the scene. And here we have an observation to make which we think may be deserving of attention.

Antonio, the Improvisatore, is made, in the novel, to love in the strangest fashion imaginable. He loves and he does not love; he never knows himself, nor the reader either, whether, or with whom, to pronounce him in love. Annunciata, the first object of this uncertain passion, behaves herself, it must be confessed, in a very extraordinary manner. We suppose the exigencies of the novel must excuse her; it was necessary that her lover should be plunged in despair, and therefore she could not be permitted to behave as any other woman would have done in the same circumstances. She has a real affection for Antonio; yet at the critical moment—the last moment he will be able to learn the truth, the last time he will see her unless her response be favourable—she behaves in such a manner as to lead him inevitably to the conclusion that his rival is preferred to him. This Annunciata, the most celebrated singer of her day, loses her voice, loses her beauty,—a fever deprives her of both;—and not till her death does Antonio learn that he, and not another, was the person really beloved. Meanwhile, in his travels, Antonio meets with a blind girl, whom he does or does not love, on whom at least he poetises, and whose forehead, *because she was blind*, he had kissed. He is afterwards introduced, at Venice, to a young lady, (Maria) who bears a striking resemblance to this blind girl. She is, in fact, the same person, restored to sight, though he is not aware of it. Maria loves the Improvisatore; he says, he believes that his affection is *not* love. He quits Venice—he returns—he is ill. Then follows one of those miserable

scenes which novelists will inflict upon us—of dream, or delirium—what you will,—and, in this state, he fancies Maria is dead; he finds then that he really loved; and, in his sleep or trance, he expresses aloud his affection. His declaration is overheard by Maria and her sister, who are watching over his couch. He wakes, and Maria is there, alive before him. In his sleep he has become aware of the true condition of his own heart; nay, he has leapt the Rubicon,—he has declared it. He becomes a married man.

Now, in the confused and contradictory account of Antonio's passion, we see a truth which the author drew from his own nature and experience,—a truth which, if he had fully appreciated, or had manfully adhered to, would have enabled him to draw a striking, consistent, and original portrait. In such natures as Andersen's, there is often found a modesty more than a woman's, combined with a vivid feeling of beauty, and a yearning for affection. Modesty is no exclusive property of the female sex, and there may be so much of it in a youth as to be the impediment, perhaps the unconscious impediment, to all the natural outpouring of his heart. The coyness of the virgin, the suitor, by his prayers and wooing, does all he can to overcome; but here the coyness is in the suitor himself. He has to overcome it by himself, and he cannot. He hardly knows the sort of enemy he has to conquer. Every woman seems to him enclosed in a bell-glass, fine as gossamer, but he cannot break it. He feels himself drawn, but he cannot approach. His heart is yearning; yet he says to himself, no, I do not love. A looker-on calls him inconstant, uncertain, capricious. He is not so; he is bound by viewless fetters, nor does he know where to strike the chain that is coiled around him.

[Pg 402]

Such was the truth, we apprehend, such the character, that Andersen had indistinctly in view. He drew from himself, but he had not previously analysed that self. It is, therefore, not so much a false as a confused and imperfect representation that he has given, which the reader, if he thinks it worth his while, must explain and complete for himself. Perhaps, too, a fear of the ridicule which an exhibition of modesty in man might draw down from certain slender witlings, from the young gentlemen, or even the young ladies, of Copenhagen, may have, in part, deterred him from a faithful portraiture. To people of reflection, who have learned to estimate at its true value the laugh of coxcombs, and the wisdom of the so-called man of the world—the shallowest bird of passage that we know of—such a portrait would have been attractive for the genuine truth it contains. It would require, indeed, a master's hand to deal both well and honestly with it.

The descriptions of Italy which "The Improvisatore" contains are sufficiently striking and faithful to recall the scenes to those who have visited them; which is all, we believe, the best descriptions can effect. What is absolutely new to a reader cannot be described to him. If all the poets and romancers of England were to unite together in a committee of taste, they could not frame a description which would give the effect of mountainous scenery to one who had never seen a mountain. The utmost the describer call do, in all such cases, is to liken the scene to something already familiar to the reader's imagination. Though generally faithful, we cannot say that our author never sacrifices accuracy of detail to the demands of the novelist, never sacrifices the actual to the ideal. For instance, his account of the *Miserere* in the Sistine Chapel, is rather what one is willing to anticipate it might be, than what a traveller really finds it. To be sure, he has a right to place his hero of the novel where he pleases in the chapel, relieve him from the crowd, and give him all the advantages of position: still his perfect enjoyment of all that both the arts of painting and music can afford, and that overpowering *sentiment* which he finds in the great picture of the Last Judgment by Michel Angelo, (a picture which addresses itself far more to the artist than the poet,) strikes us as a description more from imagination than experience.

A little satire upon the travelling English seems, by the way, to be as agreeable at Copenhagen as at Paris. Our Danish friends are quite welcome to it; we only wish for their sakes that, in the present instance, it had been a little more lively and pungent. Our Hans Andersen is too weak in the wrist, has not arm strong enough "to crack the satyric thong." Mere exaggeration maybe mere nonsense, and very dull nonsense. The scene is at the hotel at Terracina, so well known by all travellers.

"The cracking of whips re-echoed from the wall of rocks; a carriage with four horses rolled up to the hotel. Armed servants sat on the seat at the back of the carriage; a pale thin gentleman, wrapped in a large bright-coloured dressing-gown, stretched himself within it. The postilion dismounted and cracked his long whip several times, whilst fresh horses were put to. The stranger wished to proceed, but as he desired to have an escort over the mountains where Fra Diavolo and Cesari had bold descendants, he was obliged to wait a quarter of an hour, and now scolded, half in English and half in Italian, at the people's laziness, and at the torments and sufferings which travellers had to endure; and at length knotted up his pocket-handkerchief into a night-cap, which he drew on his head, and then, throwing himself into a corner of the carriage, closed his eyes, and seemed to resign himself to his fate.

"I perceived that it was all Englishman, who already, in ten days, had travelled through the north and the middle of Italy, and in that time had made himself acquainted with this country; had seen Rome in one day, and was now going to Naples to ascend Vesuvius, and then by the steam-vessel to Marseilles, to gain a knowledge also of the south of France, which he hoped to do in a still shorter time. At length eight well-armed horsemen arrived, the postilion cracked his whip, and the carriage and the out-riders vanished through the gate between the tall yellow rocks."—(Vol. ii. p. 6.)

[Pg 403]

"*Only a Fiddler*" proceeds, in part, on the same plan as "The Improvisatore." Here, too, the author has drawn from his own early experience; here, too, we have a poor lad of genius, who will "go through an immense deal of adversity and then become famous;" here too we have the little ugly duck, who, however, was born in a swan's egg. The commencement of the novel is pretty, where

it treats of the childhood of the hero; but Christian (such is his name) does not win upon our sympathy, and still less upon our respect. We are led to suspect that Christian Andersen himself, is naturally deficient in certain elements of character, or he would have better upheld the dignity of his namesake, whom he has certainly no desire to lower in our esteem. With an egregious passion for distinction, a great vanity, in short, we are afraid that he himself (judging from some passages in his Autobiography) hardly possesses a proper degree of pride, or the due feeling of self-respect. The Christian in the novel is the butt and laughing-stock of a proud, wilful young beauty of the name of Naomi; yet does he forsake the love of a sweet girl Lucie, to be the beaten spaniel of this Naomi. He has so little spirit as to take her money and her contempt at the same time.

This self-willed and beautiful Naomi is a well-imagined character, but imperfectly developed. Indeed the whole novel may be described as a jumble of ill-connected scenes, and of half-drawn characters. We have some sad imitations of the worst models of our current literature. Here is a Norwegian godfather, the blurred likeness of some Parisian murderer. Here are dreams and visions, and plenty of delirium. He has caught the trick, perhaps, from some of our English novelists, of infusing into the persons of his drama all sorts of distorted imaginations, by way of describing the situation he has placed them in. We will quote a passage of this nature: it is just possible that some of our countrymen, when they see their own style reflected back to them from a foreign page, may be able to appreciate its exquisite truth to nature. Christian, still a boy, is at play with his companions; he hides from them in the belfry of a church. It was the custom to ring the bells at sunset. He had ensconced himself between the wall and the great bell, and "when this rose, and showed to him the whole opening of its mouth," he found he was within a hair's breadth of contact with it. Retreat was impossible, and the least movement exposed his head to be shattered. The conception is terrible enough, but by no means a novel one, as all readers conversant with the pages of this Magazine will readily allow, by reference to the story of "The Man in the Bell," in our tenth volume,<sup>[4]</sup> one of the late Dr Maginn's most powerful and graphic sketches. But the natural horror of the situation by no means satisfies this novelist; he therefore engrafts the following imaginations thereupon, as being such as were most likely to occur to the lad, frightened out of his senses, stunned by the roar of the bell, winking hard, and pressing himself closer and closer to the wall to escape the threatened blow.

"Overpowered to his very inmost soul by the most fearful anguish, the bell appeared to him the jaws of some immense serpent; the clapper was the poisonous tongue, which it extended towards him. Confused imaginations pressed upon him; feelings similar to the anguish which he felt when the godfather had dived with him beneath the water, took possession of him; but here it roared far stronger in his ears, and the changing colours before his eyes formed themselves into gray figures. The old pictures in the castle floated before him, but with threatening mien and gestures, and ever-changing forms; now long and angular, again jelly-like, clear and trembling; they clashed cymbals and beat drums, and then suddenly passed away into that fiery glow in which every thing had appeared to him, when, with Naomi, he looked through the red window-panes. It burned, that he felt plainly. He swam through a burning sea, and ever did the serpent exhibit to him its fearful jaws. An irresistible desire seized him to take hold on the clapper with both hands, when suddenly it became calm around him, but it still raged within his brain. He felt that all his clothes clung to him, and that his hands seemed fastened to the wall. Before him hung the serpent's head, dead and bowed; the bell was silent. He closed his eyes and felt that he fell asleep. He had fainted."—(Vol. i. p. 59.)

[Pg 404]

Are these some of the "beautiful thoughts" which Mrs Howitt finds it the greatest delight of her literary life to translate? One is a little curious to know how far this beauty has been increased or diminished by their admiring translator; but unfortunately we can boast no Scandinavian scholarship. This novel, however, is not without some striking passages, whether of description of natural scenery, or of human life. Of these, the little episode of the fate of Steffen-Margaret recurs most vividly to our recollection. Mrs Howitt, in her translation of "The True Story of my Life," draws our attention, in a note, to this character of Steffen-Margaret, informing us that it is the reproduction of a personage whom Andersen becomes slightly acquainted with in the early part of his career. She thus points out a striking passage in the novel; but the translator of the Autobiography and of "Only a Fiddler," might have found more natural opportunities for illustrating the connexion between the novel and the life of the author. There is no resemblance whatever between the two characters alluded to, except that they both belong to the same unfortunate class of society. Of the young girl mentioned in the life, nothing indeed is said, except that she received once a week a visit from her papa, who came to drink tea with her, dressed always in a shabby blue coat; and the point of the story is, that in after times, when Andersen rose into a far different rank of society, he encountered in some fashionable saloon the papa of the shabby blue coat in a bland old gentleman glittering with orders.

Christian, the hero of the novel, a lad utterly ignorant of life, has come for the first time to Copenhagen. Whilst the ship in which he has arrived is at anchor in the port, it is visited by some *ladies*, one of whom particularly fascinates him. She must be a princess, or something of that kind, if not a species of angel. The next day he finds out her residence, sees her, tells her all his history, all his inspirations, all his hopes; he is sure that he has found a kind and powerful patroness. The lady smiles at him, and dismisses him with some cakes and sweetmeats, and kindly taps upon the head. This is just what Andersen at the same age would have done himself, and just in this manner would he have been dismissed and comforted. There is a scene in the Autobiography very similar. He explains to some kind old dames, whom he encounters at the theatre, his thwarted aspirations after art; they give him cakes;—he tells them again of his impulses, and that he is dying to be famous; they give him more cakes;—he eats and is pacified.

The ship, however, had not been long in the harbour before his princess visited it again. It was evening—Christian was alone in the cabin.

"He was most strangely affected as he heard at this moment a voice on the cabin steps, which was just like hers. She, perhaps, would already present herself as a powerful fairy to conduct him to happiness. He would have rushed towards her, but she came not alone; a sailor accompanied her, and inquired aloud, on entering, if there were any one there. But a strange feeling of distress fettered Christian's tongue, and he remained silent.

"What have you got to say to me?" asked the sailor.

"Save me!" was the first word, which Christian heard from her lips in the cabin; she whom he had regarded as a rich and noble lady. "I am sunk in shame!" said she. "No one esteems me; I no longer esteem myself. Oh, save me, Sören! I have honestly divided my money with you; I yet am possessed of forty dollars. Marry me, and take me away out of this wo, and out of this misery! Take me to a place where nobody will know me, where you may not be ashamed of me. I will work for you like a slave, till the blood comes out at my finger-ends. Oh, take me away with you! In a year's time it may be too late."

"Should I take you to my old father and mother?" said the sailor.

"I will kiss the dust from their feet they may beat me, and I will bear it without a murmur—will patiently bear every blow. I am already old, that I know. I shall soon be eight-and-twenty; but it is an act of mercy, which I beseech of you. If you will not do it, nobody else will; and I think I must drink—drink till my brain reels—and I forget what I have made myself!"

[Pg 405]

"Is that the very important thing that you have got to tell me?" remarked the sailor, with a cold indifference.

"Her tears, her sighs, her words of despair, sank deep into Christian's heart. A visionary image had vanished, and with its vanishing he saw the dark side of a naked reality.

"He found himself again alone.

"A few days after this, the ice had to be hewed away from the channel. Christian and the sailor struck their axes deeply into the firm ice, so that it broke into great pieces. Something white hung fast to the ice in the opening; the sailor enlarged the opening, and then a female corpse presented itself, dressed in white as for a ball. She had amber leads round her neck, gold earrings, and she held her hands closely folded against her breast as if for prayer. It was Steffen-Margaret."

"O.T." commences in a more lively style than either of the preceding novels, but soon becomes in fact the dullest and most wearisome of the three. During a portion of this novel he seems to have taken for his model of narrative the "Wilhelm Meister" of Goethe; but the calm domestic manner which is tolerable in the clear-sighted man, who we know can rise nobly from it when he pleases, accords ill enough with the bewildered, most displeasing, and half intelligible story which Andersen has here to relate.

We have occupied ourselves quite sufficiently with these novels, and shall pass over "O.T." without further comment. Neither shall we bestow any of our space upon "The Poet's Bazaar," which seems to be nothing else than the Journal which the author may be supposed to have kept during his second visit to Italy, when he also extended his travels into Greece and Constantinople.

We take refuge in the nursery—we will listen to these tales for children—we throw away the rigid pen of criticism—we will have a story.

What precisely are the laws, what the critical rules, on which tales for children should be written, we will by no means undertake to define. Are they to contain nothing, in language or significance, beyond the apprehension of the inmates of the nursery? It is a question which we will not pretend to answer. Aristotle lays down nothing on the subject in his "Poetici;" nor Mr Dunlop in his "History of Fiction." If this be the law, if every thing must be level to the understanding of the frock-and-trousers population, then these, and many other Tales for Children, transgress against the first rule of their construction. How often does the story turn, like the novels for elder people, upon a marriage! Some king's son in disguise marries the beautiful princess. What idea has a child of marriage?—unless the sugared plum-cake distributed on such occasions comes in aid of his imagination. Marriage, to the infantine intelligence, must mean fine dresses, and infinite sweetmeats—a sort of juvenile party that is never to break up. Well, and the notion serves to carry on the tale withal. The imagination throws this temporary bridge over the gap, till time and experience supply other architecture. Amongst this collection, is a story in which vast importance is attached to a kiss. What can a curly-headed urchin, who is kissing, or being kissed, all day long, know of the value that may be given to what some versifier calls,

"The humid seal of soft affections!"

To our apprehension, it has always appeared that the best books for children were those not written expressly for them, but which, interesting to all readers, happened to fasten peculiarly upon the youthful imagination,—such as "Robinson Crusoe," the "Arabian Nights," "Pilgrim's Progress," &c. It is quite true that in all these there is much the child does not understand, but where there is something vividly apprehended, there is an additional pleasure procured, and an admirable stimulant, in the endeavour to penetrate the rest. There is all the charm of a riddle combined with all the fascination of a story. Besides, do we not throughout our boyhood and our youth, read with intense interest, and to our great improvement, books which we but partly understand? How much was lost to us of our Milton and our Shakspeare at an age when

nevertheless we read them with intense interest and excitement, and therefore, we may be sure, with great profit. Throughout the whole season of our intellectual progress, we are necessarily reading works of which a great part is obscure to us; we get half at one time, and half at another.

[Pg 406]

Not, by any means, that we intend to say a word against writing books for children; if they are good books we shall read them too. A clever man talking to his child, in the presence of his adult friends,—has it never been remarked, how infinitely amusing he may be, and what an advantage he has from this two-fold audience? He lets loose all his fancy, under pretence that he is talking to a child, and he couples this wildness with all his wit, and point, and shrewdness, because he knows his friend is listening. The child is not a whit the less pleased, because there is something above its comprehension, nor the friend at all the less entertained, because he laughs at what was not intended for his capacity. A writer of children's tales—(If they are any thing better than what every nursery-maid can invent for herself)—is precisely in this position: he will, he *must* have in view the adult listener. While speaking to the child, he will endeavour to interest the parent who is overhearing him; and thus there may result a very amusing and agreeable composition.

We have met with some children's tales which, we thought, were so plainly levelled at the parent, that they seemed little more than lectures to grown-up people in the disguise of stories to their children. Some of the very clever stories of Miss Edgeworth appear to be more evidently designed for the adult listener, than to the little people to whom they are immediately addressed. And they may perhaps render good service in this way. Perhaps some mature matron, far above counsel, may take a hint which she thinks was not *intended*—may accept that piece of good advice which she fancies her own shrewdness has discovered, and which the subtle, Miss Edgeworth had laid, like a trap, in her path.

We are happy, we repeat, that we do not feel it incumbent upon us to settle the rules, the critical canon, of this nursery literature. We have no objection, however, to peep into it now and then, and we shall venture to give our readers another of Andersen's little stories, and so take our leave of him. We omit a sentence, here and there, where we can without injury to the tale; yet we have no fear that our gravest readers will think the extract too long. Our quotation is from the volume called "Tales from Denmark." There is another collection called, "The Shoes of Fortune;" these are higher in pretension, and inferior in merit.

### THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

"One day a couple of swindlers, who called themselves first-rate weavers, made their appearance in the imperial town of——. They pretended that they were able to weave the richest stuffs, in which not only the colours and the pattern were extremely beautiful, but that the clothes made of such stuffs possessed the wonderful property of remaining invisible to him who was unfit for the office he held, or was extremely silly.

"'What capital clothes they must be!' thought the Emperor. 'If I had but such a suit, I could directly find out what people in my empire were not equal to their office; and besides, I should be able to distinguish the clever from the stupid. By Jove, I must have some of this stuff made directly for me!' And so he ordered large sums of money to be given to the two swindlers, that they might set to work immediately.

"The men erected two looms, and did as if they worked very diligently; but in reality they had got nothing on the loom. They boldly demanded the finest silk, and gold thread, put it all in their own pockets, and worked away at the empty loom till quite late at night.

"'I should like to know how the two weavers are getting on with my stuff,' said the Emperor one day to himself; 'but he was rather embarrassed when he remembered that a silly fellow, or one unfitted for his office, would not be able to see the stuff. 'Tis true, he thought, as far as regarded himself, there was no risk whatever; but yet he preferred sending some one else, to bring him intelligence of the two weavers, and how they were getting on, before he went himself; for every body in the whole town had heard of the wonderful property that this stuff was said to possess.

"'I will send my worthy old minister,' said the Emperor at last, after much consideration; 'he will be able to say how the stuff looks better than anybody.'

"So the worthy old minister went to the room where the two swindlers were working away with all their might and main. 'Lord help me!' thought the old man, opening his eyes as wide as possible—'Why, I can't see the least thing whatever on the loom.' But he took care not to say so.

[Pg 407]

"The swindlers, pointing to the empty frame, asked him most politely if the colours were not of great beauty. And the poor old minister looked and looked, and could see nothing whatever. 'Bless me!' thought he to himself, 'Am I, then, really a simpleton? Well, I never thought so. Nobody knows it. I not fit for office! No, nothing on earth shall make me say that I have not seen the stuff!'

"'Well, sir,' said one of the swindlers, still working busily at the empty loom, 'you don't say if the stuff pleases you or not.'

"'Oh beautiful! beautiful! the work is admirable!' said the old minister looking hard through his spectacles. 'This pattern, and these colours! Well, well, I shall not fail to tell the Emperor that they are most beautiful!'

"The swindlers then asked for more money, and silk, and gold thread; but they put as before all that was given them into their own pocket, and still continued to work with apparent

diligence at the empty loom.

"Some time after, the Emperor sent another officer to see how the work was getting on. But he fared like the other; he stared at the loom from every side; but as there was nothing there, of course he could see nothing. 'Does the stuff not please you as much as it did the minister?' asked the men, making the same gestures as before, and talking of splendid colours and patterns, which did not exist.

"'Stupid I certainly am not!' thought the new commissioner; 'then it must be that I am not fitted for my lucrative office—that were a good joke! However, no one dare even suspect such a thing.' And so he began praising the stuff that he could not see, and told the two swindlers how pleased he was to behold such beautiful colours, and such charming patterns. 'Indeed, your majesty,' said he to the Emperor on his return, 'the stuff which the weavers are making, is extraordinarily fine.'

"It was the talk of the whole town.

"The Emperor could no longer restrain his curiosity to see this costly stuff; so, accompanied by a chosen train of courtiers, among whom were the two trusty men who had so admired the work, off he went to the two cunning cheats. As soon as they heard of the Emperor's approach they began working with all diligence, although there was still not a single thread on the loom.

"'Is it not magnificent?' said the two officers of the crown, who had been there before. 'Will your majesty only look? What a charming pattern! What beautiful colours!' said they, pointing to the empty frames, for they thought the others really could see the stuff.

"'What's the meaning of this?' said the Emperor to himself, 'I see nothing! Am I a simpleton! I not fit to be Emperor? Oh,' he cried aloud, 'charming! The stuff is really charming! I approve of it highly;' and he smiled graciously, and examined the empty looms minutely. And the whole suite strained their eyes and cried 'Beautiful!' and counselled his Majesty to have new robes made out of this magnificent stuff for the grand procession that was about to take place. And so it was ordered.

"The day on which the procession was to take place, the two men brought the Emperor's new suit to the palace; they held up their arms as though they had something in their hands, and said, 'Here are your Majesty's knee-breeches; here is the coat, and here the mantle. The whole suit is as light as a cobweb; and when one is dressed, one would almost fancy one had nothing on: but that is just the beauty of this stuff!'

"'Of course!' said all the courtiers, although not a single one of them could see any thing of the clothes.

"'Will your imperial Majesty most graciously be pleased to undress? We will then try on the new things before the glass.'

"The Emperor allowed himself to be undressed, and then the two cheats did exactly as if each one helped him on with an article of dress, while his Majesty turned himself round on all sides before the mirror.

"'The canopy which is to be borne above your Majesty in the procession, is in readiness without,' announced the chief master of the ceremonies.

"'I am quite ready,' replied the Emperor, turning round once more before the looking-glass.

"So the Emperor walked on, under the high canopy, through the streets of the metropolis, and all the people in the streets and at the windows cried out, 'Oh, how beautiful the Emperor's new dress is!' In short there was nobody but wished to cheat himself into the belief that he saw the Emperor's new clothes.

"'But he has nothing on!' said a little child.'

"And then all the people cried out, 'He has nothing on!'

"But the Emperor and the courtiers—they retained their seeming faith, and walked on with great dignity to the close of the procession."

#### FOOTNOTES:

[Pg 408]

[1] *The Improvisatore; or, Life in Italy*, from the Danish of HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. Translated by MARY HOWITT.

*Only a Fiddler!* and *O.T. or, Life in Denmark*, by the Author of *The Improvisatore*. Translated by MARY HOWITT.

*A True Story of my Life*, by HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. Translated by MARY HOWITT.

*Tales from Denmark*. Translated by CHARLES BONAR.

*A Picture-Book without Pictures*. Translated by META TAYLOR.

*The Shoes of Fortune, and other Tales*.

*A Poet's Bazaar*. Translated by CHARLES BECKWITH, Esq.

[2] See Allan Cunningham's *Lives of the Painters and Sculptors*, vol. ii. p. 150.

[3] Not very clearly expressed by the translator. One would think that our Saviour, in his progress to the cross, had passed through the area of the Coliseum, and not that each of the pictures on these altars represented one of the resting-points, &c. Mrs Howitt is sometimes hasty and careless in her writing. And why does she employ such expressions as these:—"many white buttons," "beside of it," "beside of us?" We have read a *many* English books, but never met them in anyone beside of this.



## THE VISION OF CAGLIOSTRO.

"In the horror of a vision by night, when deep sleep is wont to hold men, fear seized upon me, and trembling, and all my bones were affrighted; and when a spirit passed before me, the hair of my flesh stood up."—*The Book of Job*.

The last, and perhaps the most renowned of the Rosicrucians, was, according to a historical insinuation, implicated in that notorious juggle of the Diamond Necklace, which tended so much to increase the popular hatred towards the evil-doomed and beautiful Marie Antoinette. Whether this imputation were correct, or whether the Cardinal Duc de Rohan was the only distinguished person deluded by the artifices of the Countess de la Motte, it is certain that Joseph Balsamo, commonly called Alexandre, Count de Cagliostro, was capable of any knavery, however infamous. Guile was his element; audacity was his breastplate; delusion was his profession; immorality was his creed; debauchery was his consolation; his own genius—the genius of cunning—was the god of his idolatry. Had Cagliostro been sustained by the principles of rectitude, he must have become the idol as well as the wonder of his contemporaries; his accomplishments must have dazzled them into admiration, for he possessed all the attributes of a Crichton. Beautiful in aspect, symmetrical in proportions, graceful in carriage, capacious in intellect, erudite as a Benedictine, agile as an Acrobat, daring as Scævola, persuasive as Alcibiades, skilled in all manly pastimes, familiar with the philosophies of the scholar and the worldling, an orator, a musician, a courtier, a linguist,—such was the celebrated Cagliostro. In his abilities, he was as capricious as Leonardo, and as subtle as Macchiavelli; but he was without the magnanimity of the one, or the crafty prudence of the other. Lucretius so darkened the glories of nature by the glooms of his blasphemous imagination, that he might have described this earth as a golden globe animated by a demon. Fashioned in a mould as marvellous as that golden orb, and animated in like manner by a devilish and wily spirit, was Balsamo the Rosicrucian.

Between the period of his birth in 1743, and that of his dissolution in 1795, when incarcerated in a dungeon of San Leo, at Rome, Cagliostro, rendered himself in a manner illustrious by practising upon the credulity of his fellow-creatures. Holstein had witnessed his pretended successes in alchemy. Strasburg had received him with admiration, as the evangelist of a mystic religion. Paris had resounded with the marvels revealed by his performances in Egyptian free-masonry. Molten gold was said to stream at pleasure over the rim of his crucibles; divination by astrology was as familiar to him as it had been of yore to Zoroaster or Nostradamus; graves yawned at the beck of his potent finger; their ghostly habitants, appeared at his preternatural bidding. The necromantic achievements of Doctor Dee and William Lilly dwindled into insignificance before those attributed to a man who, although apparently in the bloom of manhood, was believed to have survived a thousand winters.

Accident had supplied Cagliostro with an accomplice of suitable depravity. In the course of his eccentric peregrinations among the continental cities, he had formed the acquaintance of a female, remarkable for her consummate loveliness and her boundless sensuality. Married to this Circe, the adventurer began to thrive beyond his most sanguine anticipations. It must be remembered, however, that in his nefarious proceedings, Balsamo was aided by a faculty of invention almost miraculous in its fruitfulness, and occasionally almost sublime in its audacity. By these means, he ultimately became the most astonishing impostor the world had ever beheld, with the solitary exception of Mohammed.

As a forerunner of a disastrous revolution, the appearance of this fantastic personage in the capital of civilisation was at once dismal and prophetic. Unconsciously, he was the prophet of disaster. Unconsciously, he was the prelude—half-solemn, half-grotesque—of a bloody and diabolical saturnalia. History, both profane and inspired, tells us that when the Euphrates forsook its natural channel, and the hostile legions trampled under its gates at nightfall; when the revellers of Belshazzar, drunk with prolonged orgies and haggard with the shadow of an impending doom, staggered through the marble vestibules and out upon the marble causeways, rending their purple vestures in the moonlight, there was weeping among the lords of Chaldea,—"Wo! wo! wo!" was walled in the streets of Babylon. A similar destiny awaited Paris, but as yet a different spectacle was visible; as yet the carousals of the metropolis were at their zenith; as yet the current flowed in its ancient channel; as yet the woes of the empire were not written on the wall of the palace. Festivities were never conducted with more magnificence than immediately before the downfall of the monarchy and the general desolation of the kingdom. The pomps of the religion, the pageantries of the court, and the munificence of the nobility, were never before characterised by so much grandeur and profusion. The church, the sovereign, and the oligarchy, were crowning themselves for the sacrifice.

[Pg 409]

Opposite the Rue de Luxembourg, and parallel with the Rue de Caumartin, there stood, in the year 1782, a little villa-cottage or rustic pavilion. It was separated from the Boulevard de la Madeleine by a green paddock, and was concealed in a nest of laurustinus and clematis. Autumn, that generous season, which seems in its bounty to impart a smell of ripeness to the very leaves,

had already scattered dyes of gold and vermilion over the verdure of this shrubbery. A night-breeze, impregnated with vegetable perfumes, and wafting before it one of these leaves, stole between the branches—over the fragrant mould—across a grass-plot—through an open window of the cottage. The leaf tinkled. It had fallen upon the pages of a volume from which a man was reading by a lamp. At that moment the clock of the Capuchins tolled out a doleful two; it was answered by the numerous bells of Paris. Solemn, querulous, sepulchral, quavering, silvery, close at hand, or modulated into a dim echo by the distance, the voice of the inexorable hours vibrated over the capital, and then ceased.

Alas, for the heart of Cagliostro!

The solitary watcher shuddered as the metallic sounds floated in from the belfries. Although startled by the dropping of the leaf, he closed the volume, leisurely placing it between the pages as a marker—*it*, so brittle! so yellow! so typical of decay and mortality! The book comprised the writings of Sir Cornelius Agrippa. Having tossed the old alchemist from him with an air of overwhelming dejection, the student abandoned himself to the most sorrowful reflections.

He had but recently returned from a masked ball, and a domino of salmon-coloured satin still hung loosely over his shoulders. As the feeble light of the lamp glimmered upon the jet-bugles and steel-spangles of his costume, there was visible the perpetual contrast of his destiny,—a mingling of the most abstruse researches and the most extravagant frivolities. Jewels sparkled upon his hands and bosom; the varicose veins on his temples throbbed with a feverish precision; the fumes of the wine-cup flushed his cheek and disordered his imagination.

"Death," thought the Rosicrucian, "fills me with abhorrence; and yet life is totally devoid of happiness. Happiness! O delusive phantom of humanity, how art thou attainable? Through Fame? Fame is mine, and I am wretched. Over the realms of civilisation my name is noised abroad; in the populous cities the glory of my art resounds; when my barge glided among the palaces of Venice, the blue Adriatic was purpled with blossoms in my honour.—Fame? Fame brings not happiness to Cagliostro. Wealth? Not so. Ducats, pistoles, louis-d'or, have brought no panacea to the sorrows of Balsamo. Beauty? Nay; for, in the profligate experience of capitals, the sage is saddened with the knowledge that comeliness, at best, is but an exquisite hypocrisy. I have striven also, vainly, for contentment in the luxuries of voluptuous living. The talisman of Epicurus has evaded my grasp—the glittering bauble!<sup>[5]</sup> The ravishing ideal Joy, has been to me not as the statue to Pygmalion: I have grovelled down in adoration at its feet, and have found it the same immobile, relentless, unresponsive image. Youth is yet mine, but it is a youth hoary in desolation. Centuries of anguish have flooded through my bosom, even in the heyday of existence. The tangible and the intangible, the visible and the invisible, the material and the immaterial, have been at deadly strife in my conjectures. The present has been to me an evasion, the future an enigma; the earth a delusion, the heavens a doubt. Even the pomp of those inexplicable stars is a new agony of indecision to my recoiling fancy<sup>[6]</sup>—so impassive in their unchangeableness, so awful in the quiescence of their eternal grandeur. Supreme, too, in my bewilderment, remains the problem of their revolutions—the cause of their impulsion<sup>[7]</sup> as well as of their creation. Baffled in my scrutiny of the sublime puzzle which is *domed* over the globe at nightfall, dizzy with the contemplation of such abysses of mystery, my thoughts have reverted to this earth, in which pleasure sparkles but to evaporate. No solace in the investigation of those infinities, which are only fathomable by a system revolting to my judgment—the system of a theocratic philosophy; no consolation in the dreamings evoked by the lore of the stupendous skies: my heart throbs still for the detection and the possession of happiness. Nature has endowed me with senses—five delicate and susceptible instruments—for the realisation of bodily delight. Sights of unutterable loveliness, tones of surpassing melody, perfumes of delicious fragrance, marvellous sensibilities of touch and palate, afford me so many channels for enjoyment. Still the insufficiency of the palpable and appreciable is paramount; still the everlasting dolor interposes: the appetite is satiated, the aroma palls upon the nostrils, the nerves are affected by irritability, the harmony merges into dissonance; even the beautiful becomes so far an abomination that man is 'mad for the sight of his eyes that he did see.' Such is the sterile and repulsive penalty of the searcher after happiness. Happiness! O delusive phantom of humanity, how art thou attainable?"

[Pg 410]

A thrill pervaded the frame of the visionary as he paused in his meditations. Subtle as the birth of an emotion—solemn as the presage of a disaster—terrible as the throes of dissolution, was the pang that agonised the Rosicrucian. His flesh crept upon his bones at the consciousness of a preternatural but invisible presence—the presence of an unseen visitant in the dead of the midnight! His heart quaked as it drank in, like Eliphaz, "*the veins of its whisper*."<sup>[8]</sup> There was no sound or reverberation, and yet the language streamed upon the knowledge of the listener with a distinctness beyond that of human articulation. The stillness of his solitude was only broken by the rustling of the night-breeze among the laurustines, and yet in the ears of Cagliostro there was the utterance as of unsubstantial lips—the sense as of a divine symphony—"the thunder, and the music, and the pomp" of an unearthly Voice.<sup>[9]</sup>

[Pg 411]

"Balsamo!" it cried, "thy thoughts are blasphemy; thy lamentations are foolishness; thy mind is darkened by the glooms of a most barren dejection. Away! vain Sceptic, with the syllogisms of infidelity. The glory of the immortal WILL evades thy comprehension in the depths of infinitude. When in its natural brightness, the spiritual being of man reflects that glory as in a mirror. *Thine* is blurred by sensuality. Tranquillity is denied thee, because of the concupiscence of thy ambition. A profligate and venal career has troubled thy soul with misgivings. Thou hast scorned even the five senses—those golden portals of humanity! Know, O dreamer, that in them alone consists the enjoyment of a finite existence: know that *through the virtuous use of those five*

*senses, earthly happiness is attainable! Dost thou still tremble in thy unbelief? Arise, Balsamo, and behold the teachings of eternity!"*

As the last sentence resounded in the heart of Cagliostro, up into the air floated the Rosicrucian and the Voice.

### TIBERIUS.

Time and distance seemed to be conquered in that mysterious ascension, and an impenetrable darkness enveloped the impostor as he felt himself carried swiftly through the atmosphere. When he had somewhat recovered, however, from his astonishment, the motion ceased, and the light of an Italian evening beamed upon him from the heavens. A scene then revealed itself around Cagliostro, the like of which his eyes had never before beheld, or his imagination, in its wildest mood, conceived.

He was standing in a secluded grove in the island of Capreæ. Fountains sparkled under the branches; blossoms of the gaudiest colours flaunted on the brambles, or enamelled the turf; laughter and music filled the air with a confusion of sweet sounds; and among the intricacies of the trees, bands of revellers flitted to and fro, clad in the antique costumes of Rome. Under the shadow of a gigantic orange-bush, upon a couch of luxurious softness and embroidered in gorgeous arabesques, there reclined the figure of an old man. His countenance was hideous with age and debauchery. Sin glimmered in the evil light of his eyes—those enormous and bloodshot eyes with which (*prægrandibus oculis*) the historian tells us he could see even in the night-time. [10] Habitual intemperance had inflamed his complexion, and disfigured his skin with disgusting eruptions; while his body, naturally robust in its proportions, had become bloated with the indolence of confirmed gluttony. A garment (the *toga virilis*) of virgin whiteness covered his limbs; along the edge of the garment was the broad hem of Tyrian purple indicative of the imperial dignity; and around the hoary brow of the epicurean, was woven a chaplet of roses and aloe-leaves.

[Pg 412]

Cagliostro recoiled in abhorrence before a spectacle at once so austere and lascivious. His spirit quailed at the sight of a visage in which appeared to be concentrated the infamy of many centuries. His soul revolted at the sinister and ferocious expression pervading every lineament, and lurking in every wrinkle. As he gazed, however, a blithe sound startled him from the umbrage of the boughs. Quick, lively, jocund, to the clashing of her cymbals, there bounded forth an Italian maiden in the garb of a Bacchante. Her feet agile as the roe's, her eyes lustrous and defiant, her hair dishevelled, her bosom heaving, her arms symmetrical as sculpture, but glowing with the roseate warmth of youth, the virgin still rejoiced, as it were, in the tumult of the dance. Grapes of a golden-green relieved by the ruddy-brown of their foliage, clustered in a garland about her temples, and leaped in unison with her movements. Around! with her raven tresses streaming abroad in ringlets—around! with her sandals clinking on the gravel to the capricious beat of her cymbals—around! with her light robes flowing back from a jewelled brooch above the knee—singing, sparkling, undulating, circling, rustling, the Bacchante entranced the heart of the Rosicrucian. She gleamed before him like the embodiment of enthusiasm. She was the genius of motion, the divinity of the dance; she was Terpsichore in the grace of her movements, Euterpe in the ravishing sweetness of her voice. A thrill of admiration suffused with a deeper tint even the abhorred cheek of the voluptuary.

By an almost imperceptible degree, the damsel abated the ardour of her gyrations, her cymbals clashed less frequently, the song faded from her lip, the flutter of her garments ceased, the vine-fruit drooped upon her forehead. She stood before the couch palpitating with emotion, and radiant with a divine beauty. In another instant, she had prostrated herself upon the earth, for in the decrepit monster of Capreæ, she recognised the lord of the whole world—Tiberius.

"Arise, maiden of Apulia," he said, with an immediate sense that he beheld another of those innocent damsels, who were stolen from their pastoral homes on the Peninsula to become the victims of his depravity. "Arise, and slake my thirst from yonder goblet. The tongue of Tiberius is dry with the avidity of his passion."

An indescribable loathing entered into the imagination of the Bacchante even as she lay upon the grass; yet she rose with precipitation and filled a chalice to the brim with Falernian. Tiberius grasped it with an eager hand, and his mouth pressed the lip of the cup as if to drain its ruby vintage to the bottom. Suddenly, however, the eyes of the old man blazed with a raging light; the scowl of lust was forgotten; the vindictiveness of a fiend shone in his dilated eyeballs, and, with a yell of fury, he cast the goblet into the air, crying out that the wine *boiled like the bowl of Pluto*. He was writhing in one of those paroxysms of rage, which justified posterity in regarding him as a madman. The howling of Tiberius resounded among the verdure, as the rattle of a snake might do when it raises its deadly crest from its lair among the flowers. Quick as thought at the first sound of those inexorable accents, the grove was thronged with the revellers. They jostled each other in their solicitude to minister to the cruelty of the despot; and that cruelty was as ruthless, and as hell-born, as it was ingenious and appalling.

Obedient to a gesture of Tiberius, the Bacchante was placed upon a pedestal. For a moment, she stood before them an exquisite statue Of despair—exquisite even in the excess of her bewilderment. For a moment, she stood there stunned by the suddenness of the commotion, and frantic with the consciousness of her peril. For a moment she gazed about her for aid, wildly but, alas! vainly. No pity beamed upon her in that more horrible Gomorrah. The marble trembled

under her feet—a sulphurous stench shot through its crevices—the virgin shrieked and fell forwards, scorched and blackened to a cinder. She was blasted, as if by a thunderbolt.[11] Cagliostro looked with horror upon the ashes of the Bacchante. He had seen youth stricken down by age; he had seen virtue annihilated, so to speak, at the mandate of vice; he had seen—and even *his* callous heart exulted at the thought—he had seen innocence snatched from pollution, when upon the very threshold of an earthly hell. While rejoicing in this reflection, he was aroused by the stertorous breathing of the emperor. The crowned demon of the island was being borne away to his palace upon the shoulders of his attendants. Although maddened by an insatiable thirst, and by a gloom that was becoming habitual, the monster lay upon his cushions as impotent as a child, in the midst of his diseases and iniquities.[12]

At the feet of the Rosicrucian were huddled the bones of the virgin of Apulia; and the babbling of the fountains was alone audible in the solitude.

"Such," said the mournful Voice, as Cagliostro again felt himself carried through the darkness—"such, Balsamo, are the miseries of a debauched appetite."

### AGRIPPA.

In another instant, the impostor was standing upon the floor of a gigantic amphitheatre in Palestine. The whole air was refulgent with the light of a summer morning, and through the loopholes of the structure, the eye caught the blue shimmer of the Mediterranean. Banners, emblazoned with the ciphers of Rome, fluttered from the walls of the amphitheatre. Its internal circumference was thronged with a vast concourse of citizens; and, immediately about the Rosicrucian, groups of foreign traders, habited as if for some unusual ceremony, were scattered over the arena. Expectation was evinced in every movement of the assemblage, in every murmur that floated round the benches. The worshippers were there, it seemed, and were awaiting the high-priest. That high-priest was approaching, and more than a high-priest; for Herod Agrippa, the tetrarch of Judea had descended from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, for the celebration of warlike games in honour of the Emperor Claudius, and, on the completion of those festivities, the deputed sovereign had consented, at the intercession of Blastus, to receive a deputation of certain Phenician ambassadors who were solicitous for an assurance of his clemency. Those envoys—the merchant princes of Tyre and Sidon—were tarrying in the public theatre of the city for the promised interview in the presence of the people of Samaria. [Pg 414]

Cagliostro marvelled, as he scanned the scene before him, whether it were all a reality or a delusion of his fancy; but the lapping of the surge upon the adjacent beach, and the perfume of Oriental spices which impregnated the breezes from the Levant, and even the motes that swarmed about him like phosphoric atoms, proved that it was no juggle of a distempered imagination.

Suddenly the air was rent with acclamations; the crowd rose as if by a single impulse; trumpets sounded in the seven porches of the amphitheatre; again the plaudits shook the air like the concussion of enthusiasm, and the deputation in the arena prostrated themselves in the dust. Balsamo saw, at once, the reason of this rejoicing; he saw the tetrarch of Judea seated upon a throne of ivory. The crown of Agrippa glittered upon his forehead with an unnatural brightness—it was of the purest gold, radiating from the brow in spikes, and flecked with pearls of an uncommon size. Silent—erect—inflated with pride at his own grandeur, and the adulation of the rabble, sate the King of Palestine. Silent—awe-stricken—uncovered before the majesty of the representative of Claudius, stood the people of Samaria and Phenicia. Extreme beauty of an elevated and heroic character shone upon the features of Herod, although his beard was grizzled with the passage of fifty-four winters. In the midst of the silence of the populace, the morning sun rose, almost abruptly, above the topmost arches of the edifice, and darted his beams full upon the glorious garments of Agrippa. It played in sparkles of intense lustre upon the jewels of his diadem; and upon the outer robe, which was of silver tissue woven with consummate skill and powdered with diamonds, the refraction of the sunlight produced an intolerable splendour.[13] The Samaritans shielded their eyes from its magnificence; they were dazzled; they were blinded; they thrilled with admiration and astonishment.

Agrippa spoke.

At the first sound of his accents, there was a whisper of awe among the multitude—it increased—it grew louder—it arose to the heavens in one prolonged and jubilant shout of adoration.

"It is a God!" they cried—"it is a God that speaketh, not a man!"

As the language of that impious homage saluted the ears of Herod, his mouth curled with a smile of satisfaction, his soul expanded with an inexpressible tumult of emotions, he drank in the blasphemous flatteries of the rabble, and assumed to himself the power and the dignity of the Most High God. Yet in the very ecstasy of those sensations, his countenance became ghastly, his lips writhed, his eyes beheld with unutterable dismay the omen of his dissolution—the visible phantom of an avenging Nemesis.[14] He staggered from his throne, crying aloud in the extremity of his anguish; a sudden corruption had seized upon his body—he was being devoured by worms.

The heart of Cagliostro quailed within him at the lamentations of the people of Samaria, as they beheld their idol smitten down by death in the midst of his surpassing pomp. Even the Jewish hagiographer tells us, with pathetic simplicity, that King Agrippa himself wept at the wailings of the adoring mob.

Again the Alchemist found himself enveloped in darkness, again the unearthly Voice stole into his brain.

"Lo!" it said, "how the frame rots in the ermine: how the body and soul are polluted by vicious passions! Such, Balsamo, are the penalties of the lusts of the flesh."

[Pg 415]

### MILTON.

Another scene then revealed itself to the Rosicrucian, but one altogether different from those he had already witnessed. Instead of being in an Oriental amphitheatre, he was standing in a rural lane; instead of tumult he found tranquillity; instead of regal pageantries an almost primitive simplicity. He inhaled the sweet smells of clover and newly-turned mould with a zest hitherto unexperienced. The gurgling of a brook by the wayside saluted his ears, as it struggled through the rushes and tinkled over the pebbles, with a sound more agreeable than he ever remembered to have heard from the instruments of court musicians. For the first time nature seemed to disclose her real loveliness to his comprehension. Every where she appeared to abound with beauties: in the bee that lit upon the nettle and sucked the honey out of its blossom; in the nettle that nodded under the weight of the bee; in the dew that dropped like a diamond from the alder-bough when the thrush alighted on its stem; in the thrush that warbled till the speckled feathers on its throat throbbed as if its heart were in its song; in the slug that trailed a silver track upon the dust; in the very dust itself that twirled in threads and circles on the ground as the wind swerved round the corner of the hedgerow. Cagliostro was entranced with the most novel and pleasurable emotions, as he strolled on towards the building he had already observed. From the elevation of the ground which he was traversing, his glance roved with admiration over a wide and diversified extent of country; over a prospect richly wooded and teeming with vegetation; over orchards laden with fruit and knee-deep in grass; over fields of barley bristling with golden ripeness; over distant mills, churning the water into foam, and driving gusts of meal out through the open doorway; over meadows where the sheep cropped the cool herbage, and the cattle lay in the sunshine sleeping; over village steeples, over homesteads brown with age, or hid amongst the verdure. The worldling scanned the profusion of the panorama with an amazement that was exquisite from its newness. He marvelled at the charms that strewed the earth in such abundance, at the almost unnumbered forms and colours of her vitality, at the wonderful harmony that subsisted amidst all those various hues and shapes. Never had the joys derivable from the sense of vision appeared of so much value as now that he gazed into the deep and delicious magnificence of nature. His sight, with a sort of luxurious abandonment, strayed over the contrasts, and penetrated into the distances of the landscape; his bosom swelled with the consciousness of a sympathy with that creation of which he felt himself to be but a kindred unit, or, at best, a sentient atom.

