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LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1885.

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Among the inhabitants of the United States there are none that stand so firmly on the national legs as the Virginians,—though it would be more correct to contract this statement somewhat, substituting "State" for "national," since it has never been the habit of Virginians to make themselves more than very incidentally responsible for thirty-eight States and ten Territories occupied by persons of mixed race, numerous religions, objectionable politics, and no safe views about so much as the proper way to make mint-juleps. When Sir Robert presented himself one day at the door of a fine old house belonging to the golden age of ante-bellum prosperity in Caroline County, he was received by two of the most English Englishmen to be found on this planet, in the persons of Mr. Edmund and Mr. Gregory Aglonby, brothers, bachelors, and joint-heirs of the property he had come to look at. These gentlemen received him with a dignity and antique courtesy irresistibly suggestive of bag-wigs, short swords, and aristocratic institutions generally, a courtesy largely mingled with restrained severity and unspoken suspicion until his identity had been fully established by the letters of introduction he had brought, his position defined, and his mission in Caroline clearly set forth. An Englishman out of England was a fact to

be accounted for, not imprudently accepted without due inquiry; but, this done, the law and traditions of hospitality began to alleviate the situation and temper justice with mercy. The lady of the house was sent for, and proved to be a wonderfully pretty old lady, who might have just got out of a sedan-chair, whose manner was even finer and statelier than that of her brothers (diminutive as she was in point of mere inches), and who executed a tremendous courtesy when Sir Robert was presented. "An English gentleman travelling in this country for pleasure, and desirous of seeing 'Heart's Content,' Anne Buller," explained the elder brother. Miss Aglonby's face, which had worn a look of mild interest during the first part of this speech, clouded perceptibly at its close. She murmured some mechanical speech of welcome in an almost inaudible voice, and sat down in a rigid and uncompromising fashion, while her heart contracted painfully. A gentleman to look at the place: there had been several such in the last year, who had come, and seen, and objected to the price, and ridden away again; but perhaps this one might not ride away, and the uneasy thought tormented her throughout the conversation that followed. The brothers, meanwhile, had quite accepted Sir Robert, and had insisted, with a calm, authoritative air, on sending for his "travelling impedimenta," which had been deposited at the hotel in a neighboring town, and had expressed a lofty hope that he would do them the honor to consider himself their guest.

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"The *res angusta domi* will not permit us to entertain you in a manner befitting your rank and in consonance with our wishes," said Mr. Edmund Aglonby, in his representative capacity as head of the family, "but, that consideration waived, I need not say that we shall esteem it an honor and a pleasure to have you domesticated beneath this roof as long as you find any satisfaction in remaining."

"It was not my idea, certainly, to intrude upon you here, but rather to treat with your solicitor in this matter; but if you find it more agreeable to set him aside, which between gentlemen is usually altogether more satisfactory, and will, in addition, allow me to become your guest for a few days, I can only say that I shall be delighted to accept your kind hospitality," replied Sir Robert.

"Brother Gregory, will you see that our guest's effects are at once transferred to his room here?" said Mr. Aglonby, half turning in his chair and giving a graceful wave with one of his long, shapely hands toward the door, after which he bowed with dignified grace to Sir Robert, and said, "Your decision gives us great satisfaction, sir." Mr. Gregory Aglonby confirmed this statement in Johnsonian periods before he left, and tiny Miss Aglonby expressed herself as became a lady who had been receiving guests in that very room for fifty years with stiff but genuine courtesy. The atmosphere was so familiar to Sir Robert that he could scarcely believe himself to be in an American household. Could this be the American type of his dreams? Was there ever a country in which the scenes shifted so completely with a few hours or days of travel? "If this goes on, America will mean everything, anything, to me," he thought. "When I hear of a Frenchman, or German, or Italian, I have some idea of what I shall find; but it is not so here at all. This Mr. Aglonby is quite evidently a gentleman, and a high-bred one; but so was Porter in Boston, and Colonel De Witt, and those Baltimore fellows; yet how different they all are! These men remind me more of my grandfather and my great-uncles than any Englishman of the present day. Perhaps they are English. I'll ask. Who would ever suppose them to be countrymen of Ketchum's?"