It was while absorbed in these sensations, that Cagliostro paused before the rustic dwelling-house towards which his steps had been involuntarily directed. The building was situated at a few paces from the pathway. There was nothing about it to arrest the attention of a passer-by, except, perhaps, all appearance of extreme but picturesque humility. The walls were riveted together with iron-bands in crossbars and zig-zags; the brickwork was decayed and crumbling away in blotches; the roof was low and thatched. Yet, in spite of these evidences of poverty, the scholar regarded the structure with a reverential aspect, with such an aspect as he might have presented had he contemplated the hut of Baucis and Philemon.

The threshold of this obscure edifice formed of itself a bower of greenery, thickly covered with the blooms of the honey-suckle. Under the porch was seated a man of a most venerable countenance. He was muffled in a gray coat of the coarsest texture, and his legs being crossed, a worsted stocking and a slipper of untanned leather betrayed the meanness of his under garments. His hair, brilliant with a whiteness like that of milk, was parted in the centre of the forehead, and fell over his shoulders in those negligent curls called *oreilles de chien*, which became fashionable long afterwards, during the days of the French Directory. Had the Alchemist remained profoundly ignorant as to the identity of the old man, he must still have observed with interest, features which were equally characterised by the pensiveness of the student and the paleness of the valetudinarian. He knew, however, instinctively, as he had done upon the two preceding occasions, that he beheld a personage of illustrious memory. And he knew rightly, for it was Milton. While the great plague was desolating the metropolis, he had escaped from his residence in the Artillery Walk, and sought security from the contagion by a temporary sojourn in Buckinghamshire.

[Pg 416]

Opposite the immortal sage stood a person of about the same years, but of a very different deportment—it was the dearest of his few friends, and the most ardent of his many worshippers, Richardson. The latter was leaning against the trunk of a great maple-tree that grew close to the parlour-lattice, stretching forth its enormous branches in all directions, and mingling its foliage with the smoke that issued from the chimney. Richardson had been reading aloud but a moment before, from a volume of Boccaccio; he had placed the book, however, upon the window-sill, in obedience to a movement from his companion, and continued, with his arms folded and his eyelids closed, a silent and almost inanimate portion of the domestic group. The quietude which ensued was so contagious that Cagliostro remarked with a feeling of listlessness, the details and accessories of the spectacle—the silk curtains of rusty green festooned before the open window, the tobacco-pipe lying among the manuscripts upon the table, even the slouched-hat hanging from the back of an arm-chair. The rambling meditations of Balsamo were soon concentrated upon a loftier theme, by the voice of Milton singing in a subdued tone the antistrophe of a

favourite ode of Pindar. As the noble words of the Greek lyricist rolled with an indescribable gusto from the lips of Milton, it seemed to the Rosicrucian that he had never before comprehended the true euphony of the language. And the visage of the old bard responded to the strain of Pindar; it was illumined with a certain majesty of expression that imparted additional dignity to a countenance at all times beaming with wisdom. In appreciating the Pagan poet, the poet of Christianity appeared to glow with enthusiasm like that which entranced his whole soul in the moments of his own superb inspiration.<sup>[15]</sup> Nor was the grandeur of the head diminished in any manner by the unpoetical proportions of the body, for, to the acknowledgment of his most partial biographer, Richardson, the stature of Milton was so much below the ordinary height, and so much beyond the ordinary bulk, that he might almost be described as "short and thick." Yet, notwithstanding these peculiarities of the frame, an august radiance seemed to envelope the brow—a brow, hoary alike from years and from misfortunes—and to invest with a sublime air the figure of that old man huddled in that old gray coat. Cagliostro gazed with profound interest upon Milton as the rolling melody of Pindar streamed into his ears, when suddenly the song ceased, and the face of the singer was raised to the resplendent light of the heavens. Alas! those eyes turned vacantly in their sockets—those eyes which had once looked so sorrowfully on the sightless Galileo—those eyes which had mourned over the ashes of *Lycidas*, and rained upon them tears transmuted by poetry into a shower of precious stones! The misery of his blindness recurred to Milton himself at that same instant. A cloud of grief descended upon his countenance. He experienced one of those poignant feelings of regret which, in our own day, occasionally oppress the heart of Augustin Thierry—for with the sensibility of a poet he *knew* that the hour was beautiful. Never had Cagliostro seen human face express such exquisite but patient suffering; it seemed to be *listening* to the loveliness of the earth; it seemed to be *inhaling* the glories of nature, as it were, through those channels which were not obliterated. The stirring of the leaves, the scent of the woodbine, the pattering of the winged seeds of the maple upon the pages of Boccaccio, the fitful twittering of the birds—all ascended as offerings of recompense to the blind man, but they only tended to enhance the sense of his affliction. He caught but the skirts of the goddess of that creation whose glories he had chanted in his celestial epic; and yet no murmur escaped from the dejected lip of Milton!

[Pg 417]

Again darkness surrounded the Rosicrucian—again the awful voice resounded in his imagination.

"Behold!" it said, "the sorrows of the great and virtuous when the light is quenched: behold the divine prerogative of those who see! And know, Balsamo, that such are the boons thou hast contemned—such are the faculties thou hast polluted."

#### MIRABEAU.

After a scarcely perceptible pause, the Voice resumed: "The miseries of those who have abused or lost the powers of seeing, of tasting, or of feeling, have been revealed to thee, O sceptic! Thine eyes have penetrated into the dim retrospections of the past. Look onwards, Balsamo, and thou shalt discern the things that are germinating in the womb of the future."

Cagliostro had scarcely heard this assurance when the curtain hitherto impenetrable to mortal, was raised—the dread shadows of the future were dispelled. He found himself in the upper apartment of one of the most distinguished mansions in Paris. The chamber, which was lofty and spacious, was enriched with the most costly furniture, and the most gorgeous decorations. Pilasters, incrusting with marble, and enamelled with lapis-lazuli, broke the monotony of the walls and supported the ceiling with their capitals. Between these pilasters were pedestals surmounted with statuary and busts; and these, again, were reflected in the mirrors hung about the room in profusion. An almost oriental luxury characterised the Turkish carpets, as soft as the greensward, and the draperies of velvet which concealed the windows, and fell in graceful folds about a bed at the opposite end of the apartment. An antique candelabrum stood upon the mantelpiece and shed a rosy and voluptuous light over this domestic pomp, while some odorous gums crackled in a chafing-dish upon the hearth and loaded the air with their fragrance.

Familiar as the Rosicrucian was with splendour, his glance roved over these appurtenances with delight, for he had never before seen the evidences of wealth so enhanced by the evidences of refinement. He thought that the possession of such a dwelling would be something towards the realisation of happiness. In the very conception of that ignoble thought, however, he received a solemn and effectual admonition. Before him, in the silent chamber, on either side of it groups of attendants and men robed in the costumes of the court and the barracks, was a deathbed. It was the deathbed of an extraordinary being, the owner of all this grandeur. It was the deathbed of Honoré-Gabriel de Mirabeau.

The patrician demagogue reposed upon the pillows in the final stage of dissolution, and his broad forehead was already damp with the sweat of his last agony. Cagliostro surveyed the dying tribune with emotion, for in the very hideousness of his countenance there was a subtle and indefinable fascination. The gigantic stature which had so often awed the tumults of the National Assembly was prostrate. The voice, whose brazen tones had sounded like a trumpet over the land, was hushed—that voice which had exclaimed with such sublime significance to the Marseillais,—"When the last of the Gracchi expired, he flung dust towards heaven, and from this dust sprang Marius!"—that voice which had conquered the aversion of Mademoiselle de Marignan with its seductive melody—that voice which had been at once the oracle of the king and the law of the rabble. Mirabeau lay before the Rosicrucian, with his natural ugliness rendered yet more repulsive by the tokens of a terrible malady. The touch of death imparted

[Pg 418]

additional horror to the massive deformity of his skull, to the coarseness of his pockmarked features, to his sunken eyeballs, to his cheeks scared by disease, to his hair bristling and dishevelled like that of a gorgon. Still, through all these unsightly and almost loathsome peculiarities, there was perceptible a sort of masculine susceptibility. It was that susceptibility which gave zest to his debaucheries, and occasionally subdued into pathos the storms of his dazzling and sonorous eloquence.

Never was a solitary life prized by so many millions, as that which was then ebbing from the breast of Mirabeau. He seemed to be the only guarantee for the solid adjustment of the Revolution. With his disappearance, all hope of tranquillity and good government was prepared to vanish. His was the intellect in which the extremes of that momentous epoch were united. He was the antithesis of public opinion. Noble by birth and plebeian by accident, a democrat in principle and a dictator in ambition, the shield of the monarch and the sword of the people, he was placed exactly between the contending powers of the age. He was the arbiter between royalty and revolt: on the one side he acquired the obedience of the sovereign through his fears, and on the other he obtained the allegiance of the multitude through their aspirations. His supremacy occupied at the same moment the palace, the legislative chamber, and the marketplace; for all recognised *in* him the omen of their good fortune, and *through* him, the realisation of their wishes. Flattered by the minions of the monarchy, applauded by the members of the National Assembly, and idolised by the mob, his influence rested, as it were, upon a triple foundation. And yet, by a contradiction as remarkable as the anomalies of his own character, all parties were disposed to rejoice at the probability of his departure. The King was gratified at the thought of his removal, forasmuch as Mirabeau was the impersonation of a formidable sedition; the political adventurers exulted in the prospect of his decease, because he monopolised popularity, and rendered them insignificant by the contrast of his colossal genius; the people, in like manner, were, not altogether displeased at the notion of his extinction, because he appeared to them the only obstacle between themselves, and the supreme authority. All valued him as their present preserver, and all hated him as their future impediment. Such were the conflicting sentiments entertained towards Mirabeau, during the last incidents of his eccentric and volatile career. And in the midst of so many antagonistic interests, he alone remained unshaken and unappalled, his oratory rendering him still the mouth-piece of the Revolution, his duplicity its diplomatist, and his intellectual contrivance its statesman. Nor was he satisfied with these successes; he sought others, and was equally fortunate. Profligacy and legislation equally divided his enthusiasm between them, and proved him to be not only the most daring politician, but the most debauched citizen in France. His power and popularity had now, however, reached their apogee, and Honoré-Gabriel Riquetti Comte de Mirabeau was stretched upon his deathbed.

Cagliostro approached the couch and listened, for the great demagogue was speaking. His voice was harsh even in a murmur, though it still retained, according to Lemercier, "a slight meridional accent." The rosy light of the candelabrum beamed upon his cadaverous lips.

"Sprinkle me with perfumes, crown me with flowers, that thus I may enter upon eternal sleep."

Memorable words—the last words of Gabriel de Mirabeau. They embody the spirit of his sterile philosophy, and are in unison with the evanescence of his genius.<sup>[16]</sup> As Cagliostro observed the limbs convulsed and the eyes glazed with a simultaneous pang, he was caught up again into the darkness, and again his soul hearkened to the whispers of the Holy Voice.

[Pg 419]

"Thus," it said, "are those recompensed with disease and satiety, who are the slaves of their meanest, as of their noblest appetites; thus is their talisman shattered in the hour of its attainment."

## BEETHOVEN.

When the reproachful accents ceased, Balsamo felt his feet once more pressing the earth, and the breezes rustling against his domino. He was wandering in the garden of what is termed the Schwarzpanier House, situated on a slope or glacis in the outskirts of Wahrung. The evening was so far advanced, that candles already twinkled from the upper windows of the building, while the fires of the kitchens checkered the shrubs and gravel with patches of glaring light. Through the flowerbeds, and along the intricate paths of the shrubbery, the Alchemist strolled at a languid pace, musing upon the things he had already witnessed, when his vigilant ears caught the tones of a musical instrument. Although it was scarcely audible from the distance, Cagliostro was struck by the extreme beauty and *espièglerie* of the performance. He hurried forward in the direction from which the sounds proceeded, and at each step they became more distinguishable and bewitching. After a momentary feeling of indecision when he reached the walls of the Schwarzpanier, the Alchemist ascended a flight of steps, and passed through the open casement of a French-window into a modest sitting-room. The musician whose skill had attracted him, was seated in the gray twilight at a piano. Cagliostro scarcely noticed that he was a man of short stature but of muscular proportions; he scarcely remarked, indeed, either the apartment or its occupant; his whole consciousness was absorbed in the melody that streamed from the instrument.

At first, the fingers of the player seemed to frolic over the keys, as though they toyed with the vibrations of the strings. The sounds were sportive and jocund; they rippled like laughter; they were capricious as the merriment of a coquette. Then they merged into a sweet and warbling cadence—a cadence of inimitable tenderness, the very suavity of which was rendered more

piquant by its lavish variations. The measure changed, with an abrupt fling of the treble-hand: it gushed into an air quaint and sprightly as the dance of Puck—comic—odd—sparkling on the ear like zig-zags: it threw out a shower of notes; it was the voice of agility and merriment; it was grotesque and fitful, droll in its absurd confusion, and yet nimble, in its amazing ingenuity. Gradually, however, the humorous movement resolved itself into a strain of preternatural wildness—a strain that made the blood curdle, and the flesh creep, and the nerves shudder. It abounded with dark and goblin passages; it was the whirlwind blowing among the crags of the Jungfrau, and swarming with the forms and cries of the witches of the Walpurgis; it was Eurydice, traversing the corridors of hell; it was midnight over the wilderness, with the clouds drifting before the moon; it was a hurricane on the deep sea; it was every thing horrible, wierdlike, and tumultuous. And through the very fury of these passages there would start tones of ravishing and gentle beauty—the incense of an adoring heart wafted to the black heavens through the lightnings and lamentations of Nineveh. Again the musician changed the purpose of his improvisation; it was no longer dismal and appalling, it was pathetic. The instrument became, as it were, the organ of sadness, it became eloquent with an inarticulate wo; it was a breast bursting with affliction, a voice broken with sorrow, a soul dissolving with emotions. Then the variable harmonies rose from pensiveness into frenzy, from frenzy into the noise and the shocks of a great battle; they swelled to the din of contending armies, to the storm and vicissitudes of warlike deeds, and soared at last into a pæan such as that of victorious legions when—

[Pg 420]

"Gaily to glory they come,  
Like a king in his pomp,  
To the blast of the tromp,  
And the roar of the mighty drum!"

As the triumphant tones of the instrument rolled up from its recesses, and filled the apartment with a torrent of majestic sounds, as the musician swayed to and fro in the enthusiasm of his sublime inspirations, and enhanced the divine symphony by the crash of many thrilling and abrupt discords, the Rosicrucian gazed with awe upon the responsive grandeur of his countenance. The impetus of his superb imagination imparted an inconceivable dignity to every lineament, to his capacious forehead, to his broad and distended nostrils, to the fierce protrusion of his under-lip, to the mobile and generous expression of his mouth, to the tawny yellow of his complexion, to the brown depths of his noble and dilated eyes. There was something in unison with the glorious sounds that reverberated through the chamber, even in the enormous contour of his head and the gray disorder of his hair. He seemed to exult in the torrent of melody as it gushed from the piano and streamed out upon the dusk of the evening. While Cagliostro was listening in an ecstasy of admiration, he was startled by a sudden clangour among the bass-notes—the music seemed to be jumbled into confusion, and the ear was stunned by a painful and intolerable dissonance. On looking more intently, he perceived that the composer had let one hand fall abstractedly upon the key-board, while the other executed, by itself, a passage of extraordinary difficulty and involution. Then, for the first time, the thought struck him that the musician was deaf.<sup>[17]</sup> Alas! the supposition was too true: Beethoven was cursed with the loss of his most precious faculty. Those who appreciate the full splendour of his gigantic genius, those who conceive, with a distinguished composer now living, that "Beethoven began where Haydn and Mozart left off;" those who coincide with an eminent critic, in saying that "the discords of Beethoven are better than the harmonies of all other musicians;" those, in fine, who worship his memory with the devotion inspired by his compositions, can sympathise in that terrible deprivation of the powers of hearing, by which his art was rendered a blank, and the latter years of his life were embittered. They will remember with gratitude the joys they have derived from the effusions of his fruitful intellect; they will call to their recollection the joyous choruses of the prisoners in *Fidelio*,—the sublime and adoring hymn of the "Alleluia" in *The Mount of Olives*,—the matchless pomp of the *Sinfonia Eroica*,—the passionate beauty of the sentiment of *Adelaida*,—the aerial grace of his quartets and waltzes,—the thrilling and almost awful pathos of the dirge written for six trombones,—but, above all, they will recall to mind the noblest work ever conceived and perfected by composer, one of the greatest achievements of the human mind, *the Mass in D*. And, bearing these wonders in their memory, their hearts will ache for the doom of Ludwig Von Beethoven. None of these things, however, being known to the Rosicrucian, his sympathies were aroused solely by what he himself had heard and witnessed. Still that was more than enough to fill his whole soul with commiseration, especially as the sounds again burst in bewitching concert from the instrument, and a new inspiration lit up the visage of the musician. Cagliostro found himself, with profound sorrow, returning into the silent darkness, and the solemn Voice stealing, for the last time, into his brain.

[Pg 421]

"Behold, Balsamo," it said, "the pleasures that may vanish with the loss of hearing. Behold, and shudder at the remembrance of thy blasphemies. Recognise the goodness of Omnipotence in thy five senses—value them beyond either rank, or wealth, or dignity, or fame, or power,—value them as the five mysterious talismans of human life; and, in their virtuous employment, know that earthly happiness *is* attainable!"

While these words were resounding in his mind, the Rosicrucian felt himself carried, with inconceivable swiftness, through the atmosphere. Immediately they ceased he became motionless, though he was still enveloped in the shadows of night. All that had recently occurred to him,—all the strange and moving circumstances of which he had been a spectator, then thronged upon his recollection, and stirred his heart with astonishment. His imagination responded to his amazement. He revisited again, in thought, the blooming grove of Capreæ, the pageantries of Cesarea, the green lanes of Buckingham, the luxurious *salon* of Paris, and the



twilight of the garden of Wahrung. Italian beauty lived again in his remembrance, but a beauty marred by licentiousness and cruelty. He seemed to behold once more the multitudes of Palestine, the landscapes of England, the dainty splendours of France, and the tranquil homes of Germany. Gradually, however, his reflections became less incoherent, and the meaning of the vision appeared to evolve itself before him, in inductions fraught at once with reproach and consolation. Coupling together the truths enunciated by the Voice of his unseen visitant, and the spectacles revealed to him in succession through its agency, the Alchemist bethought himself whether his original impressions, as to the condition of humanity, might not, in a great measure, have been erroneous. What he had just witnessed assured him, in an unanswerable manner, that overt crimes or overt virtues were merely the good or evil employment of one or other of the five senses; that they were the bright and black spots upon the spiritual nature of man, the *faculæ* and the *maculæ*, as it were, on the disc of his conscience. Satisfied, therefore, that the purity or depravity of every mortal was merely the consequence of the different purpose to which their senses had been directed, the Rosicrucian perceived the intimate relationship subsisting between the immaterial being and the physical organs. He perceived especially that those organs were the channels through which that immaterial portion of humanity was brought into communication with a material existence, was compelled to endure its miseries, or was enabled to appreciate its enjoyments. In this he recognised the veracity of that solemn assurance, that happiness is accessible, even on this earth, to all who use their senses with a virtuous discrimination. Nor had this consolatory truth been enforced merely by a barren asseveration. Balsamo had been taught the inestimable value of those senses, and the penalties of such as abused them by their vices. Five incidents, most touching, or most appalling, had reminded him of the exquisite pleasures derivable from created things, through the eyes, through the nostrils, through the ears, through the palate, and through the nerves. He had seen the anguish, moreover, of those who suffered from the deprivation of either sense, or of those who were tortured by the result of their own heinous misapplication. He had seen this in the insanity of Tiberius, in the torments of Agrippa, in the sadness of Milton, in the desolation of Mirabeau, and even in the philosophic sorrows of Beethoven. The emperor, the tetrarch, the poet, the demagogue, and the musician, crowded upon his memory, and appealed to his judgment with the same melancholy distinctness. Still the villainous predilections of the Rosicrucian contended for the mastery, although his intellect recognised the wisdom of the Vision. A fierce strife arose between his passions and his reason.

[Pg 422]

Suddenly his eyes opened to the splendour of an autumn morning; and as the sunlight poured along the *Boulevard de la Madeleine*, as it gilded every blade of grass in the paddock, and streamed in golden pencils through the open window of the cottage, it glittered upon his cheek like raindrops.

Cagliostro was weeping.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [5] Béranger has already conveyed this truth through the melody of his delicious verse:—

"Le vois-tu bien, là-bas, là-bas,  
Là-bas, là-bas? dit l'Espérance;  
Bourgeois, manants, rois et prelates  
Lui font de loin la révérence.  
C'est le Bonheur, dit l'Espérance.  
Courons, courons; doublons le pas,  
Pour le trouver là-bas, là-bas,  
Là-bas, là-bas."

- [6] "I did not dare to breathe aloud the unhallowed anguish of my mind to the majesty of the unsympathising stars."—See *Falkland*.

- [7] "Motus autem siderum," such is the reverent and sententious remark of Grotius, "qui eccentrici, quique epicyclici dicuntur, manifeste ostendunt *non vim materiæ, sed liberi agentis ordinationem*."—See *De Veritate Rel. Christ. Lib. i. § 7*.

- [8] "Now, there was a word spoken to me in private, and my ears, by stealth as it were, received the veins of its whisper."—*Job*, chap. iv. verse 12.

- [9] "There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise  
Among immortals when a god gives sign  
With hushing finger, how he means to load  
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,  
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp."

Such are the majestic syllables which preface the speech of Saturn in *Hyperion*. Keats was ridding himself of the puerilities of Cockaigne when he wrote that fragment of an epic—a fragment which is unsurpassed by any modern attempt at heroic composition. In reading it, the very earth seems shaking with the footsteps of fallen divinities. Even Byron, who, like ourselves, had no great predilection for the school in which the poetic genius of John Keats was germinated, has emphatically said of *Hyperion* that "it seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Æschylus."—See *Byron's Works*, vol. xv., p. 92.

- [10] Thus writes Suetonius—"prægrandibus oculis, qui, quod mirum esset, noctu etiam et in tenebris, viderent, sed ad breve, et quum primum a somno patuissent; deinde rursum hebescebant."—*Tib.* cap. lxxviii.

- [11] Those who are familiar with the classic historians, will see in this description no

exaggeration whatever. Instruments for the destruction of life yet more awful and mysterious, were employed by many of the predecessors, and many of the successors of Tiberius, as well as by Tiberius himself: and modern science has shown that these devices, instead of being, as was originally conjectured, the result of black-magic, were, in reality, the effect of hydraulic, pneumatic, and mechanical contrivances. Even the most marvellous feats of the Egyptian sorcerers have been latterly explained by the revelations of natural philosophy, and a multitude of these explanations may be found by the reader in the learned work "Des Sciences Occultes," &c. written by M. Eusebe Salverte, and published in Paris as recently as 1843. In that remarkable volume, M. Salverte proves that natural phenomena are more startling than necromantic tricks, and that, in the words of Roger Bacon, "*non igitur oportet nos magicis illusionibus uti, cum potestas philosophica doceat operari quod sufficit.*" That Tiberius was capable of atrocities yet more terrific, and that murders of the most inhuman kind were the consequence of almost every one of his diabolical whims, those acquainted with the picturesque narrative of Suetonius already know. They will remember not only how he caused his nephew Germanicus to be poisoned by the governor of Syria, but how he ordered a fisherman to be torn in pieces by the claws of a crab, simply because he met him, in one of his suspicious moods, when strolling in a sequestered garden of Capreæ. —*Sue. Tib. c. lx.*

- [12] Suetonius assures us (cap. lxxviii.), that the muscular strength of Tiberius Claudius Nero was, in the prime of his manhood, almost as supernatural as his crimes; that he could with his outstretched finger bore a hole through a sound apple (*integrum malum digito terebraret*), and wound the head of a child or even a youth with a fillip, (*caput pueri, vel etiam adolescentis, talitro vulneraret.*) His excesses must, however, have enervated his frame long before his death by suffocation.
- [13] His garb, writes Josephus, "was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon Him."—*Lib. xix. c. 8.*
- [14] "An owl," says Josephus (xix. 8); "an angel of the Lord," ἀγγελος Κυριου, say the scriptures, (Acts. xii. 23,)—in either case a spectral illusion.
- [15] It is impossible for anyone devoted to the study of "Paradise Lost," of "Comus," even of "Sampson Agonistes," and especially of "Il Penseroso" and "L'Allegro," to doubt that their writer was carried away at times by the *æstrum*, or *divine afflatus*, although Dr Johnson discredits "these bursts of light, and involutions of darkness, these transient and involuntary excursions and retrocessions of invention."—See *Lives of the Poets*, vol. i. p. 188.
- [16] Even M. Alphonse de Lamartine acknowledges of Mirabeau, that "neither his character, his deeds, nor his thoughts, have the brand of immortality."—*Hist. Giron. Liv. i. chap. 3.*
- [17] This incident was suggested by a touching sentence in Schindler's biography of Beethoven. After observing that the outward sense no longer co-operated with the inward mind of the great composer, and that, consequently, "the outpourings of his fancy became scarcely intelligible," Schindler continues:—"Sometimes he would lay his left hand flat upon the key-board, and thus drown, in discordant noise, the music to which his right was feelingly giving utterance."—See *Life of Beethoven, Edited by Ignace Moschelles*, ii. 175.

---

## MAGA IN AMERICA.

*New York, August 1847.*

MY DEAR GODFREY—You will laugh when you hear into what a practical blunder I was led, by a desire to gratify your curiosity concerning Maga's Icon in America. I wondered you should ask me for a description, when it was so easy to have ordered out the thing itself; and so resolved to save myself the trouble of writing a long story, by duly exporting a specimen of the American Ebony, from which you might form your own conclusions as to its counterfeit merits, and its supposed relations to the great question of international copyright. *Segnius irritant*—you know! What disciple of old Plunkett's will ever forget the difference between the *demissa per aurem*, and

—"quæ sunt *oculis* subjecta fidelibus!"

I have always maintained that his illustration of this great principle gave Dickens the hint of his Dotheboy's Hall. You remember, doubtless, poor Harry Farmar's false quantity, and how Plunkett made him peel onions till he cried his eyes out; asserting his confidence in Horace's maxim, and that he had found the usual box on the ear quite incapable of any exciting effect on Harry's mind. Who would have said that the same Harry, surviving the operation, would have lived to hunt bisons on the prairies of Western America, after riding on elephants in India, and bestriding a camel's hump through the waste places of Edom! Harry's wandering mind has developed as vagabond a habit of life as ever his prophetic instructor ventured to predict; but he vows himself cured at last, and that, if he ever sets foot again on England's *terra firma*, he will at once become one of the manly hearts that guard the fair, and settle down in contented conjugation. He it was, then, who offered to be the bearer to yourself at C— of any despatches, or parcels, I might choose to send; but he affected to think me so thoroughly Americanised, that he entered a caveat against my loading him with a consignment of bowie knives or cotton-bales. A nicely packthreaded parcel was accordingly put up, and duly adorned with your most Saxon name and address, in the delusive expectation that none but your own hands would presume

"—to set the imprison'd wranglers free  
And give them voice and utterance once again."

I was doomed to be quickly undeceived; and as I doubt not Harry will be giving you his own version of the affair, over a glass of wine, some three weeks hence, at the Hall, you shall know beforehand how much to allow, in this matter, for his habitual untruthfulness, or rather love of romance.

I waited on him yesterday and presented the packet; but you should have seen him start, when I happened to mention its contents. Not the captors of Guido Fawkes bounced with more consternation, when that eminent pyrotechnist proposed to touch off his gunpowder for their especial gratification and amusement. "What!" exclaimed our mutual friend—"Have you lived so long in America, as to have forgotten the laws of a civilised and Christian land! Would you have me seized as a smuggler; posted in every newspaper as an importer of contraband goods; brutally insulted by the officers of her Majesty's Customs; and perhaps actually brought before a justice, and locked up where the only prospect would be a distant view of New South Wales!" It was in vain that I remonstrated with his eloquent horrors, at the thought of renewing his travels at government cost: he insisted that my proposal might actually have ensured the catastrophe; and from this appeal to my feelings, passed to a bold invective against literary piracy, and concluded by a generous compromise in favour of the cotton-bales, if I would pardon the warm expressions with which he found himself compelled to decline my extraordinary commission. You should have seen him, Godfrey! If he ever takes that seat in Parliament which he threatens to make the sequel of matrimony, I predict wo to the whole race of Humes, Brights, and Cobdens, should they ever start him on a subject capable of transatlantic illustration.

[Pg 423]

I could not but laugh, though, when I saw the true state of the case, at the comical scene that might have ensued, had he taken my parcel without explanations. Think of Harry's air of fearless innocence before the inspectors of imports, till from the depths of an enormous trunk comes forth a parcel, which those faithful officials at once lay bare, with the professional dexterity of a private tearing his cartridge. The officer stares, and Harry looks still more astounded, at the sight of a familiar visage, peering forth from under the wrapper, and giving mute but significant expressions of pain and displeasure. It is the head of Geordy Buchanan! It is Blackwood, imported from New York! The confounded servant of her Majesty's Customs begins to whisper contraband, and expresses a wish for the undoubted original, which you, just stepping up to welcome your friend, are enabled to supply. The fresh number from your coat-skirts, and the suspicious importation from America, are set together like the two Dromios before the duke. "Look on this picture, and on that!" Behold the two Buchanans!

"One of these men is genius to the other  
—Which is the natural man,  
And which the spirit? Who deciphers them?"

Harry, to prevent the coming crisis, volunteers a confession, but invites you to a comparison of the heads. With his outrageous Tory hatred of the Yankees, he, of course, declares there's no comparison; ridicules the fac-simile, and hastily seizing what he mistakes for the counterfeit, confounds the company by a quotation from the Latin of "Terence"—that very small fragment of the Eunuchus which Plunkett forced into his head through the opposite pole of his person—

"Ne comparandus hic quidem ad illum est, ille erat  
Honestae facie, et liberali!"

And finally, disgusted to find that he has ascribed the more gentlemanly bearing to the American, he tosses the whole parcel into the docks, with the tardy announcement that it was my friendly consignment to yourself, as well as the very curiosity of literature which you so much desire to see. You remember, doubtless, what I did not recollect, that there is no port of entry in her Majesty's empire for the Icons of British copyright property. They come with a Frenchified air from the press of Galignani; they arrive in vulgarised costume from the cheap manufactories of New England; but the scent of the vermin is familiar to the nose of a collector of customs, and no rat-catching terrier, says my informant, ever pounces upon his Norwegian with half the gusto with which such an official snubs such an intruder. A health, I say, to the fury of this sort of Iconoclasts!

Our friend's unusual caution has saved you the excitement of the scene I have imagined, but it puts me to the necessity of substituting a hurried description for the ocular satisfaction I had proposed to send you. Who would have supposed, thirty years since, that one Maga would not be enough for the world, and that New York would be the seat of its flourishing double! Yet it is now twelve years since its twin started up on this side the water, and has been battenning and fattening on the rewards of successful illegitimacy. Nay—for a portion of that period, Maga has been "three gentlemen at once." The very pirates were pirated, and undersold; and two reprints of Maga, both professing to be fac-similes, were at one time supported in America, in addition to countless republications of particular articles; such, for instance, as the tales of "Ten Thousand a-Year," and "Caleb Stukeley"! I think I hear you exclaim at such wholesale grand-larceny; but though not inclined to take up the cudgels for Reprint and Co., it is but justice to tell you what they would say in self-defence. The truth is, they would not have known what you meant, had you told them, when their republication was established, that there was any question as to the ethics of such a business. The laws not only permitted, but even encouraged the enterprise; and they do so still. The most respectable booksellers were engaged in a similar seizure of every new novel of Bulwer's, and every new work whatever, that had stood the experiment of success in England.

[Pg 424]

Original copies of the Magazine were rarely imported, as the importer's charges and duties nearly doubled the first cost of each number; and besides, it was already virtually republished, its leading articles being constantly appropriated, in different ways, by editors of literary periodicals, and often by the daily newspapers. Then, it must be remembered, that England was nearly twice as far from America before the era of steamers; and that the matter of copyright was only just beginning to excite the attention of Parliament. As yet Lord Mahon had not stirred up the ministry to move foreign countries to international justice, and England was not, as now, prepared to invest their authors with all the rights she concedes to her own. It is not surprising, therefore, that Reprint and Co. commenced operations without any compunctions of conscience, and were even praised for their enterprise by honourable men. Hundreds, who could hardly forego the reading of *Maga*, were unable to pay for it twice what it costs in England; and I grant you, that when the first number was laid on my table at one-fourth the price of an importation, I myself was not the man to throw a pebble at the pirates, but wished them good luck and gave them my name as a subscriber. I verily believe I did so with a virtuous delight in what then struck me as a compliment to my favourite magazine; for somebody, at about the same time, had started a similar republication of other English Monthlies, and I desired to see them fairly run off the course. You will certainly concede to the Americans some credit for a discerning taste, when I add that *Maga's* competitors have long since been withdrawn for want of backers; and she so easily walks the field, that it begins to be a fair question whether Messrs Reprint and Co. are honestly entitled to the purse.

I have marvelled a little, I confess, that a magazine of such unmitigated Toryism, and of so uncomplimentary a tone towards America, should nevertheless gain so universal a popularity in this country. I must stand to it, Godfrey—there's a touch of the magnanimous in the affection which exists among Americans for Christopher North, and all his high Tory fraternity. Seldom approving, they always enjoy his old-fashioned prejudices; and defend in *Maga* what, in a book of Alison's, they would relish very little. Much is said for the kind of affectionate regard with which they welcome to their firesides its monthly returns, in the fact that it is the only foreign work which American republishers have felt themselves forced, by popular feeling, to furnish in the form of a fac-simile. It is proof of the individual interest which it possesses, and of the rich associations which it has imparted even to the simplicity of its outside. Every one wants old *Ebony* in its own gentlemanly wear: but much as is implied in the livery of the *Edinburgh Review*, and many as are its admirers among the literary freethinkers of the eastern states, it is curious that no one cares twopence to see it in any other than a semi-newspaper shape, and that Reprint and Co. have never thought of reproducing it in all the splendour of its popinjay surtout. In fact, I doubt whether it will long continue in any shape at all. Its crack article is always reprinted in another form; and oracular as its pages are deemed by the clannish provincials of Boston, its general contents seldom go down with the public. The truth is, no one honestly prefers porridge to roast-beef; and in spite of a natural leaning to buff and blue, Jonathan will not be diverted from his luxurious repasts in *Maga*, by anything less "hot in the mouth."

[Pg 425]

I remember that, in one of those Ambrosial Noctes, some one remarked in *auld-lang-syne*, that *Maga* is a ubiquity. The Shepherd assented, for he had seen the head of Geordy alike in the hut and the hall; beaming the same by the mirrored fire-light of the manorial villa, and "by the peat-lowe frae the ingle o' the auld clay biggin." But think, my dear Godfrey, what a flow of the *decalect* would have gushed from that child of the Yarrow, had he beheld, with me, the pirated *Maga* scattered through the length and breadth of this immense republic, and devoured with equal delight by the self-congratulating native of Massachusetts Bay, and the home-sick immigrant of Oregon. Here, too, *Maga* is ubiquitous. If you make your summer tour through the States of New England, and stop to visit its priggish little colleges, and biggish little schools, you shall find it on many a sophister's table, and in many a schoolboy's hands; or, ten to one, as you pass the windows of the barracks where they keep their terms, you will chance to hear some full-voiced youth adding a nasal rhetoric to *Maga's* pages, as he retails them, through clouds of cigar-smoke, to his assembled companions. To your surprise, you will find *Maga* in every library and reading-room from the Independent Union Lyceum of Jeffersonville, in New Hampshire, to the Congressional lobbies at Washington. And I assure you, they not only take it in, but they read it out and out. Often, when I have wanted but a glimpse at its leader, I have found it, like *The Times* at a country inn, in the grasp of some sturdy monopolist, exploring it inch by inch, and only pausing at intervals, to wipe his glasses, and renew his pinch of snuff. Along the shores of the Hudson, in those snug little villas that peep forth from the thick trees and copsewood, *Maga* is quite as universal, but is found in more palmy estate. There—whether your retreat from the city be to the banks of Westchester, to the glens of the Highlands, or to the table-lands that underlie the Kaatskills—your welcome you value none the less that you see volumes of old numbers in the book-case, and the number of the month already laid on the table in the hall; and you think of the hot noons they will help to wile away, after the morning's sport, and before the evening drive. In homes like these, I have usually found *Blackwood* a favourite with the fairer portion of American society. You shall find it lurking amongst worsteds and flower-patterns, and very often preferred to the pretty work that tasks a far prettier eye: or, stepping into the verandah to see a steamer go by, you shall pick it up from a tabouret, where it lies with a pearl-knife in its uncut pages, and the breezes playing with its parted leaves—evidently the immediate relic of some startled and disappearing fair one. Going south or west, you meet it on railways, and in steamers. It is usually the companion of such travellers as are accustomed to decline the repeated attempts of fellow-passengers to engage them in conversation or political debate, and seems to afford peculiar refreshment to those who have effected a retreat from the philanthropic assaults of travelling temperance agents, and of other affectionate inquirers as to the condition of their bodies and

souls. When you reach the Carolinas, where, in default of taverns, you may always venture to make yourself the guest of a planter, and will be thanked for your visit—if you would bait at noon, and turn from the road to a hospitable-looking mansion among the pines, I'll wager that a basking Negro, without a shirt, will start up, and take charge of your horse, while the master of a thousand slaves gives you one open hand, but holds in the other the ubiquitous pages, which he has been reading in the cool of his piazza. I say then, had the Shepherd been blest with such universal experiences as mine, with what a flow of metaphor and illustrative wit would he have enlarged upon the proposition—Maga is an ubiquity. Beginning with a broadside at the literary corsairs of New York, I can fancy him bursting with indignant virtue into luxurious comparisons between the rape of the Sabines, and that of the inimitable Noctes—and then between Maga bodily, and her who in the field of Enna gathering flowers, experienced a fate most gloomy; and so on till his exuberant good-humour expands at last into an apology, as he expatiates on the tempting character of the booty, and declares, that like apples of gold to frolicsome schoolboys, so beautiful Maga, to covetous Yankees, is a thing too full of relish and of beauty to be other than pardonable plunder! Maga, like Italy, ought to be less bewitching, or better defended. What would not some of Maga's cotemporaries give, nevertheless, for the compliment of being perpetually ravished by the Goths and Vandals of Letters—the merciless anti-copyright booksellers of America? Nay—they will pout at the insinuation, and stand upon the virtue which no one believes they possess. But assure them, dear Godfrey, that they are in no conceivable danger. Maga shall growl, and they shall fawn; but the republicans will not be repulsed by the honest frankness of the one nor propitiated by the hypocritical blandishments of the others. If they doubt it, just tell them what happened with me the other day, and what I vouch for as fairly exhibiting the feeling of the most intelligent Americans. I could add many other anecdotes of the same colour and character; but I tell this as creditable to them, and illustrative of Maga's footing among them:—

[Pg 426]

I was at the reading-rooms of "The Athenæum"—a literary club-house in this city, which has grown out of a small society of scholars that existed here before the Revolution—and which, I am happy to say, is always supplied with the genuine imported Magazine. A young man, whom I had often met at the rooms, and who had the Magazine in his hand, called my attention to a palpable error in an article, that reflected pretty merrily on his countrymen. "Ha!" said I, "just like old Ebony! Why don't you banish the rabid old Tory from these most democratic tables?"

"Banish Maga!" was the reply—"what would be left fit to read?"

"You surprise me! Edinburgh, Westminster—any thing that thinks better of Congress, and legislative eloquence—as you do, of course!"

"Why so? Mayn't a man be a republican, without recognising a *jure divino* majesty in a Congressman?"

"But Maga would make out some of your Solons prodigiously long in the ears."

"Nay—rather intolerably long in the wind, which is just the intolerable truth. Thanks to Maga for giving them the echo of their palaver! and may the first reformed Congress vote her a gold medal for the good she has done to the country!"

"She sometimes makes free with the nation itself, and some of the little peculiarities of your countrymen."

"Well, well—we are not drawn more out of proportion than the Iron Duke's nose is in *Punch*! Why should we not laugh like heroes, who are said to grow hale of good-humour kept up by caricatures?"

"You must allow that Maga is not always good-natured, as some of her rivals invariably are."

"There's no comparison, sir, between the sometimes irritable merriment of King Christopher, and the professional tinkling of a jester's cap-and-bells. I can't argue it,—only I like *Blackwood* for all its Toryism; and when Kit North is testy, I reflect that he's long had the gout! Banish Geordie Buchanan's venerable old pow—did you say? Never, Sir, never!"

Of course, I allowed the good sense of these replies, and at once explained to myself the philosophy which gave rise to them. The truth is, there is in human nature a deep sense of "the eternal fitness of things," which usually gives tone to the opinions of man, where undue prejudices do not exercise an overruling control. You know, my dear Godfrey, how unlikely it is that an American would ever care to pay you a second visit at the Hall, should he signalise his first by depreciating the character of Washington, or undervaluing the many advantages which his country really enjoys. On the same principle which would certainly betray you into marks of cool aversion towards such a guest from this side the Atlantic, the intelligent American despises in his heart the Briton, whose spirit is alien to the time-honoured institutions of his ancestors, and whose life is one long blasphemy of all that has contributed most to the glory and greatness of an empire, whose worst symptom of decay is the fungous existence of a race of such blasphemers, at once the morbid fruit of a free constitution, and its fatal and cancerous disease. Whiggery is, therefore, at a discount in the republic; and I have been surprised to hear the confession from American democrats, that if they were Englishmen, they would be far from any sympathy with those who call themselves reformers. This, perhaps, will account for it, that with all the influence of the Edinburgh Reviewers, they have never gained, in this country, any hold of the heart, even where they have controlled the head; whilst Maga, on the contrary, without bending the republican opinions of Americans, has secured no small degree of their affections,

[Pg 427]

and become enshrined in their genuine regard. You may see one proof of this in the fact, that if you contract with Reprint & Co. for their republications, and will take *Blackwood* and *The Quarterly*, you can have *The Edinburgh* and *The Westminster* almost thrown into the bargain; like the lying little *Mercury* of Æsop's statuary, which was a mere gratuity to those who would buy a *Phœbus*, and *Pallas-Athene*. In truth, if my observation has been correct, intelligent Americans like to be republicans themselves, because such were the fathers of their country; but an Englishman in blue and yellow, they regard much as they do an Indian in shoes and stockings. He is despised, as no specimen of the noble race from which he has degenerated and dwindled into a Whig.

To return to the republished Magazine; it is not only a republication, but, as I have said, it professes to be a fac-simile. You will ask, if it is cleverly done. I must answer—not very, considered as a whole; and yet, to give the mannikin its due, the face of the thing is about as accurate as counterfeits usually are. The colour is not often right, however, and I suspect Reprint & Co. are ignorant that the colour is of any consequence. The thistle-framed portrait, nevertheless, is tolerably well copied; enough so, to deserve the greatest proportion of credit belonging to the whole, as an imitation. You look for the familiar imprint in vain. One would never know from the publisher's part of the title-page that the house of Blackwood & Sons was still in existence. Instead of the usual mark, we have that of the republishers, with an intimation that they are assisted in the sale by booksellers in Boston, Philadelphia, Charlestown, Baltimore, Savannah, New Orleans, and PARIS! Why they should print Paris in capitals, rather than Boston and Philadelphia, I am at a loss to conceive; but such an announcement does indeed demand some note of admiration at the vastness of the enterprise of REPRINT & Co., who, to give Mr Blackwood more time to attend to the getting up of each successive number of his work, thus undertake to relieve him of any share in seeing to the supply of the Continent of Europe. In this benevolent effort to take the burthen from the proprietors of the genuine *Ebony*, it is fair that the French coadjutor should have his share of the honour. His name is given as HECTOR BOSSANGE; and his shop, if I rightly remember, adorns the Quai Voltaire. And, now I think of it, I advise you, dear Godfrey, to skip across the Channel this summer, and alight on the capital, (where very likely they will just be getting up an *emeute* in honour of the Three Days), and there, in Monsieur Bossange's establishment, you will be permitted to try the merits of my description and Maga's Icon at the same time, and with no danger from officials of the Customs. So much then for the front, which is good, except the colour. *Nimum ne crede colori*, says Mr Reprint; and *fronti nulla fides*, say I.

The reverse cover has, of course, an outer and inner surface, with only the thickness of the paper between the letter-press adorning the twain. What say you, then, to the fact, that whilst the outer half is devoted to an advertisement of Mr Reprint's imitative publications, the *better half* contains a bold and faithful warning against such piracy! You stare, but I repeat it; whilst the one side of the leaf announces Mr Reprint's arrangements for circulating throughout the States his imitations of Blackwood, the other indignantly announces that there are "now in circulation in the United States, SPURIOUS and HIGHLY PERNICIOUS IMITATIONS." Alas for the difference between those who *instruct* the head, and those who only *dress* it! The imitations that are shamelessly commended are only those of *Blackwood's Magazine*; while those which Messrs Reprint feel called upon to hold up as shocking to every sense of virtue,—to head with IMPORTANT INFORMATION, and to stamp with triple marks of wonder, as FRAUDULENT COUNTERFEITS—are imitations of Rowland's Macassar Oil! Think of that, Godfrey! I learn from this announcement of Reprint's, that there are now in the United States men base enough to rob the immortal Rowland of his patent right, men who have doubtless established agencies in "Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Savannah, New Orleans and PARIS," but who, as the imitation Blackwood is circulated in just those places, will find it, by just retribution, always in their way. *A bon chat, bon rat!* Well, it was wise in the agents of Rowland to employ one ubiquitous imitation to stop another; but since the trade is much the same, it ought to be suggested to Reprint & Co., that they do ill to expose a fellow-craftsman. Suppose, now, the enterprising apothecaries, who do for Mr Rowland what Reprint & Co. are doing for Mr Blackwood, should print a label for every bottle of their "incomparable oil," warning the public that spurious imitations of Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine* are now in circulation throughout the States, which they are compelled to stamp as FRAUDULENT COUNTERFEITS! Would not this be quite as IMPORTANT INFORMATION as the other? Are not the public as much concerned in having the genuine article for their brain, as in having the unadulterated article for their hair? Yet, how would Reprint like to see such a *Rowland* for his *Oliver*?

Strange that the same leaf that thus brands a counterfeit,—which Reprint repudiates, hinting that respectable perfumers "sell only the genuine article,"—should within one two-hundredth part of an inch, contain the exposure of his own counterfeit, by his own pen, ink, and types: and that with the announcement of a "Travelling Agent, recently appointed to procure Subscribers in the Western States, Iowa and Wisconsin, *who will prove his identity by a certificate from the Mayor of Cincinnati!*" Now, it strikes me, would not a certificate from his lordship, proving *the identity of the Magazine*, be much more to the purpose? It is called *Blackwood's Magazine*; and if so, the Travelling Agent would be better certified by a commission from Mr Blackwood to be selling his property, and that would be more to the purpose still! But think, dear Godfrey, where this certified bagman goes! Iowa and Wisconsin are a thousand miles inland, where even so lately as when this reprint was begun, the Indian trail was the only post-road, and the aborigines almost the only inhabitants, and where, even at this day, the reader of Maga, holding the cream of civilisation and refinement in one hand, must keep the other in close contact with his rifle, and the rifle well loaded and cocked; for should his magazine interest him more than his safety, he might expect at any moment the pressing salutations of a cougar, or the warm embrace of a

grisly bear. Or think, I pray you, of a circumstance still less improbable, which will illustrate what it is to be a bagman in Iowa. Where this "Travelling Agent" goes, he often carries his merchandise through an Indian village, and often, I'll venture to say, has Buchanan been seen in his hand, as centre to a circle of fierce-visaged Red-skins, with tomahawks in their girdles, and any thing but brotherly love in their gestures. Ah, then, the contrabandist is afraid. Among savages he first learns to wish himself engaged in any thing but an anti-copyright expedition; and produces in vain the proof of his identity, signed by the Mayor of Cincinnati.

I observe that there are similar agencies in the Southern and South-western States; so that Reprint & Co. are the monopolists of Maga, from the mouth of the St Lawrence, to the deltas of the Mississippi, and before long will doubtless have their travelling agents pushing its sale in the "halls of the Montezumas," or exchanging it for peltry at the head-waters of the Colombia. It is said in one of the newspapers of this city, that for every copy issued in Edinburgh, two copies of the reprint are published here; and though the estimate strikes me as, at least, unlikely, it is far from being incredible. I can pardon Mr Blackwood should his temper be a little ruffled, when he compares his trouble and responsibility, and limited sale, with the *sans souci* and universal market of Reprint & Co.; but surely, old Christopher North should smile with inward satisfaction when, not by cannon, or carnage, but as the result of a greatness thrust upon him, he finds his empire, like her Majesty's, the girdle of the earth, and his sovereignty recognised, in the world of letters, where hers can claim no subjects, and demand no homage. That crutch is now the sceptre of bookdom. Its shadow stretcheth over all lands, whether the dawn project it athwart the broad Atlantic, or the Boreal light send it overland to farthest India. Who reads not Maga? You shall find the smutched lieutenant turning over its pages by the camp-fire, after a terrible scratch with the Sikhs; and within the same twenty-four hours you may fairly surmise that some green mountain volunteer, on the wrong side of the Rio Grande, has lighted a pine-knot, and is reading one of the Marlborough articles to his mess, with extemporaneous parallels in favour of General Taylor, which the shade of the great Churchill must not venture to overhear. Swinging in his hammock, the midshipman holds Blackwood to the smoky lamp of the orlop, as he plunges and pitches around Cape Horn. Lounging in his state-room, and bound for Hong Kong, the sea-sick passenger corrects his nausea with the same spicy page, and bewitched with the flavour, forgets to sigh for Madeira, which he has passed, or to look out for St Helena, which is somewhere on his lee. It keeps the old Admiral from the deck as his keel scrapes the coral-reefs of the South Pacific; and a stale back number, from the bottom of a seaman's chest, is purchased as a prize, by him who cruises among seals, icebergs, and spermaceti whales.

[Pg 429]

"Quis jam locus, inquit, Achate,  
Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris!"

Yes—who reads not Maga? The flayed Radical of Parliament—the rasped Balaamite of Congress—the spanked Cockney of an author—the jaundiced Editor of some new no-go periodical—even these must cut the leaves of each new number, if they die for it, or if their only reward be to find their own sweet selves hung up in its pages, like sham Socrates in his basket, but not looking on like live Socrates with philosophic composure. And if they whimper, who will sympathise? Like the Shepherd at Awmrose's, the testy public may now and then rebel, and rail for a season at "the cawm, cauld, clear, glitterin' cruelty in the expression of his een,"—but who can keep up a quarrel with North? Again, like the Shepherd, they relax into a broad good humour, and, before they know it, are drinking with all the honours, "Long live King Christopher!" So then, in spite of Cockneys, chartists, coxcombs, rebels, radicals, and rascally reformers, yea, and the whole alphabetical list of what is whiggish, vulgar, and vexatious,—

"Maga still sitteth on Edina's crags,  
And from her throne of beauty rules the world!"

Ah! my dear Godfrey Godfrey of Godfrey Hall, in the county of Kent, Esquire,—I know what you are thinking of. You were certainly meant for trade, and 'twas a loss to the Bank of England, that you ever wore a shooting-jacket. There was ever a commercial crotchet in your head, and I am sure it now suggests the rejoinder—that to rule the world is nothing, so long as one can't rule the market. But I respectfully ask, do you go for absolute monarchy? Would you have Maga more potent than her Majesty? I grant there should be something coming to Mr Blackwood for the thousands that profit by his labours in America—but if it can't be so, let the glory suffice him, and let *Sic vos non vobis* be his song of patient resignation. The parallel between his case and that of the Virgilian sufferers, is perfect. Who concentrates more pungency, or collects more sweets than the busy bee? Who keeps more musical throats in time than the motherly bird? Who lends the agricultural interest greater assistance than the labouring ox; or who suffers more by the manufacturers than the fleeced lamb? Undoubtedly, the answer is,—Mr. Blackwood! Well then, I say, he must comfort himself by philosophy and *Sic vos non vobis*. He may, indeed, utter one word of remonstrance against literary and commercial piracy, like that first great sufferer by anti-copyright,—Mr. Virgilius Maro, of Mantua—

[Pg 430]

"Hos ego versiculos *emi*, tulit alter honores."

Or, in other words, I pay for every line and letter of Maga, and lo! Mr Bathyllus Reprint, of New York, carries off the sesterces! Think, Godfrey, what a charm of a life this Bathyllus must make of it! His are all the honey, and the bird's nests, the corn-bags, and the fleeces of the Ebony estates; and yet he has no trouble to see his banks furnished with bees, or to preserve game in the brake; no care to drive away crows, or to stifle the blatter of sheep. For him—to descend from the firmament of metaphor, to the plain prose of George Street and Paternoster Row—for him, Mr North inspects boxes of Balaam, with the patience of a proofreader, and deciphers pages of wit

and pathos with the perseverance of a Champollion. For him, with each new moon, and punctual to the day, comes forth the Maga of the month, the fruit of incredible diligence, and the flower of admirable skill. For him the foreign purveyor of all he lives by pays down the golden *honorarium*, fifty guineas for the sheet, that he may have the whole for less than fifty pence. For him—the same benevolent provider takes pains to silence, by the same metallic spell, ten thousand other claims and clamours, contingent to each lunation of Maga. All things work for him! For him the steamer ploughs Atlantic surges; and for him, when she gains her port, two hundred miles of wire are put into galvanic tremor, bidding him prepare his covers, and rally his compositors. It is there that Reprint, with a grateful sense (perhaps) of all that has been done for him, and a still more gratifying sense of the very little that remains for him to do, finds himself called to bestir from a fortnight's nap, and proceed to do that little. With railway speed, and thunder step, the Express of Harnden brings to his hand almost the only emigrant original of *Blackwood* that ever touches these occidental shores. No prosy correspondence—no botheration manuscript—no rejectable contribution—but the choicest literary matter that the genius of the British empire can furnish, all picked, packed, and laid at his feet, in fair white printed copy, without pains and without cost! Another's all the toil—his, all the profits! In a turn or two of his hand the American market is supplied. Sure sale—no risk—all clear gains, and quick returns! I am sure Mr Bathyllus Reprint must be the happiest of men, and the most amiable of publishers; and I can conceive that few of the more legitimate craft would be able to stand upon dignity, or refuse his kind invitation to meet a little company at his board—

"At the close of the day, when the market is still,  
And mortals the sweets of comestibles prove."

But hold! When is the market still. For a fortnight after he has set it astir with a new number, his announcements confront you as you open your "folio of four pages." His placards smite the eye at the crossings of the streets; they return your glance at the shop-window, and confound your senses at every turn. "Old Ebony for the month,"—"Kit North again in the field,"—"A racy new number of *Blackwood*,"—such are the headings of newspaper puffs, and the bawlings of hawkers on the steps of Astor House. They pursue you to the Boston railway-station, or to the Hudson-river steamer; they follow you on the road to Niagara; meet you afresh at Detroit and Chicago, and hardly provoke any additional surprise when the bagman accosts you with the same syllables, through the nose, as you arrive in the buffalo-season on the debateable grounds of Oregon! To quote once more the oracular words of the Ettrick orator and poet, "Ane gets tired o' that eternal soun'—*Blackwood's Magazeen*,—*Blackwood's Magazeen*—dinnin' in ane's lugs, day and nicht!" So vast and so varied I suppose to be the commercial relations of Reprint & Co., and such, beyond a doubt, is Maga's empire in America.

[Pg 431]

No more by this steamer. Let me see; in ten days, perhaps, Harry will be with you at breakfast, discussing my letter, and lamenting my lot, to live so far from the world. For me, however, a contented disposition, the steamers twice a-month, and *Blackwood* monthly, do wonders. I see as much of the world as a good man need wish to see; and at any time, you know, it's not a fortnight's work, by God's blessing, to rejoin the old friends and true friends, that so often go fishing under your patronage, and tell improbable stories around your table. Wait till I get into my own chair beside you, and I will tell stories of my sojourn in America that will put Harry's Indian romances to the blush. He now goes out with a stock of prairie-adventures, that out-Sinbad Sinbad, and yet he tells them with an air of honesty that would gull Gulliver. Wait till I rejoin you, and you shall see how a plain tale will put him down.

Yours, &c.

---

## THE TIMES OF GEORGE II. [18]

Female authorship is beginning to flourish in England. To this employment no rational objection can be raised. The want of occupation for female life in the higher classes has long been a subject of complaint, and any honest change which removes it will be a change for the better. The quantity of time and thread which has been wasted on chainstitch, and roundstitch, and all the other mysteries of the needle, in the last three centuries, is beyond all calculation. If the fair artists had been workers at the loom, they might have clothed half the living population in "fine linen," if not in purple. If they had been equally diligent in brickmaking, they might have built ten Babels; or if they had devoted similar energies, on Iago's hint, "to suckle fools, and chronicle small beer," they might have tripled the population, or anticipated the colossal vats of Messrs Truman & Co. What myriads of young faces have grown old over worsted parrots and linsey-wolsey maps of the terrestrial globe! What exquisite fingers have been thinned to the bone, in creating carnations to be sat upon, and cowslip beds for the repose of favourite poodles! What bright eyes have been reduced to spectacles, in the remorseless fabrication of patchwork, quilts and flowery footstools for the feet of gouty gentlemen! Nay, what thousands and tens of thousands have been flung into the arms of their only bridegroom, Consumption, leaving nothing to record their existence but an accumulation of trifles, which cost them only their health, their tempers, their time, their charms, and their usefulness!

But the age of knitting and tambour passed away. The spinning-jenny was its mortal enemy. The most inveterate of fringemakers, the most painstaking devotee of patchwork, when she found that Arkwright could make in a minute more than with all her diligence she could make in a



month, and that old Robert Peel could pour out figured muslins, by a twist of a screw, sufficient to give gowns to the whole petticoat population of England, had only to give in; the spinsterhood were forced to feel that their "occupation was o'er."

Even then, however, the female fingers were not suffered to "forget their cunning;" and the age of purse-making began. The land was inundated with purses of every shape, size, and substance. Then followed another change. The Berlin manufacturers had contrived to bring back the age of worsted wonders, though, by a happy art, they saved the fair artists all the trouble of drawing and design. We are still under a Gothic invasion of trimmings and tapestry, of needlework nondescripts, moonlight minstrels in canvass, playing under cross-bar balconies; and all the signs of the zodiac brought down to the level of the ivory fingers of womankind.

[Pg 432]

To this, we must acknowledge, that the incipient taste of the ladies for historical publications, for diving into the trunks of family memorials, and giving us those private correspondences which are to be found only by the desperate determination to find something and every thing, is a fortunate turn of the wheel.

It is true, that England boasts of many distinguished female writers; that the works of Mrs Radcliffe opened a new vein of rich description and solemn mystery; that the comedies of Inchbald netted her innocent and persevering spirit some thousand pounds; and that Joanna Baillie's tragedies entitle her to an enduring fame. We also acknowledge, with equal sincerity and gratification, the merits of many of our female novelists in the past half century; their keen insight into character, their close anatomy of the general impulses of the human heart, and the mingled delicacy and force with which they seize on personal peculiarities, belong to woman alone. But their day, too, has gone down. They were first rivalled by the "high-life novel," the most vulgar of all earthly caricatures. They are now extinguished by the low-life novel; the most intolerable of all earthly realities. The true novel, true in its fidelity to nature, polished without affectation, and vigorous without rudeness, now sleeps in the grave, and must sleep, until posterity shall, with one voice, demand its revival.

Yet, until another race of genius shall arise, and the laurel of Fielding or of Shakspeare shall descend on our female authors, we must be grateful for their gentle labours in the rather rugged field of history.

It must be owned, that gallantry has a good deal to do in giving these works the name of history. They want all the vigour, all the philosophy, and all the eloquence of history. Of course, no human being will ever apply to them as authorities. Still, they have the merit of giving general statements to general readers, of supplying facts in their regular order, and probably, of inducing the multitude, who would shrink from the formalities of Hume or Gibbon in solemn quartos and ponderous octavos, to dip into pages having all the look and nearly all the slightness of the modern novel. At all events, if they do nothing else, they employ the time of pens, which might be much worse occupied; and that pens are often much worse occupied, we have evidence from hour to hour.

The French novels are making rapid way into our circulating libraries. Yet nothing can be more unfortunate, for nothing can be more corrupting than a French novel of the nineteenth century. France, always a profligate country, always had profligate writers. But they were generally confined to "Memoirs," "Court anecdotes," and the ridicule of the world of Versailles; their criminality was at least partially concealed by their good breeding, and their vice was not altogether lowered to the grossness of the crowd.

The Revolution created a new school. All there was hatred to duty, faith, and honour. The deepest profligacy was pictured as scarcely less than the natural right of man; and all the abominations of the human heart were excited, encouraged, and propagated by daring pens, sometimes subtle, sometimes eloquent, and in all instances appealing to the most tempting abominations of man.

But the Revolution fell, and with the ascendant of Napoleon another school followed. War, public business, the general objects of the active faculties, and strong ambition of a people with Europe at its feet, partially superseded alike the frivolous taste of the monarchy, and the rabid ferocities of revolutionary authorship. The Bulletins of the "Grande Armée" told a daily tale of romance, to which the brains of a Parisian scribbler could find no rival, and men with the sound of falling thrones echoing in their ears, forgot the whispers of low intrigue and commonplace corruption.

[Pg 433]

The "Three Glorious Days" of July 1830, have now produced another change; and peace has given leisure to think of something else than conquest and the conscription. The power of the national pen has turned again to fiction, and the natural wit, habitual dexterity, and dashing verbiage of France have all been thrown into the novel. Even the French drama, once the pride of the nation, has perished under this sudden pressure. A French modern tragedy is now only a rhymed melodrama. Even French history attracts popular applause only as it approaches to a three volume romance. Every man of name in French modern authorship has attained it only by the rapid production of novels. But no language can be too contemptuous, or too condemnatory, for the spirit of those works in general. Every tie of society is violated in the progress of their pages; and violated with the full approval of every body. Seduction is the habitual office of the hero. Adultery is the regular office of the heroine. In each the vice is simply a matter of course. Manly honour is a burlesque every where, but where the criminal shoots the injured husband in a duel. Female virtue is only a proof of dulness or decay, a vulgar formality of mind, or an unaccountable inaptitude to adopt the customs of polished society.

The hero is pictured with every quality which can charm the eye or ear; he is the handsomest, the most accomplished, and the most high-spirited of mankind, all sentiment, and all scoundrelism. The heroine, always a wife or a widow,—in the former instance, is the "lovely victim of a marriage in which her heart had no share," and in which she is entitled to have all the privileges of her heart supplied. And in the latter is a creature full of charms, about twenty-one, resolved to live for love, but never to be "chained in the iron links of a dull and obsolete ceremonial" again. She quickly fixes her eyes on some Adolphe, Auguste, or Hyppolite, "*Officier de la Garde*," who has performed prodigies of valour in Algiers, taken lions by the beard every where, and is the best waltzer in all Paris. They meet, flame together, swear an *amitié éternelle*, and defy the world, through three volumes.

In reprobating this detestable school, we certainly have no hope that our remarks will reform the French novelism of the day; but we call on the critical press of England to take up the rational and righteous task of reforming our own.

Within these few years, the English novels are rapidly falling into the imitation of the French. And we say it with no less regret than surprise, that the chief imitators are females. The novels written by men have generally some manliness, some recollection of the higher impulses which occasionally act on the minds of men; some reluctance in revealing the more infirm movements of the mind; and some doubts as to the absorption of all human nature in one perpetual whirl of love-making.

But with the female pen in general, the whole affair is resolved into one impulse—all is "passion." The winds of heaven have nothing to do, but to "waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole." The art of printing is seriously presumed to have been invented only for "some banished lover, or some captive maid." Flirtation is the grand business of life. The maiden flirts from the nursery, the married woman flirts from the altar. The widow adds to the miscellaneous cares of her "bereaved" life, flirtation from the hearse which carries her husband to his final mansion. She flirts in her weeds more glowingly than ever. But she knows too well the "value of her liberty" to submit to be a slave once more; and so flirts on for life, in the most innocent manner imaginable, taking all risks, and throwing herself into situations of which the result would be obvious any where but in the pages of an *English* novel.

The French have no scruples on such subjects, and their candour leaves nothing to the imagination. Our female novelists have not yet arrived at that pitch of explicitness, and it is to be hoped will pause before they leap the gulf.

We attribute a good deal of this dangerous adoption to the prevalent habit of yearly running to the Continent. The English ear becomes familiarised to language on the other side of the Channel, which would have shocked it here. The chief topic of foreign life is intrigue, the chief employment of foreign life is that half idle, half infamous intercourse, which extinguishes all delicacy even in the spectators. The young English woman sees the foreign woman leading a life which, though in England it would stamp her with universal shame, in France or Germany, and above all, in Italy, never brings more than a sneer, and seldom even the sneer. She sees this wedded or widowed profligate received in the highest ranks; flourishing without a reproach, if she has the means of keeping an opera-box, or giving suppers; every soul round her acquainted with every point of her history, yet none shrinking from her association. If she has one Cicisbeo, or ten, the whole affair is *selon les règles*.

[Pg 434]

The young English woman who blushes at this scandalous career, or exhibits any reluctance on the subject of the companionship or the crime, is laughed at as a "novice," is charged with a want of the "*savoir vivre*," is quietly reprov'd for "the coldness of her English blood," and is recommended to abandon, as speedily as possible, ideas so unsuitable to "the glow of the warm South."

She soon finds a dangler, or a dozen danglers, who, having nothing on earth to do, and in their penury rejoiced to find any spot where they can kill an hour, and get a cup of coffee, are daily at her command. All those fellows, too, are counts; the title being about as common, and as cheap, as chimney-sweepers among us, though not belonging to so valuable fraternity.

After a month's training of this kind, the poor fool is fit for nothing else, to the last hour of her being. She is a flirt and a *figurante*, as long as she lives. Duty and decorum are things too icy for the "ardour of her soul." The life of England is utterly barbarian to the refinement of the land of macaroni.

And it is unquestionably much better that the whole tribe should remain where they are, and roam among the lazzaroni, than return to corrupt the decencies of English life. If this sentimentalist has money, she is sure to be picked up by some "superb chevalier," some rambling fortune-hunter, or known swindler, hunted from the gambling table; probably beginning his career as a friseur or a footman, and making rapid progress towards the galleys. If she has none, she returns to England, to grumble, for the next fifty years, at the climate, the country, and the people; to draw out her maudlin regrets for olive groves, and pout for the Bay of Naples; to talk of her loves; exhibit a cameo or a crucifix, (the parting pledge of some inamorato, probably since hanged), prate papistry, and profess *liberalism*; pronounce the Roman holidays "charming things," and long to see the carnival, and the worship of the Virgin together, imported to relieve the *ennui* of London.

The subject is startling: and we recommend any thing, and every thing, in the shape of

employment, in preference to the vitiating follies of a life of Touring.

Another tribe of female authorship ought to be extinguished without a moment's delay. Those are the yearly travellers. A woman of this kind scampers over the Continent, like a queen's messenger, every season; she rushes along with the rapidity and the regularity of the "Royal Mail." The month of May no sooner appears in the calendar, than she packs up her trunk, and crosses to Boulogne, "to make a book." One year she takes the north, another the south; to her, all points of the compass are equal. But whether the *roulage* carries her to the Baltic or the Mediterranean, her affair is done, if she adds a page a day to her journal. She gossips along, and scribbles, with the indefatigable finger of a maker of bobbin lace, or a German knitter of stockings. The most slipshod descriptions of every thing that has been described before; sketches of peasant character taken from the beggars at the roadside; national traits taken from the commonplaces of the *table-d'hôte*, and court *secrets* copied from the newspapers—all are disgorged into the Journal. We have, unfailingly, whole pages of setting suns, moonlight nights, effulgent stars, and southern breezes. She gloats over pictures of enraptured monks, and sees heaven in the eyes of saints, copied from the painter's mistresses. If she goes to Italy, she tells us of the banditti, the gondola, and St Peter's; gazes with solemn speculation on the naked beauties of the Belvidere Apollo; and descants in an ultra-ecstasy on the proportions of sages and heroes destitute of drapery; winding up by an adventure, in which she falls by night into the hands of a marching regiment, or band of smugglers setting out on a robbery, and leaving the world to guess at the results of the adventure to herself.

[Pg 435]

In all this farrago, she never gives the reader an atom of information worth the paper which she blots. We have no additional lights on character, public life, national feeling, or national advancement. All is as vapid as the "Academy of Compliments," and as well known as "Lindley Murray's Grammar." But why object to all this? Why not let the scribbler take her way—and the world know that vineyards are green, and the sky blue, if it desires the knowledge? Our reason is this,—such practices actually destroy all taste for the legitimate narratives of travel. Those trading tourists talk nonsense, until intelligence itself becomes wearisome. They strip away the interest which novelty gives to new countries, and by running their silly speculation into scenes of beauty, sublimity, or high recollection, would make Tempe a counterpart to the Thames Tunnel; Mount Atlas a fellow to Primrose Hill; and Marathon a fac-simile of the Zoological Garden or Bartholomew Fair. The subject is pawed, and dandled, and fondled, until the very name excites nausea; and a writer of real ability would no more touch upon it, than a great artist would paint St George and the Dragon.

This has been the history of the decline of works of imagination in England. No sooner had Mrs Radcliffe touched the old monasteries with her glorious pencil, than a generation of monk-describers and ruined-castle-builders sprang up, until the very name of convent or castle became an abhorrence. Sir Walter Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," rich and romantic as it was, was nearly buried under an overflow of heavy imitations, which drove his genius to other pursuits, and which filled the public ear with such enormities of octo-syllabic *ennui*, that it hates poetry ever since. The Helicon of which he drank the gushing and pure stream, was stirred into mire by the slippers of school-girls, city-apprentices, and chambermaid-poetesses of every shade of character.

A new Malthus for the express purpose of extinguishing, by strangulation or otherwise, the whole race of Annual Travellers in Normandy, Picardy, up the Seine and down the Seine, up the Loire and down the Loire, on the shores of the Mediterranean, and in the Brenner Alps, would be a benefactor to society.

Whether England would be the wiser and the happier if, instead of being separated from the Continent by a channel, she were separated by an ocean, is a question which we leave to the philosopher; but there can be no doubt of the nature of its answer by the historian. It will be found, that the national character had degenerated in every period when that intercourse increased, and that it resumed its vigour only in the periods when that intercourse was restricted.

It would not be difficult to exemplify this principle, from the earliest times of English independence. But our glance shall be limited to the era of the Reformation, when England began first to assume an imperial character.

Elizabeth was always contemptuous of the foreigner, and boasted of the defiance; the national mind never rose to a higher rank than in her illustrious reign. James renewed the connexions of the throne with France, and Charles I. renewed the connexion of the royal line. It may have been for the purpose of checking the national contagion of the intercourse, that rebellion was suffered to grow up in his kingdom. But whatever might be the origin, the effect was, to break off the intercourse with France and her corruptions, and to exhibit a new energy and purity in the people. Cromwell raised a sudden barrier against France by his political system, and the nation recovered its daring and its character in its contempt for the foreigner.

[Pg 436]

In the reign of Charles II. the intercourse was resumed, and corruption rapidly spread from France to the court, and from the court to the people. England, proud and powerful under the Protectorate, became almost a rival to France in infidelity and profligacy in the course of the Reign. Again the war of William with France closed the Continent upon the national intercourse, and the manliness of the national character partially revived. But with the death of Anne the intercourse was renewed, and the result was a renewal of the corruption. The war of the French Revolution again and utterly broke off the intercourse for the time; and it is undeniable, that the

national character suddenly exhibited a most singular and striking return to the original virtues of the country—to its fortitude, to its patriotism, and to the purity of its religious feelings.

The period from the Treaty of Utrecht to the war of the French Revolution, has always appeared to us a blot on the annals of England. It is true that it contained many names of distinction, that it exhibited a graceful and animated literature, that it was characterised by striking advances in national power, and that towards its close it gave the world a Chatham, as if to reconcile us to its existence and throw a brief splendour over its close.

But no period of British history developed more unhappily those vices which naturally ripen in the hot bed of political intrigue. The names of Harley, Bolingbroke, Walpole, and Newcastle, might head a general indictment against the manliness, the integrity, and the honour of England. The low faithlessness of Harley, who seems to have been carrying on a Jacobite correspondence at the foot of the throne—the infamous treachery of his brother-minister, St John—the undenied and undeniable corruption of Walpole, and the half-imbecility which made the chicane of Newcastle ridiculous, while his perpetual artifice alone saved his imbecility from overthrow,—altogether form a congeries, which, like the animal wrecks of the primitive world, almost give in their deformity a reason for its extinction.

There can be no question of the perpetual villany which then assumed the insulted name of politics; none, of the utter sacrifice of public interests to the office-hunting avarice of all the successive parties; none, of the atrocious corruptibility of them all; none, of that general decay of religion, morals, and national honour, which was the result of a time when principle was laughed at, and when the loudest laughter passed for the wisest man of his generation.

The cause was obvious. Charles II. had brought with him from France all the vices of a court, where the grossest licentiousness found its grossest example in the person of the sovereign. Profligate as private life naturally is in all the dominions of a religion where every crime is rated by a tariff, and where the confessional relieves every man of his conscience, the conduct of Louis XIV. had made profligacy the actual pride of the throne.

The feeble and frivolous Charles was more a Frenchman than an Englishman; more a courtier than a king; and fitter to be a page in the seraglio than either.

The royal robe on the shoulders of such a monarch, instead of concealing his vices, only made them glitter in the national eyes; and the morals of England might have been irretrievably stained, but for that salutary judgment which interposed between the people and the dynasty, and by driving James into an ignominious exile, placed a man of principle on the throne. Unfortunately, the reign of William was too busy and too brief to produce any striking change in the habits of the people. His whole policy was turned to the great terror of the time, the daring ambition of France. He fought on the outposts of Europe. All his ideas were Continental. The singular constitution of his nature gave him the spirit of a warrior, combined with the seclusion of a monk. Solitary even in camps, what must he be in the trivial bustle of a court?—and, engrossed with the largest interests of nations, what interest could he attach to the squabbles of rival professors of licentiousness, to giving force to a feeble drama, or regulating the decorum of factions equally corrupt and querulous, and long since equally despised and forgotten?

[Pg 437]

The reign of Anne made some progress in the national restoration. But it was less by the influence of the Queen than by the work of time. The "gallants" of the reign of Charles were now a past generation. Their frolics were a gossip's tale; their showy vices were now as tarnished as their wardrobe, and both were hung out of sight. The man who, in the days of Anne, would have ventured on the freaks of Rochester, would have finished his nights in the watch-house, and his years in the plantations. The wit of the past age was also rude, vulgar, and pointless to the polished sarcasm of Pope, or even to the reckless sting of Swift. Yet manners were still coarse, and the Queen complained of Harley's coming to her after dinner,—"*troublesome, impudent, and drunk.*" Her court exhibited form without dignity, and her parliaments the most violent partisanship in politics and religion, without sincerity or substance in either. But the long peace threw open the floodgates of frivolity and fashion once more, and France again became the universal model.

On glancing over the history of public men through this diversified period, the astonishment of an honest mind is perpetually excited at the unblushing effrontery with which the most scandalous treacheries seem to have been all but acknowledged. France was still the great corrupter, and French money was lavished, not more in undermining the fidelity of public men, than in degrading the character of the nation. But when Charles was an actual pensioner of the French King, and James a palpable dependent on the French throne, the force of example may be easily conceived, among the spendthrift and needy officials, one half of whose life was spent at the gaming table.

On those vilenesses history looks back with an eye of disgust. But they were the natural results of an age when religion was at the lowest ebb in Europe; when our travelled gentry only brought back with them that disregard of Christianity which they had learned in Paris and Rome, and when Voltaire's works were found on the toilet of every woman in high life.

The accession of George III. was, in this view, of incalculable value to England. Contempt for the marriage tie is universally the source of all popular corruption. The king instantly discountenanced the fashionable levity of noble life. No man openly stigmatised for profligacy, dared to appear before him. No woman scandalised by her looseness of conduct was suffered to

approach the drawing-room. The public feeling was suddenly righted. The shameless forehead was sent into deserved obscurity. The debased heart felt that there was a punishment, which no rank, wealth, or effrontery could resist. The decorum of public manners was effectively restored, and the nation had to thank the monarch for the example and for the restoration.

Lady Sundon was of an obscure family, of the name of Dyves. Her portrait represents her as handsome, and her history vouches for her cleverness. It was probably owing to both that she was married to Mr Clayton, then holding an appointment in the treasury, and also the agent for the great Duke of Marlborough's estate, both of them appointments which implied a certain degree of intelligence and character. He also at one period was deputy-auditor of the exchequer. Mrs Clayton soon obtained the confidence of that most impracticable of all personages, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.

On the death of Queen Anne, the duke and duchess had returned to England, but, repulsed shortly after by the ungracious manner of the ungrateful George I., they soon abandoned public life. Still it was difficult for so stirring a personage as the duchess altogether to abandon court intrigue, and probably for the purpose of obtaining some shadow of that influence which she might afterwards turn into substance, she contrived to obtain for her correspondent and dependant, Mrs Clayton, the place of bedchamber-woman to Caroline, wife of the heir-apparent.

It is obvious that such a position might give all the advantages of the most confidential intercourse, to a clever woman, who had her own game to play. The Princess herself was in a position which required great dexterity. She was the wife of a brutish personage whom it was impossible to respect, and yet with whom it was hazardous to quarrel. She was the daughter-in-law of a Prince utterly incapable of popularity, yet singularly jealous of power. She was surrounded by a court, half Jacobite, and wholly unprincipled; and exposed to the constant observation of a people still dubious of the German title to the throne, contemptuous by nature of all foreign alliances, disgusted with the manners of the court, and still disturbed by the struggles of the fallen dynasty.

[Pg 438]

It was obviously of high importance to such a personage, to have in her employ so clear-headed, and at the same time so stirring an agent as Mrs Clayton. There seems even to have been a strong similitude in their characters—both keen, both intelligent, both fond of power, and both exhibiting no delicacy whatever with regard to the means for its possession. Mrs Clayton never shrank from intercourse with those profligate persons who then abounded at court, when she had a point to carry; and Caroline, as Queen, endured for thirty years the notorious irregularities of her lord and master, without a remonstrance. She even went farther. She pretended, in the midst of those gross offences, to be even tenderly attached to him, talked of "not valuing her children as a grain of sand in comparison with him," and not merely acquiesced in conduct which must have galled every feeling of virtue in a pure heart, but involved herself in the natural suspicion of playing a part for the sake of power, and forgetting the injuries of the wife in order to retain the influence of the Queen.

There can be no doubt that this policy had its reward. The King gave her power, or at least never attempted to disturb the power belonging to her rank, while it left him the full indulgence of his vices. She thus obtained two objects—to the world she appeared a suffering angel, to the King a submissive wife. In the mean time she managed both court and King, possessed vast patronage, perhaps more general court popularity than any Queen of the age; led a pleasant life, enjoying the sweets without the responsibilities of royalty; and by judicious liberality of purse, and equally dexterous flexibility of opinion, contrived to carry some degree of public respect with her, while she lived, and be followed by some degree of public regret to her grave.

But this example was productive of palpable evil. The example of the higher ranks always operates powerfully on the lower. The toleration exhibited by the highest female in the kingdom for the most notorious vices, gave additional effect to that fashion of flexibility, which is the besetting sin of polished times. If the Queen had firmly set her face against the offences of her husband, or if she had shown the delicacy of a woman of virtue in keeping aloof from all intercourse with women whom the public voice had long marked as criminal, she might have, partially at least, reformed the corruptions of her profligate period.

But this indifference to all the nobler feelings was the style of the day. Religion was scarcely more than a form: its preachers were partisans; its controversies were court feuds, its principles were politics, and its objects were stoles and mitres. In an age when Sacheverel, with his rampant nonsense, had been a popular apostle, and Swift, with his pungent abominations, had been a church adviser of the cabinet, and when Hoadley was regarded alternately as a pillar and as a subverter of the faith, we may easily conjecture the national estimate of Christianity.

Unfortunately, a considerable proportion of the correspondence in these volumes is from clerical candidates for personal services; and if singular eagerness in pursuit of preferment, and singular homage to the influence of the queen's bed-chamber-woman, could stamp them with shame, the brand would be at once broad and indelible. But it must be remembered, that there are contemptible minds in every profession, that these men acted in direct violation of the principles of their religion, and that the church is no more accountable for the delinquencies of its members, than the courts of law for the morals of the jail.

[Pg 439]

Another repulsive feature of the period was the conduct of conspicuous females. The habits of Germany in its higher ranks were offensive to all purity. The Brunswick Princes had brought those habits to St James's. Born and educated in Germany, they were regardless even of the

feeble decorums of English life, and a king's mistress was an understood portion of the royal establishment. It is to the honour of later times, that such offences could not now be committed with impunity. But the example of Louis XIV. had sanctioned all royal excesses, and the conduct of his successor was an actual study of the most reckless profligacy. The constant intercourse of the English nobility with Paris, to which allusion has already been made, had accustomed them to such scenes, and persons of the highest condition, of the most important offices of the state, and even of the most respectable private character, such as respectability was in those days, associated with those mistresses, corresponded with them, and even submitted to be assisted by their influence with the king.

We shall give but one example; that of Henrietta Hobart, afterwards Lady Suffolk. A baronet's daughter, and poor, she had married in early life the son of the Earl of Suffolk, nearly as poor as herself. In their narrowness of means, their only resource was some court office, and to obtain this, and probably to live cheap, they went to Hanover, to lay the foundation of favour with the future monarch of England. To some extent they succeeded. For, on the accession of George the First, Mrs Howard was appointed bedchamber-woman to Caroline the Princess of Wales.

Courts, in all countries, seem to be dull places; ceremonial fails as a substitute for animation, and dinners of fifty covers become a mere tax on time, taste, and common-sense. Etiquette is only *ennui* under another name, and the eternal anticipation of enjoyment is the death of all pleasure. Miss Burney's narrative has let in light on the sullen mysteries of the Maid of Honour's life, and her pencil has evidently given us only the picture of what had been in the times of our forefathers, and what will be in the times of our posterity.

Mrs Howard was well-looking, without the invidious attribute of great beauty, and lively, without the not less invidious faculty of wit. All the court officials crowded her apartments in the palace. Chesterfield, young Churchill, Lord Hervey, Lord Scarborough, all hurried to the tea-table of the well-bred bedchamber-woman, to escape the dreary duties and monotonous moping of attendance on the throne. Lady Walpole, Mrs Selwyn, Mary Lepell, and Mary Bellenden, formed a part of this coterie—all women of presumed character, yet all associating familiarly with women of none. Of Mrs Howard, Swift observed in his acid style—"That her private virtues, for want of room to operate, might be folded and laid up clean, like clothes in a chest, never to be put on; till satiety, or some reverse of fortune should dispose her to retirement."

Then, probably in reference to the prudery with which she occasionally covered her conduct,—"In the meantime," said he, "it will be her prudence, to take care that they be not tarnished and moth-eaten, for want of opening and airing, and turning, at least *once a-year*."

Those matters seem to have sought no concealment whatever. "Es regular," says the Spaniard, when his country is charged with some especial abomination. Howard, the husband, though a *roué*, at last went into the quadrangle at St James's and publicly demanded his wife. He then wrote to the Archbishop. His letter was given to the Queen, and by her to Mrs Howard. Yet all this scandal never interrupted the lady's intercourse with the highest personages of the court. Mrs Howard continued to be the Queen's bedchamber woman; the Queen suffered her personal attendance, her carriage was escorted by John Duke of Argyle; her husband obtained a pension to hold his tongue; and even when the King grew tired of the *liaison*, and wished to get rid of her, actually complaining to the Queen, "That he did not know why she would not let him part with a deaf old woman, of whom he was weary," the politic Caroline would not allow him to give her up, "lest a younger favourite should gain a greater ascendancy over him." After this, we must hear no more of the delicacy of Queen Caroline. Virtue and religion scarcely belonged to her day.

[Pg 440]

In a court of this intolerable worldliness, the worldly must thrive; and Mrs Clayton advanced year by year in the imitation of her mistress, and in power. She, as well as Lady Suffolk, adopted Caroline's patronage of letters, and corresponded a good deal with the clever men of the time. We quote one of Lady Suffolk's letters addressed to Swift, apparently in answer to some of his perpetual complaints of a world, which used him only too well after all.

"September, 1727.

"I write to you to please myself. I hear you are melancholy, because you have a bad head and deaf ears. These are two misfortunes I have laboured under these many years, and yet never was peevish with either myself or the world. Have I more philosophy and resolution than you? Or am I so stupid that I do not feel the evil?"

"Answer those queries in writing, if *poison* or other methods do not enable you soon to appear in person. Though I make use of your own word, *poison*, yet let me tell you—it is nonsense, and I desire you will take more care for the time to come. Now, you endeavour to impose on my understanding by taking no care of your own."

The value of a keen and active confidante in a court of perpetual intrigue was obvious, and Mrs Clayton was the double of the Queen. But a deeper and more painful reason is assigned for her confidence. The Queen had a malady, which is not described in her Memoirs, but which we suppose to have been a cancer, which she was most anxious to hide from all the world. Walpole discovered it, and the discovery exhibits his skill in human nature.

On the death of Lady Walpole, the Queen, who was about the same age, asked Sir Robert in many questions as to her illness; but he remarked, that she frequently reverted to one particular malady, which had *not* been Lady Walpole's disease. "When he came home," (his son writes) "he said to me,—now, Horace, I know by the possession of what secret Lady Sundon has preserved such an ascendant over the Queen."

Mrs Clayton possessed at least one merit (if merit it be) in a remarkable degree, that of providing for her relatives. She was of a poor family, and she contrived to get something for them all. Her three nieces had court places, one of them that of a maid of honour; one brother obtained a cornetcy in the Horse Guards; another a chief clerkship in the annuity office; and her nephew was sent out with Lord Albemarle to Spain. A more remarkable relative was Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, who evidently knew the value of her patronage, for a more importunate suitor, and a more persevering sycophant, never kissed hands. Finally, she obtained a peerage for her husband, a distinction in which, of course, she herself shared, but which probably she desired merely to throw some *eclat* round a singularly submissive husband.

Yet there was no slight infusion of pleasantry in the minds of some of the royal household. When they got rid of the stately pedantry of Caroline, and the smooth hypocrisy of her confidante,—when the gross and formal monarch was shut out, and the younger portion of the court were left to their own inventions, they seem to have enjoyed themselves like children at play. There was a vast deal of flirtation, of course, for this folly was as much the fashion of the time as rouge. But there was also a great deal of verse writing, correspondence of all degrees of wit, and now and then caricature with pencil and pen. Mary Lepell, in one of those *jeux d'esprit*, described the "Six Maids of Honour" as six volumes bound in *calfs*.—The first, Miss Meadows, as mingled satire, and reflection; the second as a *plain* treatise on morality; the third as a rhapsody; the fourth (supposed to be the future Lady Pembroke) as a volume, neatly bound, of "The Whole Art of Dressing;" the next a miscellaneous work, with essays on "Gallantry;" the sixth, a folio collection of all the "Court Ballads." But there were some women of a superior stamp in the court circle. One of those was Lady Sophia Fermor, the daughter of Lady Pomfret, who seems to have been followed by all the men of fashion, and loved by some of them. But, like other professed beauties, she remained unmarried, until at last she accepted Lord Carteret, a man twice her age. Yet the match was a brilliant one in all other points, for Carteret was Secretary of State, and perhaps the most accomplished public man of his time.

[Pg 441]

"Do but imagine," observes that prince of gossips, Horace Walpole, "how many passions will be gratified in that family; her own ambition, vanity, and resentment—love, she never had any; the politics, management, and pedantry of her mother, who will think to govern her son-in-law out of Froissart. Figure the instructions which she will give her daughter. Lincoln, (one of her admirers) is quite indifferent, and laughs."

While the marriage was on the *tapis*, the beautiful Sophia was taken ill of the scarlet fever, and Lord Carteret of the gout. Nothing could be less amatory than such a crisis. But his lordship was all gallantry; he corresponded with her, read her letters to the Privy Council, and tired all the world with his passion. At length both recovered, and the lady had all the enjoyments which she could find in ambition. Carteret obtained an earldom, lost his place, but became only more popular, personally distinguished, and politically active. The Countess then became the female head of the Opposition, and gave brilliant parties, to the infinite annoyance of the Pelhams. For a while, she was the "observed of all observers." But her career came to a sudden and melancholy close. She had given promise of an heir, which would have been doubly a source of gratification to her husband; as his son by a former wife was a lunatic. But she was suddenly seized with a fever. One evening, as her mother and sister were sitting beside her, she sighed and said, "I feel death coming very fast upon me." This was their first intimation of her danger. She died on the same night!

Walpole is the especial chronicler of this time. Such a man must have been an intolerable nuisance in his day, but his piquant impertinence is amusing in ours. He was evidently a wasp, pretending to perform the part of a butterfly, and fluttering over all the court flowers, only to plant his sting. As he was a perpetual flirt, he dangled round the Pomfret family; and probably received some severe rebuke from their mother, for he describes her with all the venom of an expelled *dilettante*.

He speaks of her as all that was prim in pedantry, and all that was ridiculous in affectation; as, on being told of some man who talked of nothing but Madeira, gravely asking, "What language that was;" and as attending the public act at Oxford (on the occasion of her presenting some statues to the University) in a box built for her near the Vice-Chancellor, "where she sat for three days together, to receive adoration, and hear herself for four hours at a time called Minerva." In this assembly, adds the wit, in his peculiar style, "she appeared in all the tawdry poverty and frippery imaginable, and in a scoured damask robe," and wonders that "she did not wash out a few words of Latin," as she used to *fricassee* French and Italian; or, that "she did not torture some learned simile," as when she said, that "it was as difficult to get into an Italian coach, as it was for Cæsar to take Attica, by which she meant Utica."

But Lady Pomfret is said also to have employed her talents upon more substantial things than pedantry. She had an early intercourse with the immaculate Mrs Clayton, with whom she was supposed to have negotiated the appointment of Lord Pomfret as master of the horse, for a pair of diamond rings, worth £1,400. The rumour appears to have obtained considerable currency; for one day when she appeared at the Duchess of Marlborough's with the jewels in her ears, the Duchess (old Sarah) said to Lady Wortley Montague, "How can the woman have the impudence to go about *in that bribe!*" Lady Wortley keenly and promptly answered,—"*Madam, how can people know where wine is to be sold, unless where they see the sign?*"

Another of the curiosities of this court menagerie, was Katherine, Duchess of Buckingham. She was a daughter of James the Second by Katherine Sedley, daughter of the wit, Sir Charles. James,

[Pg 442]

who with all his zeal for popery was a scandalous profligate, and as shameless in his contempt of decent opinion as he was criminal in his contempt for his coronation oath; gave this illegitimate offspring the rank of a Duke's daughter, and the permission to bear the royal arms! She found a husband in the Earl of Anglesea, from whom she was soon separated; the earl died, and she took another husband, John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, certainly not too youthful a bridegroom. The duke, always a wit, had been in early life one of the most dissipated men of his day, and through all the varieties and *vexations* of a life devoted to pleasure, had reached his 59th year. Yet, this handsome wreck, almost the last relic of the court of Charles the Second, lived a dozen years longer, and left the duchess guardian of his son.

His lordly dowager afforded the world of high life perpetual amusement. Her whole life was an unintentional caricature of royalty. Beggarly beyond conception in her private affairs, she was as pompous in public as if she had the blood of all the thrones of Europe in her veins. She evidently regarded the Brunswicks as usurpers, and hated them; while she affected a sort of superstitious homage for the exiled dynasty, and gave them—every thing but her money. She once made a sort of pilgrimage to visit the body of James, and pretended to shed tears over it. The monk who showed it, adroitly observed to her, that the velvet pall which covered the coffin was in rags, but her sympathies did not reach quite so far, and she would not take the hint, and saved her purse.

At the opera, she appeared in a sort of royal robe of scarlet and ermine, and everywhere made herself so supremely ridiculous, that the laughers called her Princess Buckingham. Even the deepest domestic calamity could not tame down this outrageous pride. When her only son died of consumption, she sent messengers to all her circle, telling them, that if they wished to see him lie in state, "she would admit them by the back stairs." On this melancholy occasion, her only feeling seemed to be, her vanity. She sent to the Duchess of Marlborough to borrow the triumphal car which had conveyed the remains of the great duke to the grave. This preposterous request was naturally refused by the duchess, who replied, "that the car which had borne the Duke of Marlborough's dead body should never be profaned by another."

On her own deathbed, she declared her wish to be buried beside her father James the Second. "George Selwyn shrewdly said, that to be buried by her father, she need not be carried out of England," (she was supposed to be actually the daughter of Colonel Graham.) When she found herself dying, she carried on the melancholy farce to the last. She sent for Anstis, the herald, and arranged the whole funeral ceremony with him. She was particularly anxious to see the preparations before she died. "Why," she asked, "won't they send the canopy for me to see? Let them send it, even though the tassels are not finished." And finally, she exacted from her ladies a promise, that if she became insensible, they should not sit down in the presence of her body, till she was completely dead!

Such things told in a romance, would be criticised for their extravagance, but nothing is too extravagant for human nature. Reared in folly, pampered with self-indulgence, and bloated with vanity, the wholesome discipline of adversity would have been of infinite value to this woman and her tribe. Six months in Bridewell, varied by beating hemp, would have been the most fortunate lesson which she could have received from society.