After dinner,—and you may be sure the dinner was a good one, for Miss Aglonby was one of a generation of women whose knowledge of housewifely arts was such that, shut up in a lighthouse or wrecked on a desert island, they would have made shift to get a nice meal somehow, even if they could not have served it, as she did, off old china and graced it with old silver,—after dinner, then, a long and pleasant evening set in, with no thought or talk of business-matters. Sir Robert was charmed with his new acquaintances, and not less by the matter than by the manner of their conversation. Did they talk of travels, Mr. Aglonby "liked to read books of adventure," but had never been out of the State of Virginia, and had no wish to go anywhere. He deplored his fate in being compelled at his age to leave it permanently and take up his residence in Florida, where his physician was sending him. He talked of "Mr. Pope" and "Mr. Addison," quoted Milton and the Latin classics, and had chanced upon "a modern work lately, by a writer named Thackeray," "Henry Esmond," which had pleased him extremely. On hearing this, Sir Robert took occasion to ask him whether he liked any of the writings of this and that New-England author of the day, about whom he had been hearing a great deal since his arrival in the country, and Mr. Aglonby replied, with perfect truth, that he had "never heard of them," though he added that Irving and Cooper, the latest additions to his library, were, in his opinion, "writers of merit." In politics Mr. Aglonby declared himself the champion of a defunct party,—the "old-line Whigs,"—and explained "the levelling, agrarian tendencies of Tom Jefferson" and the result of his policy, which had been "to eliminate the gentleman from politics." Mr. Gregory Aglonby spoke with regretful emotion of that period of the history of Virginia in which her local magistrates had managed county affairs in such a way as to secure her "safety, honor, and welfare," when universal suffrage had not "cursed the country with ignorance and incompetence, legally established at present, indeed, but sure to be supplemented by a property or educational test eventually." In religion they were what "the Aglonbys had always been,—attached adherents of the Episcopal Church in this country, as of the Establishment in England." Quite early in the evening Sir Robert had propounded his question as to their nationality. "Are you an American?" he had asked the elder of the two gentlemen, and both had replied, "We are Virginians," in accents that were eloquent of love and pride.

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"Upon my word, if I were asked what your nationality was, I should say that you were English,"

remarked Sir Robert, feeling that he was making what they must see was a handsome concession. But he was not talking to a Sam Bates now. Mr. Edmund Aglonby regarded him with a reserved air, as if he had said something rather flippant.

Mr. Gregory said gravely, "You doubtless mean it kindly, but we would prefer to be thought what we are,—Virginians. Not that we are ashamed of our parent stock, but Anne Buller here is the seventh of the name born in this country, and it is only natural that we should be completely identified with it. Unworthy as we are to represent it, we are Virginians." That anybody could be *more* than a Virginian had never crossed Mr. Aglonby's mind; but it should be said, in defence of what many regard as an exaggerated State pride, that to such, men to be *less* than a Virginian (that is, an embodiment of the virtues represented to them by the title) is equally impossible.

Whist was now proposed, and played by the light of two candles in old-fashioned candlesticks, that towered high enough to allow mild yellow rays to illuminate a vast expanse of bald head belonging to Mr. Gregory, and made the dark sheen of the polished mahogany table dimly visible beneath. An oil-lamp on the high mantel-shelf enabled Sir Robert to get a ghostly impression of the large, bare room in which they were sitting,—the high ceilings, the black-looking floors fading away into grewsome corners, the spindle-legged furniture that had no idea of accommodating itself to a lolling, mannerless generation, and loomed up in some occasional piece in a threatening sort of way,—solid, massive, dignified furniture, conscious of its obligations to society and ready to fulfil them to the very end, however little a frivolous and degenerate world might be worthy of such accessories. More than once in the pauses of the game Sir Robert's eyes wandered to the pictures, of which there were a number, all portraits, two being half discernible, —a young matron in ruby velvet and pearls, with hair dressed in a pyramid, a coach-and-six in court-plaster stuck on a snowy forehead, and eyes that would have laughed anybody into a good humor; and, opposite, a gentleman of the pursiest, puffiest, most prosperous description, the husband of the young matron, and so evidently high-tempered, dull, and obstinate, that he must have brought many a tear into the laughing eyes.