Another of those persons, yet more remarkable for her position in life, was the second daughter of George II., the Princess Amelia. She was supposed to have been attached to the Duke of Grafton; but remaining single, and having nothing on the earth to do, she became a torment to the King, the Court, and every body. Idleness is the vice of high life, and discontent its punishment. The Princess became proverbial for peevishness, sarcasm, and scandal. Of course, fashion took its revenge; and where every one was shooting an arrow, some struck, and struck deep. The Princess grew masculine in her manners, and coarse in her mind. Her appointment as ranger in Richmond Park, one of those sinecure offices which are scattered among the dependants of the throne, made her enemies. Little acts of authority, such as stopping up pathways, brought the tongues of the neighbouring population and gentry upon her, until her royal highness had the vexation of seeing an action brought against her. After some of the usual delays of justice, she had the mortification of being beaten, and ultimately resigned the rangership. From this period she almost disappeared from the public eye, yet she survived till 1786, dying at the age of 71.

Mrs Clayton still held her quiet ascendancy, and her position was so perfectly understood, that her interest seems to have been an object of solicitation with nearly every person involved in public difficulties. Of this kind was her intercourse with the three sons of Bishop Burnet, all individuals of intelligence and accomplishment, but all in early life struggling with fortune. The character of the bishop himself is best known from his works: gossiping, giddiness, and imprudence in taking every thing for granted that he had heard, but honesty in telling it, belonged to the bishop as much as to his books. The chances of the Revolution placed him in the way of preferment; chances, however, which, if they had turned the other way, might have cost him his head. But he was on the right side in politics, and not on the wrong side in religion; and he won and wore the mitre in better style than any man of his age. His oldest son, William, was educated as a barrister; he lost his fortune in the South Sea bubble, and was sent to America as governor of New York. Subsequently he was removed to Boston, with which he was discontented, and after long altercations with the General Assembly of the province, he died of a fever, probably inflamed by vexation. Gilbert, the second son, was appointed chaplain to George I., was a man of clear understanding, and exhibited his knowledge of courts by siding with Hoadley. With all the distinctions of his profession opening before him, he died young. Thomas, the third son, differed from both his brothers, in the superiority of his talents, and the wildness of his



temper. The manners of the time were a mixture of vulgar riot and gross indulgence. The streets were infested with ruffianism, and a society among the young men of rank and education, which took to itself the name of "The Mohocks," and whose barbarous habits were worthy of the name, insulted alike public justice and endangered personal safety. Thomas Burnet was said to have been engaged in some of their violences, though he, perhaps, was not one of the "affiliated." It may be naturally supposed, that those excesses grieved so distinguished a man as his father; and it is equally to be supposed that they led to frequent remonstrance. If so, they operated effectively at last.

One day the bishop, observing the peculiar gravity of his son's countenance, asked, "On what he was thinking."

"On a greater work than your 'History of the Reformation.'—*My own*," was the answer.

"I shall be heartily glad to see it," said the father, "though I almost despair of it."

It was undertaken, however, and vigorously pursued. The young *roué* became a leading lawyer, and finally attained the rank of Chief-justice of the Common Pleas. He died in 1753.

There is, perhaps, in public history, no more curious instance of the power which circumstances may place in the hands of a private individual, than the deference paid to Mrs Clayton. Her whole merit seems to have been caution, a perpetual sense of the delicacy of her position, and an undeviating deference to the habits, opinions, and purposes of the Queen. Those were useful qualities, but not remarkable for dignity, and rather opposed to personal amiability of mind. Yet this cautious, considerate, and frigid personage, was all but worshipped by the world of fashion, of talents, and of celebrity.

Among those worshippers was the man who did the most evil, and gained the most renown, of any man of his generation. The wit, who eclipsed all the witty pungency of France in his sportive sarcasm; all the libellers of royalty in his scorn of thrones; and all the grave infidelity of England, in his restless and envenomed antipathy to all religion—the memorable Voltaire.

[Pg 444]

He was then only beginning his mischievous career, but he had already made its character sufficiently marked to earn an imprisonment in the Bastille, and, on his liberation, an order to quit Paris.

In England he occupied himself chiefly with literature; published his "Henriade," for which he obtained a large subscription; wrote his tragedy of "Brutus," his "Philosophical Letters," and other works.

At length he was permitted to return to that spot out of which a French wit may be scarcely said to live; and kept up his intercourse with Mrs Clayton by the following letter:

*"Paris, April 18, 1729.*

"Madame,—Though I am out of London, the favours which your ladyship has honoured me with, are not, nor ever will be, out of my memory. I will remember, as long as I live, that the most respectable lady, who waits, and is a friend to the most truly great queen in the world, has vouchsafed to protect me, and receive me with kindness while I was at London.

"I am just now arrived at Paris, and pay my respects to your Court, before I see our own. I wish, for the honour of Versailles, and for the improvement of virtue and letters, we could have here some ladies like you. You see, my wishes are unbounded. So is the respect and gratitude I am with, Madame, your most humble, obedient servant,

"VOLTAIRE."

We pass over a thousand triflings in the subsequent pages—the alarms of court ladies for the loss of a royal smile, the sickness of a favourite monkey, or the formidable "impossibility" of matching a set of old china. Such are the calamities of having nothing to do. We see in those pages instances of high-born men contented to linger round the court for life, performing some petty office which, however, required constant attendance on the court circle, and submitting, with many a groan, it must be confessed, to the miserable routine of trivial duties and meagre ceremonial, much fitter for their own footmen; while they left their own magnificent mansions to solitude, their noble estates unvisited, their tenantry uncheered, unprotected, and unencouraged by their residence in their proper sphere, and finally degenerated into feeble gossips, splenetic intriguers, and ridiculous encumbrances of the court itself.

Difficulty seems essential to the vigour of man. Difficulty seems essential even to the vigour of nations. The old theory, that luxury is the ruin of a state, was obviously untrue; for in no condition of the earth could luxury ever go down to the multitude. But the true evil of states is, the decay of the national activity, the chill of the national ardour, the adoption of a trifling, indolent, vegetative style of being. Into this life France had sunk, from the time of Louis XIV. Into this life Germany had sunk, from the peace of Westphalia. Into this life England was rapidly sinking, from the reign of Anne.

But the visitation came at last, at once to punish and to stimulate. France, Germany, and England were plunged into war together; and fearful as the plunge was, out of that raging torrent the three nations have struggled to shore, refreshed and invigorated by the struggle. England seems now to be entering on another career, more perilous than the exigencies of war—a moral and intellectual conflict, in which popular passions and rational principles will be ranged on opposite sides; and the question may involve the final shape which government shall assume in the British

empire, or, perhaps, in the European world.

The characteristics of our time are wholly unshared with the past. In calling up the recollections of the great ages of English change, we can discover but slight evidence of their connexion with our own. To the stately, but religious, aspect of the Republic of 1641, we find no resemblance in the general features of our religious tolerance. To the ardent zeal for liberty which marked the Revolution of 1688, we can find no counterpart in the constitutional quietude of the present day. The fiery ferocity of Continental Revolution has certainly furnished no model to the professors of national regeneration, since the reform of 1830. And yet, a determination, a power and a progress of public change, is now the acknowledged principle of the most active, indefatigable, and unscrupulous portion of the mind of England.

[Pg 445]

And among the most remarkable and most menacing adjuncts of the crisis, is the singular sense of inadequacy to resist its career, which seems to paralyse the habitual defenders of the right cause. The consecrated guardians of the church seem only to wait the final blow. The great landholders in the peerage are contented with making protests. The agricultural interest, the boast of England, and the vital interest of the empire, has abandoned a resistance, too feeble to deserve the praise of fortitude, and too irregular to deserve the fruits of victory. The moneyed interest sees its gigantic opulence threatened by a hundred-handed grasp; but makes no defence, or makes that most dangerous of all defences, which calls in the invader as the auxiliary, bribes him with a portion of the spoils, and only provokes his appetite for the possession of the whole.

This condition of things cannot last. A few years, perhaps a few months, will ripen the bitter fruit, which the meekness of undecided governments has suffered to grow before their eyes. The Ballot, which offers a subterfuge for every fraud; Extended Suffrage, which offers a force for every aggression; the overthrow of all religious endowments, which offers a bribe to every desire of avarice—above all that turning of religion into a political tool, that indifference to the true, and that welcoming of the false, in whatever shape it may approach, however fierce and foul; however coldly contemptuous, or furiously fanatical, however grim or grotesque, whose first act must be to trample all principle under foot, and place on its altar the worship of the passions;—those are the demands which are already made, and those will be the trophies which the hands of political zealotry and personal rapine, in the first hour of their triumph, will raise on the grave where lies buried the Constitution.

Yet nothing is done by the natural defenders of the rights of Englishmen. No leader comes forward; no new followers are to be found; no banner is raised as the rallying point for the fugitives, already broken. We see the approach of the evil, as the men of the old world might have seen the approach of the Deluge; awaiting with folded hands, and feet rooted to the ground, the surges which nothing could resist; looking with an indolent despair at the mighty inundation, before which the plain and the mountain alike began to disappear; and sullenly submitting to an extinction, of which they had been long offered the means of escape, and perishing, with the pledge of security floating before their eyes.

We are by no means desirous of being prophets of public misfortune; but, with the tenets publicly avowed, in the elections which have just closed, with the strong popularity attached to the most daring opinions, with thirty pledged *Repealers* from Ireland, with the wildest doctrines of trade advocated by the popular representatives in England, with sixty subjects of the Pope sitting in a Protestant legislature, and with the evident determination to bring into that legislature individuals (and who shall limit their numbers, when its doors are once thrown open to their wealth?) who pronounce Christianity itself to be an imposture,—we can conjecture no consequences, however hazardous, which ought not to present themselves to the soberest friend of his country. That the worst consequences may not be inevitable, is only to hope in a higher protection; that even out of the evil good may come, is not unconformable to the ways of Providence; but that times are at hand in which the noblest energy of English statesmanship will be required to meet the conflict, we have no more doubt, than that the pilot who, in a storm, uses neither compass nor sail, must run his ship on shore; or that the man who walks about in clothes dipped in pestilence, will leave his corpse as a testimony to the fact of the contagion.

[Pg 446]

FOOTNOTES:

[18] *Memoirs of Viscountess Sunden*. By Mrs THOMPSON. 2 Vols. Colburn.

---

## ART IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN AGES.[19]

From time immemorial the German universities have been regarded as the seats of patient, persevering, indefatigable, but also unprofitable, erudition. They have been the homes of men whose lives were one long day of toil—a continual course of labour, the sole reward of which was a secret consciousness of worth, and a fame, circumscribed it is true, yet still spreading wide amongst the elect of science in all civilised countries. Lost, not in the day-dreams of romance, but in the depths and amongst the mazes of science, it was but seldom that these men of the study and the library found leisure and nerve to escape from seclusion, and to take their share of the duties of active life in which their less reflective brethren were feverishly engaged. And when they attempted the competition, their failure was signal. They presented an extraordinary exhibition of awkward genius and blundering sagacity, and exposed themselves at once to the

painful ridicule of those whose calling and pursuits taught them to prize mere worldly wisdom above all human lore.

Their country owes them a heavy debt of gratitude. Though little known, they ought never to be forgotten. They were unpopular, but they worked for the popularity of science. The results of their labours are not to be looked for in their own creations, but must rather be traced in the productions of their children's children. Generations to come will acknowledge them for their lawful progenitors, nor will future ages lose by confessing the obligations which they owe to so noble an ancestry. If our task to-day is comparatively easy, it is because the men of whom we speak never shrank from the difficulties attending theirs. We may smile at the childish simplicity of Neander, but we deeply venerate the profound erudition and the subtle discernment of that extraordinary critic's mind. We may feel shocked at the clownish sallies of a Blumenbach, the stinginess of Gesenius, and the rude manners of Ernesti. But with the first, we connect vast realms in natural philosophy unconquered before him; to the second, the student of Hebrew refers with reverential affection and gratitude; whilst we know, that the burly demeanour of the last could never hide the treasures of a Latin style, which, for purity and power, competes with that of Tully, and like that may well be compared to a precious sword, pure in metal, and as lasting as it is flexible and cutting.

The greater number of those to whom we refer have long since passed from the silence of their study to that of the grave. They have died as they lived—poor and honoured. Of them all, there is scarcely one whose departure was generally lamented; not one whose death was generally known. For the bulk of mankind, they never existed. Their works, unpalatable to the many, had always been the delight and instruction of the few. Yet, let not their unpopularity be quoted against them. They knew the extent of their mission. It was to collect and hoard bullion for future coinage and circulation. They prepared the path along which a whole nation was hereafter to travel. They were modest but meritorious labourers, who built a massive and powerful foundation, that another age might be left at ease to erect the brilliant superstructure.

That other age is here. The proud fane for which they cleared the way, and saw as the prophet of old beheld the Land of Promise, is rising now before us. In the author of the "History of the Fine Arts in the Early Ages of Christianity," we greet a worthy follower of those great masters whose works have somewhat rashly been pronounced more curious than useful. Professor Gottfried Kinkel is a true disciple and no imitator. He understands the period which has produced him. He knows its wants. General diffusion of knowledge is its distinguishing feature. Science leaves the closet to communicate her benefits to the forum. Neither the centralisation of wealth, nor that of knowledge, can now secure a nation against poverty and ignorance. People may starve, though the royal coffers are bursting with their weight of gold; they may be ignorant, though their chiefs luxuriate in the possession of unbounded knowledge. Rapid circulation of the currency has been found to constitute national wealth. A general diffusion of knowledge is the necessary condition of civilisation. Poesy is no longer content to dwell at court. Chemistry has chosen the path which Bacon pointed out to her; and whilst she has found a new field of action, has been enriched by treasures of knowledge hitherto concealed from her view. The sneering exclamation of Persius—

"Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter."

is the great truth and motto of this our century.

Even the universities of Germany have begun to popularise the results of their laborious researches; although it cannot be said that they have taken the lead of the age, we may at least affirm that they have gone along with it. They have not lingered in the rear. They have adapted their instruction and language to homely understandings, and have increased rather than lessened their dignity by the condescension. They have become more honoured and respected as the benefits of their labours have grown more palpable to common sight; they have been more renowned since the many have been permitted to appreciate the merits of the few. Instruction itself has been more courted and made more welcome since it took courage to cast aside its cumbrous wig and gown, and ventured to appear before the world with the natural graces of pure humanity.

Professor Kinkel, to whom we owe the work whose title is placed at the foot of the present article, is in every respect a specimen, and perhaps a prototype, of the German professor of the nineteenth century. To the deep and solid learning of a former generation, he adds the good taste and social accomplishments indispensable in these more advanced times. Thirteen years ago he was a student of theology in the university of Bonn, and even at that period the extraordinary application and the commanding faculties of the "studiosus Kinkel" had earned for him a scholastic reputation, and won the respect of his fellow-students and of the professors of the university. Indefatigable, then, in his theological pursuits, he was the subject of general admiration on account of the vast extent of his acquirements, and of the enthusiastic interest with which he engaged in the sacred study of the fine arts. No less general was the complaint that a mind so happily formed to range through the boundless realms of philosophy, a genius so brilliant, a soul so deeply imbued with a love of the beautiful and the great, should be suffered to pine beneath the monotonous duties of a theological professorship, and dissipate unparalleled energies in splitting the straws of a controversy, or deciding the dusty quibbles of an antiquated lore. At the close of his academical career, GOTTFRIED KINKEL was admitted into the university as a licentiate in theology; but shortly after his promotion, he quitted his native country, and was for some years a wanderer amongst the splendid ruins of Italy. The treasures of art which mock the nakedness of this ill-starred country were to him what they are ever to the mind of the artist,—

they revealed a new world. Unlike many others, however, Kinkel was not bewildered by the beauty which so suddenly burst upon his view. He was not surfeited. His enthusiasm, tempered by the metallic reasoning of the Hegel school, was closely allied with the subtlest criticism. His admiration was never an obstacle to comparison. Whilst he admired he remembered: individual faults or excellencies, he found to be reducible to common causes. His conclusions he drew from the objects: he did not force the one upon the other.

In like manner, and intent upon the same purpose, the theological licentiate travelled through France, Belgium, and Holland; and when he returned to Bonn, his spirit as well as his habits of life were more than ever wedded to the critical contemplation of the results of the creative faculty in the mind of man. The annual exhibitions of paintings in Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Frankfort, found in him an indulgent and impartial critic. His researches on the monuments of ancient sacred architecture were at intervals published in *The Domban Blatt*, and immediately secured the attention and regard of all antiquarians.

[Pg 448]

The cherished pursuits, however, were ill calculated to reconcile Kinkel to his adopted profession. In 1845, the licentiate in theology doffed his gown, and was forthwith appointed a professor of philosophy in the university of Bonn. It is to his lectures in this capacity that we owe the treatise on Art in the Early Christian Ages. This remarkable book was written with the purpose of instructing the public mind, and of enabling the many to participate in the intellectual enjoyment as yet confined to a favoured few. Its objects were to vindicate the merits of Christianity as a fosterer of the arts, and to encourage, all lovers of art by opening new fields for exploration.

The productions of real art are the most universally instructive of all creations. Nothing acts so powerfully on individual and national character; nothing so beneficially. Wherever art has been without these consequences, we may be sure that art was false. Its prophets were false prophets. The assumption of charlatans, however, is no condemnation of the art itself. The abuses of idolaters is no argument against religion. M. Kinkel's introduction to the plan of his work has but one fault. It is a national one. His mode of reasoning is conclusive; but the English reader, less accustomed to metaphysical phraseology than his German neighbours, will find some difficulty in grasping it. According to our author, two conditions are necessary to true art, which he defines to be "the incorporation of the spirit in a beautiful form." *Beauty*, then, and *spirit* are, the two conditions of true art. If one be wanting, true art is likewise wanting. The spirit, separate from beauty of form, may be religion and ethics—it can never be art. Beauty of form without the spirit, is likewise not a work of art. It remains on a level with matter; but the production of the artist soars higher. Hence true art is capable of yielding more universal satisfaction both to the artist and to the spectator than all other intellectual creations. The reason is obvious. We express and meet with the two grand constituents of our being; and, whilst other branches of knowledge are apter to separate than to unite—whilst science is exclusive, and even religion herself is sometimes productive of discord, true art asserts her right to be regarded as the great Pantheon of mankind. No idea is *universal* property unless expressed by art. Even the vast abyss which separates the lower orders of men from the ranks above them is overcome by art, for all are sensible of the joys which art produces. To know, therefore, what and how the mind and hand of man have hitherto worked, is a necessary, if it be not an indispensable, investigation and pursuit. "We are not ambitious," says M. Kinkel, "to conquer fame by profound hypotheses concerning things which, both by time and place, are indeed far from us. It is not our object to look for art in its infancy amongst nations which have long ceased to exist, nor shall we at once turn to Greece and Rome. Our desire is to contemplate those creations, which from their time and spirit are kindred to our feelings, and to speak of that branch of art with which Christianity has been busy within the last eighteen hundred years."

The author proceeds to point out the two grand directions in which all original art branches off. It serves either religion or history. The first productions of art were idols and monuments. Palaces, theatres, paintings, are the work of progressive civilisation. Christian art has one principal feature in common with pagan art,—its origin. They are alike the offspring of religion. They are also similar in their progress; they acquired an inclination towards history, and both have at last taken a decided *realistic* direction. But the vast difference between Christian and antique art is no less palpable. The art of antiquity was far more deeply imbued with the principle of nationality than the former. Nations were isolated; each had its proper gods and its peculiar history. The diversity of religion and of political institutions engendered a difference of feeling. This civilised world of ours, on the other hand, has a community of feeling, in as much as it has one religion common to all. The Celtic, Slavonian, and German nations exhibit far greater diversities of origin and climate than the inhabitants of Persia and India in ancient times; yet the artistic productions of the former are more alike. Their religion furnishes one point at which all meet, and in respect of which they are inseparable. The prevalence of the ecclesiastical element in modern art, is, however, liable to one great objection. For many years it served to exclude historical art, which even in our own time has not attained so high a perfection. It is true that Christianity makes amends in some degree for the want of this historical development. A total absence of historical facts is the great characteristic of the religions of antiquity. The Son of David, on the contrary, is in himself the greatest of historical facts. The Apostles are no mythical personages. The great men of Judaic history, the family of our Saviour, and the people with whom he conversed, all form one large group of historical personages, and religion and history, formerly separated, are *here* united. Christ on the cross is an object of touching adoration, but he is also the monument of the greatest event in the history of the world. But that this is no national history is undeniable. Offspring of a foreign soil, it had no connexion with the state.

[Pg 449]

The exclusively ecclesiastical character of early Christian art, is another grand feature which at once destroys all analogy between this art and the creations of pagan antiquity. In Hellenic paganism, we behold the triumph of humanity. The human form in its most ideal beauty is the type of all things divine. Christianity starts at once with the peremptory condition of a renunciation of individual beauty and strength. Christianity counted sensual beauty as nothing: she regarded the mind alone. She permits the human form only as the incorporation of some hidden thought divine. In the one instance, the *form* was all in all; in the other, it is the *expression*. The heathen delighted in naked bodies, for every single part might convey the sensation of beauty. The face sufficed for Christian art, as solely expressive of divine beauty. And since the adopted Jewish custom excludes nudity in life, it must needs die in art. In the new order of things, sculpture is lost, and painting is better adapted to the narrow limits of early Christian art.

Upon the question whether this fear of the world, as exhibited in the rejection of the world's material forms, be truly the character of real Christianity, Professor Kinkel answers with a decided negative. He rather favours the opinion of those who hold the fear and hate of the world which distinguished the early Christian ages, to have been founded on an erroneous comprehension of the doctrine and example of the great Founder, who, as far as we are able to learn, facilitated the creation of real art. The misconception, so fatal to the civilising influence of art, M. Kinkel, explains by reminding us of the fears of idolatry, so justly entertained by Christianity in its first existence, of the oppression and persecution which the early church experienced, and of the natural desire entertained by the oppressed, to be as little like the oppressors as possible.

The extreme opinions, however, could not last. They began with the fury of persecution, and they died with it. An earnest admiration of the beautiful is implanted deeply in the soul of man for noble purposes, which Providence will not suffer to be thwarted. Mistaken notions of duty, religious zeal maddened by oppression, for a time clouded the faculty amongst the early Christians, but it soon burst forth again. Faint at first in its appearance, it gained strength with every passing lustre; and however sweeping the condemnation pronounced by early believers against vain signs and images expressive of the objects of this fleeting world, the voices of the cursers gradually hushed, and the mind of man, asserting its prerogative, was active again with new and regenerated power. The history of civilisation must needs count by centuries, and it took ages to effect the transition. From our present lofty and unprejudiced height, from that height at which modern art strives to emulate that of antiquity, it may not be wholly uninteresting to look back towards the first trembling attempts of the early Christian people.

[Pg 450]

It would appear that the first attempts of the early Christians were of a symbolical and allegorical kind. The same figures, with little or no variation, were constantly repeated to express ideas which, whilst they led the thoughts of the believer into the channel which to him appeared most satisfactory, were mere forms, and void of meaning to pagan eyes. Chief amongst these was the Cross, but without the body of Christ affixed to it. The crucifix is an invention of the seventh century. In the beginning, the Cross did not expose the Christians to suspicion, for it was known to many religions of antiquity. The nations of Egypt adored the cross as a sign of their salvation, since they placed it in the hands of one of their idols as a key to the annual flux of the Nile. The Persian worshippers of Mithras considered the cross a sacred symbol. When pagan persecution finally discovered the exclusive and peculiar signification of the sign amongst the Christians, the latter ingeniously contrived forms of the cross translatable by the eyes of the elect alone. To these, the image of a flying bird was a cross; the human figure in a swimming attitude was the same thing, and so also the cross-trees of a sailing ship; the letters A and Ω are seen frequently engraved at the extremities of these disguised emblems in remembrance of Revelation, i. 8. Doves, ships, lyres, anchors, fishes and fishermen, are recommended by Clemens Alexandrinus, as the most fitting objects for Christians to contemplate, and for representation on seals. Amongst other symbols we find the seven-branched chandelier, though originally a Jewish sign, employed as a type of our Saviour, who calls himself (John, viii. 12.) the "light of the world." A wreath of flowers was expressive of the crown of life. A pair of scales, in remembrance of the last judgment, and a house, have been occasionally discovered on ancient grave-stones; and once, a simple *curriculum* has been traced with the pole thrown backwards and a whip leaning against it,—an unmistakable allusion to a departure for that place where "the weary are at rest." Amongst plants, the olive, the vine, and the palm were favourite symbols, the latter being generally reserved for the grave-stones of martyrs. Birds, too, are frequently met with on the walls of houses: the phoenix and the peacock being emblems of immortality. The fable of the phoenix is minutely told by Clemens Romanus; but the common superstition which ascribes imputrescibility to the flesh of the latter, easily rendered this bird a symbol of the resurrection of the body. Saint Augustine is said to have subjected this peculiar quality of the peacock's flesh to a practical test. He ordered one to be roasted, and at the close of a twelvemonth requested it to be served up. Tradition does not inform us whether he ate it, and with what appetite.

The dove occurs more frequently than any other bird. Two doves bearing olive branches, are seen on Christian grave-stones in the Cologne museum, and on the *porta nigra* at Treves. The meaning of the sign of a fish will not readily occur: but the frequency of its appearance establishes its character as a secret mark of recognition. It was used to signify both Christ and his church. Of quadrupeds we find the stag,<sup>[20]</sup> the ox,<sup>[21]</sup> the lion,<sup>[22]</sup> and the lamb,<sup>[23]</sup> constantly in connexion with the cross. The lion and the lamb are typical of Christ. The transition to his representation in human form is rendered by two figures, which, whilst human, are still symbolical. In the catacombs of Saint Calintus, in the Via Appia at Rome, Christ is discovered in the character of

Orpheus, whilst at other places he is represented as a shepherd.

Two paintings were found in Herculaneum, and may at present be seen in the Museo Borbonico at Naples, which are of undoubted Christian origin, and present a curious specimen of Christian art in the first century. Each of these two paintings is divided into an upper field, and into a lower smaller one. The smaller field of one of them is destined to expose the folly and corruption of paganism, and Egyptian mythology is selected for the purpose. We behold temples. In front of one of them stands a statue of Isis; another is devoted to Anubis the dog-god: two figures of crocodiles lie stretched across the entrance. On the left, we see a live crocodile waiting for its prey amongst the bulrushes: an ass is in the act of walking into the open mouth of the monster, in spite of the efforts of the driver, who vainly endeavours to pull the animal back by its tail. This might be intended to satirize some Roman pagan, were it not for the counterpart. To the right, and immediately opposite the idolatries on the field already spoken of, we see a well into which a rope is being lowered, whilst a naked man, standing by, is seeking to cover himself. An allusion is here made to fishing and baptism. On the left, the crocodile of the former picture is again met with, but a warrior with lance and shield advances with the view of slaying it. In the middle of the painting a net is spread between two trees, and behind it, and in direct opposition to the Isis on the pagan picture, we behold a tall and erect cross. The upper fields harmonise with the lower. The Christian painting displays a vigorous and stately tree between two younger palm-trees; the pagan picture has the same symbols; but the middle tree is in the sere and yellow leaf, whilst a Dryad issuing from the roots flourishes an axe to cut it down. The allusion is not to be mistaken. The sun of paganism has set: the axe is already at the root.

[Pg 451]

The greater number of the symbols named, however rich they may be in thought, are sadly deficient in form, and we can discover but little progress in this respect from the origin of Christianity to the time of Constantine. Architecture, and especially ecclesiastical architecture, may be said to be the only branch of the fine arts which was successfully cultivated, and architecture itself was insignificant for three centuries subsequently to the birth of Christ. Painting and sculpture could elude cruelty and take refuge beneath the cloak of symbols: but churches could not be masked. It was difficult to hide them. In the earliest periods of Christianity, too, their absence was not seriously felt; people prayed where they thought proper. Scripture tells us that the apostles taught in the temple of Jerusalem. Christianity, a sect of Judaism in its origin, dwelt for a long time in the synagogues. Wherever St Paul came, he preached first in the Jewish schools. In times of persecution, the believers sought refuge in the catacombs. They assembled in the solitude of forests to pray and to exhort one another. When the Jews opposed themselves to the new creed, congregations met in the houses of the more wealthy. The apartment usually employed for divine purposes is supposed to have been the triclinium, or large dining-room of the richer classes amongst the Greeks and Romans. The want of churches was first experienced when frequent conversions swelled congregations beyond the limits of a large family; and this, as we have hinted, occurred in the course of the third century. The existence of a church expressly devoted to Christian worship in the reign of the Emperor Severus Alexander, has been proved beyond a doubt. It was a reign remarkable for its spirit of toleration. The Christians were suffered to hold offices in the state, in the army, and even at court. Churches rose rapidly under the mild light of toleration. Even in the western provinces of the empire, in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, we meet with churches erected at the commencement of the fourth century. In Nicomedia also, under the very eyes of Diocletian, a church was built that surpassed in splendour the very palace of the Emperor. The army of Diocletian destroyed the holy building in the last grand persecution. It was the last convulsive effort of paganism in its agony.

No particulars of these churches have come down to us. Of that in Nicomedia we know nothing, save that it was splendid. None had, we are inclined to suppose, any fixed style. The style of the original triclinium in which believers first congregated, was, in all likelihood, imitated. Even in private houses, these triclinia were magnificently adorned. The walls were ornamented with rows of lofty columns, and where the Egyptian style prevailed, two rows of columns were constructed, one above the other; an effect of this last arrangement was the formation of a two-storied passage between the walls and the columns. In the beginning of the tenth century, Pope Leo III. constructed a dining-room after this fashion. We may fairly conclude that nothing grand or extraordinary in architecture was attempted in a period of great trouble and poverty. The real glory of Christian architecture dates from the reign of Constantine. Christianity, legalised by him, might venture to display her rites and her art. Under the government of Constantine the church was enriched. He endowed it with the spoils of defeated and expiring paganism. In the third century, the church of Rome, when summoned to yield its treasures, produced its poor as the only treasures it possessed. In the fifth century, that same church appointed a clerical commission to watch over and inspect its possessions in foreign countries.

[Pg 452]

The change of circumstances was not without a great and lasting influence. Paganism threatened no more. It was conquered. No further danger was to be apprehended from the departed religion of a gloomier age. The clerical profession, warmed and nourished by the rays of imperial favour, was soon effectually distinguished from the crowd of laymen which surrounded it. The desire to render this separation systematic and all-pervading was too natural to slumber for any length of time, and the absence of an order of architecture peculiar to the ministers of the new religion came to be severely felt. Rank and wealth have ever delighted in drawing towards them the eyes of the world. The worldliness and splendour of the church have been long the subject of violent animadversion. But how could it be otherwise? From the moment that Christianity became a favoured creed, conversions were rapid and frequent; but not all the neophytes converted in form, had undergone a similar change of spirit. Millions flocked through the open gates of the

church. To teach all, before they entered, was an impossibility. If there was time to *awe*, that was something. If general conviction was out of the question, universal respect was easily attainable. The charms, the sensual enjoyments of the pagan altars, were once more offered to the heathen. The smoke of incense filled the church; the spoils of antiquity adorned its roofs and columns; the robes of the clergy were covered with gold; the rites of the church delighted in colours. But decoration and ornament alone were borrowed from paganism. The temples of the heathen could not be copied in form: they could not serve the purposes of Christian worship.

The destination of the temple was different from that of the church. The temple was the house of an idol: limited in extent, it received sufficient light through the open door. The rites of paganism were performed in the colonnade surrounding the temple, not in the temple itself, and the crowd of spectators stood beyond the limits of the sacred building. The sanctuary of Pandrosus at Athens, admits only of a few persons; and even the temple of Athenæ is not to be compared for size with our modern churches. The Christian religion is essentially didactic. It requires space for its hearers and disciples. But its sacraments were mysteries, and none but the elect were admitted to them. Thus, it was necessary to separate true believers from the bulk of the congregation. No buildings were so happily adapted to this double purpose as the houses of public justice and traffic, which, originally of Grecian origin, had arrived at a high state of perfection in the Roman empire. The most ancient of such houses—called Basilika—stood in Athens at the foot of the Pnyx. It was in such a building that Socrates appeared before his judges, and Christ was judged by Pilate. In the history of art, we trace the workings of omnipresent Nemesis. The sign of curse and infamy—the cross—has for centuries graced the banners of humanity. The Basilikon in which Christ was condemned, has lent its form to the churches in which his name is adored.

[Pg 453]

Whilst the groundwork of the Basilikon remained unchanged, Christian art added steeples and cupolas to increase the solemnity of the impression. The most perfect building of the kind is, without doubt, the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. For chastity and purity of style, it can never be surpassed. The numerous churches erected by ostentation and devotion in basilikon form are all inferior to that incomparable temple. Many, it is true, have been disfigured, robbed, and half-burned; but their faults are not accidental. The greater number were built at a time when Pagan art, their prototype, had sunk very low indeed. Moreover, since the days of Constantine, Pagan temples had fallen into disuse. They stood deserted, and were suffered to crumble away beneath the influences of neglect and time. Christian builders took all they wanted from the ruins; a fragment from this temple, a block from that. Ionian and Corinthian columns were placed in the same line. If a pillar was too long for its companion, it was shortened without reference to its diameters or form. Columns of different stones were jumbled together in a row. Thus, amongst a number of columns of purple granite in the church of Ara Celi at Rome we discover two Ionian columns of white marble. In Saint Peter's, granite and Parian and African marbles are grouped together without the smallest attempt at harmony or adaptation. San Giovanni in Porta Laterana boasts ten columns of five different kinds of stone.

A more interesting employment cannot be found than that of watching the slow and cautious progress of ancient painting and sculpture in connexion with Christianity. The slowness is indeed remarkable, when we reflect upon the high perfection which these arts had generally attained even during the reigns of the first emperors. Christianity dealt far differently with painting and sculpture, than with architecture. In the latter, the Pagan form was adopted and improved; but with respect to the former, she made a *tabula rasa*, and descended to the rudest efforts of daubing and carving. The shapes, both of men and animals, were awkward, cumbrous, and unnatural; every part was out of proportion, and the most solemn scenes acquired a ludicrous grotesqueness. But the strangest phenomenon is, that Pagan art itself, of its own accord, descended to as low a level. The productions of Paganism in the time of Constantine were altogether as barbarous as the clumsy attempts of the untutored hands of Christianity. The new religion had created a new world. The forms of the old might indeed survive for a time, but its spirit was gone. Paganism was a corpse. Altars might be crowned with garlands, sacrifice might be offered to the gods: but all in vain. A voice came forth from an island in the Ægean Sea; a voice of sorrow and complaint, but of truth also. It wailed the death of the great Pan. The mighty were indeed fallen, and so vast was the gulf between Paganism in the days of Titus, and Paganism in those of Constantine, that the creations of the former period could be no lesson to the idolaters of the latter. These clung to the worship of a departed age, but in spite of themselves. The new and mighty river of thought swept them onward, and carried them on to the very same parting point from which Christian art was struggling for perfection.

Christian art started with one grand error. It was warring for ever against itself. In portraying the world, it hated it. Of all its creations, there is not one which can be said to be really beautiful; the effusions of symbolical enthusiasm are without all plastic truth. Ideas were incorporated, but they did not prove men with flesh and blood. The paintings and carvings were hieroglyphics. The same figure expressed the same idea, and the idea once expressed, there was no desire to extend the circle of figures or to alter their wretched appearance. The same uncouth forms return with a killing monotony. Centuries do not change them. The uniformity of monastic life by no means tended to relax the inflexibility of invention. Religion, not art, was the sculptor's or the painter's object; his production was a creation of faith, not of beauty. Such is the character of almost all the carvings in wood and stone which have been found in the catacombs of Rome and Naples.

[Pg 454]

Christianity has the great merit of having discovered the poesy of the grave. From the outset it abhorred the Pagan custom of burning the dead, and faithful to its Jewish origin, and mindful

perhaps of Christ's burial, it renewed the old Roman custom of interring the departed. This was the origin of the catacombs. The early Christians loved to be deposited with, or near the Martyrs, and grounds for burial capable of receiving a large number of the dead were wholly wanting. The population of Rome, Naples, Alexandria, and Syracuse was so great, that there was scarcely room enough for the living. To find new receptacles for the dead became an urgent necessity. It is true, that digging into the bowels of the earth for the purpose of entombing the bodies of the dead was no new operation. Egypt and Etruria had in their time set the example. The one idea of immortality, led to similar results in different creeds. The early Christians found their cities of the dead already prepared for them. Paris, in our own time, stands upon a soil which is hollowed throughout. The limestone upon which Paris stands was taken from beneath to supply the wants of the builders. Rome, in like manner, has a second and subterraneous town of vast extent, with its streets and squares in endless number. Nor is it without its inhabitants. In this town did Christians seek refuge from Pagan persecution, and here did they likewise inter their dead. The caves and passages were not dug by Christian hands, but were discovered already made. They date from the last century of the republic, when the clay upon which Rome stands, was required by the mania then raging for extensive and magnificent structures. The Christians took possession of the hollows and enlarged them; the work was by no means difficult, for the clay was soft and plastic.

It was after the time of Constantine that the catacombs came into more general use. Martyrs were more revered subsequently to the reign of this Emperor than before it, for martyrdom became less easy of achievement. The chief martyrs had found a resting-place in the catacombs. Churches rose above their remains, from which secret and sacred doors led into the City of the Dead, the cemetery of the saints. It was at the period to which we refer that the regularly formed spacious catacombs were first fashioned—a fact established by the date of the coffins, all of which belong to a time later than that of the Emperor Constantine. The wealthier members of the community constructed small chapels in the catacombs for the reception of the bodies of their relations and friends. These chapels are for the most part situated at the crossing of passages or at the end of them, in which latter case the chapel forms the termination of one particular passage. They are most important as indices to the development of art. Besides the curious character and beauty of the architecture, they afford specimens of the most ancient grave paintings that we know of. Their walls and ceilings are covered with a thin crust of gypsum, upon which the colours were laid. Not unfrequently we find ornaments of stucco and marble. Altars and stone seats, too, are found in these chapels. An astonishing number of skeletons have been discovered in the passages by which the chapels are connected: it was not the custom, as now, to bury the dead beneath the floor and to cover the grave with a stone slab. The bodies were placed in niches of from three to six feet in length. Sometimes four and six together, one above the other. The corpse of a departed brother was thrust into one of these niches; a lamp and some tool, explanatory of the trade he had followed in life, were placed beside him, and then the aperture was walled up, and lastly covered with a thin marble slab, bearing an inscription and the particulars of the life and death of the departed.

Church service was frequently performed in the catacombs, yet not in the days of persecution. It was after Constantine that these tombs were used for such a purpose. On Sabbath days they were open to the public and were much visited. Devotion, love for departed relatives, and mere curiosity, carried vast numbers to these silent halls. Saint Jerome, tells us of his having often explored them with his comrades whilst he was still a student in Rome; and he lived some three hundred and fifty years after the death of Christ. The catacombs were but badly lighted at first, light being admitted by a few apertures only in the roofs of the chapels. At a later period, great care was taken to prevent visitors losing their way amidst the labyrinth of passages. The guardianship of the catacombs was confided to a certain body of the clergy, who went under the name of *fossores*, or grave-diggers. It was their office to inspect the chapels and passages, to point out the places where new passages might be formed, and to portion out and sell the spots in which burials might take place. The water in the wells of the catacombs was subsequently found to possess the virtue of healing to a marvellous degree. Nay, even the use of the drinking-cups found in the catacombs was sufficient to cure several diseases.

[Pg 455]

In later days, many of the catacombs were opened, and a vast number of curious and interesting objects brought to light. Not the least valuable amongst these objects were the paintings and carvings to which we have above adverted, and which throw some light upon the history of the portraiture of the great Founder of our religion. Still in the great bulk of the subjects represented the symbolical prevails; and since the earliest masters were for a long time forbidden, by a pious awe, from producing the figure of Christ, we find in the more ancient carvings a decided preference given to the Old Testament over the New. Noah's ark, Abraham sacrificing his son, Moses taking off his shoes upon receiving the tablets of the law, the destruction of Pharaoh, and the miracle of the water starting from the rock—in short, all the subjects of our modern illustrated Bibles are of frequent occurrence in these ancient houses of the dead, and one and all are intended to represent the mission and person of Christ. The suffering of Christ, in the delineation of which the masters of later times have so much delighted, formed no subject for the artist in the earliest selections from the history of the New Testament. The controversy in the temple, the entry into Jerusalem, and the most celebrated of the miracles, were subjects that better suited the ancient master's pencil. The infancy of Christ was an inexhaustible subject to a later age. The Nestorian controversy brought the religious pretensions of the Holy Virgin to an issue; and after the church in the fifth century had bestowed upon Mary the title of Mother of God, artists took pleasure in representing her either as lying-in, or as holding the babe in her arms. The Eastern Kings are not unfrequently found in the Virgin's company. M. Kinkel presumes



that the number of these wise men was first determined by the early masters, who in all probability conferred the royal dignity upon them. Holy Writ does not inform us that these personages were kings, and in the more ancient carvings, they wear ordinary Phrygian caps. At a later period, and no doubt inadvertently, these caps were changed into crowns. The four evangelists are constantly represented either as four rolls of papyrus, or as four fountains issuing from a hill beneath the feet of Christ. When seen in the guise of the four apocalyptic animals, they belong to a later period. The apostles also are found on ancient coffins, surrounding Christ, at whose left side Peter is placed, whilst Paul stands on his right. They all wear sandals tied with ribbon to their feet. Some paintings represent scenes of early Christian life, the sacred rites of the Church, and the love-feasts of the first Christians.

Wherever our Saviour is found he is represented by two types. In the earliest paintings of the catacombs he appears as a beardless youth: this type of the Saviour was produced under the influence of antique art. The second and later type bears those oriental features which have been transmitted by sacred painting even to our own time. The features of the second face so closely resemble those of the first that the early theologians do not hesitate to proclaim them exact copies of the original. "Christ was well proportioned," says John of Damascus in the eighth century; "his fingers were slender, his nose mighty, and the eyebrows joined above the same; his hair was very curly, his beard black, and the colour of his face like his mother's,—viz. yellowish, like unto wheat." Later western writers change the colour of the beard and hair from black to blond. Both hair and beard are parted in the middle. There are two pictures of Christ thus represented, one in the cemetery of S. Calintus, and another in that of S. Ponziano. The former is partly, the latter wholly dressed. In both, the features are strongly marked, and the eyes are very large; the right hand is placed on the breast, whilst the left holds a book.

[Pg 456]

Apocryphal pictures ascribed to Saint Luke have asserted a considerable influence upon the traditions concerning the portrait of Christ. The same has happened in the instance of the Virgin Mary, although her type is far from attaining the degree of stability which we find in the representations of her divine son. The fathers, however, are unanimous in their opinion that the face of Mary bore a strong resemblance to that of our Saviour. She is seldom found in the Catacombs, but frequently in the Mosaic work of churches dedicated to her worship, and on Byzantine coins from the tenth century forwards. The face is oval, similar to that of a youthful matron of ancient Rome, and carrying always the expression of a calm benignity. The head is covered with a veil and surrounded by a nimbus. Next to Mary and her Son, Peter and Paul, the chief apostles of the Pagan and Judaic world, are most frequently represented. They were both objects of devotion, even to those who still lingered without the pale of Christianity. The Mosaics display them more frequently than the Catacombs. Their type is not fixed; although Peter may at times be known by his curly hair and beard, whilst the bald forehead and the pointed fashion of the beard render Paul at once recognisable. The other apostles, as well as the personages of the Old Testament, have not grown into individuality, and lack the distinguishing features by which sacred and historical characters of antiquity become objects of real life, and are rendered familiar to the most distant ages.

The most ancient Mosaic works of the Christian era are to be found in the mausoleum of Constantine. The subject is strictly symbolic. It is the vine, with birds perched on the branches and angels collecting the grapes. One of the tendrils encompasses the head of Constantine. The forms of the angels show a near affinity to Pagan art. Another great Mosaic work, more ecclesiastical in thought and execution, was promoted by Pope Sixtus III. in 443. It consists of historical representations from the Old and New Testaments, and ornaments the space below the windows of the Maria Maggiore. The costumes, the helmets, and cuirasses resemble those of ancient Rome; but where priests and Levites appear, the oriental character is followed. The composition is poor, and the human figures are rude and awkward. That little regard is paid to perspective is not a matter of surprise. Antique art is guilty of the fault. It would be difficult for any Mosaic work to overcome the difficulties which present themselves in the active scenes of real life and history. The Mosaics in the triumphal arch of the Church of St Paul create a favourable impression, simply because they confine themselves to that narrow and more suitable sphere, in which alone the Mosaic art can look to be successful.

The study of the period of Christian art, treated of and exemplified in Professor Kinkel's book, though apparently unprofitable to the artist, is full of interest to the curious observer, and to one who has pleasure in beholding the development of the human mind under the most varied circumstances. We have read the volume of the learned and accomplished professor with infinite satisfaction, and we can safely recommend it to the perusal of the student and the man of letters. The history of art, in the early stages of Christianity, is the history of intellectual cultivation in the most extraordinary period of the world's history. The state of the world during the first centuries after the departure of Christ, was essentially exceptional. It had never been; it never will be again. Art and civilisation were weighed and were found wanting—a new idea visited the earth and conquered it—old arts drooped and died: civilisation degenerated at once into barbarism; whilst a new art and a new civilisation, with the light of Heaven upon them, were already preparing to claim the dominion over future centuries.

[Pg 457]

#### FOOTNOTES:

[19] *Geschichte der bildenden Künste bei den Christlichen Völkern.* Von GOTTFRIED KINKEL.

[20] Psalm xlii. 1.

[21] 1 Cor. ix. 9.

---

## THE PORTRAIT.

A TALE: ABRIDGED FROM THE RUSSIAN OF GÓGOL. BY THOMAS B. SHAW.

### CHAPTER I.

By none of the numerous objects of interest in the busy city of St Petersburg are the steps of the sauntering pedestrian more frequently arrested than by the picture-shop in the Stchúkin Dvor. [24] True it is that the specimens of art there displayed are distinguished rather by eccentricity of design, and rudeness of execution, than by striking evidences of genius. The paintings are for the most part in oil, coated with green varnish, and fitted into frames of dark yellow tinsel. A winter-piece with white trees, a ferociously red sunset, like the glow of a conflagration, a Flemish boor with a pipe and dislocated-looking arm—resembling a turkey-cock in ruffles, rather than a human being,—such are the ordinary subjects. Beside them hang a few engravings: portraits of Khosrev-Mirza in his sheepskin bonnet, and of truculent generals with cocked hats and crooked noses. Bundles of coarse prints, on large paper broadsides, are suspended on either side the door. Here we have the Princess Miliktris Kirbitiarna; [25] yonder the city of Jerusalem, its houses and churches smeared with vermilion, which gaudy colour has also invaded a part of the ground and a brace of Russian pilgrims in huge fur gloves. If these works of art find few purchasers, they at least attract a throng of starers; drunken ragamuffin lacqueys on their way from the cook's shop, bearing piles of plates with their masters' dinners, which grow cold whilst they gape at the pictures; great-coated Russian soldiers with penknives for sale; Okhta pedlar-women with boxes of shoes. Each spectator expresses his admiration in his own peculiar way: peasants point with their fingers; soldiers gaze with stolid gravity; dirty foot-boys and blackguard apprentices laugh and apply the caricatures to each other; old serving men in frieze cloaks stand listless and agape, indulging their propensity to utter idleness.

A number of persons answering to the above description were assembled before the picture-shop, when they were joined by a young man in a threadbare cloak and shabby garments. He was a painter, named Tchartkóff, as enthusiastic in his art as he was needy in his circumstances and careless of his dress. Pausing before the booth, he smiled as he glanced at the wretched pictures there displayed. The next moment the expression of mirthful contempt faded from his thin, ardent features, and he fell a-thinking. The question had occurred to him, amongst what class of people could those tawdry, worthless productions find purchasers? That Russian *mujíks* should gaze delightedly upon the *Yeruslán Lazarévitches*, on pictures of *Phomá* and *Yerema*, of the heroes of their tales and legends, was quite natural; the objects represented were adapted to popular taste and comprehension; but who would buy those tawdry oil-paintings, those Flemish boors, those crimson and azure landscapes, which, whilst pretending to a higher grade of art, served but to prove its deep degradation? Not one redeeming touch could be traced in the senseless caricatures, to whose authors' clumsy hands the mason's trowel would assuredly have been better adapted than the painter's pencil. It was the very dotage of incapacity. The colouring, the treatment, the coarse obtrusive mechanical touch, seemed those of a clumsily constructed automaton, rather than of a human painter. Thus musing, our artist stood for some time before the vile daubs that excited his disgust, gazing at them long after the train of his reflections had led him far from them; whilst the master of the shop, a little, gray, ill-shaven fellow in a frieze cloak, chattered and chaffered and bargained as indefatigably as if the young man had announced himself a purchaser.

[Pg 458]

"Well now," said he, "for these mujíks and the landscape, I'll take a white note. [26] There's painting! It hurts your eye, it's so bright; just received from the Exchange; varnish hardly dry. Take the winter-piece. Fifteen rubles! Frame worth the money. There's a winter, there's snow for you!"

Here the eager trader gave a slight fillip to the canvass, as if he expected the snow to fall off.

"Take the three. I'll send them home at once. Where does your honour live? Boy, a cord!"

"Not so fast, my friend," cried the artist, startled from his reverie, and perceiving the brisk dealer about to tie up the three daubs. His first impulse was to walk away, but he felt ashamed to purchase nothing after standing so long before the shop, and causing the hungry-looking old salesman so large an expenditure of breath. "Wait a little," he said. "I will see if you have any thing to suit me." And, stooping down, he turned over a number of battered dusty old pictures heaped like lumber upon the ground. They were chiefly old-fashioned family portraits, likenesses of unknown and insignificant faces, with torn canvass, and frames that had lost their gilding. Nevertheless Tchartkóff carefully examined them, thinking it possible he might pick up something good. He had more than once heard stories of pictures of the great masters being met with amongst the dust and trash of such shops as this. The dealer, perceiving he had probably nailed a customer, ceased his bustling importunity, resumed his station at the door, and recommenced his appeals to the passengers. He shouted, chattered, and pointed to his wares, but without success; then he had a long chat with an old-clothesman, whose establishment was

on the opposite side of the alley; and at last, recollecting that, all this time there was a customer in his shop, he turned his back upon the public and walked in.

"Have you chosen anything, sir?"

The artist stood immovable before a large portrait, whose frame had once been richly gilt, although it now scarcely retained a few tarnished vestiges of its former splendour. The subject was an old man, his face swarthy and bronzed, with furrowed brow and hollow temples, and sharp high cheekbones; a physiognomy on which the ravages of time, and climate, and suffering were plainly legible. The figure was draped in a flowing Asiatic costume. Defaced and injured and grimed with dirt though the portrait was, yet, when Tchartkóff had wiped the dust from the countenance, he perceived evident traces of the touch of a great artist. The picture seemed to have been scarcely finished, but the force of treatment was immense. Its most extraordinary part was the eyes; in them the artist had concentrated all the power of his pencil. There was vitality in those dark and lustrous orbs, they looked out of the portrait, and in some measure destroyed its harmony by their strange and life-like expression. When Tchartkóff took the picture to the door, he fancied the pupils dilated. The peculiarity of the painting at once attracted the attention of the idlers without. Some uttered exclamations of surprise, others fell back a pace as if in terror. A pale, sickly-looking woman of the lower classes, who suddenly found herself face to face with this singular portrait, screamed with alarm. "It's looking at me!" she cried, and hurried away, casting nervous glances over her shoulder. Tchartkóff himself experienced—he could not tell why—a sort of disagreeable sensation, and he put the portrait on the ground.

"D'ye buy?" said the picture-dealer.

"How much?" replied the artist.

"At a word—three *tchetvertáks*."<sup>[27]</sup>

Tchartkóff shook his head. "Too much. I will give you a dougrívennoi," he added, moving towards the door. [Pg 459]

"A dougrívennoi for that picture! You are pleased to joke, sir. The frame is worth twice the money. Bid me something more, if it be only another grivennik. Come back, sir," he shouted, running after the painter, and detaining him by his cloak-skirt; "come back, sir. You are my first customer to-day, and I will take your offer, for luck's sake. But the picture is given away."

On finding his offer thus unexpectedly accepted, Tchartkóff heartily repented his temerity in making it. The dougrívennoi he paid the dealer was his last in the world, and he was encumbered with a lumbering old portrait for which he had no earthly use. Cursing his own imprudence, he took up his purchase, and trudged away with it. Its weight and size caused it to slip perpetually from under his arm, and rendered it a most troublesome burthen. At last, tired to death and bathed in perspiration, he reached the house, in the fifteenth line of the Vasilievskü Ostrow, in which he occupied a modest lodging, ascended the uncleanly staircase, and knocked impatiently at the door of his apartment. It was opened by a slatternly lad in a blue shirt—his cook, model, colour-grinder and floor-sweeper, who had to thank his godfathers for the harmonious name of Nikíta, and who united in his person the dirt incidental to three out of his four occupations. Tchartkóff entered his ante-room, which felt very chilly, as artists' ante-rooms usually are, and, without taking off his cloak, walked on into his studio a square apartment, tolerably spacious, but low in the ceiling, and with windows dimmed by the frost. This room was littered with all kinds of artistical rubbish: fragments of plaster of Paris, casts of hands, frames, stretched canvasses, sketches begun and thrown aside, and drapery cast carelessly over the chairs. Completely knocked up, Tchartkóff let his cloak fall, placed his new purchase against the wall, and threw himself on a narrow meagre little sofa, whose leathern cover, torn upon one side from the row of brass nails that had formerly confined it, afforded Nikíta a convenient receptacle for dish-cloths, old clothes, dirty linen, and any other miscellaneous matters he thought fit to cram under. The sun had set, and the night grew each moment darker. Our artist ordered Nikíta to bring a candle.

"There are no candles," was Nikíta's reply.

"How!—no candles?"

"There were none yesterday," said Nikíta.

Tchartkóff remembered that there *had* been none the night before, and that his credit with the tallow-chandler was not such as to render it probable a supply had been sent in that morning. So he held his tongue, allowed Nikíta to take off his coat, waistcoat, and cravat, and wrapped himself up as warmly as he could in a dressing gown with tattered elbows.

"I forgot to tell you," said Nikíta, "the landlord has been here."

"For money, I suppose," said the artist, shrugging his shoulders.

"He had somebody with him. A Kwartálnü, I think."<sup>[28]</sup> He said something about the rent not being paid."

"Well, what can they do?"

"Don't know," replied the imperturbable Nikíta. "He said you must leave the lodgings or pay. Will come again to-morrow."

"Let them come," said Tchartkóff gloomily. And he turned himself upon the comfortless sofa with a feeling akin to desperation.

Tchartkóff was a young artist of considerable promise, and whose pencil was at times remarked for its accuracy, and near approach to the truthfulness of nature. But he had faults which procured him frequent admonitions from the professor under whom he studied. "You have talent," he would say to him; "it will be a sin to ruin it by carelessness and by pursuing erroneous ideas and principles. You are too impatient; too apt to be fascinated by novelty, and to neglect rules hallowed by time and experience, laws immutable as those of the Medes. Beware, lest you become a mere fashionable painter. Your colours, I observe, are not unfrequently selected in defiance of good taste; your drawing is often feeble, sometimes positively incorrect; your outlines want clearness. You run after a flashy kind of *chiaro-scuro*, the lighting up of your picture is meant only to strike the eye at the first glance. And you have a passion for the introduction of finery; a taste for dandified costume. All this is dangerous, and may lead you into the fatal habit of painting mere fashionable pictures, pretty portraits and the like, which yield money, but can never give fame. Do that, and your talent is lost and thrown away. Be patient, wait, reflect, chasten your taste by study, and wean yourself from that hankering after prettiness and dandyism. Leave such tricks to those who care but for gold, and propose yourself a higher aim, the never-dying laurels of a Titian or an Angelo."

[Pg 460]

The professor meant well, and was right in the main. Tchartkóff was apt to indulge in the flashy and the superficial. But he had sufficient strength of mind to control this dangerous tendency, and a purer taste was gradually but perceptibly developing itself in him. As yet he could not quite appreciate all the depth of Raphael, but he was strongly fascinated by the broad and rapid touch of Guido; he would stand enchanted before Titian's portraits, and had a high appreciation of the Flemish school. Yet the darkened and sober tone characterising old pictures did not quite please or satisfy him; nor did he, in his innermost mind, altogether agree with the professor, when the latter expatiated to him on that mysterious power which places the old masters at such immeasurable distance above the moderns. In some respects he almost fancied them surpassed by the nineteenth century; that the imitation of nature had somehow become, in modern times, more vivid, and lively, and faithful: in a word, his mind was in that fluctuating unsettled state in which the minds of young people are apt to be when they have reached a particular point of proficiency in their art, and feel a proud internal conviction of talent. Often was he filled with rage when he saw some travelling French or German painter, by the mere effect of trick and habit, by readiness of pencil and flashy colouring, catching the multitude, and making a fortune. These impressions made their way into his mind, not in moments when he was buried, body and soul, in his work, and forgot food and drink and all outward things; but when, as was often the case, necessity stared him in the face, and he found himself without the means of buying brushes and colours, or even bread, whilst the greedy and implacable landlord came ten times a-day to dun him for his rent. Then his hunger-sharpened imagination would revert to the different lot of the rich and fashionable painter; then darted through his brain the thought that so often flits through the Russian head, the idea of sending his art and all to the devil, and going to the devil himself.

"Yes, wait! wait!" he exclaimed passionately; "but patience and waiting must have an end. Wait, indeed! and where am I to seek to-morrow's dinner? Borrowing is out of the question; and if I sell my pictures and drawings, they will give me, perhaps, a *dougrívennoi* for the whole lot. They are useful to me; not one of them but was undertaken with an object,—from each I have learned something. But what would be their value to any body else? They are studies,—exercises; and studies and exercises they will remain to the end of the chapter. And, besides, who would buy them? I am unknown as an artist, and who wants studies from the antique and sketches from the living model, or my unfinished Love and Psyche, or the perspective sketch of my room, or my portrait of Nikíta, though it is really better than the portraits painted by any of your fashionable fellows? And, after all, what do I gain by this? Why should I work myself to death, and keep plodding like a schoolboy over his A, B, C, when I might be as famous as any of them, and have as much money in my pockets?" As he pronounced these words, the artist involuntarily shuddered and turned pale. He saw, looking fixedly at him, peeping out from the shadow of a tall canvass that stood against the wall, a face seemingly torn by some convulsive agony. Two dreadful eyes glared upon the young man, with a strange inexplicable expression; the lips were curled with mingled scorn and suffering; the features were haggard and distorted. Startled, almost terrified, Tchartkóff was on the point of calling Nikíta, who by this time sent forth from his ante-room a Titanic snore, when he checked himself and burst into a laugh. The object of alarm was the portrait he had bought, and which he had completely forgotten. The bright moonbeams, streaming into the room, partially illuminated the picture, and gave it a strange air of reality. By the clear cold light Tchartkóff set to work to examine and clean his purchase. When the coat of dust and filth that incrustated it was removed, he hung the picture upon the wall, and, retiring to look at it, was more than ever astounded at its extraordinary character and power. The countenance seemed lighted up by the fierce and glittering eyes, which looked out of the picture so wonderfully, and assumed, as it seemed to him, such strange and varied and terrible expression, that he at last involuntarily turned away his own, unable to support the gaze of the old Asiatic. Then came into his mind a story he had once heard from his professor, of a certain portrait of the famous Leonardo da Vinci, at which the great master worked for many years, still counting it unfinished, and which, nevertheless, according to Vasari, was universally considered the most perfect and finished production of art. But the most exquisitely finished part of it were the eyes, which excited the wonder of all contemporaries; even the minute and almost invisible veins were exactly rendered and put upon the canvass. But here, on the other hand, in the

[Pg 461]

portrait before him, there was something strange and horrid. This was not art: the eyes absolutely destroyed the harmony of the portrait. They were living, they were human eyes! They seemed to have been cut out of a living man's face and stuck in the picture. Instead of admiration, the portrait inspired a painful feeling of oppression; the beholder was seized with a sort of waking nightmare, weighing upon and overwhelming him like a moral and mysterious incubus.

Shaking off this feeling, Tchartkóff again approached the portrait, and forced himself to gaze steadily upon its eyes. They were still fixed upon him. He changed his place; the eyes followed him. To whatever part of the room he removed, he met their deep malignant glance. They seemed animated with the unnatural sort of life one might expect to find in the eyes of a corpse, newly recalled to existence by the spell of some potent sorcerer. In spite of his better reason, which reproached him for his weakness, Tchartkóff felt an inexplicable impression, which made him unwilling to remain alone in the room. He retired softly from the portrait, turned his eyes in a different direction, and endeavoured to forget its presence; yet, in spite of all his efforts, his eye, as though of its own accord, kept glancing sideways at it. At last he became even fearful to walk about; his excited imagination made him fancy that as soon as he moved somebody was walking behind him,—at each step he glanced timidly over his shoulder. He was naturally no coward; but his nerves and imagination were painfully on the stretch, and he could not control his absurd and involuntary fears. He sat down in the corner; somebody, he thought, peeped stealthily over his shoulder into his face. Even the loud snoring of Nikíta, which resounded from the ante-room, could not dispel his uneasiness and chase away the unreal visions haunting him. At last he rose from his seat, timidly, without lifting his eyes, went behind the screen and lay down on his bed. Through the crevices in the screen he saw his room brightly illuminated by the moon, and he beheld the portrait hanging on the wall. The eyes were fixed upon him even more horribly and meaningfully than before, and seemed as if they would not look at any thing but him. Making a strong effort, he got out of bed, took a sheet and hung it over the portrait. This done, he again lay down, feeling more tranquil, and began to muse upon his melancholy lot,—upon the thorns and difficulties that beset the path of the friendless and aspiring artist. At intervals he involuntarily glanced through the crevices of the screen at the shrouded portrait. The bright moonlight increased the whiteness of the sheet, and he at last fancied that he saw the horrible eyes shining through the linen. He strained his sight to convince himself he was mistaken. The contrary effect was produced. The old man's face became more and more distinct;—there could no longer be any doubt: the sheet had disappeared,—the grim portrait was completely uncovered, and the infernal eyes stared straight at him, peering into his very soul. An icy chill came over his heart. He looked again;—the old man had moved, and stood with both hands leaning on the frame. In a few seconds he rose upon his arms, put forth both legs and leaped out of the frame, which was now seen empty through the crevice in the screen. A heavy footstep was heard in the room. The poor artist's heart beat hard and fast. Swallowing his breath for very fear, he awaited the sight of the old man, who evidently approached his bed. And in another moment there he was, peeping round the screen, with the same bronze-like countenance and fixed glittering eyes. Tchartkóff made a violent effort to cry out, but his voice was gone. He strove to stir his limbs,—they refused to obey him. With open mouth and arrested breath he gazed upon the apparition. It was that of a tall man in a wide Asiatic robe. The painter watched its movements. Presently it sat down almost at his very feet, and drew something from between the folds of its flowing dress. This was a bag. The old man untied it, and, seizing it by the two ends, shook it: with a dull heavy sound there fell on the floor a number of heavy packets, of a long cylindrical shape. Their envelope was of dark blue paper, and on each was inscribed, 1000 DUCATS. Extending his long lean hands from his wide sleeves, the old man began unrolling the packets. There was a gleam of gold. Great as Tchartkóff's terror was, he could not help staring covetously at the coin, and looked on with profound attention as it streamed rapidly through the spectre's bony hands, glittering and clinking with a dull thin metallic sound, and was then rolled up anew. Suddenly he remarked one packet which had rolled a little farther than the rest, and stopped at the leg of the bedstead, near the head. By a rapid and furtive motion he seized this packet, gazing the while at the old man to see whether he remarked it. But he was too busy. He collected the remaining packets, replaced them in the bag, and, without looking at the artist, retired behind the screen. Tchartkóff's heart beat vehemently when he heard his departing footsteps echoing through the room. Congratulating himself on impunity, he joyfully grasped the packet, and had almost ceased to tremble for its safety, when suddenly the footsteps again approached the screen; the old man had evidently discovered that one of his packets was wanting. Nearer he came, and nearer, until once more his grim visage was seen peeping round the screen. In an agony of terror the young man dropped the rouleau, made a desperate effort to stir his limbs, uttered a great cry—and awoke. A cold sweat streamed from every pore; his heart beat so violently that it seemed about to burst; his breast felt as tight as if the last breath were in the act of leaving it. Was it a dream? he said, pressing his head between both hands; the vividness of the apparition made him doubt it. Now, at any rate, he was unquestionably awake, yet he thought he saw the old man moving as he settled himself in his frame, his hand sinking by his side, and the border of his wide robe waving. His own hand retained the sensation of having, but a moment before, held a weighty substance. The moon still shone into the room, bringing out from its dark corners here a canvass, there a lay figure, there again the drapery thrown over a chair, or a plaster cast on its bracket on the wall. Tchartkóff now perceived that he was not in bed, but on his feet, opposite the portrait. How he got there—was a thing he could in no way comprehend. What astounded him still more was the fact that the portrait was completely uncovered. No vestige of a sheet was there, but the living eyes staring fixedly at him. A cold sweat stood upon his brow; he would fain have fled, but his feet were rooted to the ground. And then he saw (of a certainty this was no dream) the old man's

features move, and his lips protruded as if about to utter words. With a shrill cry of horror, and a despairing effort, Tchartkóff tore himself from the spot—and awoke. It was still a dream. His heart beat as though it would burst his bosom, but there was no cause for such agitation. He was in bed, in the same attitude as when he fell asleep. Before him was the screen: the chamber was filled with the watery moonbeams. Through the crack in the screen, the portrait was visible, covered with the sheet he had himself laid over it. Although thus convinced of the groundlessness of his alarm, the palpitation of his heart increased in violence, until it became painful and alarming; the oppression on his breast grew more and more severe. He could not detach his eyes from the sheet, and presently he distinctly saw it move, at first gently, then quickly and violently, as though hands were struggling and groping behind it, pulling and tearing, and striving, but in vain, to throw it aside. There was something mysteriously awful in this struggle of an invisible power against so flimsy an obstacle, which it yet was unable to overcome. Tchartkóff felt his very soul chilled with fear. "Great God! what is this?" he cried, crossing himself in an agony of terror. And once more he awoke. For the third time he had dreamed a dream! He sprang from his bed in utter bewilderment, his brain whirling and burning, and at first could not make up his mind whether he had been favoured by a visit from the *domovói*,<sup>[29]</sup> or by that of a real apparition.

Approaching the window, he opened the *fórtotchka*.<sup>[30]</sup> A sharp frosty breeze brought refreshment to his heated frame. The moon's radiance still lay broadly on the roofs and white walls of the houses, and small floating clouds chased each other across the sky. All was still, save when, from time to time, there fell faintly upon the ear the distant jarring rattle of a lingering *drójki*, prowling in search of a belated fare. For some time our young painter remained with his head out of the *fórtotchka*, and it was not until signs of approaching dawn were visible in the heavens that he closed the pane, threw himself upon his bed, and fell into a deep and dreamless slumber.

It was very late when he awoke with a violent headache. The room felt close; a disagreeable dampness saturated the air, and made its way through the crevices of the windows. Low-spirited, uncomfortable, and cheerless as a drenched cock, he sat down on his dilapidated sofa, and began to recall his dream of the previous night. So vivid was the impression it had made, that he could hardly persuade himself it had been a mere dream. Removing the sheet, he minutely examined the portrait by the light of day. He was still struck with the extraordinary power and expression of the eyes, but he found in them nothing peculiarly terrific. Still an unpleasant impression remained upon his mind. He could not divest himself of the conviction that a fragment of horrible reality had mingled with his dream. In defiance of reason, he imagined something peculiarly significant in the expression of the old man's face; a something of the cautious stealthy look it had worn when he crept round the screen, and counted his gold under the very nose of the needy painter. And Tchartkóff still felt the print of the roulette upon his palm, as though it had but that instant left his grasp. Had he held it but a little tighter, he thought, it must have remained in his hand even after his awakening.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, heaving a sorrowful sigh, "had I but the moiety of that wealth!" And again in his mind's eye he saw the rouleaus streaming from the sack. Again he read the attractive inscription,—1000 DUCATS; again they were unrolled, he heard the chink of metal, saw it shine, burned to clutch it. But once more the blue paper was rolled around it; and there he sat, motionless and entranced, straining his eyes upon vacancy, powerless to divert their gaze from the imaginary treasure—like a child gazing with watering mouth at a dish of unattainable sweetmeats.

[Pg 464]

A knock at the door at last roused him from his reverie. It was promptly followed by the entrance of his landlord, accompanied by the *Nadzirátel*, or police-inspector of the quarter—a gentleman whose appearance is, if possible, more disagreeable to the poor than the face of a petitioner is to the rich. The landlord of the small house in which Tchartkóff lodged, was no bad type of the class of house-owners in such quarters as the fifteenth line of the *Vasílievskü Ostrov*. In his youth, he had been a captain in the army, where he was noted as a noisy quarrelsome fellow; transferred thence to the civil service, he proved himself a thorough master of the art of petty tyranny, a bustling coxcomb and a blockhead. Age had done little to improve his character. He had been some time a widower, had long retired from the service, was less given to quarrels and coxcombry, but more trivial and teasing. His chief happiness consisted in drinking tea, propagating scandal, and in sauntering about his apartment, with hands behind his back. These intellectual occupations were varied by an occasional inspection of the roof of his house, by ferreting his *dvòrnik*, or porter, fifty times a-day out of the kennel in which he oftener slept than watched, and by a monthly attack upon his lodgers for their rent.

"Do me the favour to see about it yourself, Varùkh Kusmitch," said the landlord, to the *Kvartálnü*: "he won't pay his rent—he won't pay, sir."

"How can I, without money? Give me time, and I will pay."

"Time, my good sir! impossible! I can't hear of such a thing," said the landlord in a rage, flourishing the key he held in his hand. "Perhaps you don't know that Colonel Potogònkin lodges in my house—a colonel, sir, and has lived here these seven years; and Anna Petròvna Buchmisteroff—a lady of fortune, sir, who rents a coach-house, and a two-stall stable, sir, and keeps three out-door servants: these are the sort of lodgers I have. My house, I tell you plainly, is not one of those establishments where people live who don't pay their rent. So I will thank you to pay yours directly, and be off bag and baggage."

"You had better pay," said the *Kvartálnü Nadzirátel*, with a slight but significant shake of the

head, sticking his forefinger through a button-hole of his uniform.

"It's very easy to say pay, but where is the money? I have not a sou."

"In that case, you can satisfy Ivàn Ivànovitch with goods, with the produce of your profession," said the Kvartálnü; "he will probably agree to take pictures."

"Not I, indeed! no pictures for me! It would be all very well to take pictures with respectable subjects, such as a gentleman could hang on his wall; a general with a star, or the likeness of Prince Kutúzoff; but, here I see nothing but paintings of mujíks in their shirt-sleeves, servants, and such like cattle—a mere waste of time and colours. He has taken the likeness of that blackguard of his, whose bones I shall assuredly break, for the thief has pulled the nails out of all my locks and window-hasps—a scoundrel! Just look; there's a subject for you! a picture of the room! It would have been all very well if he had drawn it clean, neat, and orderly; but there he has got it full of filth and rubbish, just as it is. Only see how he has bedevilled and dirtied my room; pretty work, indeed, when I have had colonels for lodgers seven years together, and Anna Petròvna Buchmísteroff! Truly there are no worse lodgers than artists; they turn a drawing-room into a pigstye."

To all this, and much more, the poor painter was forced to listen patiently. Meanwhile the Kvartálnü Nadzirátel amused himself by looking at the pictures and sketches, occasionally uttering a comment or question.

"Not bad!" said he, pausing before a female figure: "pretty woman, really! But what's the meaning of that black, there, under her nose? is it snuff, or what?" [Pg 465]

"That's the shadow," replied Tchartkóff surlily, without turning towards him.

"You would have done better to have put it somewhere else. It is too remarkable just under the nose," said the critical Argus. "But, whose portrait is this?" continued he, approaching the picture that had occasioned Tchartkóff so restless a night. "What an ugly old heathen! And what eyes! They might belong to Belzebug himself. I must have a look at this."

And without asking permission, or thinking it necessary to use much ceremony with a poor devil of a painter who could not pay his rent, the agent of the law lifted the portrait from the nails on which it hung, to carry it to the window, and examine it at his leisure. But his hands were stiff and clumsy, and he had miscalculated the weight of the picture. It slipped through his fingers, and fell to the ground with a heavy thump and slight crashing noise, upsetting some lumber that stood against the wall, and raising a cloud of dust, which caused the man of manacles to step back and rub his eyes. With a muttered curse on the meddling official, Tchartkóff sprang forward to raise the picture. As he did so, a small board, forming one of the sides of the frame, and which had been cracked by the fall, gave way altogether under the pressure of his hand, and part of it fell out. The fragment was followed by a rouleau of dark blue paper, which emitted a dull chink as it struck the ground. Tchartkóff's eye glanced upon an inscription; it was—1000 DUCATS. To snatch up the packet, and thrust it into his pocket, was the work of an instant.

"Surely, I heard the sound of coin," said the Kvartálnü, who, owing to the dust, and to the rapidity of the painter's movement, had not caught sight of the rouleau.

"And what business of yours is it, to know what I have in my room?"

"It's my business to tell you, that you must pay the landlord his rent; it's my business to tell you, that I know you have money, and yet you won't pay—that's my business, my fine fellow!"

"Well, I will pay him to-day."

"And, why did you not pay at once, without giving trouble to the landlord, and disturbing the police?"

"Because I didn't intend to touch this money. But I will pay him this evening, and leave his lodgings at once. I will live no longer in his paltry garret."

"He will pay you, Ivàn Ivànovitch," said the Kvartálnü to the landlord. "If you neglect to do so by this evening, why then you must excuse me, Mr Painter, if we use severer means." And resuming his cocked hat, he departed, followed by the landlord, who hung his head, and looked exceedingly small.

"The devil go with them!" said Tchartkóff, as he heard the outer door shut. He looked into the ante-room, sent Nikíta out, in order to be quite alone, locked himself in, and, with a violent palpitation of the heart, opened his packet. It contained exactly a thousand ducats, almost all of them quite new, and sparkling like the sun. Its appearance was precisely the same as those he had seen in his dream. Almost frantic with delight, he sat with the pile of gold before him, asking himself whether he did not still dream. Long did he handle and tell the gold before he could believe that it was real, and that he himself was awake and in his right mind.

He then curiously and carefully examined the frame. In one side of it a kind of cavity had been hollowed out, and afterwards closed with a board, so neatly that if the loutish hand of the Kvartálnü Nadzirátel had not let the frame drop, the ducats might have remained for centuries undisturbed. It was with gratitude and complacency, rather than aversion, that the painter now contemplated the peculiar features and remarkable eyes of the old Asiatic.

"Whoever you are, my old boy," said Tchartkóff to himself, "I'll put you under glass, and give you a splendid frame for this."

At this moment his hand happened to touch the heap of gold, and the contact made his heart beat as violently as ever. "What shall I do with it?" he thought, fixing his eyes upon the money. "Now I am at my ease for three years at least, I can shut myself in my studio, and work. I can buy colours, pay for a comfortable lodging and good food. I have enough for every thing; nobody can tease or badger me now. I'll get a first-rate lay-figure, order a plaster torso, model feet, buy a Venus, have engravings of all the great masters. And if I work steadily for three years, quietly, without hurry, without being obliged to sell my pictures for my daily bread, I shall astonish the world and achieve fame."

[Pg 466]

Such was the artist's soliloquy, prompted by conscious talent and honourable ambition. A far different counsel was given by his twenty-two summers and heat of youth. He now had at his command all that he had hitherto gazed at from afar with envying eyes. How his heart bounded and swelled within him, as he thought of the luxuries he could now command! how he longed to exchange rags for purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously after his long fast, to dwell in a splendid lodging, to visit the theatre, the café, the ball!

Seizing his money, the young man was in the street in a moment. His first visit was to a tailor's shop, where he dressed himself from top to toe, and walked down the street looking at himself in every window. He bought a huge quantity of trinkets and perfumes, an opera-glass, and a mountain of brilliant cravats; took, without a word of bargaining, the first lodging that he saw, a magnificent set of rooms in the Nevsku perspective, with immense mirrors, and each window glazed with a single pane; had his hair curled at a coiffeur's, hired a carriage, and drove twice, without the slightest object, from one end of the town to the other, crammed himself with bonbons at a confectioner's, and went to a French *restaurant*, about which he had hitherto heard only vague and uncertain rumours, such as one hears of the Chinese empire. There he dined, assuming the while a haughty and supercilious air, and incessantly arranging his well-curled locks. There, too, he drank a bottle of champagne; a liquid he had hitherto known only by reputation. His head full of wine, he went out into the street, gay, bold, ready for any thing—able to face the devil, as the Russians say. On the bridge he met his former professor, and pushed coolly past him, as if he did not observe him, leaving the poor man motionless with astonishment, a mark of interrogation visibly printed in his countenance. All that he possessed in the world, easels, canvasses, pictures, Tchartkóff transported that very evening to his new and splendid lodgings. He arranged his best pictures in the most visible situations, cast those he thought less of into corners, and perambulated his splendid rooms, looking at himself each minute in the mirrors. Then there arose in his mind a restless desire to take fame by storm, instantly, without delay, and to compel, by whatever means, the applause of the multitude. Already the cry rang in his ears, "Tchartkóff, Tchartkóff! haven't you seen Tchartkóff's picture? What a rapid pencil Tchartkóff has! Tchartkóff has immense talent!" Musing, and castle-building, he paced his apartment till a late hour of the night, and when in bed, could not sleep for ruminating his ambitious projects.

The next morning he took a dozen ducats, and drove to the editor of a fashionable newspaper. The introduction was efficacious. The journalist praised his genius, professed the most ardent desire to serve him, loaded him with compliments, shook him fervently by both hands, and accompanied him obsequiously to the door, making minute inquiries as to his name, his style of painting, his place of residence.

The very next day there appeared in the newspaper, immediately after an advertisement of newly discovered candles, warranted to burn without wicks, an article headed,

#### EXTRAORDINARY TALENT OF TCHARTKÓFF.

"We hasten to congratulate the inhabitants of this polite metropolis on what may be styled a *discovery* of the most splendid and useful nature. We refer to the sudden appearance of an artist of consummate skill, possessing all the qualifications that can render a painter worthy to transfer to the magic canvass the faces of the many beautiful women and handsome men who adorn the cultivated circles of St Petersburg. Ladies may now confidently rely on being transmitted to posterity without diminution of their graces, with all their delicate loveliness, enchanting symmetry of form, and exquisite expression of feature—graces ephemeral, alas! as the existence of the butterfly that hovers over the vernal flowers. Parents, ere they leave this vale of tears, may bequeath to their sorrowing children their exact resemblance. The warrior, the statesman, the poet, all classes of men, in short, will pursue their career with fresh zeal and ardour, now that the brilliant pencil of a Tchartkóff enables them to transmit to posterity their visible features, as well as their imperishable renown. Let all hasten, then, abandoning promenade, and party, opera, ball, and theatre, to the splendid and luxurious studio of our artist, (Nevsku Perspective, No.—). It is hung with portraits, the produce of his pencil, worthy a Vandyke or a Titian. The happy connoisseur knows not what to admire most in these exquisite works, their exact resemblance to the original, or the extraordinary brilliancy and freshness of their handling. They must be seen to be even imperfectly appreciated; the artist has truly drawn a prize in the lottery of genius. Success to you, Andréi Petróvitch! (the journalist was evidently fond of the familiar style). *Macte novâ virtute*, and immortalise yourself and us. Glory, fortune, crowds of sitters, in spite of the feeble and envious efforts of certain contemporary prints, will be your speedy and unailing reward!"

[Pg 467]

His face beaming with contentment, our artist perused this puff. He saw his name in print,—a



thing which was to him a complete novelty; and he could not help reading the lines at least a dozen times. He was particularly tickled with the comparison of his works to Vandyke and Titian. The use of his baptismal name, Andréi Petróvitch, also gratified him not a little. To be mentioned in this delightfully familiar way in print, was to him an honour as gratifying as it was new. He could not remain quiet a moment. Now he sat down in a chair, then threw himself picturesquely on a sofa, rehearsing the way he would receive his sitters; then he went to his easel, and gave a bold dashing stroke of the brush, studying at the same time a graceful mode of wielding it. Thus he got through the day.

The next morning, soon after breakfast, his bell rang. He hurried to the door; a lady entered, preceded by a footman in a furred livery cloak, and accompanied by a young girl of eighteen, her daughter.

"Monsieur Tchartkóff, I believe?" said the lady. The painter bowed.

"I have seen your name in the papers; your portraits, they say, are incomparable." With these words the lady put her glass to her eye, and glanced round the walls, which were bare. "But where are all your portraits?"

"They are not arrived," said the artist, a little confused; "I have just removed into these rooms, the pictures are still on the road—they will soon be here."

"You have been in Italy?" said the lady, turning her eye-glass on the painter in the absence of the paintings.

"No, I have not been there exactly—I intend to go—I have been compelled to put it off; but pray do me the honour to sit down; you must be tired."

"You are very kind, but I have been sitting—in my carriage. Ah, at last, I see some of your works!" said the lady, running up to the opposite side of the room, and levelling her glass at some canvasses placed on the floor, studies, sketches, interiors, and portraits. "*C'est charmant! Lise, Lise! venez ici:* there's an interior in the manner of Teniers, see: all is in disorder, higgledy-piggledy, a table with a bust upon it, a hand, a palette; and the dust, look how well the dust is painted! *c'est charmant!* And there is another canvass, a woman washing her face—*quelle jolie figure!* Oh, and there's a *mujík!* Lise, Lise! a *mujík* in a Russian shirt! look, do look—a *mujík!* So you don't paint portraits only?"

[Pg 468]

"These are mere trifles—done for amusement, in an idle moment—mere studies——"

"But do tell me your opinion of the portrait-painters of the present day? Isn't it true, that we have none at present like Titian? There's not that force of colouring, not that,—really, what a pity it is that I cannot express what I mean in Russian." The lady was passionately fond of painting, and had run, eye-glass in hand, over all the galleries in Italy. "Only, I must say, that Monsieur Dauberelli—ah, how he paints! What an extraordinary touch! I find more expression in his faces than even in Titian's. You know Monsieur Dauberelli?"

"Dauberelli! who is he?" asked the artist.

"Such talent! He painted my daughter when she was only twelve years old. You must come and see it, really you must. Lise, you shall show him your album. But I want another portrait of my daughter, and that is the motive of my visit. Can you begin at once?"

"Directly, madam, if you please." And in a moment he wheeled up his easel, with a canvass on it, ready stretched, took his palette in his hand and fixed his eyes on the pale childish features of the daughter. Young as she was, they already bore traces of late hours and dissipation. Expression they had little or none. But the artist saw in the complexion an almost china-like transparency, exquisitely adapted to his pencil; the neck was white and slender, the form elegant and aristocratic. And he prepared for a triumph; he intended to show the lightness and brilliancy of his touch, for the display of which he had hitherto lacked opportunities. He already began to fancy to himself how the pale but graceful little lady would come out upon the canvass.

"Do you know," said the mother, with a sentimental expression of face "I should like—you see she has a frock on now—well, I confess I should not like you to paint her in a frock, it's so commonplace; I should like her to be painted simply dressed, sitting in the shade of a thicket, with fields in the distance, and sheep or a forest in the back-ground—simplicity, the greatest simplicity, is what I should like."

Tchartkóff set to work, arranged the sitter in the attitude he required, endeavoured to fix the whole subject in his mind; waved his brush in the air before him, as if establishing the principal points; half-closed his eyes several times, retired back a step or two, examined his sitter from a distance, and in about an hour he finished drawing in the face. Satisfied with the effect, he now commenced painting, and his labour rapidly grew lighter. By this time he had forgotten he was in the presence of two ladies of high fashion, and began to fall into a few tricks of the painting-room, uttering half-aloud various inarticulate sounds, and at intervals humming a tune between his teeth. Without the slightest ceremony he from time to time signed, by a movement of his brush, to his sitter to raise her head. At last the young lady grew weary and restless.

"That's quite enough for the first sitting," said her mother.

"Another minute," cried the painter in an absent tone.

"Impossible! Lise, three o'clock!" said the lady, looking at her diminutive watch. "Oh, how late!"

"Only half a second," said Tchartkóff, in the wistful and beseeching voice of a child.

But the lady was disinclined to comply. She promised him a longer sitting another time.

"Horridly annoying!" said Tchartkóff to himself; "just as my hand was getting in." And he remembered that no one had ever interrupted him, when he worked in his painting-room in the Vasílievskü Ostrov. Nikíta would sit hour after hour without moving a muscle: you might paint him as much as you liked; he would go to sleep in the attitude he was fixed in. And the artist discontentedly laid his pencil and palette on a chair, and stood pensively before the canvass. He was aroused from his reverie by a compliment addressed to him by the fashionable lady. He darted towards the door to show out his visitors: on the stairs he received an invitation to dine with them the following week, and with a cheerful air he re-entered his rooms. The aristocratic style of his visitors had quite fascinated him. Up to this time he had held such beings unapproachable, born only to glide about in a splendid carriage with liveried footmen and a laced and bearded coachman, throwing a calm indifferent glance on the humble foot-passenger as he plodded by in a shabby cloak. And yet, here was one of these exquisite beings calling upon him: he was painting her portrait, and had received an invitation to dine with her. Intoxicated with vanity and delight, he treated himself to a splendid dinner, went to the theatre in the evening, and again, without the slightest occasion, drove about the town in a carriage.

[Pg 469]

For some days he did nothing but arrange his rooms and listen for the sound of his bell. At last the lady arrived, with her pale daughter. He made them sit down, wheeled up his easel with a strong affectation of fashionable manner, and began to paint. He saw in his delicate sitter much that, being cleverly caught, would give high value to the portrait: he perceived that he might produce something quite peculiar and characteristic, if he could render it with the same accuracy and completeness with which nature herself had placed it before him. His heart even felt a slight tremor when he found himself expressing what no one else perhaps had ever remarked. His attention became riveted on his canvass, and he again forgot the aristocratic descent of his sitter. Holding his breath from eagerness, he gradually saw the delicate features and transparent skin come out upon his canvass. He had caught every half-tint, even the slight ivory-like yellowness, the nearly imperceptible blueish tone under the eyes, and was just in the act of seizing a little mole upon the forehead, when he suddenly heard behind him the voice of the mother, crying—"Oh, never mind that! that is not necessary! I see, too, you have got a—here, for instance, and here, see!—a kind of yellowish—and here and there you have, as it were, little dark places." The artist explained that the dark and yellow tones relieved the face, and gave a delicacy to the flesh-tints. But the notion was scouted. He was informed that Lise had not slept well, that there was usually no yellowness at all in her face, which struck every body by its freshness of complexion. Sadly and reluctantly Tchartkóff began to efface what he had taken such pains to produce. With it there vanished of course much of the resemblance. He now began, with a feeling of indifference, to throw over the whole a more commonplace and hackneyed colouring, the red and white, devoid of vigour, which each daubster has at his command. The obnoxious tint was effaced, and the mamma was delighted. She only expressed her surprise that the work went on so slowly. She had heard, she said, that he could completely finish a portrait in two sittings. The ladies rose and prepared to go away. Tchartkóff laid down his pencil, conducted them to the door, and then, returning, stood for a while before his portrait, regretting the delicate lines, the half-tints and airy tones, so happily caught and pitilessly effaced. With these recollections vivid in his mind, he put aside the portrait, and looked for a study, which had been long abandoned, of a head of Psyche, an idea he had some time before thrown sketchily on the canvass. It was a pretty little countenance, cleverly and rapidly painted, but quite ideal, cold and hard, devoid of life and reality. Scarcely knowing why, he began to work at this, endeavouring to communicate to it all he could remember of the countenance of his aristocratic sitter. Psyche grew more and more animated; the type of the young fashionable lady's countenance was by degrees mingled with hers, at the same time acquiring an expression which gave it originality and character. Tchartkóff was able to avail himself, both in the details and in the general effect, of all that he had obtained from his sitter, and to incorporate it with his work. During several days he laboured hard at his Psyche. He was still busy with it when he was interrupted by the arrival of his former visitors. The picture was on the easel. Both ladies uttered a cry of admiration, and clapped their hands.

[Pg 470]

"Lise! Lise! Oh, how like! *Superbe! Superbe!* What an exquisite idea, to dress her in the Grecian costume! What a truly delicious surprise!"

The artist hardly knew how to undeceive the ladies in their agreeable mistake. He hung his head, and, with an apologetic air, said, in a low voice, "This is Psyche."

"Painted as Psyche! *C'est charmant!*" said the mother, with a smile, faithfully repeated by the daughter. "Don't you think so, Lise? it's just the thing for you. Painted as Pysche! *Quelle idée délicieuse!* But what a picture! Quite a Correggio! I have heard and read much about you, but I had not the least idea of your talent."

"What the deuce am I to do with them?" thought the artist. "Well, if they will have it so, Psyche shall go;" and he said aloud—"I must trouble you to give me a few minutes more—I should like to add a few touches."

"You cannot improve it. Pray leave it as it is."

The painter guessed that they apprehended some more yellow tones, and he hastened to remove

their fears, saying that he was only going to increase the brilliancy and expression of the eyes. In reality he desired to give his picture a closer resemblance with the original—fearing, if he did not, that he should be taxed with unblushing flattery. In spite of the lady's reluctance, the pallid damsel's features began to come out more clearly amid the outlines of the Psyche.

"That will do," said the mother, less pleased by the picture as the resemblance grew closer. The artist was rewarded for his labour with smiles, money, compliments, a most affectionate squeeze of the hand, and a pressing invitation to dinner; in a word, he was overwhelmed with recompenses. The portrait made much noise in the town. The lady showed it to all her acquaintance. Every body admired the skill with which the painter had succeeded in preserving the resemblance, and at the same time in giving beauty to the original. The last remark, of course, was not made without a slight tinge of malice. Tchartkóff was besieged with commissions. The whole town was mad to be painted by him. His door-bell rang incessantly. Unfortunately his sitters were of the class most difficult to manage; either persons very much occupied, or fashionable people, who having in reality nothing to do, were, of course, far busier than anybody else, and hurried and impatient in the highest degree. Every body expected a good picture in less time than was necessary to do a slovenly one. The artist saw that high finish was quite out of the question, and that all he could do was to dazzle by the facility, rapidity, and smartness of his execution. He had to content himself with catching the general expression, neglecting the more delicate details, and not attempting to attain the individuality and reality of nature. Besides this, every sitter had some fresh fancy. The ladies required that only their sentiment and character should be represented in their portraits; that all the rest should be smoothed and softened; sharp angles rounded off; defects mitigated, and even, if possible, altogether concealed. They required, in short, to be made attractive in their portraits, whether nature had made them so or not. Consequently many, when they seated themselves in the painting chair, put on such looks and expressions as absolutely astounded the artist. One struggled to give her features an air of melancholy; another of sentimental abstraction; a third tried desperately to make her mouth small, and pursed it up till it resembled a round dot. And in spite of all this they expected striking resemblance, ease, and grace. Nor were the gentlemen more reasonable. One required to be painted with a strong energetic turn of the head; another with uplifted eyes, full of poetic inspiration; an ensign of the Guards declared that he should not be satisfied unless Mars was made visible in his countenance: a civilian delicately suggested that his face should be made as much as possible to express incorruptible probity, mingled with imposing dignity, and that he should be painted leaning his arm on a book, inscribed in legible characters, "I stand for right." At first all these requests frightened and annoyed our painter; there was so much to be harmonised, considered, and arranged, and all in a few hours. At last he began to understand the secret, and went on without troubling his head in the least. From the first two or three words spoken, he perceived how the sitter wished to be painted. The gentleman who wanted Mars was made a Mars of; he who aped Byron received a Byronic attitude. As to the ladies, whether they wished to be Corinnas, or Undines, or Aspasias, he was quite ready to accommodate them, and even added, from his own imagination, a universal air of distinction, which never does any harm, and which sometimes makes people excuse even want of resemblance. He soon began to be astonished at the wonderful rapidity and success of his execution. As to the sitters, they were in ecstasies, and proclaimed him every where a genius of the first water.

[Pg 471]

Tchartkóff became all the fashion. He drove out every day to dinner parties, escorted ladies to exhibitions and promenades, was a consummate puppy in his dress, and openly declared that an artist ought to be a man of the world; that it was his duty to maintain his dignity; that painters in general dressed like shoemakers; that their manners were excruciatingly vulgar, and that they were people of no education. His studio was a pattern of elegance; he kept a couple of magnificent footmen; took a number of dandified pupils; had his hair curled; dressed half-a-dozen times a-day in various fantastical costumes. He was perpetually rehearsing improvements in his way of receiving visitors; meditating on all possible means of beautifying his person, and of producing an agreeable impression on the ladies. In short, it soon became impossible to recognise in him the modest student who once laboured so fervently in his garret in the Vasílievskü Ostrov. Concerning art and artists he now rarely spoke; he asserted that the merit of the old masters had been outrageously overrated; that, before Raphael, their figures were rather like herrings than human beings; that it was the imagination of the spectator only that could find in their works that air of grandeur and dignity generally attributed to them. Raphael himself, he said, was very unequal, and many of his productions owed their glory only to tradition. Michael Angelo was a boaster, weakly vain of his knowledge of anatomy, and without a particle of grace. Real force of outline, grace of touch, and magic of colouring we must look for, he said, in the present age. Thence the conversation easily glided to his own pictures.

"I cannot conceive," he would say, "the obstinacy of people who drudge at their pictures. A fellow who hangs month after month over one piece of canvass is, in my opinion, an artisan, not an artist. Such a one has no genius, for genius creates boldly, rapidly. Now this portrait, for instance," he would say, "I painted in two days, this head in one day, this in a few hours, and that other in rather more than an hour. I don't call it art to go crawling on, line after line."

Thus he would chatter to his visitors, and the visitors would admire his dashing rapidity, and utter exclamations of wonder when they heard how quickly he worked; and then they would whisper to each other—"This is genius—real genius! How well he talks! What an extraordinary talent!"