"A handsome woman, that," he said, after one of these moments of inattention, "and a good picture."

"It is an ancestress of ours on the distaff side,—Lady Philippa Vane,—and is accounted a Lely.—Brother Gregory, if you will have the kindness to cut the cards we can proceed with our game.—The other is her husband and cousin, a man of rank and large property but incurably vicious propensities, to whom we are rather fond of attributing certain follies and weaknesses in his descendants, and who we could wish had laid to heart the maxim, '*Nobilitatis virtus non stemma character*.' They were of the Vanes of Huddlesford," said Mr. Aglonby. [Pg 220]

"Ah," said Sir Robert, "you suppose yourself to have some connection with the Huddlesford Vanes?"

Mr. Aglonby's white tufted brows arched themselves in surprise above his dark eyes at the question, and there was a little more dignified reserve than before in his voice and manner as he said, "Descent and alliance are not matters of *supposition* in Virginia, but of record.—Anne Buller, I beg your forgiveness for having inadvertently revoked. My memory is really growing too treacherous to permit of my long enjoying this diversion, however great the horrors of an old age without cards may be."

The deferential courtesy paid to Miss Aglonby by her brothers was the most remarkable feature of the game to Sir Robert, and, when it was over, the first thought of both was to place a chair for her in the corner she generally occupied. They were not in haste,—it was impossible to associate the idea of hurry or flurry with either of them,—but somehow there was a little collision between them in doing this, followed by formal bows and elaborate mutual apologies, which were broken in upon by Miss Aglonby's low voice, saying, "Brother Edmund, I feared that you had slipped again.—He sustained a grave injury in that way last winter" (this to Sir Robert), "and I am always afraid that the disastrous experience may be repeated.—Brother Gregory, I thank you. I am entirely comfortable, and I beg that you will be seated now. Perhaps our guest will do us the favor to resume the very instructive and entertaining discourse with which he was beguiling us earlier in the evening."

Thus adjured, Sir Robert proceeded to instruct and entertain, with such success that all three of his companions were charmed, though they gave no frivolous evidences of it, such as laughing heartily, interrupting him to interject phrases or opinions into the "discourse," or replying in an animated strain. They listened with intelligent seriousness to what he had to say, weighed it apparently, replied to it with gravity, responded to some jest with a smile; but, although they were not people to approve of crackling thorns under a pot, or any form of folly, they were, in their way, appreciative of the culture, humor, and insight he showed. Mr. Aglonby begged to be favored with his "observations" on America, and added that "the dispassionate reflections of an intelligent foreigner should be esteemed of the utmost value by all judicious patriots and enlightened political economists, calling attention, as they often did, to evils and dangers whose existence had not been previously suspected." Mr. Gregory Aglonby wished to hear more of his travels among "that God-forsaken people the French." Miss Aglonby was eager to know more of the England of "Bracebridge Hall."

When bedtime came at last ("the proper season for repose," dear old Anne Buller called it, when she rose to "retire"), another courtesy was executed in front of Sir Robert by the châtelaine of "Heart's Content," who said, "How truly it has been remarked that we owe some of our keenest

pleasures in life to strangers! You must permit me to thank you again for your improving and pleasing conversation, which I shall often recall, and always with lively satisfaction. May your slumbers be refreshing and your awakening devoid of all pain! I wish you a very good night, sir." With this Miss Aglonby took up one of the top-heavy candlesticks, and glided, like the shade she was and ghost of a past period, up the stairs.