Such praise as this the painter greedily drank in, and was as delighted as a child by the

encomiums of the press, even when bought and paid for with his own money. His fame continued to spread, and his occupation to increase, till he grew weary of painting portraits and faces with the same tricks and attitudes that he knew by heart. Gradually he worked with less and less good-will, contenting himself with carelessly sketching in the head, and leaving all the rest to be finished by his pupils. Formerly he had taken trouble to seek new attitudes; to strike by novelty—by effect. Now he began to grow weary even of this labour. He entirely left off reflecting; he had neither power nor leisure for it. His dissipated mode of life, and the society in which he played the part of a man of fashion, severed him more and more from labour and from thought. His touch grew cold and dull, and he insensibly confined himself to stale, commonplace, worn-out forms. The stiff, monotonous countenances of officers and civilians, in their graceless modern costumes, were not very attractive subjects for the pencil. He forgot all—his graceful draping, his easy attitudes, his power of representing the passions. As to skilful grouping or dramatic effect in painting, all that was quite out of the question. He had nothing before his eyes but the eternal uniform, corset, or dress-coat—objects chilling to the artist, and affording little scope to imagination. By and by even the most ordinary merits disappeared, one by one, from his productions; and they still enjoyed the highest reputation, though real judges and artists only shrugged their shoulders as they looked at the work of his hand.

[Pg 472]

These mute but significant criticisms of the discerning few never reached the ears of the artist, intoxicated as he was with vanity and false fame. He already too approached the period of maturity in age and intellect, and was rapidly acquiring a respectable corpulence. He now met in the journals with such expressions as these:—"Our respectable Andréi Petróvitch—our veteran of the pencil, Andréi Petróvitch." He now received many honorary appointments in public institutions; was frequently invited to examinations and to committees. He began, as people infallibly do on reaching a certain age, to stand up sturdily for the old masters, not from any profound conviction of their wonderful merits, but in order to throw their names in the teeth of young artists. He did not hesitate to fly in the face of the doctrines he had advocated some years previously. According to him, labour was every thing, inspiration a mere name; and he affirmed that, in art, all things should be subjected to the severest rules.

Fame can give no satisfaction to one who has not earned, but stolen it. It produces a constant thrill only in the heart conscious of having deserved it. Tchartkóff no longer valued fame. All his feelings and desires were turned towards gold. Gold became his passion, his delight, the object of his being. Bank-notes filled his portfolios, piles of gold his coffers; but, like all avaricious men, he grew sour, selfish, inaccessible to every thing but money—cold-hearted and penurious. He was gradually sinking into an unhappy miser, when an event came to pass which gave his whole moral being a terrible and awakening shock.

Returning home one day, Tchartkóff found lying on his table a letter, in which the Academy of Arts invited him, as one of its most distinguished members, to give his opinion of a new picture just arrived from Italy, the work of a Russian artist who had long studied there. The painter, who had been a schoolfellow of Tchartkóff's, imbued, even as a boy, with a fervent passion for art, had early torn himself from home and friends, from all the pleasures and habits of his age and country, to toil and study in the renowned Italian city, whose very name thrills the painter's heart. There he condemned himself to solitude and uninterrupted labour. Men spoke of his eccentricity, of his ignorance of the world, of his neglect of all the customs of society, of the disgrace he cast on the artist's profession by his dress, which was beneath his station, and by his frugality, which was almost penury. He cared nothing for scoff and reproach. Regardless of the world's comments, he gave himself up to his art. Unweariedly did he haunt the galleries; hour after hour, day after day, he stood before the works of the great masters, striving to penetrate their secrets. He never finished a picture without comparing it many times with the productions of those mighty teachers, and reading in their creations silent but eloquent counsel. He engaged in no arguments or disputes, but accorded to every school the honour it deserved; and after aiming at acquiring what was most meritorious in each, at length addicted himself to the study of the immortal Raphael; like a student of letters, who, after reading and rereading the works of a multitude of authors, at last confines himself to the writings of one whom he conceives to unite the chief beauties of all the others, superadding graces none of them possess. After many years of persevering application and gradual progress, the artist left the schools, possessing pure and elevated ideas of composition, great powers of conception, and an execution that charmed alike by its delicacy and force. But, with the modesty of true genius, he still allowed a considerable time to elapse before he ventured to submit a picture to the verdict of his countrymen.

[Pg 473]

On entering the exhibition-room, Tchartkóff found it thronged with visitors, grouped before the painting. Silence, such as is rarely met with amongst a numerous collection of amateurs, reigned throughout the crowd. Assuming the knowing and supercilious look of an acknowledged connoisseur, he approached the picture, prepared to cavil and find fault, or, at best, to damn with faint praise. But the canting phrase of conventional criticism died away upon his lips at the sight he there beheld. Faultless, pure, gracious, and beautiful as some fair and virgin bride was the noble production of genius that met his astonished gaze. With wonder and admiration he recognised the work of a pencil that revived the glories of ancient art. A profound study of Raphael was manifest in the noble elevation of the attitudes; there was a something Correggian in the skilful handling and careful finish. But there was no servile imitation of any painter; the artist had sought and found in his own soul the divine spark that gave life to his creation. Not an object in the picture, however trifling, but had been the subject of a profound study; the law of its constitution had been analysed, and its internal organism investigated. And the painter had caught that flowing roundness of line which pervades all nature, but which no eye ever sees save

that of the creator-artist—that roundness which the mere copyist degrades into points and angles. He had poetised, whilst faithfully representing, the commonest objects of external nature. A feeling of awe mingled with the admiration that kept the crowd profoundly silent. Not a whisper was heard, not a rustle or a sound, for some time after the arrival of Tchartkóff. All were absorbed in contemplation of the masterpiece; and in the eyes of the more enthusiastic tears of delight were seen to glisten. Tchartkóff himself stood open-mouthed and motionless before the wonderful painting, whose merits and beauties the spectators at last began to discuss. He was roused from abstraction by being appealed to for his opinion. In vain did he strive to resume his dignified air, and to give utterance to the musty commonplace of criticism. The contemptuous smile was chased from his features by the workings of emotion; his breast heaved with a convulsive sob, and after a moment's violent but ineffectual struggle, he burst into tears and rushed wildly from the hall.

A few minutes later he stood motionless, almost paralysed, in his own magnificent studio. The bandage had fallen from his eyes. He saw how he had squandered the best years of his youth; how he had trampled and stifled the spark of that fire once burning within him, which might have been fanned till it blazed up into grandeur and glory, and extorted tears of gratitude and admiration from a wondering world. All this he had sacrificed and thrown away, heedlessly, madly, brutally. There suddenly revived in his soul those enthusiastic aspirations he once had known. He caught up a pencil and approached a canvass. The sweat of eagerness stood upon his brow; his soul was filled with one passionate desire—one solitary thought burned in his brain. The zeal for art, the thirst for fame he once so strongly felt, had suddenly returned, evoked from their lurking-place by the mute voice of another's genius. And why, Tchartkóff thought, should not he also excel? His hand trembled with feverish impatience till he could scarcely hold the pencil. He took for his subject a fallen angel. The idea was in accordance with his frame of mind. But, alas! how soon he was convinced of the vanity of his efforts! His hand and imagination had been too long confined to one line and limit, and his fierce but impotent endeavour to overleap the barrier, to break his self-imposed fetters, had no result. He had despised and neglected the fundamental condition of future greatness—the long and fatiguing ladder of study and reflection. Maddened by disappointment, furious at the conviction of impotency, he ignominiously dismissed from his studio all his later and most esteemed productions, to which places of honour had been accorded—all his lifeless, senseless, fashionable portraits of hussars, ladies of fashion, and privy councillors. He then shut himself up, denied himself to all visitors, and sat down to work, patient and eager as a young student. For a while he laboured day and night. But how unsatisfactory, how cruelly ungrateful was all that grew under his pencil! Each moment he found himself checked and repulsed in the new path he fain would have trodden by the wretched mechanical tricks to which he had so long habituated himself. They stood on his road, an impassable barrier. In spite of himself he recurred to the old commonplace forms; the arms would arrange themselves in one graceless position; the head assume the old hackneyed attitude; the folds of dress refused to drape themselves otherwise than they had so long been wont to do in his hands. All this the unhappy artist plainly felt and saw. His eyes were opened to his heinous faults, but he lacked the power to correct them.

[Pg 474]

"Surely I *had* ability!" said he to himself; "or was it mere delusion? Could I not, under any circumstances, have done better than I have? Did the whispers of youthful vanity mislead me?" And, to settle this doubt, he hunted out some of his early pictures, which lay neglected in a corner of his painting-room—pictures he had laboured at long ago, when his heart was pure from avarice, and he dwelt in his poor garret in the lonely Vasilievskü Ostrov, far from the world, from luxury and covetousness. He examined them attentively, and the conviction forced itself upon him with irresistible strength, that he had sacrificed genius at the altar of Mammon. "I had it in me!" was his agonised exclamation. "Every where, in all of these, I behold traces and proofs of the power I have recklessly frittered away."

Covering his face with his hands, Tchartkóff stood silent, full of bitter thoughts, rapidly but minutely reviewing the whole of his past life. When he removed his hands he started, and a thrill passed over him, for he suddenly encountered the gaze of two piercing eyes glittering with a sombre lustre, and seeming to watch and enjoy his despair. A second glance showed him they belonged to the strange portrait which he had bought, many years before, in the Stchúkin Dvor. It had remained forgotten and concealed amidst a mass of old pictures, and he had long since forgotten its existence. Now that the gaudy, fashionable pictures and portraits had been removed from the studio, there it was, peering grimly out from amongst his early productions. Tchartkóff remembered that, in a certain sense, this hideous portrait had been the origin of the useless life he had so long led and now so deeply deplored; that the hoard of gold discovered in its frame had developed and fostered in him those worldly passions, that sensuality and love of luxury, which had been the bane of his genius. Calling his servants, he ordered the hateful picture to be taken from the room, and bestowed where he should never again behold it. Its departure, however, was insufficient to calm his agitation and quell the storm that raged within him. He was a prey to that rare moral torture sometimes witnessed when a feeble talent wrestles unsuccessfully to attain a development above its capacity—a furious endeavour which often conducts young and vigorous minds to great achievements, but whose result to old and enervated ones is more frequently despair and insanity. Tchartkóff, when convinced of the futility of his efforts, became possessed by the demon of envy, who soon monopolised and made him all his own. His complexion assumed a bilious yellow tint; he could not bear to hear an artist praised, or look with patience at any work of art that bore the impress of genius. On beholding such he would grind his teeth with fury, and the expression of his face became that of a maniac.

At last he conceived one of the most execrable projects the human mind ever engendered; and with an eagerness approaching to frenzy, he hastened to put it into execution. He bought up all the best pictures he could find in St Petersburg, and whose owners could be induced to part with them. The prices he gave to tempt sellers were often most extravagant. As soon as he had purchased a picture, and got it safely home, he would set upon it with demoniac fury, tearing, scratching, even biting it; and, when it was utterly defaced and rent into the smallest possible fragments, he would dance and trample on it, laughing like a fiend. The enormous fortune he had accumulated during his long and successful career as a fashionable portrait-painter, enabled him largely to indulge this infernal monomania. To this abominable end he, Tchartkóff, but a short time before so avaricious, became reckless in his expenditure. For this he untied the strings of his bags of gold, and scattered his rubles with lavish hand. All were surprised at the change, and at the rapidity with which he squandered his fortune, in his zeal, as it was supposed, to form a gallery of the noblest works of art. In the auction room, none cared to oppose him, for all were certain to be outbid. He was held to be mad, and certainly his conduct and appearance justified the presumption. His countenance, of a jaundiced hue, grew haggard and wrinkled; misanthropy and hatred of the world were plainly legible upon it. He resembled that horrid demon whom Pushkin has so ably conceived and portrayed. Save all occasional sarcasm, venomous and bitter, no word ever passed his lips, and at last he became universally avoided. His acquaintances, and even his oldest friends, shunned his presence, and would go a mile round to escape meeting him in the street. The mere sight of him, they said, was enough to cloud their whole day.

[Pg 475]

Fortunately for society and for art, such an unnatural and agitated existence as this could not long endure. Tchartkóff's mental excitement was too violent for his physical strength. A burning fever and furious delirium ravaged his frame, and in a few days he was but the ghost of his former self. The delirium augmented, and became a permanent and incurable mania, in some of whose paroxysms it was necessary to bind him to his couch. He fancied he saw continually before him the singular old portrait from the Stchúkin Dvor! This was the more strange, because since the day he had turned it out of his studio, it had never once met his sight. But now he raved of its terrible living eyes, which haunted him unceasingly, and when this fancy came over him, his madness was something terrific. All the persons who approached his bed he imagined to be horrible portraits; copies, repeated again and again, of the old man with the fiendish eyes. The image multiplied itself perpetually; the ceiling, the walls, the floor, were all covered with portraits, staring sternly and fixedly at him with living eyes. The room extended and stretched out to a vast and interminable gallery, to afford room for millions of repetitions of the ghastly picture. In vain did numerous physicians seek to discover, with a view to the alleviation of the poor wretch's sufferings, some secret connexion between the incidents of his past life and the strange phantom that thus eternally haunted him. No explanation or clue could be obtained from the patient, who continued to apostrophise the portrait in disconnected phrase, and to utter howls of agony and lamentation. At last his existence terminated in one last horrible paroxysm. His corpse was frightful to behold; of his once comely form, a yellow shrivelled skeleton was all that remained. A few thousand rubles were the sole residue of his wealth; and his disappointed heirs, beholding numerous drawers and closets full of torn fragments that had once composed noble pictures, understood and cursed the odious use to which their relative had applied his princely fortune.

## CHAPTER II

A number of carriages, caleches, and drójkis were drawn up in the vicinity of a handsome mansion in one of the best quarters of St Petersburg. It had been the residence of a rich virtuoso, lately deceased, and whose pictures, furniture, and curiosities, were now selling by auction. The large drawing-room was filled with the most distinguished amateurs of art in St Petersburg, mingled with brokers and dealers on the look-out for bargains, and with a large sprinkling of those idlers who, without intending to purchase, frequent auctions to kill a morning. The sale was in full activity, and there was eager competition for the lot then up. The biddings succeeded each other so rapidly, that the auctioneer was scarcely able to repeat them. The object so many were eager to possess, was a portrait, which could hardly fail to attract the attention even of persons who know nothing of pictures. This painting, which possessed a very considerable amount of artistical merit, and had apparently been more than once restored, repaired, and cleaned, represented the tawny features of an Oriental, attired in a loose costume. The expression of the face was singular, and by no means pleasant. Its most striking feature was the extraordinary and unaccountable look of the eyes, which, by some trick of the artist, seemed to follow the spectator wherever he went. Every one of the persons there assembled was ready to swear that the eyes looked straight at him; and, what was yet more unaccountable, the effect was the same whether the beholder stood on the right, or on the left, or in front of the picture. This peculiarity it was that had made so many anxious to possess a portrait whose subject and painter were alike unknown. Gradually, however, many of the amateurs ceased their biddings, for the price had become extravagant, and at last only two continued to compete—two rich noblemen, both enthusiastic lovers of the eccentric in art. These still continued the contest, grew heated with their rivalry, and were in a fair way to raise the price to something positively absurd, when a bystander stepped forward and addressed them. "Before this contest goes farther," he said, "permit me to say a few words. Of all here present, it is I, I believe, who have the best right to the portrait in dispute."

[Pg 476]

All eyes were turned towards the speaker. He was a tall, handsome man, of about thirty-five, with a pleasant, cheerful countenance, a careless style of dress, and long black curls flowing down his

neck. He was personally known to many present, and the name of B—, the artist, was circulated through the room.

"Extraordinary as my words may appear to you," he resumed, perceiving he had fixed the general attention, "I can explain them if you are disposed to give me five minutes' audience. I have every reason to believe that this portrait is one I have long sought in vain."

Curiosity was expressed on every countenance; the auctioneer stood open-mouthed and with uplifted hammer; all entreated B— to tell his tale. The artist at once complied.

"You are all acquainted," he said, "with the quarter of St Petersburg known as the Kolómna, and aware that it is chiefly occupied by persons either in poverty, or whose resources are exceedingly limited, many of whom, compelled by unforeseen circumstances to outstrip their limited income, frequently find themselves in want of immediate and temporary assistance; compelled, in short, to apply to money-lenders. In consequence of this, there has settled amongst them a particular class of usurers, who supply petty sums on satisfactory pledges, and at enormous interest. These pawnbrokers on a small scale are generally far more pitiless than the aristocratic usurer, whose customers drive to his door in their carriages. Compunction, humanity, a feeling of pity for the unfortunates upon whose need they fatten, never by any chance enter their breast. Amongst these callous extortioners there was one who, at a certain period of the last century, under the reign of the Empress Catherine II., had been settled for some years in the Kolómna. He was an extraordinary and enigmatical personage, of whom none knew any thing; he wore a flowing Asiatic dress, his complexion was swarthy as an Arab; but to what nation he really belonged, whether Hindoo, or Greek, or Persian, none could decide. His tall stature, his tawny, withered, wiry face, with its tint of greenish bronze, his large eyes full of sullen fire, shadowed by thick and overhanging brows; every point in his appearance, in short, made a strong and marked distinction between him and the other inhabitants of the quarter. His very dwelling was quite unlike the little wooden houses which surrounded it. It was a large brick building, in the style of those often constructed by the Genoese merchants, with windows of different sizes disposed at irregular distances, with iron shutters and hasps. This usurer was distinguished from all others by the circumstance that he could always supply any sum of money required, and would accommodate alike the needy groom and the extravagant noble. At his door were often to be seen brilliant equipages, through whose windows might sometimes be discerned the head of a luxurious and fashionable lady. Rumour said that his iron chests teemed with countless heaps of money, plate, diamonds, and all kinds of valuable pledges, but nevertheless he was reported less greedy than the other money-lenders. He made no difficulty, people said, to lend, and was apparently far from oppressive in fixing the terms of payment. But on the day of reckoning, it was observed, that by some extraordinary arithmetical calculation, he made the interest mount up to an enormous sum: such, at least, was the popular report. The strangest thing about him, however, and which struck every body, was the fatality that seemed to attach to his loans; all who borrowed of him finished their lives in an unhappy manner. Whether this was a mere popular notion, a stupid superstitious gossip, or a rumour intentionally disseminated, has ever remained a mystery. But it is a fact that many things occurred to give it validity, and that within a comparatively short period of time. Amongst the aristocracy of the day, there was one young man who particularly attracted the attention of society. He was of ancient descent and noble blood; had very early distinguished himself in the service of the empire, as a warm protector of every thing honourable and elevated, and as a passionate lover of art and genius. He was soon distinguished by the personal notice of the Empress, who confided to him the duties of an office peculiarly adapted to his tastes and talents—an office which gave him power to be of the greatest service not only to science, but to humanity itself. The young noble surrounded himself with artists, poets, scholars, and men of learning. To all of them he promised employment, patronage, protection. He undertook, at his own expense, a number of important publications, gave a multitude of orders to artists, founded prizes for excellence, spent enormous sums in this unselfish manner, and at length got into difficulties. Full, however, of generous enthusiasm, and unwilling to leave his work half finished, he borrowed money in all directions, and at length found his way to the famous usurer in the Kolómna. Having obtained from this man a very extensive loan, the young noble all at once underwent a complete transformation. He became, as by enchantment, the enemy of rising intellect and talent, the persecutor of all he had previously protected. It was just then that the French Revolution broke out. This event gave him a handle for suspicion. In every thing he detected some revolutionary tendency; in every word, in every expressed opinion, he saw a dangerous hint or perfidious insinuation. The disease gained on him till he almost began to suspect himself. He laid false informations, fabricated the foulest charges, and caused the ruin of numbers of innocent people. At first, his guilty manœuvres were undetected, and, when found out, they were thought to proceed from insanity. Report was made to the Empress, who deprived him of his office. But his severest sentence was the contempt he read in the faces of his countrymen. I need not describe the sufferings of this vain and insolent spirit, the tortures he endured from crushed pride, defeated ambition, ruined expectations. At last his monomania—for such it must surely have been—aggravated by regret and chagrin, became insanity, and in a frightful paroxysm the unhappy maniac committed suicide.

[Pg 477]

"Not less remarkable than the fate of this wretched young man was that of a lady who passed at that time for the most beautiful woman in St Petersburg. My father has often assured me, that he never beheld any thing to be compared to her. Possessing, besides her beauty, the not less fascinating charms of wit, intellect, wealth, and high rank, she was of course surrounded by a swarm of admirers. The most remarkable of these was Prince R., the flower of all the young nobles of that day, and to whom the palm was universally conceded, not only for beauty of

[Pg 478]

person, but for high qualities and chivalry of character. He was well qualified for a hero of romance, or a woman's beau-ideal. Deeply and passionately enamoured of the young countess, his affection met with as pure and ardent a return. But her relations disapproved the match. The prince's paternal estates had passed out of his hands,—his family was in disgrace at court, and the derangement of his finances was no secret to any body. Suddenly he left the capital, apparently for the purpose of putting his affairs in order; and, after a brief absence, reappeared and commenced a life of splendid extravagance. His balls and entertainments were so magnificent as to attract the notice of the court, and, it was rumoured, to mollify imperial displeasure. The countess's father became suddenly gracious, and soon nothing was talked of in St Petersburg but the marriage of the two lovers. Of the origin of the enormous fortune of the bridegroom, to which this change in the sentiments of his future father-in-law was unquestionably to be attributed, nobody could give a distinct account, though it was pretty generally whispered that he had entered into a compact with the mysterious money-lender of the Kolómna, and from him obtained a large loan. Be this as it may, the wedding formed the whole talk of the town. Bride and bridegroom were the object of universal envy. Every body had heard of their beauty and virtues, of their ardent and constant love; and all rejoiced that the obstacles to their union were removed. Numerous were the prophetic pictures drawn of the blissful existence the young couple were certain to enjoy. The event proved very different. In one twelvemonth a total and terrible change took place in the character of the prince. Hitherto noble, generous, and confiding, he became, on a sudden, jealous, suspicious, impatient, and capricious. He was the tyrant and tormentor of his wife; and, to the unbounded astonishment of every body who had known him before his marriage, treated her with inhuman brutality, and was even known to strike her! In one year the beautiful and dazzling girl, who was followed by a crowd of obedient adorers, could not be recognised in the careworn and unhappy wife. At length, unable longer to support the cruel yoke of such a marriage, she sought a separation. At the first notification of this step, the prince gave way to the most uncontrolled fury,—burst into her chamber, and would infallibly have stabbed her, had he not been seized and removed by force. Mad with rage, he turned his weapon upon himself, and lay a corpse at the feet of his horror-stricken friends. Besides these two incidents, which attracted great notice in the higher circles, a number of other instances were cited as having occurred amongst the lower classes, where the loans of the mysterious usurer had brought misfortune in their train. One man, previously a sober and honest artisan, had become a confirmed drunkard, and died in the hospital; a shopman had robbed his master; an *izvóztchik*, for years noted for his honesty, had cut the throat of a customer in order to rob him of an insignificant sum. All these persons, and many others, who sank into misery and crime, or perished by violent deaths, had been customers of the mysterious Asiatic, of whom these stories, related, as they often were, with additions and exaggerations, inspired the quiet and peaceable inhabitants of the Kolómna with an involuntary horror. Nobody doubted the real presence of the evil spirit in this man. They said that he exacted conditions which made one's very hair stand on end, and which none of his unhappy clients dared disclose; that his money had a mysterious property of attraction; that the coins were marked with strange characters, and grew red-hot of their own accord. In short, there were a thousand extravagant reports. But what is most remarkable is, that this population of Kolómna, made up of pensioners, half-pay officers, petty functionaries, obscure artists, and others equally necessitous, preferred bearing the utmost distress to having recourse to the dreaded money-lender. They all declared they would rather mortify their bodies than destroy their souls. Those who met him in the street hurried by with an uneasy sensation, making way for him with anxious submissiveness, and looking long over their shoulders at the tall lean figure as it lost itself in the distance. His singular frame might well have been the receptacle of a supernatural and unholy spirit. The wild and deeply-cut features had something different from humanity; the extraordinary thickness of the shaggy eyebrows; the bronzed glow of the countenance; the frightful eyes, with their steady unsupportable glare; even the broad folds of the Oriental dress were, each in turn, the subject of uneasy and suspicious comment. My father told me, that when he met him he could not avoid stopping to gaze at him; and it invariably occurred to him that he had never seen, either in painting or life, a face that so completely came up to his notion of a demon. But I must make you, as briefly as possible, acquainted with my father, who is the real hero of my tale. He was a remarkable man, a self-taught painter, seeking principles in his own mind, and elaborating, without master or school, rules and laws of art, led onward by the mere thirst for excellence, and advancing, under the influence of causes which he himself, perhaps, could not have defined, along a path marked out for him only in his own mind. He was one of those children of genius whom contemporaries so often stigmatise as ignorant, because they have struck out a track for themselves, and whose ardour is to be chilled neither by censure nor failures; whence, on the contrary, they derive fresh vigour and courage. Aided only by his own lofty instincts, he attained to the true understanding of what historical painting should be. Scriptural subjects, the last and loftiest step of high art, chiefly occupied his pencil. Free from the feverish irritable vanity and paltry envy so common amongst artists, he was a firm, upright, honourable man, a little rough and unpolished in externals—the husk rather rugged—and with a share of honest pride and independent feeling which sometimes imparted to his manner an air of mingled bluntness and condescension. 'I care nothing for your fine folks,' he would say. 'I don't work for them. I don't paint drawing-room pictures. Those who understand my work best reward me for it. I do not blame fashionable people for not understanding art: how should they? They understand their cards; they are judges of wine and horses. 'Tis enough. When they do pick up a crude notion or two on the subject of painting, they become intolerable by their assumption. I prefer, a thousand times, the man who honestly confesses he knows nothing about art, to your ignoramus who comes in with a solemn affectation of connoisseurship, claiming to be a judge, talking about things he does not understand, and consequently talking nonsense.' By no means a covetous man, my father painted



for very modest remuneration, contented to earn sufficient for the support of his family, and for providing the means of exercising his art. Generous in the extreme, his hand was ever open to less successful artists. Imbued with a fervent and profound sense of religion, it was that, perhaps, which enabled him to communicate to the faces he painted an elevation of religious sentiment that the most brilliant pencils often fail to give. In course of time, and aided by obstinate industry and unflinching perseverance, his talent attracted the attention and commanded the respect even of those who had at first sneered at him as a *home-made* artist. He received numerous orders for altar-pieces and other church pictures, and laboured incessantly. One picture, in particular, engaged his closest attention. The subject I forget, but I know that the great enemy of mankind was to be introduced. Long did my father meditate on this figure; he desired to embody in the countenance the expression of every evil passion that afflicts fallen humanity. Whilst reflecting on the subject, and conjuring up horrible countenances in his imagination, the strange features of the mysterious money-lender frequently recurred to him; and, as often as they did so, he said to himself, 'The usurer would be a fine model for my Devil.' One day, whilst he was busy planning his great work, and making sketches, with which he had difficulty in pleasing himself, there was a knock at his studio door, and the next instant, to his infinite astonishment, the usurer entered the room. My father has since told me that on beholding him he felt an inexplicable chill and shudder come over his whole frame.

[Pg 480]

"You are an artist?" said the intruder, abruptly.

"I am," replied my father, and wondered what was coming next.

"I want my portrait painted. I have not long to live. I have no children, and I do not wish to die altogether. Can you paint a portrait of me that shall be exactly like life?"

"My father reflected for a moment. 'Nothing could be more opportune,' thought he to himself; 'he comes of his own accord to sit to me for my Devil.' And he at once agreed to satisfy his singular visitor. Hour and price were stipulated, and the next day, my father, bearing palette and brushes, repaired to the abode of his new sitter. The gloomy court-yard, surrounded by high walls; the watch-dogs; the iron doors and shutters; the arched windows; the huge coffers, covered with strange, outlandish-looking carpets; and, above all, the grim, gloomy visage of the master of the house, seated immovable before him,—all these conspired to produce a strong impression on his mind. The windows were closed and darkened; a single pane in the upper part of one of them admitted a strong ray of light. My father forgot the strange repute of his sitter in zeal for his art. 'How splendidly the fellow's face is lighted up!' he thought to himself, and set to work with furious eagerness, as though fearful of losing the favourable moment. 'What vigour! what light and shade!' he exclaimed, inaudibly. 'If I can get him in only half as vigorously as he sits there, the portrait will beat every thing I have done: he will walk out of the canvass. What extraordinary features; what depth in the lines and furrows! he repeated to himself, redoubling his fervour at every stroke, as he observed trait after trait rapidly transferring itself to the canvass. But, whilst proceeding with his work, he insensibly became aware of a strange feeling of oppression and uneasiness that crept over him, he knew not how or wherefore. Disregarding it, he persisted in following, with the strictest fidelity and most scrupulous care, every line, and tone, and shade in the extraordinary countenance of his model. To the eyes he gave his chief attention. At first they nearly made him despair. So peculiar and penetrating was their expression, so unlike were they to any eyes he had ever encountered, that it seemed an almost hopeless task to attempt to render them in a picture. Nevertheless he persevered, resolved, at whatever cost of pains and time, to follow them in their minute details, and thus to penetrate, if possible, the mystery and secret of their expression. But whilst engaged in this work, whilst diving, as it were, with his pencil, into the recesses of those mysterious orbs, the uneasiness he had before felt rapidly increased, and there arose in his soul such an inexplicable loathing, such an overpowering sensation of vague horror, that he was several times obliged to suspend his work, and it was only by a violent effort he could bring himself to resume it. At last this unaccountable feeling fairly mastered him; he could no longer bear to look upon those horrible eyes, whose demon-like gaze filled him with dismay. He closed the sitting. But the next day, and the one after that, the same thing occurred; after painting for a short time he invariably became agitated, excited, and unable to proceed. Each day these sensations increased in strength, until they became positive torture, and at last my father threw down his brush, declaring he would paint no more. Extraordinary was the effect produced upon the mysterious usurer by this declaration. By the most touching and humble entreaties, and by promises of munificent reward, he essayed, but in vain, to induce my father to retract his decision and resume his task. He even prostrated himself before him and implored him to terminate the picture, saying that upon its completion hung his fate, and his very existence. And then he threw out dark and confused hints of supernatural agency, by which, if his living features were once faithfully represented, his soul would be in some sort transferred to the portrait, and be saved from complete annihilation, or a yet worse doom. Terror-stricken at these strange and fearful words, my father threw down pencil and palette and rushed from the house. He could not sleep that night for meditating on this occurrence. The next morning he received back the unfinished portrait, brought to his house by an old woman, the only human being who lived with the usurer. She left also a message, that her master returned the portrait, because he did not want and would not pay for it. A few hours afterwards, on going out, my father learned that the usurer of the Kolómna had died that morning. There was a mystery in all this which my father neither was able nor desired to solve.

[Pg 481]

"Dating from that day, a perceptible and unfavourable change took place in my father's character. Without apparent cause he became irritable, restless, and unhappy, and a very short

time elapsed before he became guilty of an act of which none supposed him capable. About this period, the works of one of his pupils had attracted the attention of a small circle of judges and amateurs of art. My father from the first had perceived and appreciated this young man's talent, and had shown himself particularly well-disposed towards him. Suddenly, as if by a spell, envy and hatred were generated in his mind. The general interest excited by the pupil became intolerable to the master, who could not hear with patience the name of the rising genius. At length, to fill up the measure of his mortification, he learned that the young man had been preferred to paint a picture for a splendid church then just completed. This drove my father frantic. Previously the most upright and honourable of men, he now condescended to the pettiest intrigues and manœuvres—he who, up to that time, had regarded with horror and contempt all that bore the semblance of intrigue. By dint of caballing, he succeeded in obtaining an open competition for the work in question; whoever chose, was at liberty to send in his picture, and the best would obtain the preference. Having brought this about, he secluded himself in his studio and applied himself to the task with intense ardour, summoning up all his great energy, skill, and experience of art. As was to be expected, the result was one of his very finest pictures. As a work of art, it was unquestionably the best. When my father saw it placed beside those of the other competitors, a smile of triumph curled his lip, and he entertained no doubt that his would be the picture chosen to adorn the altar. The committee appointed to decide arrived, and cast approving glances at my father's painting. Before giving their verdict, however, they proceeded to examine it minutely, and at last, one of the members—an ecclesiastic of high rank, if I remember rightly—waved his hand to secure the attention of his fellow-judges, and spoke thus: 'The picture presented by this artist,' he said, 'has undoubtedly very high merit as a mere work of art; but it is unsuited to the place and purpose for which it was designed. Those countenances have nothing sacred or holy in their expression. On the contrary, you may discern in every one of them, and especially in the eyes, the traces, more or less modified, of some evil passion, a something unhallowed and almost fiendish.' Struck by this observation, all present looked at the picture: it was impossible to deny the justice of the criticism. My father rushed furiously forward eager to deny and disprove the unfavourable judgment. But he saw for the first time, with feelings of intense horror, that he had given to almost all his countenances the eyes of the money-lender. They all looked out of the canvass with such a devilish and abominable stare, that he himself could scarcely help shuddering. The picture was rejected, and, with unspeakable rage and envy, he heard the prize awarded to his former pupil. He returned home in a state of mind worthy of a demon. He abused and even ill-treated my poor mother, who sought to console him for his disappointment, drove his children brutally from him, broke his easel and brushes, tore down from the wall the portrait of the money-lender, called for a knife, and ordered a fire to be instantly lighted, intending to cut up the picture and burn it. In this mood he was found by a friend, a painter like himself, a careless, jovial dog, always in good-humour, untroubled with ambition, working gaily at whatever he could get to do, and loving a good dinner and merry company.

[Pg 482]

"'What the deuce are you at? what are you about to burn?' said he, going up to the portrait. 'Why, are you mad? This is one of your very best pictures! The old money-lender, I declare. By Jove! an exquisite thing! Admirably hit off! you have caught the old fellow's eyes to perfection. One would almost swear you had transplanted them from the head to the picture. They look out of the canvass.'

"'We'll see how they look in the fire,' said my father surlily, making a movement to thrust the picture into the grate.

"'Stop, stop!' cried his friend, checking his arm. 'Give it me, rather than burn it.' My father was at first unwilling, but at last consented; and the jolly old painter, enchanted with his acquisition, carried off the portrait.

"The picture gone, my father felt himself more tranquil. 'It seemed,' he said, 'as if its departure had taken a load off his heart.' He was astonished at his recent conduct, at the malice and envy that had filled his soul. The more he reflected, the stronger became his sorrow and repentance. 'Yes,' he at last exclaimed, with sincere self-reproach, 'God has punished me for my sins; my picture was really a shameful and abominable thing. It was inspired by the wicked hope of injuring a fellow-man, and a brother artist. Hatred and envy guided my pencil; what better feelings could I expect it to portray?' Without a moment's delay he went in search of his former pupil, embraced him affectionately, entreated his forgiveness, and did all in his power to efface from the young man's mind the remembrance of his offence. Once more his days glided on in peaceful and contented toll, although his face had assumed a pensive and melancholy expression, previously a stranger to it. He prayed more frequently and fervently, was more often silent, and spoke less bluntly and roughly to others; the rugged suffice of his character was smoothed and softened.

"A long time had elapsed without his seeing or hearing any thing of the friend to whom he had given the portrait, and he was one day about to go out and inquire after him, when the man himself entered the room. But his former joviality of manner was gone. He looked worn and melancholy, his checks were hollow, his complexion pale, and his clothes hung loosely upon him. My father was struck with the change, and inquired what ailed him.

"'Nothing now,' was the reply: 'nothing since I got rid of that infernal portrait. I was wrong, my friend, not to let you burn it. The devil fly away with the thing, say I! I am no believer in witchcraft and the like, but I am more than half persuaded some evil spirit is lodged in the portrait of the usurer.'

"What makes you think so?" said my father.

"The simple fact, that from the very first day it entered my house, I, formerly so gay and joyous, became the most anxious melancholy dog that ever whined under a gallows. I was irritable, ill-tempered, disposed to cut my own throat, and every body else's. My whole life through, I had never known what it was to sleep badly. Well, my sleep left me, and when I did get any, it was broken by dreams. Good Heavens! such horrible dreams; I could not bring myself to believe they were mere dreams, ordinary nightmares. I was sometimes nearly stifled in my sleep; and eternally, my good sir, the old man, that accursed old man, flitted about me. In short, I was in a pitiable state, lost flesh and appetite, and cursed the hour I was born. I crawled about, as if drunk or stupid, tormented with a vague incessant fear, a dread, and anticipation of something frightful about to happen, of some uncommon danger besetting me at every turn. At last, I bethought me of the portrait, and gave it away to a nephew of mine, who had taken a great fancy to it. Since then I have been much relieved; I feel as if a great stone had been rolled off my heart; I can sleep and eat, and am recovering my former spirits. It was a rare devil you cooked up there, my boy!"

[Pg 483]

"My father listened to his friend's confession with the closest attention.

"The portrait, then, is now in your nephew's possession?" he at last inquired.

"My nephew's! No, no! He tried it, but could stand it no better than your humble servant. Assuredly the spirit of the old usurer has transmigrated into the picture. My nephew declares that he walks out of the frame, glides about the room; in short the things he tells me, pass human understanding and belief. I should have taken him for a madman, if I had not partly experienced the thing myself. He sold the picture to some dealer or other; and the dealer could not stand it either, and got it off his hands."

"This narrative made a deep impression upon my father. About this time he became subject to long fits of abstraction, and incessant reveries, which gradually turned to hypochondria. At last, he was firmly convinced that his pencil had served as an instrument to the evil spirit; that a portion of the usurer's vitality had actually passed into the picture, which thus continued to torment and persecute its possessors, inspiring them with evil passions, tempting them from the paths of virtue and religion, rousing in their breasts feelings of envy and malice and all uncharitableness. A great misfortune which afflicted him shortly after, the loss, by a contagious disorder, of his wife, daughter, and infant son, he accounted a judgment of heaven upon his sin. He determined to quit the world, and devote himself to religion and prayer. I was then nine years of age. He placed me in the Academy of Arts, wound up his affairs, and retired to a remote convent, where he shortly afterwards assumed the tonsure. There, by the severity of his life, and by the unwearied punctuality with which he fulfilled the rules of his order, he struck the whole brotherhood with surprise and admiration. The superior of the monastery, hearing of his skill as a painter, requested him to execute an altar-piece for the convent chapel. But the devout brother declared that his pencil had been polluted by a great sin, and that he must purify himself by mortification and long penance, before he could dare apply it to a holy purpose. He then, of his own accord, gradually increased the austerity of his monastic life. At last, the utmost privations he could inflict on himself appearing to him insufficient, he retired, with the blessing of the superior, to court solitude in the desert. There he built himself a hermitage out of the branches of trees, lived on uncooked roots, dragged a heavy stone with him wherever he went, and stood from sunrise to sunset with his hands uplifted to heaven, fervently praying. His penances and mortifications were such as we find examples of only in the lives of the saints. For many years he followed this austere manner of life, and his brethren at the convent had given up all hopes of again seeing him, when one day he suddenly appeared amongst them. 'I am ready,' he said, firmly and calmly to the superior: 'with the help of God, I will begin my task.' The subject he selected was the Birth of Christ. For a whole year he laboured incessantly at his picture, without leaving his cell, nourishing himself with the coarsest food, and rigid in the fulfilment of his religious duties. At the end of that time the picture was completed. It was a miracle of art. Neither the brethren nor the superior were profound critics of painting, but they were awe-struck by the extraordinary sublimity of the figures. The sentiment of divine tranquillity and mildness in the Holy Mother, bending over the Infant Jesus—the profound and celestial intelligence in the eyes of the Babe—the solemn silence and dignified humility of the three Wise Men prostrate at His feet—the holy, unspeakable calm breathed over the whole work—the combined impression of all this was magical. The brethren bowed the knee before the picture, and the superior, deeply affected, pronounced a blessing on the artist. 'No mere human art,' he said, 'could have produced a picture like this. A power from on high has guided thy pencil, my son, and the blessing of heaven has descended on the work of thy hands.'

[Pg 484]

"About this time I finished my education in the Academy; I received the gold medal, and at the same time saw realised the delicious hope of being sent to Italy—the cherished dream of the boy-artist. Before departing, I wished to take leave of my father, whom I had not seen for twelve years. I had heard divers reports of the extreme austerity of his life, and expected to see the withered figure of a hermit, worn-out, exhausted, macerated with fast and vigil. My astonishment was great when I beheld my father. No trace of exhaustion was on his countenance, which beamed with a joy whose source was not of this world. A beard as white as snow, and long thin hair of silvery hue floated picturesquely down his breast and along the folds of his black robe, and descended even to the cord girding his monastic gown. Before we parted, I received from his lips precepts and counsels for the conduct of my life and for my guidance in art—precepts I have religiously remembered, and which will ever remain indelibly engraven on my soul. Three days I abode near him; on the third, I went to ask his blessing before my departure for the artist's home,

the distant and much-desired shores of Italy. Already, in the course of our long communings, he had told me the story of his life, especially dwelling on the remarkable passage I have just related. 'My son, these were his last words, 'my conscience, tranquillised in great measure by years of prayer and penitence, has yet its uneasy moments, when I recall the circumstances connected with that portrait. I have been told that it still passes from hand to hand, occasioning misery to many, exciting feelings of envy and hatred, fostering unlawful desires and unholy thoughts. By the memory of thy mother, and by the love thou bearest me, I entreat thee, my son, truly and faithfully to perform my last request. Seek out that portrait; sooner or later you must find it; you cannot fail to recognise it by the strange expression, and by the extraordinary fire and vividness of the eyes. Purchase it, at whatever cost, and commit it to the flames! So shall my blessing prosper thee, and thy days be long in the land.'

"How could I refuse the pledge thus touchingly required by the venerable old man? Throwing myself into his arms, I swore by the silver locks that flowed over his breast, faithfully to do his bidding. We live in a positive age, and believers in any thing bordering on the supernatural grow each day rarer. But my path was plain before me; I had promised, and must perform. For fifteen years I have devoted a certain portion of each, to a search for the mysterious picture, with constant ill-success, until to-day—at this auction."

Here the artist, suspending his sentence, turned towards the wall where the portrait had hung. His movement was imitated by his hearers, who, looked round in search of the wonderful picture, concerning which they had just been told so strange a tale. But the portrait was no longer there. A murmur of surprise, almost of consternation, ran through the throng.

"Stolen!" at last exclaimed a voice. And stolen the picture doubtless had been. Some dexterous thief, profiting by the profound attention with which the eyes of all were fixed upon the narrator, whilst all ears, drank in his singular story, had managed to take down and carry off the portrait. The company remained plunged in perplexity, almost doubting whether they had really seen those extraordinary eyes, or whether the whole thing were not a fantasy, a vision, the phantom of a brain heated and fatigued by the long examination of a gallery of old pictures.

[Pg 485]

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [24] A kind of bazaar or perpetual market, where second-hand furniture, old books and pictures, earthenware, and other cheap commodities, are exposed for sale in small open booths.
- [25] A personage who figures, like two or three others afterwards alluded to, in the popular legends and fairy tales of Russia.
- [26] Twenty-five rubles.
- [27] A silver coin, about the size of a shilling, the quarter of a silver ruble (*und e nomen*) worth ninepence.
- [28] The officer commanding the police of the quarter.
- [29] The Russian house-spirit. This "lubber fiend" is frequently the popular name of the nightmare.
- [30] The "was-ist-das," a single pane of glass fixed in a frame, to admit of its being opened, very necessary in a climate where double casements are fixed during eight months out of the year.

---

## HOUNDS AND HORSES AT ROME.

### ENGLISH KENNEL.

"The Dog-Star rages!"—POPE.

To do at Rome as the Romans do, is an adage which we English can no longer apply to our proceedings in that city; we now reverse this, and carrying thither our games, field-sports, and other whimsies, not only practise these ourselves, but would impose them upon her senate and people; for a senate she still has, and the Romans take a strange pleasure in exhibiting, on state occasions, the well-known letters, which tell of formerly allied, but long since departed glories. What would her ancient senate, the stern descendants of the wolf-nursed twins—

"Curius quid sentit, et ambo Scipiadae?—"

have said to the subserviency of their present *mis*-representatives, who go forth, not to give races, but to witness the feats of barbarian jockeyship, on a turf that once resounded only to the hoofs of their own favourite racers;

"Whose easy triumph and transcendent speed  
Palm after palm proclaimed; whilst Victory,  
In the horse circus, stood exulting by."<sup>[31]</sup>

If the senator Damisippus once received such a castigation at the hands of the bard of Aquinum, for merely driving his own phaeton at noon, and for nodding *varmintly* to a friend as he passed,

have dealt with you, Princes Borghese and Cesarini, Doria and Colonna, who, changing your long robes for the scarlet jacket, (worse than any *Trechidipna*), have learned to vie with each other in acquiring a field-note, of which Alaric had been proud, to strive for precedence in a fox-hunt, and to glory more in winning his brush, than ever did your ancestors on wresting a trophy from the Sicambri. But, thanks to Popes who have wisely prohibited satirists and satire, ye are free to follow, unscathed by the Iambic muse, this or any other pastime you please, however unsuited in character to the dignity of your descent. To one merely paying a transitory visit to Rome in the grand tour of twenty years ago, it might not have occurred as a likely contingency that a pack of English fox-hounds should be one day kennelled close up to her gates; but to him who witnessed the sporting monomania of some of our countrymen, and the difficulty they found (having nothing else to *kill*) in killing *time*, it would never have seemed improbable. The enthusiasm which every one, gets up for the Coliseum, or the Arch of Titus, generally expends itself on the spot, and is not afterwards to be resuscitated. This leads many during a six weeks' sojourn in the eternal city, (which seems to them already an eternity), to ask themselves, with Fabricius, their business there; while some, following his example still farther, leave it in disgust. Till certain very recent arrangements had been completed for his equipment, no one's position was more to be compassionated—if you adopted his own view of it—than that of the English sportsman; it was really lamentable to hear him describe, while it would occasionally prompt a smile to see his expedients, to relieve it. Finding little that was congenial to his tastes or his talents in the arts or the society of the place, he would sometimes seek to abridge the tedium and length of his stay at Rome, by episodes of lark-shooting at Subiaco, or by looking after wild-boars at Ostia; and some, to whom hunting was indispensable, would hire dogs and make them chase *each other*, while they harked on the ragged pack, on the best hacks they could procure for the purpose. This, however, which might have proved excellent sport had the dogs always chosen to run properly, was oft-times tried and relinquished, in consequence of a practical difficulty, originating in the pack itself, which refused to supply from its ranks the necessary *quota* of amateur hares required by the riders. By this token, it was high time something should be done! At length the auspicious day dawned when the sporting world (already on the alert to contrive less unturf-like proceedings than the last mentioned) was agreeably saved from the embarrassment of further thought on the subject, by a spirited announcement, noticed with becoming gratitude in *Galignani*, from Lord C — that he had actually sent for his dogs from England. No time was lost; the groom, despatched in haste with the necessary instructions, returned within six weeks, leaving the kennel and *canaille* that accompanied it only a few days behind on the road. One morning, shortly after, it was announced at the Vatican, that a pack of hungry hounds was at the Popolo Gate, barking for admittance, and apparently threatening to eat up the whole Apostolic Doganieri if they kept them much longer. The matter pressed: a deputation of Englishmen waited on the governor, requesting permission for the establishment of a kennel in a spot already fixed upon for the purpose, (it was somewhere about the site where Constantine's mother was buried, and where, by tradition, Nero's ghost is supposed to brood, beyond the Pons Nomentana, and the Sacred mount); and having obtained the desired leave, the dogs were at once established in their new settlement. When they had recovered the fatigues of their journey, a notice was posted up, advertising the first "throw off" for the next day. On this occasion they hunted an old fox round the Claudian Aqueduct, into the body of which, on getting over his surprise, he scoured a retreat, thus baffling the pursuers. The next field-day his successor was not so fortunate, losing both brush and life at the end of a long run. The third was distinguished by the feat of a Roman prince, who contrived to be in at the death, and received the brush for his encouragement. After this the weekly obituary of foxes increased permanently in number. Meanwhile a few dogs disappeared in subterranean mystery, awkward falls occurred, wrists and ankles were dislocated; but no brains spilt. At last forty persons, having nothing better to do with themselves, agree to meet regularly twice a-week and to set up a subscription. While it is yet early in the winter, dogs come dropping in by couples, from various well-wishers in England; while large orders in the shape of scarlet coats and hunting-caps, duly executed and forwarded, are stopped at the Dogana Apostolica, and after a suitable demur on account of the Cardinalesque colour, allowed to pass, on paying a handsome duty. These *liveries* at first produced a great sensation in Rome, not only amongst the hierarchy, who were jealous of the profanation, but with the populace, both within and without the walls: from the prince to the peasant, every body had something to say about them. As they paced along the streets the men stared in silent admiration, while the women clapped their hands and cried, "*Guardi! Guardi!*" When they trotted out to cover, the delighted swine-herd whistled to his pigs to make way for them to pass; while the mounted buffalo-driver, from some crag above the road, would point them out with his long-spiked pole, to the man in the sheepskin who was on foot. We do not know what comments *these* might make, but those of the Roman townfolk were by no means in keeping with the flattering admiration they expressed. "What a gay livery!" said a Roman citizen, emerging from the Salara Gate, as a detachment of the "red-coats" was turning in. "Cazzo! how well they ride, and what a number too!" "Yes," said his friend at our elbow; "to whom do they belong—*a chi appartengono?*" "'Tis the livery of a Russian prince who came last week to Rome, and has put up at Serny's," said the other, affecting to know all about it. "Well, to my mind, they beat Prince Torlonia's postilions out-and-out." "*Altro*—I agree with you there; *ma abbia pazienza*—wait a bit, and depend on it our Prince, when he has seen them, will not be long in taking the hint!" We hope he will; for, however we may elsewhere admire a mounted field, *here* it shocks every notion of propriety. That fox-hunters should have their *meeting* where the Fabii met; Gell's map of Rome's classic topography be studied, with no other reference than to

*runs*; and Veii be scared in her lofty citadel by the cry of hounds and harum-scarum fellows sweeping along her ravines, are evident improprieties; while the having all one's senses assailed and offended together by the scent of highly-ammoniated bandy-legged fellows in fustian or corduroy, (their necessary satellites,) who inundate street and piazza with the slang of the London mews, is something still worse.

"Quoi! Venue d'un peuple roi,  
Toi, reine encore du monde!"

Thou who hast taken the lead by turns, in legislature, literature, and the fine arts, doomed at last to become the sovereign seat for hunting—the Melton Mowbray of the South! May thy *genius loci* forbid it; may thy goddess of fever visit the hounds in one of her ugliest types; λοιμος or λιμος destroy them; old Tiber rise with his yellow waves to drown, catacombs yawn to engulf, and aqueducts fall to crush them! Or, should inanimate nature disregard our row, two other hopes remain: the one, that the foxes, made aware by this time of the love with which the Roman princes contemplate *il loro brush*, will send them a yearly tribute of a certain number of these appendages, on condition that they forthwith dismiss the dogs; the other, that the Dominicans, who are well known to be jealous of our movements, will come to regard hunting as an heretical sport, especially as here practised by Protestant dogs and riders—and in Lent, too, against orthodox foxes—and persuade the Pope to abolish it!

### THE STEEPLE-CHASE.

In that grassy month of the Campagna, ere the sun has seared the standing herbage into hay—when anemones, cyclamens, crocuses, and Roman hyacinths, as prescient of the coming heat, lose no time in quickening, and burst out suddenly in myriads to cover the plain with their loveliness; while the towering *ferula* conceals the sandy rock whence it springs, with its delicate tracery yet unspiced by the solar rays; and the stately teal, bending under the clutch of goldfinch and linnets, or recoiling as they spurn it, in quest of their butterfly-breakfast, has still some sap in its veins. Early on one of the most exhilarating mornings of this truly delicious season, (alas, how brief in its continuance!) we are awaked by unusual sounds in the street. These proceeded from the young Romans vociferating to their friends to bestir themselves to procure places at the steeple-chase programmed for this 14th of March. An hour before Aurora had opened her *porte cochère* to Phoebus, and those sleek piebald coursers whose portraits are to be seen in the Ludovisi and Ruspigliosi palaces, all the vetturini and cabmen of Rome had already opened *theirs*; and while some were adjusting misfitting harness to every specimen of horseflesh that could be procured for the occasion, others were trundling out from their black recesses in stable and coach-house, every mis-shapen vehicle that permitted of being fastened to their backs, in order to proceed out of the Porta Salara betimes. By six all Rome was awake, and by seven, in motion towards the race-course. On that memorable morning artists forewent their studies, the Sapienza its wisdom, the Roman college its theology; shopkeepers kept their windows closed; Italian masters barouched with their pupils, mouthed Ariosto, and seemed highly delighted; while the professions of law and physic sent as many of their members as public safety could spare. In short, it had been long ago settled that all the world would be present; and all the world was present, sure enough, and long before the time. It was a lively and a pleasing spectacle, to which novelty lent another charm, when, about two miles beyond the Salara gate, we looked from our double-lined procession of Broughams and Britskas, fore and aft, and saw, for miles, scattered over that usually deserted plain, groups of peasants in the gay costumes of the adjacent villages, now animating it in every direction; some emerging from under the arches of aqueducts, or the screen of ruined columbaria, alternately lost to sight and again rising above those abrupt dips in which the ground abounds, all tending in one direction, all bent on one object. At length our carriage, (which has been intimating its purpose shortly to stop,) pulls up definitely, and Joseph, having already told us that he can neither move backward nor forward, touches his hat for orders. On such an occasion, we resigned ourselves to wait, without any feeling of impatience, finding sufficient amusement, both from the distant prospect and in the immediate vicinity; sometimes watching the wheeling of those sporting characters, the Peregrine Hawks overhead, now listening to the warbling of the loudest lark music we ever remember to have heard; then exchanging a few words with some roadside acquaintance, and anon giving ourselves up exclusively to the silent enjoyment of the weather. We were kept long enough in all conscience, waiting till even the quietly expectant Romans, drilled by their church into habits of great forbearance, at length began to murmur aloud disapprobation, and we could hear one coachman ask another "*Quando quel benidetto stippel-chess*" was to be; while the respondent, shrugging his shoulders, growled out for answer a "*Chi lo sa!*" Meanwhile our attention was fitfully resuscitated by a rider in costume doing a bit of turf, by an unsaddled racer led across the ground, or by men on horseback carrying small flags to stake at the different leaps; sometimes by an English oath, startling the *Genius loci* or whoever heard it; or more agreeably by a display of voluble young countrywomen, standing tiptoe on their carriage seats, eager to see the first fall, and permitting the young men who swaggered by to scare them into the prettiest attitudes of dismay, by a prophetic announcement of the bones that would be broken before the race was won. Some little buzz there is about unfairness and jockeyship, when we catch, from the mouth of our Anglo-Roman livery-stable-man, who chanced to be near, that "the osses is a-saddling." It took long to saddle; long to mount; and some time still before they started, during which interval

[Pg 488]

"The jockeys keep their horses on the fret,  
And each gay Spencer prompts the noisy bet,  
Till drops the signal; then, without demur,

Ten horses start,—ten riders whip and spur;  
 At first a line an easy gallop keep,  
 Then forward press, to take th' approaching  
 leap:  
 Abreast go red and yellow; after these  
 Two more succeed; one's down upon his knees;  
 The sixth o'ertops it; clattering go two more,  
 And two decline; now swells the general roar."

And every horse on the right side of the hurdle strives to get his head, and every rider is wiser than to indulge this instinct. Soon another leap presents itself; up they all go and down again,—four close together! Hurrah! blue and yellow! Hurrah! green and red! A third leap, not far from the last, and no refusals! Over and on again. Another! and this time three favourites are abreast, the fourth is a second behind, but may still be in, for he has cleared the fence and is coming up with the others; the motion appears smoother as they recede; the riders, diminished to the size of birds, are still seen gliding on—on:—

"No longer soon their colours can we trace,  
 Lost in the mazy distance of the race  
 Till at Salara's far-off bridge descried,  
 Like coursing butterflies, they seem to glide;  
 Then, dwindling farther, in the lengthening  
 course,  
 Mere floating specks supplant both man and  
 horse;  
 Till, having crossed the Columbarium gray,  
 They swerve, and back retrace their airy way."

At this point of the contest we cross the road—and there far away, two dots, a yellow and a blue one, are seen with increasing distinctness every second; which may be in advance of the other we cannot say, notwithstanding the clearness of the air; they *seem*, from where we stand, in the same line of distance; the coloured dots disappear momentarily behind a slope, and on emerging the yellow is distinctly first; the green not far behind. Where are the others? have they broken their necks? No! there they come, in the rear. They were a little thrown out at the last leap, but two are making ground upon the green usurper; and now they are once more all in full sight and full speed, while the Roman welkin rings to strange sounds! "*Guardi il Verde*;" "*Per me guadagna il Giallo*." "I'll take you two to one on the Maid of the Mill." "Done." "Who's riding the bay-mare?" "Mr A. for Lord G. and a pretty mess he's making of it." "*Das ist wunderbar, nicht wahr?*" "*Ya, gut!*" "*Les Anglais savent manier leurs chevaux, parbleu!*" "I'll be blown if Lord G. don't win after all!" "Well, Miss Smith, I shall call for my gloves to-morrow." "*Bravi tutti quanti!*" "*Cazzo! che cavalli!*" "*Forwartz! Forwartz.*" "*Allons, Messieurs! avancez.*" "*Allez! Allez!*" "*Guardi! Guardi!*" And here a distant shout, fleeter in its journey than the fleetest of the horses that it sped onwards, reaches our ears; another moment brings the two foremost to the last leap, the blue hesitates—the red springs into the air, drops *d'aplomb*, then on again swifter than before. The blue sticks close to him, is near, nearer still; comes up—

[Pg 489]

"Then anxious silence breaks in deafening cries,  
 His whip and spur each desperate rider plies;  
 The prescient coursers foaming, cheek by jowl,  
 Now see the stand and guess th' approaching  
 goal;  
 True to their blood, and frantic still to win,  
 Goaded, they fly, and spent, will not give in;  
 Exactly matched, with fruitless efforts strain  
 In rival speed, a single inch to gain.  
 Once more, the fluttering Spencers urge the  
 goad,  
 Bend o'er their saddles, lift them, light their  
 load  
 Just at the goal—one spur and it is done!  
 The rowel'd *Red* starts forward, and has won!"

After this exploit, the red, green, and yellow liveries could have done what they would with the uninitiated Romans. Captain Cooke's arrival at Otaheite; the first steamer seen on the Nile; the introduction of gun and gunpowder amongst people hitherto hunting or making war with bow and arrow,—are only parallel cases of that enthusiasm mixed with awe, with which the Romans viewed the English gentleman jockeys on this day. They would have been delighted to have it over again six times, but had to learn that races (unlike songs) are never *encored*.

### ROMAN DOGS.

A "dog's life" has become a synonym for suffering; nor does the associating him with another domestic animal (if a second proverbial expression may be trusted) appear to mend his condition; but ill as he may fare with the cat, his position is less enviable when man is co-partner in the ménage, against whose kicks and hard usage should he venture upon the lowest remonstrative growl, he is sure to receive a double portion of both for his pains; and thus it has ever been, for

the condition of a dog cannot have changed materially since the creation. Being naturally domestic in his habits, he was born to that contumely "which patient merit from the unworthy takes," and can never have known a golden age. "Croyez-vous," (demanda quelqu'un à Candide,) "que les hommes ont toujours été rans?" "Croyez-vous," (repliqua Candide,) "que les éperviers ont toujours mangé les pigeons." We entertain no more doubt of the one than of the other, and must therefore applaud the sagacity of Esop's wolf, who, when sufficiently tamed by hunger to think of offering himself as a volunteer dog, speedily changed his mind, on hearing the uses of a collar first fully expounded to him by Trusty. Not that every dog is ill-used; no; for every rule has its exception, and every tyrant his favourite. Man's selfishness here proves a safer ally than his humanity, and oft-times interposes to rescue the dog from those sufferings to which the race is subject. Thus in savage countries, where his strength may be turned to account, size and sinew recommend him to public notice and respect;

[Pg 490]

"—animalia muta  
Quis generosa putat nisi fortia"

while among civilised nations, eccentricity, beauty, cleverness, or love of sport, may establish him a lady's pet or a sportsman's companion. Happy indeed the dog born in the kennel of a park; no canister for his tail, no halter for his neck; physiologists shall try no experiments on his eighth pair of nerves; his wants are liberally supplied; a Tartar might envy him his rations of horseflesh, shut up with congenial and select associates with whom he courses twice a-week,

"Unites his bark with theirs; and through the  
vale,  
Pursues in triumph, as he snuffs the gale."

He enjoys himself thoroughly while in health, and when he is sick a veterinary surgeon feels his pulse, and prescribes for him in dog-Latin! Benign too the star, albeit the "dog star," under which are born those equal rivals in their mistress' heart, the silky-eared spaniel and the black-nosed pug, who sleep at opposite ends of a costly muff, lie on the sofa, bow-wow strangers round the drawing-room, and take their daily airing in the park! Nor are the several lots of the spotted dog from Denmark, who adds importance to his master's equipage; of the ferocious bull-dog, the Frenchman's and the butcher's friend; or of the quick-witted terrier from Skye, less enviable. But where caprice or interest do not plead for the dog, his condition is universally such as fully to justify the terms in which men speak of it. To see this exemplified, observe the misery of his *life* and *death*, in a country where he is neither petted nor employed. Throughout Italy, and particularly in Rome, (where we now introduce him to the reader,) he lives "to find abuse his only use;" to be hunted, and not to hunt; now dropping from starvation without the gates, and now the victim of poison within. Ye unkennelled scavengers of the Pincian Hill,—ye that have no master to propitiate the good Saint Anthony, on his birth-day, to bless, nor priest to asperse you with holy water, (in consequence of which omissions, no doubt, your plagues multiply upon you)—poor friendless wanderers, who come up to every lonely pedestrian, at once to remind him that it is not good for man to be alone, and to alleviate his solitude with your company; good-natured, rough, ill-favoured dogs, with whom our acquaintance has been extensive, dull indeed would the Pincian appear, were it deprived of your grotesque forms and awkward but well-meant gambols! The life of a Campagna sheep-dog, kept half starved in the sight of mutton which he dare not touch, is hard enough, but that of the members of this large, unowned republic more so. Hungry and gaunt as she-wolves, but with none of their fierceness, these poor animals seek the city gates, and, molesting nobody, find a foul and precarious subsistence from the *Immondezze* of the streets; but when their condition and appearance are improved, and they are beginning to think of an establishment, the fatal edict goes forth; nux vomica is triturated with liver, and the treacherous *bocconi* are strewn upon the dirt-heaps where they resort; the unsuspecting animals greedily devour the only meal provided for them by the State, and in a few hours experience the anguish of the slowly killing poison; an intense thirst urges them to the fountains, but the water only serves to dilute and render it more potent: their bodies swell, they totter, fall, try to recover their feet, but cannot; then piteously howling are carried off in the height of a titanic convulsion. Often on returning at this season from an evening party, we discern dark receding forms and hear voices too, "visæ canes ululare per umbras," as *they* glide moaning away and are lost in the obscurity of the off streets. Occasionally they anticipate their doom, by premature madness, when the authorities issue orders to use steel, and sometimes fifty will perish in a single night. It is remarkable that notwithstanding these summary proceedings, the canine ranks, as Easter comes round again, are renewed for fresh destruction. Some few dogs of superior cunning contrive from year to year to elude these "*Editti fulminanti*," which make such havoc among their companions; these, by securing the favour and protection of the soldiers and galley-slaves of the district, obtain besides an occasional meal from the canteens, and plenary indulgence for themselves, and for an unsightly progeny, which they screen from public remark, and bring up amidst the *latebræ* of the brushwood; but aware at the same time of the precarious tenure by which such clandestine concessions must be held, they seek to keep alive the interest, exerted in their behalf, by the exhibition of many strange antics, evidently got up for the occasion, by affecting an extraordinary interest in man and his affairs, which they cannot feel, and by the display of a most obsequious gentleness, humouring, while they play with your favourite dog, and though his superior in strength, lying under on purpose to give him the advantage; but above all, they seek to make interest with the Pincian *bonnes*, whom they readily conciliate by withdrawing the attention of the children from any *collateral* object of interest which may engage theirs. Petted and patted by many little hands, which *bongré malgré* must give up their buns to his voracity, the large quadruped, in return for these snatched courtesies, follows the small urchin,

[Pg 491]



who is learning to trundle his hoop, barking for it to proceed, and stopping when it stops. Any one observing their clever gambols and extreme docility, wishes straightway that their forms were less uncouth, and might next be tempted, as we were, to overlook external disadvantages, and to adopt one of the ragged pack in consideration of mental endowments; the experiment would fail if he made it; these animals resemble the *uneducated* negro, who shows to most advantage in difficulties—well housed, well fed, caressed, and cared for, both forget their master and the part he has taken in securing their prosperity. Stand forth, ungrateful *Frate*, while, for the reader's caution, and your own misconduct, we rehearse your history.

We met Frate at the end of the fever season upon the unhealthy heights of Otricoli; a poor lean beast, with a penetrating gray eye, rough brown coat, a tail with no grace in its rigid half curl, and an untidy grizzly white beard. We had halted to bait the horses, and finding nothing for ourselves, preceded the carriage, and were winding down the steep hill, when he came suddenly upon us through a break in the hedge, and having first looked all around and satisfied himself that no fellow town-dog was in sight, raised his ill-shaped head, barked an unmistakable "*bon giorno*;" then, turning tail on the city of his birth, ran on gambolling a few yards in front, to look back, bark again, and encourage us to proceed. "What an ugly brute! what a *hideous* dog!" but as he engages the attention of our party, these expressions become modified, and before reaching the bottom of the hill, nobody cares about the remains of Otricoli, nor looks any longer at the yellow reaches of the pestiferous Tiber, that was winding far along the plain; the dog alone occupies every thought. "Such a discerning creature! What clever eyes he has! See how well he understands what we are saying about him; suppose we take him on to Rome? We might get his grizzly beard shaved; his rough coat would become sleek after a month's good feeding, his legs could be clipped below the knees. Oh! he is full of capabilities. See! he is now acting Sphinx, and looking up at us, as if he could delve into what is passing in our minds, and would turn these vague suggestions to account." Suddenly he sprang to his feet, barked, and seemed much agitated; in a minute we, too, hear the sound of wheels, which his more acute ear had already caught; as the carriage approached, his excitement increased; at first he only barked back as if to entreat it not to come on so quickly, but as it plainly did not heed his civil remonstrance, the bow-wow became still more earnest in its expostulatory accents. Bōw (long) wōw (short). "Why such haste?" Then he tried his eloquence upon us; and while reiterating his canine *accidente* in his own way at the horses now close at hand, his voice assumes an elegiac whine as he turns to supplicate, in a tone that none accustomed to Italian beggars can mistake; "*non abbandonatemi*," being plainly the purport of its most dolorous and plaintive accents. We hesitate, the carriage draws up, down go the steps, and lo! in a twinkling, our new friend has darted in before us, taken possession, and there he sits ready to kiss our hand. Such audacity was sure to succeed, so, letting him gently down from the steps we left him to follow if he chose. Follow! trust him for that! he bounded along the Appian way, barking to encourage the horses, coquetting with a favourite pony, and winning over our Joseph, by the time we had arrived at *Civita Castellana*, to let him remain in their company for the night. Next morning he starts betimes, nor permits the carriage to overtake him, till all fear of being sent back is removed, by our near approach to Rome. Arrived there, he at once finds his way to the livery stables, and establishes himself permanently with the horses. Throughout the winter, we take with good humour the flippant comments of *flaneurs* and over-fastidious friends, touching the bestowal of our patronage upon such an ill-favoured cur, while we thought ourselves the objects of his gratitude and affection; but Frate's character (we gave him this name from the length of his beard, the colour of his coat, and because he had lived upon alms) did not improve upon acquaintance. One bad trait soon showed itself, he refused to hold communication with the less-favoured dogs of the Pincian, turning a deaf ear to their advances, or if they yet persevered, meeting them with set teeth and an unamiable growl; as he filled out, his regard for his patrons diminished perceptibly; attentions bestowed on a smaller colleague excited his jealousy; and we began to believe the truth of a report circulated to his prejudice, that Frate was really on the look-out for a place where no other dog was kept, and where he might have it all his own way. No longer proud of notice, he seldom sought our society, but was glad to slink off whenever this could be done without observation. Toward the close of the winter, indeed, we were deceived by some renewed advances into the belief of a return of affection, which determined us, when we left Rome, to take him once more in our suite; we soon, however, found out our mistake. Already unprincipled in no ordinary degree, the society of the *cafés* and *table-d'hôtes* at Lucca completed his corruption. His misconduct at last became town-talk, and his misdeeds were in every body's mouth; so, when he had lamed half-a-dozen labourers, scared the whole neighbourhood like a second Dragon of Wantley, and fought sundry battles with dogs as ugly, for Helens scarce better-looking than himself, we yielded to public remonstrance, and removing our protective collar from his unworthy neck, consigned him to a village sportsman, who hoped to turn his fierceness to account in attacking the wild-boar. With him Frate remained for about six weeks, by which time, tiring of the *Cacciatore's* rough handling, he had the temerity, two days before our departure, to present himself again at our door. Too much disgusted to receive him after what had passed, we showed him a whip from an open window, which to a dog of his sagacity was enough; in one instant he was on his legs, and in the next out of sight, but whether to return to the sportsman, or the mountain, or to seek and find a new master to cozen, we never heard, as this was our last visit to Lucca. The lesson inculcated by Frate's misconduct has not been lost upon us; so whenever any queer canine scarecrow now meets us on the Pincian, and by his dejected looks seeks to enlist our sympathy, we cut short the appeal, stare him in the face, and then utter the word "never" with sufficient emphasis to send him off shaking his head, as if a brace of fleas, or a "fulminating edict" from the governor were ringing in both ears.

[Pg 492]

[Pg 493]

## SONG,

FOR THE DINNER GIVEN TO THE EARL OF DALHOUSIE, AT EDINBURGH, 14th SEPTEMBER  
1847, BEFORE HIS PROCEEDING TO INDIA AS GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

BY DELTA.

I.

Long, long ere the thistle was twined with the rose,  
And the firmest of friends now were fiercest of foes,  
The flag of Dalwolsley aye foremost was seen;  
Through the night of oppression it glitter'd afar,  
To the patriot's eye 'twas a ne'er-setting star,  
And with Bruce and with Wallace it flash'd through the fray,  
When "Freedom or Death" was the shout of the day,  
For the thistle of Scotland shall ever be green!

II.

A long line of chieftains! from father to son,  
They lived for their country—their purpose was one—  
In heart they were fearless—in hand they were clean;  
From the hero of yore, who, in Gorton's grim caves,  
Kept watch with the band who disdain'd to be slaves,  
Down to him, with the Hopetoun and Lynedoch that vied,  
Who should shine like a twin star by Wellington's side,  
That the thistle of Scotland might ever be green!

III.

Then a bumper to him in whose bosom combine  
All the virtues that proudly ennoble his line,  
As dear to his country, as stanch to his Queen;  
Nor less that Dalhousie a patriot we find,  
Whose field is the senate, whose sword is the mind,  
And whose object the strife of the world to compose,  
That the shamrock may bloom by the side of the rose,  
And the thistle of Scotland for ever be green!

IV.

It is not alone for his bearing and birth,  
It is not alone for his wisdom and worth,  
At this board that our good and our noble convene;  
But a faith in the blessings which India may draw  
From science, from commerce, religion, and law;  
And that all who obey Britain's sceptre may see  
That knowledge is power—that the truth makes us free;  
For rose, thistle, and shamrock, shall ever be green!

V.

A hail and farewell! it is pledged to the brim,  
And drain'd to the bottom in honour of him  
Who a glory to Scotland shall be and hath been:  
Untired in the cause of his country and crown,  
May his path be a long one of spotless renown;  
Till the course nobly rounded, the goal proudly won,  
Fame, smiling on Scotland, shall point to her son,  
For the thistle—Her thistle!—shall ever be green!

---

## MY FRIEND THE DUTCHMAN.

"And you will positively marry her, if she will have you?"

"Not a doubt of either. Before this day fortnight she shall be Madame Van Haubitz."

"You will make her your wife without acquainting her with your true position?"

"Indeed will I. My very position requires it. There's no room for a scruple. She expects to live on my fortune; thinks to make a great catch of the rich Dutchman. Instead of that I shall spend her salary. The old story; going out for wool and returning shorn."

The conversation of which this is the concluding fragment, occurred in the public room of the Hotel de Hesse, in the village of Homburg on the Hill—an insignificant handful of houses, officiating as capital of the important landgravate of Hesse-Homburg. The table-d'hôte had been over some time; the guests had departed to repose in their apartments until the hour of evening promenade should summon them to the excellent band of music, provided by the calculating liberality of the gaming-house keepers, and to loiter round the *brunnens* of more or less nauseous flavour, the pretext of resort to this rendezvous of idlers and gamblers. The waiters had disappeared to batten on the broken meats from the public table, and to doze away the time till the approach of supper renewed their activity. My interlocutor, with whom I was alone in the deserted apartment, was a man of about thirty years of age, whose dark hair and mustaches, marked features, spare person, and complexion bronzed by a tropical sun, entitled him to pass for a native of southern Europe, or even of some more ardent clime. Nevertheless he answered to the very Dutch patronymic of Van Haubitz, and was a native of Holland, in whose principal city his father was a banker of considerable wealth and financial influence.

It was towards the close of a glorious August, and for two months I had been wandering in Rhineland. Not after the fashion of deluded Cockneys, who fancy they have seen the Rhine when they have careered from Cologne to Mannheim astride of a steam-engine, gaping at objects passed as soon as perceived; drinking and paying for indifferent vinegar as Steinberger-Cabinet, eating vile dinners on the decks of steamers, and excellent ones in the capital hotels which British cash and patronage have raised upon the banks of the flower of German streams. On the contrary, I had early dispensed with the aid of steam, to wander on foot, with the occasional assistance of a lazy country diligence or rickety *einspanner*, through the many beautiful districts that lie upon either bank of the river; pedestrianising in Rhenish Bavaria, losing myself in the Odenwald, and pausing, when occasion offered, to pick a trout out of the numerous streamlets that dash and meander through dell and ravine, on their way to swell the waters of old Father Rhine. At last, weary of solitude—scarcely broken by an occasional gossip with a heavy German boor, village priest, or strolling student,—I thirsted after the haunts of civilisation, and found myself, within a day of the appearance of the symptom, installed in a luxurious hotel in the free city of Frankfort on the Maine. But Frankfort at that season is deserted, save by passing tourists, who escape as fast as possible from its lifeless streets and sun-baked pavements; so, after glancing over an English newspaper at the Casino, taking one stroll in the beautiful garden surrounding the city, and another through the Jew-quarter—always interesting and curious, although any thing but savoury at that warm season,—I gathered together my baggage and was off to Homburg. There I could not complain of solitude, of deserted streets and shuttered windows. It seemed impossible that the multitude of gaily dressed belles and cavaliers, English, French, German, and Russ, who, from six in the morning until sunset, lounged and flirted on the walks, watered themselves at the fountains, and perilled their complexions in the golden sunbeams, could ever bestow themselves in the two or three middling hotels and few score shabby lodging-houses composing the town of Homburg. Manage it they did, however; crept into their narrow cells at night, to emerge next morning, like butterflies from the chrysalis, gay, bright, and brilliant, and to recommence the never-varying but pleasant round of eating, sauntering, love-making, and gambling. Homburg was not then what it has since become. That great house of cards, the new Cursaal, had not yet arisen; and its table-d'hôte, reading-room, and profane mysteries of roulette and rouge-et-noir, found temporary domicile in a narrow, disreputable-looking den in the main street, where accommodation of all kinds, but especially for dinner, was scanty in the extreme. The public tables at the hotels were consequently thronged, and there acquaintances were soon made. The day of my arrival at Homburg I was seated next to Van Haubitz; his manner was off hand and frank, we entered into conversation, took our after-dinner cigar and evening stroll together, and by bed-time had knocked up that sort of intimacy easily contracted at a watering-place, which lasts one's time of residence, and is extinguished and forgotten on departure. Van Haubitz, like many Continentals and very few Englishmen, was one of those free-and-easy communicative persons who are as familiar after twelve hours' acquaintance as if they had known you twelve years, and who do not hesitate to confide to a three days' acquaintance the history of their lives, their pursuits, position, and prospects. I was soon made acquainted, to a very considerable extent, at least, with those of my friend Van Haubitz, late lieutenant of artillery in the service of his majesty the King of Holland. He was the youngest of four sons, and having shown, at a very early age, a wild and intractable disposition, and precocious addiction to dissipation, his father pronounced him unsuited to business, and decided on placing him in the army. To this the *Junker*, (he claimed nobility, and displayed above his arms a species of coronet, bearing considerable resemblance to a fragment of chevaux-de-frise, which he might have been puzzled to prop with a parchment,) had no particular objection, and might have made a good enough officer, but for his reckless, spendthrift manner of life, which entailed negligence of duty and frequent reprimands. Extravagant beyond measure, unable to deny himself any gratification, squandering money as though millions were at his command, he was constantly overwhelmed with debts and a martyr to duns. At last his father, after thrice clearing him with his creditors, consented to do so a fourth time only on condition of his getting transferred to a regiment stationed in the Dutch East Indies, and remaining there until his return had the paternal sanction. To avoid a prison, and perhaps not altogether sorry to leave a country where his credit was bad and his reputation worse, he embarked for Batavia. But any pleasant day-dreams he may have cherished of tropical luxuries,

of the indulgence of a *farniente* life in a grass hammock, gently balanced by Javan houris beneath banana shades, of spice-laden breezes and cool sherbets, and other attributes of a Mahomedan paradise, were speedily dissipated by the odious realities of filth and vermin, marsh-fever and mosquitoes. He wrote to his father, describing the horrors of the place, and begging to be released from his pledge and allowed to return to Holland. His obdurate progenitor replied by a letter of reproach, and swore that if he left Batavia he might live on his pay, and never expect a stiver from the paternal strong-box, either as gift or bequest. To live upon his pay would have been no easy matter, even for a more prudent and economical person than Van Haubitz. He grumbled immoderately, blasphemed like a pagan, but remained where he was. A year passed and he could hold out no longer. Disregarding the paternal menaces and displeasure, and reckless of consequences, he applied to the chief military authority of the colony for leave of absence. He was asked his plea, and alleged ill health. The general thought he looked pretty well, and requested the sight of a medical certificate of his invalid state. Van Haubitz assumed a doleful countenance and betook him to the surgeons. They agreed with the general that he looked pretty healthy; asked for symptoms; could discover none more alarming than regularity of pulse, sleep, appetite, and digestion, laughed in his face and refused the certificate. The sickly cannonier, who had the constitution of a rhinoceros, and had never had a day's illness since he got over the measles at the age of four years, waited a little, and tried the second "dodge," usually resorted to in such cases. "Urgent private affairs" were now the pretext. The general expressed his regret that urgent public affairs rendered it impossible for him to dispense with the valuable services of Lieutenant Van Haubitz. Whereupon Lieutenant Van Haubitz passed half an hour in heaping maledictions on the head of his disobliging commander, and then sat down and wrote an application for an exchange to the authorities in Holland. The reply was equally unsatisfactory, the fact being that Haubitz senior, like an implacable old savage as he was, had made interest at the war-office for the refusal of all such requests on the part of his scapegrace offspring. Haubitz junior took patience for another year, and then, in a moment of extreme disgust and ennui, threw up his commission and returned to Europe, trusting, he told me, that after five years' absence, the governor's bowels would yearn towards his youngest-born. In this he was entirely mistaken; he greatly underrated the toughness of paternal viscera. Far from killing the fatted calf on the prodigal's return, the incensed old Hollander refused him the smallest cutlet, and shutting the door in his face, consigned him, with more energy than affection, to the custody of the evil one. Van Haubitz found himself in an awkward fix. Credit was dead, none of his relatives would notice or assist him; his whole fortune consisted of a dozen gold Wilhelms. At this critical moment an eccentric maiden aunt, to whom, a year or two previously, he had sent a propitiatory offering of a ring-tailed monkey and a leash of pea-green parrots, and who had never condescended even to acknowledge the present, departed this life, bequeathing him ten thousand florins as a return for the addition to her menagerie. A man of common prudence, and who had seen himself so near destitution, would have endeavoured to employ this sum, moderate as it was, in some trade or business, or, at any rate, would have lived sparingly till he found other resources. But Haubitz had not yet sown all his wild-oats; he had a soul above barter, a glorious disregard of the future, the present being provided for. He left Holland, shaking the dust from his boots, dashed across Belgium, and was soon plunged in the gaieties of a Paris carnival. Breakfasts at the Rocher, dinners at the Café, balls at the opera, and the concomitant *petits soupers* and *écarté* parties with the fair denizens of the Quartier Lorette, soon operated a prodigious chasm in the monkey-money, as Van Haubitz irreverently styled his venerable aunt's bequest. Spring having arrived, he beat a retreat from Paris, and established himself at Homburg, where he was quietly completing the consumption of the ten thousand florins, at rather a slower pace than he would have done at that head-quarters of pleasant iniquity, the capital of France. From hints he had let fall, I suspected a short time would suffice to see the last of the legacy. On this head, however, he had been less confidential than on most other matters, and certainly his manner of living would have led no one to suppose he was low in the locker. Nothing was too good for him; he drank the most expensive wines, got up parties and pic-nics for the ladies, and had a special addiction to the purchase of costly trinkets, which he generally gave away before they had been a day in his possession. He did not gamble; he had done so, he told me, once since he was at Homburg, and had won, but he had no faith in his luck, or taste for that kind of excitement, and should play no more. He was playing another game just now, which apparently interested him greatly. A few days before myself, a young actress, who, within a very short time, had acquired considerable celebrity, had arrived at Homburg, escorted by her mother. Fraulein Emilie Sendel was a lively lady of four-and-twenty or thereabouts, possessing a smart figure and pretty face, the latter somewhat wanting in refinement. Her blue eyes although rather too prominent, had a merry sparkle; her cheeks had not yet been entirely despoiled by envious rouge of their natural healthful tinge; her hair, of that peculiar tint of red auburn which the French call a *blond hasardé*, was more remarkable for abundance and flexibility than for fineness of texture. As regarded her qualities and accomplishments, she was good-humoured and tolerably unaffected, but wilful and capricious as a spoiled child; she spoke her own language pretty well, with an occasional slight vulgarism or bit of green-room slang; had a smattering of French, and played the piano sufficiently to accompany the ballads and vaudeville airs which she sang with spirit and considerable freedom of style. I had met German actresses who were far more lady-like off the stage, but there was nothing glaringly or repulsively vulgar about Emilie, and as a neighbour at a public dinner-table, she was amusing and quite above par. As if to vindicate her nationality, she would occasionally look sentimental, but the mood sat ill upon her, and never lasted long; comedy was evidently her natural line. Against her reputation, rumour, always an inquisitive censor, often a mean libeller, of ladies of her profession, had as yet, so far as I could learn, found nothing to allege. Her mother, a dingy old dowager, with bad teeth, dowdy gowns, a profusion of artificial flowers, and a strong addiction to tea and knitting,

perfectly understood the duties of duennaship, and did propriety by her daughter's side at dinner-table and promenade. To the heart of the daughter, Van Haubitz, almost from the first hour he had seen her, had laid persevering and determined siege.

During our after-dinner tête-à-tête on the day now referred to, my friend the cannonier had shown himself exceedingly unreserved, and, without any attempt on my part to draw him out, he had elucidated, with a frankness that must have satisfied the most inquisitive, whatever small points of his recent history and present position he had previously left in obscurity. The conversation began, so soon as the cloth was removed and the guests had departed, by a jesting allusion on my part to his flirtation with the actress, and to her gracious reception of his attentions.

"It is no mere flirtation," said Van, gravely. "My intentions are serious. You may depend Mademoiselle Sendel understands them as such."

"Serious! you don't mean that you want to marry her?"

"Unquestionably I do. It is my only chance."

"Your only chance!" I repeated, considerably puzzled. "Are you about to turn actor, and do you trust to her for instruction in histrionics?"

"Not exactly. I will explain. La Sendel, you must know, has just terminated her last engagement, which was at a salary of ten thousand florins. She has already received and accepted an offer of a new one, at fifteen thousand, from the Vienna theatre. Vienna is a very pleasant place. Fifteen thousand florins are thirty-two thousand francs, or twelve hundred of your English pounds sterling. Upon that stun two persons can live excellently well—in Germany at least."

Unable to contradict any of these assertions, I held my tongue. The Dutchman resumed.

"You know the history of my past life; I will tell you my present position. It is critical enough, but I shall improve it, for here," and he touched his forehead, "is what never fails me. This letter," he produced an epistle of mercantile aspect, bearing the Amsterdam post-mark, "I received last week from my eldest brother. The shabby *schelm* declares he will reply to no more of mine, that his efforts to arrange matters with my father have been fruitless, and that the old gentleman has strictly forbidden him and his brothers to hold any communication with me, a command they seem willing enough to obey. So much for that. And now for the finances."

He took out his pocket-book, opened and shook it, a flimsy crumpled bit of paper fell out. It was a note of the bank of France, for one thousand francs.

"My last," said he. "That gone, I am a beggar. But it won't come to that, either, thanks to Fraulein Emilie."

[Pg 498]

"Surely," said I, "you are too reckless of money, too extravagant and unreflecting. Six months ago, you told me, you had twenty such notes."

"Ay, twenty-two exactly, at the end of January, when I left Amsterdam. But whither was I bound? To Paris; and who can economize there? I've had my money's worth, and could have had no more, had I dribbled the dirty ten thousand florins over three years, instead of three months. I take great credit for making it last so long. Such suppers, and balls, and orgies, with the pleasantest fellows and prettiest actresses in Paris. But the louis-d'or roll rapidly in that sort of society. One must be a Russian prince, or French *feuilletoniste*, to keep it up. I never flinched at any thing so long as the money lasted. Then, when I found myself reduced to the last note, I got into the Frankfort mail, and came to rusticate at this rural roulette table. My next change will be to conjugation and Vienna."

"But if you had only a thousand francs on leaving Paris, and have got them still, how have you lived since?"

"You don't suppose these are the same? There are not many ways of getting through money here, unless one gambles, which I do not; but coin has somehow or other a peculiar aptitude to slip through my fingers, and the thousand francs soon evaporated. Meanwhile, I had written dozens of letters to my brothers, who seldom answered, and to my father, who never did. I promised reform and a respectable life, if they would either get me a snug place with little to do and good pay, or make me a reasonable yearly allowance, something better than the paltry three thousand florins they doled out to me when I was in the artillery, and on which, as I could not live, I was obliged to get in debt. They paid no attention to my request, reasonable as it was. The best offer they made me was five francs a-day, paid weekly, to live in a Silesian village. This was adding insult to injury, and I left off writing to them. A few days afterwards, taking out my purse to pay for cigars, a dollar dropped out. It was my last. I paid it away, walked home, lay down upon my bed, smoked and reflected. My position was gloomy enough, and the more I looked at it, the blacker it seemed. From my undutiful relatives there was no hope; the abominable Silesian project was evidently their ultimatum. I had no friend to turn to, no resource left. I might certainly have obtained the mere necessaries of life at this hotel, where my credit was excellent, and have vegetated for a month or two, as a man must vegetate, without ready money. But I had no fancy for such an expedient, a mere protraction of the agony. I lay ruminating for two hours, two such hours as I should be sorry to pass again, and then my mind was made up. I had a brace of small travelling pistols amongst my baggage; these I loaded and put in my pocket, and then, leaving the hotel and the town, I struck across the country for some distance and plunged into a

wood. There I sat down upon a grass bank, my back against an old beech. It was evening, and the solitary little glade before me was striped with the last sunbeams darting between the tree-trunks. I have difficulty in defining my sensations at that moment. I was quite resolved, did not waver an instant in my purpose, but my head was dizzy, and I had a sickly sensation about the heart. Determined that the physical shrinking from death should not have time to weaken my moral determination, I hastily opened my waistcoat, felt for the pulsations of my heart, placed the muzzle of a pistol where they were strongest, steadying it on that spot with my left hand. Then I looked straight before me and pulled the trigger. There was the click of the lock, but no report; the cap was bad, and had been crushed without exploding. That was a horrible moment. I snatched up another pistol, which lay cocked to my hand, and thrust the muzzle into my mouth. As before, the sharp noise of the hammer upon the nipple was the sole result. The caps had been some time in my possession, and had become worthless through age or damp."

I looked at Van Haubitz, doubtful whether he was not hoaxing me. But hitherto I had observed in him no addiction to the Munchausen vein, and now his countenance and voice were serious; there was a slight flush on his cheek, and he was evidently excited at the recollection of his abortive attempt at suicide,—perhaps a little ashamed of it. I was convinced he told the truth.

[Pg 499]

"I do not know," he continued, "whether, had I had surer weapons with me, I should have had courage to make a third attempt upon my life. Honestly, I think not; the self-preservative instinct was rapidly gaining strength. I walked slowly back to the town, my brain still confused from the agitating moments I had passed. I was unable quite to collect my thoughts, and felt as if I had just awakened from a long heavy sleep. It was now dark; lights streamed from the open windows of the gambling-rooms; the voices of the croupiers, the stir and hum of the players and jingling of money were distinctly heard in the street without. I have already told you I am no gambler, not from scruple, but choice. Nevertheless, I used often to stroll up to the Cursaal for an hour of in evening, when the play was at the highest, to look on and chat with any acquaintances I met. Mechanically, I now ascended the stairs. On the landing-place, I found myself face to face with a man with whom I was slightly intimate, and who, a few evenings before, had borrowed forty francs of me. I had not seen him since, and he now returned me the piece of gold. 'Try your luck with it,' said he; 'there is a run against the bank tonight, every body wins, and M. Blanc looks blue.' And he pointed to one of the proprietors of the tables, who, however, wore a tolerably tranquil air, knowing well that what was carried away one night, would come back with compound interest the next. The play was heavy at the Rouge-et-noir table; a Russian and two Frenchmen—the latter of whom, judging from their appearance, and from the complicated array of calculations on the table before them, were professional gamblers—extracted, at nearly every *coup*, notes or rouleaus of gold from the grated boxes in front of the bankers. I drank a glass of water, for my lips and mouth were dry and hot, and placing myself as near the table as the crowd of players and spectators permitted, watched the game. My hand was in my pocket, the forty-franc piece still between its fingers. But in spite of the advice of him who had paid it me, I felt no disposition to risk the coin; not that I feared to lose it, for as my only one it was useless, but because, as I tell you, I never had the slightest love of gambling or expectation to win.

"A pause occurred in the game. The cards had run out, and the bankers were subjecting them to those complicated and ostentatious shufflings intended to convince the players of the fairness of their dealings. During this operation, the previous silence was exchanged for eager gossip. The game, it appeared, had come out that night in a peculiar manner, very favourable to those who had had *nous* and nerve to avail themselves of it. There had been alternate long runs upon red and black.

"'*Mille noms de Dieu!*' exclaimed a hoarse cracked voice just below me. 'What a series of black! Twenty-two, and only three red! And to be unable to take advantage of it!'

"I looked down, and recognised the gray mustache, wrinkled features, and snuffy black coat with a ribbon of the Legion of Honour, of an old French colonel whom you may have seen limping in and out of the Cursaal, and who ranks amongst the antiquities of Homburg. He served under Napoleon, was shelved at the peace, and has lived since then on a moderate annuity, of which one-fifth procures him the barest necessaries of existence, whilst the other four parts are annually absorbed in the vortex of rouge-et-noir. When gambling-houses were legal at Paris, *le colonel rapé*, the threadbare colonel, as he was called, was one of the most punctual attendants at Frascati's and the Palais Royal. When they were abolished, he commenced a wandering existence amongst the German baths, and finally settled down at Homburg, giving it the preference, as the only place where he could follow his darling pursuit alike in winter and in summer. From the opening to the close of the play he is seen seated at the table, a number of cards, ruled in red and black columns, on the green cloth before him, in which he pricks with pins the progress of the game. That evening he had been unfortunate, and had emptied his pocket, but nevertheless continued puncturing cards with laudable perseverance, of course discovering, like every penniless gambler, that, had he money to stake, he should infallibly make a fortune; predicting what colour would come out, and indulging, when he proved a true prophet, in a little subdued blasphemy because he was unable to profit by his acuteness.

[Pg 500]

"'Extraordinary run! to be sure,' repeated the veteran dicer. 'Twenty-two black, and only three red! There'll be a series of red now: I feel there will, and when I don't play myself, I'm always right. I bet this deal begins with seven red. Who bets a hundred francs to fifty it does not?'

"Nobody accepted this sporting offer, or placed upon the colour which the colonel's prophetic soul foresaw was to come out. The cards were now shuffled and cut for dealing. The hell relapsed

into silence.

"*Faites le jeu, Messieurs!*" was repeated in the harsh business-like tones of the presiding demon.

"Red wins," croaked the colonel. "Seven times at the least."

"Nearly all the players backed the black. By an idle impulse I threw down my forty francs, my entire fortune, upon the red. The old soldier looked round to see the judicious individual who followed his advice, smiled grimly, and nodded approvingly. The next moment red won. I let the money lie, and walked into the next room. Eighty francs were of no more use to me than forty, and I felt very sure that another turn of the card would carry off both stake and winnings. I took up a newspaper, but soon threw it down again, for my head was not clear enough to read, and I felt exhausted with the emotions of the day. I was about to leave the house when I heard a loud buzz in the card-room, and the next instant somebody clutched my arm. It was the French colonel, in a state of furious excitement; grinning, panting, perspiring, and stuttering with eagerness.

"Seven reds!" was all he could say. "Seven reds, Monsieur. Take up your money."

"I hastened to the table. By a strange caprice of fortune, the colonel's prophecy had come true. Red had won seven times, and my forty francs had become five thousand. I took up my winnings, the colonel looking on with a triumphant smile. This was suddenly exchanged for a portentous frown and fierce twist of the gray mustache.

"*Mille millions de tonnerres!* Not a dollar left to follow up that splendid run!" And with a furious gesture, he upset his chair, and dashed his cards upon the ground.