While Mr. Gregory was looking to bolts and bars, Sir Robert strayed about the room with his hands behind him, looking at the pictures, followed by Mr. Aglonby, who made no extensive comment on them, but gave a word of explanation occasionally when his guest halted longer than [Pg 221] usual before a canvas, such as, "The First Edmund, who came here in 1654;" "Edmund the Second;" "Edmund the Third, in his Oxford cap and gown;" "Gregory Aglonby, a colonel in the Revolutionary forces;" "Red-haired Edmund, as we call him, because the others are all dark;" "Colonel Everard Buller Aglonby, who represented this county in the House of Burgesses for thirty years, and his wife, who was a Calvert,—a great-aunt, a woman of extraordinary piety, who reduced herself from a condition of affluence to comparative poverty by the manumission of her three hundred slaves."

When he had shaken hands with his host at the door of his bedroom (which was emphatically the room of a bed, a huge, be-stepped, pillared, testered contrivance that waited at one end of the large apartment to murder sleep), Sir Robert fell to winding his watch with what looked like interest, but all his thoughts were with the Aglonbys.

"English gentlefolks of the eighteenth century preserved in Virginian amber. What a curious survival! 'Gentlemen of a period of manners, morals.' Remarkably interesting! Delightful types of a society as extinct as the dodo," he was saying to himself. "There is but one mould for the gentleman; but nature changes its shape with every century, I suppose,—though I sometimes think she has gone out of the business altogether in utter disgust. We have got a lot of plutocrats that are tailors' blocks, and nobles that talk like stable-boys and act like blackguards, and both fancy themselves gentlemen; but when I contrast them with the men of my father's day even—And this dainty, charming old bit of Chelsea-ware, Anne Buller! Her brothers treat her as though she were a reigning princess. I wonder what she would say if she could see, as I did the other day, a group of Nuneham girls calling each other by their last names and smoking cigarettes with a half-dozen Cambridge men, who chaffed them and treated them exactly as though they were so many boys in petticoats. Well, well, the world moves, I know, and I am an old fogy; but I shall not make myself hoarse shouting 'Huzza' until I find out whether we are going to the devil or not. I hope I am not getting as cynical as old Caradoc, who declares that he can always tell a countess from an actress nowadays by the superior modesty and refinement of—the actress."

In the next few days Sir Robert carefully inspected the rambling, substantial old house, which, to Miss Aglonby's chagrin, he pronounced "quite modern;" though he smiled when she informed him that "Heart's Content" had been "refurnished quite recently,—in '48." He also went over the land, only about four hundred acres, put the most searching questions as to its practical value and uses, filled a tin box with the earth, meaning to have it analyzed by "a respectable chemist," and went into details generally with much energy. Nor had he anything to complain of in the way of unfair dealing in Mr. Gregory Aglonby, who accompanied him and gave him the fullest and frankest particulars about the property, which he pointed out was going to rack and ruin, or rather had gone there. Every broken gate and stony field was dear to his heart, and it was a melancholy pilgrimage to him; but had not Mr. Aglonby said to him that morning, "Brother Gregory, the place must go,—there is no help for it,—and this gentleman seems likely to become a purchaser. Will you see that the disadvantages of the property are set before him clearly, especially such as a stranger would certainly overlook? I cannot entertain a proposition of any kind looking to its ultimate purchase until I know that this has been done, anxious as I am to have this matter definitely concluded. I had thought to die here. But it has been otherwise ordered by an overruling and all-wise Providence."

It did not escape Sir Robert that he was not likely to be overreached in his bargain, however much he might repent of it; and when Mr. Gregory pointed across the road and said, "The 'Little England' farm lies over there, but produces less and less every year. The land is exhausted," Sir [Pg 222] Robert thought, "The fellow is either quixotic or doesn't wish to sell. I rather think the first: there has certainly been no shuffling and pretending." Aloud he said, "The soil can't be exhausted. It is virgin still compared to that of England, and all that it needs is careful cultivation. It seems to me that what Virginia needs is immigration."