"I took the hint, whether intended or not. I could not do less in return for the five thousand francs the old gentleman had put in my pocket.

"If Monsieur," I said, "will allow me the pleasure of lending him—"

"*Impossible, Monsieur!*" interrupted the colonel, looking as stern as if about to charge single-handed a whole pult of Cossacks. But I knew my man. He was the type of a class of which I have seen many.

"*Cependant, Monsieur, entre militaires,* between brother-soldiers—"

"*Ah! Monsieur est militaire!*" exclaimed the old gentleman, his alarming contraction of brow and rigidity of feature instantaneously dissolving into a smile of extreme benignity. "That alters the case. Certainly, between brothers in arms those little services may be offered and accepted. Although, really, it is encroaching on Monsieur's complaisance ... at the same time ... a hundred francs ... till to-morrow ... quarters at some distance ... &c. &c." which ended in his picking up his chair, cards, and pin, and applying all his faculties to break the bank with ten *louis* which I lent him, and which I need hardly say I have not seen from that day to this.

"Such a sudden stroke of good fortune would have made gamblers of nine men out of ten, but I decidedly want the organ of gaming, for I have never played since. My narrow escape from suicide had made some impression on me, and now that I had five thousand francs in my pocket, I looked back at the attempt as an exceedingly foolish proceeding. For a month or more, I lived with what even you would admit to be great economy, writing frequent letters to Amsterdam, and trying to come to terms and an arrangement with my family. All in vain. They had no confidence in my promises, proposed nothing I could accept, talked of Silesian exile—roots and water in the wilderness—and the like absurdities, until I plainly saw they were determined to cast me off, and that if I was to be helped at all, it must be by myself. How to do this was the puzzle. There are few things I can do, that could in any way be rendered profitable. I can ride a horse, lay a gun, and put a battery through its exercise; but such accomplishments are sufficiently common not to be paid at a very high rate; and besides I had had enough of garrison duty, even could I have got back my commission, which was not very likely. So I put soldiering out of the question; and yet, when I had done so, I was infernally puzzled to think of any thing better. I had no fancy to turn rook, and rove from place to place in search of pigeons—no uncommon resource with younger brothers of an idle turn and exhausted means. I had fallen in with a few birds of that breed, and had come to the conclusion that to save themselves work and trouble, they had adopted by far the most laborious and painful of all professions. In the midst of my doubts and uncertainties, the fair Sendel and her mother made their appearance. The first sight of their names upon the hotel book was a ray of light to me. Within an hour I made up my mind to sacrifice my independence to my necessities, and become the virtuous and domesticated spouse of the charming and well-paid Emilie. A hint and a dollar to the waiter placed me next her at the table-d'hôte, and I immediately opened my intrenchments, and began a siege in due form."

"Which you expect will soon terminate by the capitulation of the garrison?" said I, laughing.

"Undoubtedly. The result of the first day or two's operations was not very satisfactory. I rattled away, and did the amiable to a furious extent; but the divinity was shy, and the guardian of the temple (an old gorgon whom I shall suppress before the honeymoon is out) looked askance at me, and pulled her daughter by the sleeve whenever she seemed disposed to listen. They evidently thought the rattle might belong to a snake; did me the injustice to take me for an adventurer. On the third day, however, the ice had melted. I soon found out the cause of the thaw. The head-waiter, whom a little well-timed liberality had rendered my devoted slave, informed me that Madame Sendel had been making minute inquiries concerning me of the master of the hotel. The

worthy man, who adored me because I despised *vin ordinaire* and looked only at the sum-total of his bills, said that I was a son of Van Haubitz, the rich banker of Amsterdam, which was perfectly true; adding, which was rather less so, that I was a partner in the house, and a *millionaire*. The effect of this information upon the speculative firm of Sendel *Mère et Fille*, was perfectly electric. Medusa smoothed her horrid looks, and came out at that day's dinner in cherry ribands and fresh artificials. Emilie was all smiles and suavity, laughed at my worst jokes, nearly burst her stays by holding her breath to raise a blush at my soft speeches, and returned from that evening's promenade talking about the moon, and leaning with tender *abandon*, on my arm."

"With such encouragement, I am surprised you did not propose at once."

"So hasty a measure—oh, most unsophisticated of Britons!" replied Van, with a look of grave pity for my simplicity—"would have greatly perilled the success of my scheme. Sendel Senior, having only the innkeeper's report to rely upon, would have had her ungenerous suspicions re-awakened by my precipitation, and have instituted further inquiries; have written, probably, to some friend in Holland, and learned that the pretender to her daughter's hand, although unquestionably a son of the wealthy banker Van Haubitz, is excluded beyond redemption from the good graces of that respectable pillar of Dutch finance, who has further announced his irrevocable determination to take not the slightest notice of him in his testamentary dispositions. The excellent Herr Bratenbengel, whose succulent dinner we are now digesting, and whose very laudable *Rudesheimer* stands before us, had unwittingly laid the foundation of my success; it was for me to raise the superstructure. Now it was that I rejoiced at my economy since the lucky hit at the gaming-table. The greater part of my winnings still remained to me; golden grain, which I now profusely scattered, sure that it would yield rich harvest. On one manœuvre I particularly pride myself. Retaining a few napoleons for immediate use, I remitted the remainder to a friend in Amsterdam, requesting him to return it me in a bill on Frankfort drawn by my father's bank. I took care to have the letter containing the draft delivered to me at dinner when seated beside the adorable Emilie, and was equally careful to lay the bill open upon the table, whilst I took a hasty glance at the letter. Of course my neighbour pretended not to see the draft, and equally of course she made herself mistress of its contents, particularly noting the drawer's name, and communicating the same to her mother at the earliest opportunity. This had a good effect, establishing my connexion with the rich house of Van Haubitz; and I have taken care to confirm the favourable impression by the profuse expenditure which you, in your ignorance, have called extravagance, by treating money as if its abundance in my coffers made it valueless in my eyes, and by delicate generosity in the shape of presents to mother and daughter. The trap was too cunningly set to prove a failure; the birds are fairly snared, and tonight, when we take our usual romantic stroll, I shall raise the fair Sendel to the seventh heaven of happiness by asking her to become Madame Van Haubitz."

[Pg 502]

Although the tenour and tone of these confessions had by no means tended to elevate the Dutchman in my opinion, I could not forbear smiling at the coolness with which they were made and at the skill of his manœuvres. Still there was some good about the scamp; he had his own code of honour, such as it was, and from that he would not easily have been induced to swerve. He would have scorned to do a dirty thing, to cheat at cards, or leave a debt of honour unpaid; but would readily have got in debt to tradesmen and money-lenders beyond all possibility of reimbursement. And as regarded his present conspiracy against the celibacy and salary of Mademoiselle Sendel, a synod of sages and logicians would have failed to convince him of its impropriety. He looked upon it as a most justifiable stratagem, a lawful preying upon the spoiler, praiseworthy in the sight of men, gods, and columns, and which he would perhaps have boasted of to a considerable extent to many besides myself, had not secrecy been essential to the welfare of his combinations. I, of course, did not feel called upon to betray his plot, or to put the Sendel on her guard against this snake amongst the roses. And whilst mentally resolving rather to diminish than increase the intimacy which the confident and confidential artilleryman had in great measure forced upon me, and which I, through a sort of easy-going indolence of character, had perhaps somewhat lightly accepted, I anticipated much diversion in watching the manœuvres of the high contracting parties. I considered myself as a spectator, called upon to witness an amusing comedy in real life, and admitted behind the scenes by peculiar favour of an actor. I resolved to watch the progress of the intrigue, and, if possible, to be present at the *denouement*.

"Are you quite certain," said I to Van, "that Mademoiselle Sendel's pecuniary position and prospects are so very favourable? The sum you mentioned is a large one for an actress who has been so short a time on the stage. Public report, very apt to take liberties with the reputation of theatrical ladies, often endeavours to compensate them by magnifying their salaries."

Van, I may here mention, lest the reader should not have perceived it, had a most inordinate opinion of his own abilities and acuteness. Like certain Yankees, he "conceited" it was necessary to rise before the sun to outwit him, and even then your chance was a poor one. He had been in hot water all his life, never out of difficulties and scrapes, once, as has been shown, kept from suicide by a mere accident, and was now reduced to the alternative of beggary or of marrying for a living. None of these circumstances, which would have taken the conceit out of most men, at all impaired his opinion of his talent and sharpness. Replying to my observation merely by a slight shrug and smile of pity for the man who thus misappreciated his foresight, he again produced his pocket-book, and extracted from its innermost recesses a fragment of a German newspaper, reputed oracular in matters theatrical. This he handed to me, tapping a particular paragraph significantly with his forefinger. The paragraph was thus conceived:—

[Pg 503]

"THEATRICAL INTELLIGENCE.—That promising young actress, Fraulein Emilie Sendel—whose first



appearance, in the spring of last year, at once established her in the foremost line of the dramatic genius of the day—has concluded her twelve months' engagement at the *Hof Theater* of B—, where she doubtless considered, and not without reason, that her talents and exertions were inadequately compensated by a salary of ten thousand florins. The gay society of that *Residenz* will sensibly feel the loss of the accomplished and fascinating comedian, who has accepted an engagement at Vienna, on the more suitable terms of fifteen thousand florins, with two months' *cong *, and other advantages. Before proceeding to ravish the eyes and cars of the pleasure-loving population of the *Kaiser-Stadt*, *la belle* Sendel is off to the baths, under the protecting wing of the watchful guardian who has presided at all her theatrical triumphs."

"Clear enough, I think," said Van, when I raised my eyes from the protracted periods of the penny-a-liner.

I had nothing to say against the lucidity of the paragraph, nor any thing to urge, at all likely to avail, against the prosecution of Van's designs upon the lady's hand and fifteen thousand florins, with "two months' *cong * and other advantages." No possible sophistry, to which I was equal, could prove the marriage to be against his interest; and as to trying him on the tack of delicacy—"imposition on an unprotected woman,—degrading dependence on her exertions," and so forth—I knew the thick skin and indomitable self-conceit of the cannonier would repel such feather-shafts without feeling them, or that the utmost effect I could expect to produce would be to get myself into a quarrel with the redoubtable native of the Netherlands, a predicament in which, as a man of peace, I was by no means anxious to find myself. So after hazarding the fruitless hint with which the reader was made acquainted at the commencement of this narrative, I abstained from all further intermeddling, and retired to my apartment, leaving Van Haubitz to con the declaration with which he was that evening to rejoice the ears of the fair and too-confiding Sendel.

I went to bed early that night and, saw nothing more of the Hollander till the next morning, when I was roused from a balmy slumber at the untimely hour of seven, by his bursting into my room with more impetuosity than ceremony, with the gestures of a maniac and shouts of victory. Before my eyes were half open, he was more than half through the history of his proceedings on the previous evening. His success had been complete. Emilie had faltered, with downcast eyes, a sweet assent. The friendly gloom of eve, and the overarching foliage, beneath whose shade the momentous question was put, saved her the necessity of practising upon her lungs to produce a blush. Mamma Sendel had bestowed her blessing upon the happy pair, and in the ardour of her maternal accolades had nearly extinguished her future son-in-law's left ogle with the wire stalk of an artificial passion-flower. The first burst of benevolence over, and the effervescence of feeling a little subsided, the bridegroom elect, who could not afford delays, pressed for an early day. Thereupon Emilie was, of course, horror-stricken, but her maternal relative, nothing loath to land the fish thus satisfactorily hooked, and well aware of the impediments that sometimes arise between cup and lip, ranged herself upon the side of the eager lover, and their combined forces bore down all opposition. Madame Sendel at first showed an evident hankering after a preliminary jaunt to Amsterdam and a gay wedding, graced by the presence of the bridegroom's numerous and wealthy family. She also testified some anxiety as to the view Van Haubitz Senior might take of his son's matrimonial project, and as to how far he might approve of a hasty and unceremonious wedding. But the gallant artilleryman had an answer to every thing. He pledged himself, which he was perfectly safe in doing, that his father would not attempt in the slightest degree to control his inclinations or interfere with his projects, extolled the delights of an autumnal tour with his wife and mother-in-law before returning to Holland; in short, was so plausible in his arguments, so specious and pressing, pleading so eloquently the violence of his love and inutility of delay, and overruling objections with such cogent reasoning, that he achieved a complete triumph, and it was agreed that in one week Van Haubitz should lead his adored Emilie to the hymeneal altar. In the interval, he would have abundant time to obtain his father's consent and the necessary papers from Amsterdam—all of which he doubted not he should most satisfactorily procure by the kind aid of the accommodating friend who had made him returns for his remittance.

[Pg 504]

"There will be a small matter to arrange with respect to Emilie," said Madame Sendel in her blandest tones, and with affectation of embarrassment. "She has an engagement at the Vienna theatre, which must of course now be broken off. There is a forfeit to pay, no very heavy sum," added she—

"Not a word about that," interrupted Van, whose blood curdled in his veins, at the mere idea of cancelling the engagement on which his hopes were built. "There is no hurry for a few days. Let me once call Emilie mine, and I take charge of all those matters."

Emilie smiled angelically; Madame patted her considerate son-in-law on the shoulders, and applied to her snuff-box to conceal her emotion; and all matters of business being thus satisfactorily settled, the evening closed in harmony and bliss.

"Are you for Frankfort, to-day?" said Van Haubitz, when he had concluded his exulting narrative, and without giving me time for congratulations, which I should have been at a loss to offer. "I am off, after breakfast, to get some diamond earrings and other small matters for my adorable. I shall be glad of your taste and opinion."

"Diamonds!" I exclaimed. "Farewell, then, to the thousand franc note—"

"Pooh! Nonsense! You don't suppose I throw away my last cash that way. The Frankfort jewellers

know me well, or think they do, which is the same thing. They have seen enough of my coin since I have been at Homburg. For them, as for my excellent mother-in-law, I am the wealthy partner in the undoubted good firm of Van Haubitz, Krummwinkel, & Co. I never told them so; if they choose to imagine it I am not to blame. My credit is good. The diamonds shall be paid for—if paid for they must be—out of Madame Van Haubitz's first quarter's salary."

I was meditating an excuse for not accompanying my pertinacious and unscrupulous acquaintance on his cruise against the Frankfort Israelites, when he resumed—

"By the bye," he said, "you will come to church with us. I have arranged it all. Quite private, for reasons good. Nobody but yourself, Madame Sendel, and Emilie. You shall act as father, and give away the bride."

The start I gave, at this alarming announcement, nearly broke the bed. This was carrying things rather too far. Not satisfied with rendering me, by his intrusive and unsolicited confidence, a sort of tacit accomplice in his manœuvres, this Dutch Gil Blas would fain make me an active participator in the swindle he was practising on the actress and her mother. I drew at sight on my imagination, quickened by the peril, for a letter received the previous evening from a dear and near relative who lay dangerously ill at Baden-Baden, and to whose sick-bed it was absolutely necessary I should immediately repair; and, jumping up, I began to dress in all haste, rang furiously for the bill and a carriage, and requested Van Haubitz to present my excuses to the ladies, my unexpected departure at that early hour depriving me of the pleasure of taking leave of them. The Dutchman swore all manner of *donderwelters* and *sacraments* that he was grieved at my departure, trusted I should find my friend better, and be able to return to Frankfort in time for the marriage, but did not press me to do so, and in reality was too exhilarated by the success of his machinations to care a straw about the matter. And saying he must go and write to Amsterdam, he shook me by the hand and left the room, whistling in loud and joyous key the burthen of a Dutch march. In less than an hour I was on the road to Frankfort, and that evening I reached Heidelberg, where some friends of mine had passed the summer. I expected to find them still there, but they had left for Baden-Baden. Thither I pursued them, and—as if it were a judgment on me for my white lie to the Dutchman—arrived there the morrow of their departure. Baden was thinning, and they had gone down stream: I must have passed them on the Rhine. Having strong reasons to see them before they left Germany, I followed upon their trail. But their movements were rapid and eccentric, and after tracking them to one or two of the minor baths, the chase led me back to Frankfort. Here I made sure to catch them, or resolved to give up the hunt.

[Pg 505]

A week had been consumed in thus travelling to and fro. I had no great fancy for returning to Frankfort, lest my friend the Dutchman should still be there, and press his society upon me, of which, after his recent revelations, I was any thing but ambitious. Upon the whole, however, I thought it likely he would have departed. I knew he would accelerate his marriage as much as possible; I had been nine days absent, which gave him ample time to get over the ceremony and leave the neighbourhood. By way of precaution I resolved to keep pretty close in my hotel during the period of my stay, which was not to exceed one or two days.

On arriving at the "White Swan," I found my friends were staying there, but had driven over to Homburg. Unwilling to follow them, and risk meeting my bug-bear, I awaited their return, which was to take place to a late dinner. As usual, there was much bustle at the "Swan;" many goings and comings, several carriages in the court-yard, others in the street packing for departure, a throng of greedy *lohn-kutschers*, warm waiters, and bearded couriers, hanging about the door, and running up and down stairs. I entered the public room. It was past noon, and the tables were laid for dinner, but there were only two persons in the apartment, a gentleman and a lady. They stood at a window, outside of which a handsome Vienna-made berline, with a count's coronet on the panels, was getting ready for a journey. As I walked up the room, the lady turned her head, and I was instantly struck by her resemblance to Emilie Sendel. So strong was it that I for a moment thought I had fallen in with the very persons I wished to avoid. A second glance convinced me of error. The likeness was certainly startling, but there were many points of difference. Age and stature were the same, so were the hair and complexion, save that the former was less ruddy, the latter paler than in the case of the buxom Emilie. And there were grace and refinement about this person, far beyond any to which the Dutchman's lady-love could pretend. The expression of the interesting features was rather pensive than gay, and there was something classical in the arch of the eyebrow and outline of the face. The lady was plainly but richly attired in an elegant travelling dress, and had her hand upon the arm of a tall and very handsome man, about forty years of age, of singularly aristocratic but somewhat dissipated appearance. They were talking as I entered, and a sentence or two of their conversation reached my ear. They spoke French, with a scarcely perceptible foreign accent.

Curious to know who these persons were, I returned to the court of the hotel, intending to question a waiter. It was first necessary to catch one, not easy at that busy time of day; and after several fruitless efforts to detain the jacketed gentry, I gave the attempt, and took my station at the gateway. Scarcely had I done so, when a carriage drove up at a rattling pace, a small spit of a boy in a smart green suit, and with an ambiguous sort of coronet embroidered in silver on the front of his cap, jumped off and opened the door, and there emerged from the vehicle, to my infinite dismay, the inevitable Van Haubitz. Retreat was impossible, for he saw me directly; and after handing out Madame Sendel and her daughter, seized me vehemently by both hands.

[Pg 506]

"Delighted to see you!" he cried; "I wish you had been a day sooner. We were married yesterday,"

he added in a hurried voice, drawing me aside. "Have left Homburg, paid every thing *there*, and leave this to-morrow for Heaven knows where. Explanations must come first, (here he made a grimace) for my purse is low, and my mother-in-law makes projects that would ruin Rothschild. Lucky you are here to back me. Come in."

I was fairly caught, and in a pretty dilemma. My first thought was to knock down the Dutchman, and run for it, but reflection checked the impulse. Stammering a confused congratulation to the bride and her mother, and meditating an escape at all hazards, I allowed Madame Sendel to hook herself on my arm, and lead me into the hotel in the wake of the newly wedded pair, who made at once for the public room. A magnificent courier, in a Hungarian dress, with beard, belt, and hunting-knife, strode past us into the apartment.

"*Herr Graf*," said the man, addressing the distinguished looking stranger, who had attracted my attention, "the horses are ready."

The Count and his companion turned at the announcement, and found themselves face to face with our party. There was a general start and exclamation from the three women. The strange lady turned very pale and visibly trembled; Madame Van Haubitz gave a slight scream; her mother flushed as red as the poppies in her head-dress, and hung like a log upon my arm, glaring angrily at the strangers. For one moment all stood still; Van Haubitz and I looked at each other in bewilderment. He was evidently struck by the extraordinary resemblance I had noticed, and which became more manifest, now the two ladies were seen together.

"Come, Ameline," said the Count, who alone preserved complete self-possession. And he hurried his companion from the room. Madame Sendel released my arm, and letting herself fall upon a chair with an hysterical giggle, closed her eyes and seemed preparing for a comfortable swoon. Her daughter hastened to her assistance and untied her bonnet; Van Haubitz grasped a decanter of water and made an alarming demonstration of emptying it upon the full-moon countenance of his respectable mother-in-law. I was curious to see him do it, for I had always had my doubts whether the dowager's colours were what is technically termed "fast." My curiosity was not gratified. Whether from apprehension of the remedy or from some other cause, I cannot say, but Madame Sendel abandoned her faint, and after two or three grotesque contortions of countenance, and a certain amount of winking and blinking, was sufficiently recovered to take a huge pinch of snuff, and ascend the stairs to a private room, with her daughter and son-in-law for supporters, and half a score waiters and chamber-maids, whom her hysterical symptoms had assembled, by way of a tail. Seeing her so well guarded, I thought it unnecessary to add to the escort. As she left the room, there was a clatter of hoofs outside, and looking through the window, I saw the coroneted berline whirled rapidly away by four vigorous posters. Just then the dinner-bell rang, and the obsequious head-waiter, who with profound bows had assisted at the departure of the travellers, bustled into the room.

"Who is the gentleman who has just left?" I inquired.

"His Excellency, Count J—," replied the man. It was the name of a Hungarian nobleman of great wealth, and of reputation almost European as one of the most fashionable and successful Lotharios of the dissipated Austrian capital.

[Pg 507]

"And his companion?"

"The celebrated actress, Fraulein Sendel."

Had the cunning but unlucky Van Haubitz been a regular reader of the *Theater Zeitung*, or Journal of the Theatres, he would have seen, in the ensuing number to that whence he derived his information respecting Mademoiselle Sendel's confirmed popularity and advantageous engagement the following short but important paragraph:—

"ERRATUM.—In our yesterday's impression an error occurred, arising from a similarity of names. It is Fraulein *Ameline* Sendel who has concluded with the Vienna theatre, an engagement equally advantageous to herself and the manager. Her elder sister, Fraulein *Emilie*, continues the engagement she has already held for two seasons, as a supernumerary *soubrette*. The amount stated yesterday as her salary would still be correct, with the abstraction of a zero. Talent does not always run in families."

This good-natured paragraph, evidently from the pen of a sulky sub-editor, smarting under a lashing for his blunder of the preceding day, did not come to my knowledge till some time afterwards, so that the waiter's reply to my question concerning Count J—'s travelling companion perplexed me greatly, and plunged me into an ocean of conjectures. In fact, my curiosity was so strongly roused, that instead of availing myself of the absence of the Dutchman to escape from the hotel, I sat down to dinner, resolved not to depart till I heard the mystery explained. I had not long to wait. Dinner was just over, when I received a message from Van Haubitz, who earnestly desired to see me. I found him alone, seated at a table, his chin resting on his hand, anger, shame, and mortification stamped upon his inflamed countenance. A tumbler half full of water stood upon the table, beside a bottle of smelling salts; and, upon entering, I was pretty sure I heard a sound of sobbing from another room, which ceased, however, when I spoke. There had evidently been a violent scene. Its cause was explained to me by Van Haubitz, at first in rather a confused manner, for at each attempt to detail the circumstances he interrupted himself by bursts of fury. Owing to this, it was some time before I could arrive at a clear understanding of the facts of the case. When I did, I could scarcely help feeling sorry for the unfortunate schemer, although in truth he richly deserved the disappointment he had met. Never

was there a more glaring instance of excess of cunning over-reaching itself,—for no deception had been practised by Madame Sendel and her daughter. They doubtless gave themselves credit for some cleverness and more good fortune in enticing a rich banker with more ducats than brains, into their matrimonial nets; and doubtless Fraulein Emile put on her best looks and gowns, her sweetest smiles and most becoming bonnets, to lure the lion into the toils. But neither mother nor daughter had for a moment imagined that Van Haubitz took the latter for the celebrated and successful actress whose name was known throughout Germany, whilst that of poor Emile, whose talents were of the most humble order, had scarcely ever penetrated beyond the wings and green-room of the theatre, where she enacted unimportant characters for the modest remuneration of a hundred florins a month. By no means proud of her position as all actress, which appeared the more lowly when contrasted with her sister's brilliant success, Emilie had seldom referred to things theatrical since her acquaintance with Van Haubitz. On his part, the 'cute Dutchman, conscious of his real motives and anxious to conceal them, abstained from all direct reference to Mademoiselle Sendel's great talents and their lucrative results, contenting himself with general compliments, which passed current without being closely scanned. If he had never heard either his wife or mother-in-law make mention of Ameline, it was because they were on the worst possible terms with that young lady, who had lived, nearly from the period of her first appearance upon the boards, under the protection of the accomplished libertine, Count J—, over whom she was said to exercise extraordinary influence. When she formed this connexion, Madame Sendel, who—in spite of her suspicion of paint and artificial floriculture—had very strict notions of propriety, wrote her a letter of furious reproach, renounced her as her daughter, and prohibited Emilie from holding any communication with her. Emile, against whose virtue none had ever found aught to say, sorrowfully obeyed; and, after two or three ineffectual attempts on the part of Ameline to soften her mother's wrath, all communication ceased between them. Their next meeting was that at which Van Haubitz and myself were present. Its singularity, Madame Sendel's fainting fit, and the resemblance between the sisters, brought on inquiries and an explanation; and the Dutchman found, to his inexpressible disgust and consternation, that he had encumbered himself with a wife he cared nothing for, and a mother-in-law he detested, whose joint income was largely stated at one hundred and fifty pounds sterling per annum. In his first paroxysm of rage he taunted them with the mistake they had made when they thought to secure the love-sick millionaire, proclaimed himself in debt, disinherited, and a beggar; and, finally, by the violence of his reproaches and maledictions, drove them trembling and weeping from the room.

[Pg 508]

Van Haubitz had sent for me to implore my advice in his present difficult position; but was so bewildered by passion and overwhelmed by this sudden awakening from his dream of success and prosperity, that he was hardly in a condition to listen to reason. His regrets were so disgustingly selfish, his invectives against the innocent cause of his disappointment so violent and unmerited, that I should have left him to his fate and his own devices, had I not thought that my so doing would make matters worse for the poor girl who had thus heedlessly linked herself to a fortune-hunter. So I remained; after a while he became calmer, and we talked over various plans for the future. By my suggestion, Madame Sendel and her daughter were invited to the conference. The old lady was sulky and frightened, and would hardly open her lips; Emilie, on the other hand, made a more favourable impression on me than she had ever previously done. I now saw, what I had not before suspected, that she was really attached to Van Haubitz; hitherto, I had taken her for a mere adventuress, speculating on his supposed wealth. She spoke kindly and affectionately to him, smiled through the tears brought to her eyes by his recent brutality, and evidently trembled each time her mother spoke, lest she should vent a reproach or refer to his heartless duplicity. She tried to speak confidently and cheerfully of the future. They must go immediately to Vienna, she said; there she would apply diligently to her profession; the manager had half promised her an increase of salary after another year—she was sure she should deserve it, and meanwhile Van Haubitz, with his abilities, could not fail to find some lucrative employment. He must get rid of his accent, she added with a smile, (he spoke a voluble but most execrable jargon of mingled Dutch and German) and then he might go upon the stage, where she was certain he would succeed. This last suggestion was made timidly, as if she feared to hurt the pride of the scapegrace by proposing such a plan. There was not a word or an accent of reproach in all she said, and I heartily forgave the little coquetry, affectation, and vulgarity I had formerly remarked in her, in consideration of the intuitive delicacy and good feeling she now displayed. Truly, thought I, it is humbling to us, the bearded and baser moiety of humankind, to contrast our vile egotism with the beautiful self-devotion of woman, as exhibited even in this poor actress.

Madame Sendel by no means acquiesced in her daughter's project. The flesh-pots of Amsterdam had attractions for her, far superior to those of a struggling and uncertain existence at Vienna. She evidently leaned upon the hope of a reconciliation between Van Haubitz and his father, and hinted pretty plainly at the effect that might be produced by a personal interview with the obdurate banker. I could see she was arranging matters in her queer old noddle upon the approved theatrical principle, the penitent son and fascinating daughter-in-law throwing themselves at the feet of the melting father, who, with handkerchief to eyes, bestows on them a blubbering benediction and ample subsidy. To my surprise Van Haubitz also seemed disposed to place hope in an appeal to his father, perhaps as a drowning man clutches at a straw. He may have thought that his marriage, imprudent as it was, would be taken as some guarantee of future steadiness, or at least of abstinence from the spendthrift courses which had hitherto destroyed all confidence in him. He could hardly expect his union with a penniless actress to re-instate him in his father's good graces; but he probably imagined he might extract a small annuity, as a condition of living at a distance from the friends he had disgraced. He asked me what I thought

[Pg 509]

of the plan. I of course did not dissuade him from its adoption, and upon the whole thought it his best chance, for I really saw no other. After some deliberation and discussion, he seemed nearly to have made up his mind, when I was called away to my friends, who had returned from their excursion.

I was getting into bed that night, when Van Haubitz knocked at my door, and entered the room with a downcast and dejected air, very different from his usual boisterous headlong manner.

"I am off to Holland," he said; "'tis my only chance, bad though it be."

"I sincerely wish you success," replied I. "In any case, do not despair; something will turn up. You have friends in your own country, I have heard you say. They will help you to occupation."

He shook his head.

"Good friends over a bottle and a dice-box," said he, "but useless at a pinch like this. Pleasant fellows enough, but scamps like"—myself, he was going to add, but did not. "I am come to say farewell," he continued. "I must be off before day-break. I have debts in Frankfort, and if my departure gets wind, I shall have a dozen duns on my back. Misfortunes never come alone. As for paying, it is out of the question. Amongst us we have only about enough money to reach Amsterdam. Once there—*à la grace de Dieu!* but I confess my hopes are small. Thanks for your advice—and for your sympathy too, for I saw this morning you were sorry for me, though you did not think I deserved pity. Well, perhaps not. God bless you."

He was leaving the room, but returned.

"I think you said you should stay at Coblenz before returning to England."

"I shall probably be there a few days towards the end of the month."

"Good. If I succeed, you shall hear from me. What is your address there?"

"*Poste restante* will find me," I replied, not very covetous of the correspondence, and unwilling to give a more exact direction.

Van Haubitz nodded and left me. At breakfast the next morning I learned that the Dutch baron, as the waiter styled him, had taken his departure at peep of day.

The first days of October found me still at Coblenz, lingering amongst the valleys and vineyards, and loath to exchange them for the autumnal fogs and emptiness of London. Thither, however, I was compelled to return; and I endeavoured to console myself for the necessity by discovering that the green Rhine grew brown, the trees scant of leaves, the evenings long and chilly. I had heard nothing of Van Haubitz, and had ceased to think of him, when, walking out at dusk on the eve of the day fixed for my departure, I suddenly encountered him. He had just arrived by a steamboat coming up stream; his wife and mother-in-law were with him, and they were about to enter a fifth-rate inn, which, two months previously, he would have felt insulted if solicited to patronise. I was shocked by the change that had taken place in all three of them. In five weeks they had grown five years older. Emilie had lost her freshness, her eye its sparkle; and the melancholy smile with which she welcomed me made my heart ache. Madame Sendel's rotund cheeks had collapsed, she looked cross and jaundiced, and more snuffy than ever. Van Haubitz was thin and haggard, his hair and mustaches, formerly glossy and well-trimmed, were ragged and neglected, his dress, once so smart and carefully arranged, was soiled and slovenly. My imagination furnished me with a rapid and vivid sketch of the anxieties and disappointments and heart-burnings, which, more than any actual bodily privations, had worked so great a change in so short a time. Van Haubitz started on seeing me, and faltered in his pace, as if unwilling to enter the shabby hotel in my presence. The hesitation was momentary. "Worse quarters than we used to meet in," said he, with a bitter smile. "I will not ask you into this dog-hole. Wait an instant, and I will walk with you."

[Pg 510]

Badly as I thought of Van Haubitz, and indisposed as I was to keep up any acquaintance with such an unprincipled adventurer, I had not the heart, seeing him so miserable and down in the world, to turn my back upon him at once. So I entered the hotel, and waited in the public room. In a few minutes he reappeared with the two ladies, and we all four strolled out in the direction of the Rhine. I did not ask the Dutchman the result of his journey. It was unnecessary. His disheartened air and general appearance told the tale of disappointment, of humiliating petitions sternly rejected, of hopes fled and a cheerless future. He kept silence the while we walked a hundred yards, and then, having left his wife and mother-in-law out of ear-shot, abruptly began the tale of his mishaps. As I conjectured, he had totally failed in his attempt to mollify his father, who was furious at his temerity in appearing before him, and whose rage redoubled when he heard of his ill-omened marriage. Unfortunately for Van Haubitz, the jeweller and some other tradesmen at Frankfort, so soon as they learned his departure, had forwarded their accounts to the care of the Amsterdam firm; and, although his father had not the remotest intention of paying them, he was incensed in the extreme at the slur thus cast upon his house and name. In short, the unlucky artilleryman at once saw he had no chance of a single kreuzer, or of the slightest countenance from his father. His applications to his brothers, and one or two to more distant relatives, were equally unsuccessful. All were disgusted at his irregularities, angry at his marriage, incredulous of his promises of reform; and, after passing a miserable month in Amsterdam, he set out to accompany his wife to Vienna, whither she was compelled to repair under pain of fine and forfeiture of her engagement. Although living with rigid economy—on

bread and water, as Van Haubitz expressed it—their finances had been utterly consumed by their stay in the expensive Dutch capital, and it was only by disposing of every trinket and superfluity (and of necessaries too, I feared, when I remembered the slender baggage that came up with them from the boat) that they had procured the means of travelling, in the cheapest and most humble manner, and with the disheartening certainty of arriving penniless at Vienna. Van Haubitz told me all this, and many other details, with an air of gloomy despondency. He was hopeless, heart-broken, desperate; and certain circumstances of his position, which by some would have been held an alleviation, aggravated it in his eyes. He said little of his wife; but, from what escaped him, I easily gathered that she had shown strength of mind, good feeling and affection for him, and was willing to struggle by his side for a scanty and hard-earned subsistence. His selfish cares and irritable mood prevented his appreciating or returning her attachment, and he looked upon her as a clog and an encumbrance, without which he might again rise in the world. He had always entertained a confident expectation of enriching himself by marriage; and this hope, which had buoyed him up under many difficulties, was now gone. From something he said I suspected he had sounded Emilie on the subject of a divorce, so easily obtained in Germany, and that she had shown determined opposition. She evidently possessed a firmness of character more than a match for her husband's impetuosity and violence.

"I have one resource left," said Van Haubitz. "I have pondered over it for the last two days, and have almost determined on its adoption."

"What is it?" I asked.

"If I decide upon it," he replied, "you shall shortly know. 'Tis a desperate one enough."

[Pg 511]

We had insensibly slackened our pace, and, at this moment, the ladies came up. Van Haubitz made a gesture, as of impatience at the interruption.

"Wait for me here," he said, and walked away. Without speculating upon the motive of his absence, I stood still, and entered into conversation with the ladies. We were on the quay. The night was mild and calm, but overcast and exceedingly dark. A few feet below us rolled the dark mass of the Rhine, slightly swollen by recent rains. A light from an adjacent window illuminated the spot, and cast a flickering gleam across the water. Unwilling to refer to their misfortunes, I spoke to Emilie on some general topic. But Madame Sendel was too full of her troubles to tolerate any conversation that did not immediately relate to them, and she broke in with a long history of grievances, of the hard-heartedness of the Amsterdam relations, the cruelty of Emilie's position, her son-in-law's helplessness, and various other matters, in a querulous tone, and with frightful volubility. The poor daughter, I plainly saw, winced under this infliction. I was waiting the smallest opening to interrupt the indiscreet old lady, and revert to commonplace, when a distant splash in the water reached my ears. The women also heard it, and at the same instant a presentiment of evil came over us all. Madame Sendel suddenly held her tongue and her breath; Emilie turned deadly pale, and without saying a word, flew along the quay in the direction of the sound. She had gone but a few yards when her strength failed her, and she would have fallen but for my support. There was a shout, and a noise of men running. Leaving Madame Van Haubitz to the care of her mother, I ran swiftly along the river side, and soon reached a place where the deep water moaned and surged against the perpendicular quay. Here several men were assembled, talking hurriedly and pointing to the river. Others each moment arrived, and two boats were hastily shoved off from an adjacent landing-place.

"A man in the river," was the reply to my hasty inquiry.

It was so dark that I could not distinguish countenances close to me, and at a very few yards even the outline of objects was scarcely to be discerned. There were no houses close at hand, and some minutes elapsed before lights were procured. At last several boats put off, with men standing in the bows, holding torches and lanterns high in the air. Meanwhile I had questioned the by-standers, but could get little information; none as to the person to whom the accident had happened. The man who had given the alarm, was returning from mooring his boat to a neighbouring jetty, when he perceived a figure moving along the quay a short distance in his front. The figure disappeared, a heavy splash followed, and the boatman ran forward. He could see no one either on shore or in the stream, but heard a sound as of one striking out and struggling in the water. Having learned this much, I jumped into a boat just then putting off, and bid the rowers pull down stream, keeping a short distance from the quay. The current ran strong, and I doubted not that the drowning man had been carried along by it. Two vigorous oarsmen pulled till the blades bent, and the boat, aided by the stream, flew through the water. A third man held a torch. I strained my eyes through the darkness. Presently a small object floated within a few feet of the boat, which was rapidly passing it. It shone in the torchlight. I struck at it with a boat-hook, and brought it on board. It was a man's cap, covered with oilskin, and I remembered Van Haubitz wore such a one. Stripping off the cover, I beheld in officer's foraging cap, with a grenade embroidered on its front. My doubts, slight before, were entirely dissipated.

When the search, rendered almost hopeless by the extreme darkness and power of the current, was at last abandoned, I hastened to the hotel, and inquired for Madame Sendel. She came to me in a state of great agitation. Van Haubitz had not returned, but she thought less of that than of the state of her daughter, who, since recovering from a long swoon, had been almost distracted with anxiety. She knew some one had been drowned, and her mind misgave her it was her husband. The foraging-cap, which Madame Sendel immediately recognised, removed all uncertainty. The only hope remaining was, that Van Haubitz, although carried rapidly away by the power of the current, had been able to maintain himself on the surface, and had got ashore at

[Pg 512]

some considerable distance down the river, or had been picked up by a passing boat. But this was a very feeble hope, and for my own part, and for more than one reason, I placed no reliance on it. I left Madame Sendel to break the painful intelligence to her daughter, and went home, promising to call again in the morning.

As I had expected, nothing was heard of Van Haubitz, nor any vestige of him found, save the foraging-cap I had picked up. Doubtless, the Rhine had borne down his lifeless corpse to the country of his birth. The next day Coblenz rang with the death of the unfortunate Dutchman. A stranger, and unacquainted with the localities, he was supposed to have walked over the quay by accident. I thought differently; and so I knew did Madame Sendel and Emilie. I saw the former early the next day. She was greatly cast down about her daughter, who had passed a sleepless night, was very weak and suffering, but who nevertheless insisted on continuing her journey the following morning.

"We must go," said her mother; "if we delay, Emilie loses her engagement, and how can we both live on my poor jointure? Weeping will not bring him back, were he worth it. To think of the misery he has caused us!"

I ventured to hint an inquiry as to their means of prosecuting their journey. The old lady understood the intention, and took it kindly. "But she needed no assistance," she said; "Van Haubitz (and this confirmed our strong suspicion of suicide) had given their little stock of money into his wife's keeping only a few hours before his death."

That afternoon I left Coblenz for England.

---

On a certain Wednesday of the present year, after enjoying the excellent acting of Bouffé in two of his best characters, I paused a moment to speak to a friend in the crowded lobby of the St James's Theatre. Whilst thus engaged, I became aware that I was an object of attention to two persons, whom I had an indistinct notion of having seen before, but when or where, or who they might be, I had not the remotest idea. One of them was a comfortable-looking, middle-aged man, with a bald head, a smooth, clean-shaven face, and an incipient ventral rotundity. His complexion was clear and wholesome, his countenance good-humoured, his whole appearance bespoke an existence free from care, nights of sound sleep, and days of tranquil enjoyment. His face was too sleek to be very expressive, but there was a shrewd, quick look in the eye, and I set him down in my mind as a wealthy German merchant or manufacturer (some small peculiarities of costume betrayed the foreigner) come to show London to his wife—a well-favoured *Frau*, fat, fair, but some years short of forty—who accompanied him, and who, as well as her better-half, seemed to honour me with very particular notice. My confabulation over, I was leaving the theatre, when a sleek soft hand was gently passed through my arm. It was my friend the fat foreigner. I strained my eyes and my memory, but in vain; I felt very puzzled, and doubtless looked so, for he smiled, and advancing his head, whispered a name in my ear. It was that of Van Haubitz.

I started, looked again, doubted, and was at last convinced. *Minus* mustache and whisker, which were closely shaven, and half his hair, of which the remainder was considerably grizzled; *plus* a degree of corpulence such as I should never have thought the slender lieutenant of artillery capable of acquiring; his heated, sun-burnt complexion, and dissipated look, exchanged for a fresh colour and benevolent placidity; the Dutchman I had left on the Rhine stood beside me in the lobby of the French theatre. I turned to the lady: she was less changed than her companion, and now that I was upon the track, I recognised Emilie Sendel. By this time we were in the street. Van Haubitz handed his wife into a carriage.

"Come and sup with us," he said, "and I will explain."

I mechanically obeyed, and in less than three minutes, still tongue-tied by astonishment, I alighted at the door of a fashionable hotel in a street adjoining Piccadilly.

A few lines will convey to the reader the substance of the long conversation which kept the resuscitated Dutchman and myself from our beds for fully two hours after our unexpected meeting. I had been right in supposing that he had thrown himself voluntarily into the river; wrong in my belief that he meditated suicide. An excellent swimmer, he had taken the water to get rid of his wife. He might certainly have chosen a drier method, and have given her the slip in the night-time or on the road; but she had shown, whenever he referred to the possibility of their separation, such a determination to remain with him at all risks and sacrifices, that he felt certain she would be after him as soon as she discovered his absence. He had formed a wild scheme of returning to Amsterdam, and haunting his family until, through mere weariness and vexation, they supplied him with funds for all outfit to Sumatra. There he trusted to redeem his fortunes, as he had heard that others of no greater abilities or better character than himself had already done. A more extravagant project was never formed, and indeed all his acts, during the six weeks that followed his marriage, were more or less eccentric and ill-judged. This he admitted, when relating them to me, and probably would not have been sorry to place them to the score of actual mental derangement. The only redeeming touch in his conduct, at that, the blackest period of his life, was his leaving, as I have already mentioned, what money he had to his wife and her mother, reserving but a few florins for his own support.

With these in his pocket, he proposed proceeding on foot to Amsterdam. After landing on the

right bank of the Rhine, he walked the greater part of the night, as the best means of drying his saturated garments. When weariness at last compelled him to pause, it was not yet daylight, no house was open, and he threw himself on some straw in a farm-yard. He awoke in a high fever, the result of his immersion, of exposure and fatigue, acting on a frame heated and weakened by anxiety and mental suffering. He obtained shelter at the neighboring farm-house, whose kind-hearted inhabitants carefully tended him for several weeks, during which his life was more than once despaired of. His convalescence was long, and not till the close of the year could he resume his journey northwards, by short stages, chiefly on foot. Unfavourable as his prospects were, his good star had not yet set. This very illness, as occasioning a delay, was a stroke of good fortune. Had he at once proceeded to Holland, his family, in hopes to get rid of him for ever, would probably have given him the small sum he needed for an outfit to the Indian Archipelago, and he would have sailed thither before the 31st of December, on which day his father, a joyous liver, and confirmed votary of Bacchus, eat and drank to such an extent to celebrate the exit of the old year and commencement of the new, that he fell down, on his way to his bed, in a thundering fit of apoplexy, and was a corpse before morning. The day of his funeral, Van Haubitz, footsore and emaciated, and reduced to his last pfenning, walked wearily into the city of Amsterdam. There a great surprise awaited him.

"Your father had not disinherited you?" I exclaimed, when the Dutchman made a momentary pause at this point of his narrative.

"He had left a will devising his entire property to my brothers, and not even naming me. But a slight formality was omitted, which rendered the document of no more value than the parchment it was drawn upon. The signature was wanting. My father had the weakness, no uncommon one, of disliking whatever reminded him of his mortality. He would have fancied himself nearer his grave had he signed his will. And thus he had delayed till it was too late. I found myself joint heir with my brothers. By far the greater part of my father's large capital was embarked in his bank, and in extensive financial operations, which it would have been necessary to liquidate at considerable disadvantage, to operate the partition prescribed by law. Seeing this, I proposed to my brothers to admit me as partner in the firm, with the stipulation that I should have no active share in its direction, until my knowledge of business and steadiness of conduct gave them the requisite confidence in me. After some deliberation they agreed to this; and three years later their opinion of me had undergone such a change, that two of them retired to estates in the country, leaving me the chief management of the concern."

[Pg 514]

"And Madame Van Haubitz; when did she rejoin you?"

"Immediately the change in my fortunes occurred. Reckless as I at that time was, and utterly devoid of feeling as you must have thought me, I could not remember without emotion the disinterested affection, delicacy, and unselfishness she had exhibited on discovery of my real circumstances. During my long illness I had had time to reflect, and when I left my sick-bed in that rude but hospitable German farm-house, it was as a penitent past offences, and with a strong resolution to atone them. Within a week after my father's funeral, I was on my way to Vienna, to fetch Emilie to the opulent home she had anticipated when she married me. Her joy at seeing me was scarcely increased when she heard I now really was the rich banker she had at first thought me."

"And Madame Sendel?"

"Returned to Amsterdam with us. There was good about the old lady, and by purloining her artificials, limiting her snuff, and soaking her in tea, she was made endurable enough. Until her death, which occurred a couple of years ago, she passed her time alternately with us and her younger daughter."

"She became reconciled to Mademoiselle, Ameline?"

"Ameline had been Countess J—all the time. She was privately married. For certain family reasons the Count had conditioned that their union should for a while be kept secret. Seeing that her equivocal position and her mother's displeasure preyed upon her health and spirits, he declared his marriage. She left the stage to become a reigning beauty in the best society of Austria, lady of half a dozen castles, and sovereign mistress of as many thousand Hungarian boors."

Van Haubitz remained some time in London, and I saw him often. He was as much changed in character as in personal appearance. The sharp lessons received, about the period of our first acquaintance, had made a strong impression on him; and the summer-tide of prosperity suddenly setting in, had enabled him to realise good intentions and honourable resolves, which the chill current of adversity might have frozen in the germ. Some of those who read these lines may have occasion, when visiting the country stigmatised by the snarling Frenchman as the land of *canards*, *canaux*, and *canaille*, to receive cash in the busy counting-house, and hospitality the princely mansion of one of its most respected bankers. None, I am well assured, will discern in their amiable and exemplary entertainer any vestige of the disreputable impulses and evil passions that sullied the early life of "My Friend the Dutchman."



Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

**START: FULL LICENSE**  
**THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE**  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

**Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with

which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3

below.

#### 1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt

status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

#### **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

#### **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.