Mr. Gregory looked displeased. It was as though Sir Robert had criticised Anne Buller's dress. "On the contrary, we wish to keep Virginia for Virginians," he said slowly. "We have no desire to see it overrun by a horde of Irish and Dutch, and heaven knows what besides. The proper place for that kind of people is the West and Northwest. If we could get *the right class* of English emigrants, that would be another matter. But it is scarcely likely that they will come here in any considerable number, now that the poor old commonwealth offers so little remunerative return to the most honorable enterprise."

When Sir Robert had quite made up his mind that he would like to possess the place, he telegraphed imperatively for Mr. Heathcote, who joined him most reluctantly. Together they walked all over the county, saw a great many people, and, having bought two hundred acres that marched with, and, indeed, had formerly been a part of, the Aglonby estate, Sir Robert made a liberal offer for Heart's Content, expressed his thanks for the kind and honorable treatment he had received there, and, his terms being accepted, paid the purchase-money, and begged that the

family would suit their own convenience entirely in giving it up. This settled, he went his way to the Natural Bridge, which he considered should rank second only to Niagara in this country in point of interest, and then went on to Lexington, to visit General Lee's tomb, and from there to see Stonewall Jackson's grave, which, to his intense astonishment and indignation, he found half covered with visiting-cards,—the exquisite tribute of the sentimental tourist to the stern soldier. He could do nothing until he had cleared the last bit of pasteboard (with "Miss Mollie Bangs, Jonesville," printed on it) away from the mound. This he did energetically with his umbrella, after which he sat down quietly to think of his favorite hero, who seemed to be "resting under the shade of the trees over the river" rather than there, and fell to repeating "Stonewall Jackson's Way,"—a very favorite lyric, which he knew by heart. "'Appealing from his native sod In *forma pauperis* to God,' ought to be his epitaph. I think he would like that," he said. "I am glad England can claim such a son, however indirectly. Fancy 'Miss Mollie Bangs' leaving a card—and such a card—on old Blue-Light! A decent one might do for Beau Brummel's grave, but Jackson's—!"

Mr. Heathcote was with him, and, after one careless glance, had strolled up and down, absorbed in his own thoughts, which were not of war or death. He only half listened to his uncle's praise of the great soldier, and presently said, *à propos* of nothing that had happened that day, "Uncle, what would you say if I should ask you to let me live at 'Heart's Content'?"

"Eh? What's that?" asked Sir Robert, forgetting in his surprise to blow out the lighted match he had just applied to the offending cards. "You live in America? What idea have you got in your head, my boy?"

Mr. Heathcote could not tell his uncle that Edith had said that she would never marry an Englishman, never! but that if she ever did, she should insist upon his living in America, for to go away from mamma and papa and the boys and everybody she cared for was a thing she could not and would not do, not if she adored the man that demanded such a sacrifice of her. What he did say was that he was tired of his aimless life in London, and liked his uncle too well to look forward with any pleasure to succeeding him, and that he should like to have a small property to manage without aid of bailiff, steward, agent, or factotum of any kind. "I could go over whenever I liked, or you needed me, and you could come to me to see that I wasn't making ducks and drakes of the property," he said. "And it is an experiment, I grant; but you have always been awfully generous and kind to me, and I have something laid by that would cover the possible losses my inexperience might cause, for the first year at least. I am sure I can learn the trade, and am willing to pay for my apprenticeship, if you will only let me try my hand at farming." [Pg 223]

"The boy is thinking of marrying," was Sir Robert's mental comment; but he only said that he had bought the place with a very different idea, but that he would think the matter over.

"You must remember that it will not be child's play," he said. "And if you should grow attached to it and wish to stay, you will be practically giving up your own country, you know. But America is hardly a foreign country. It is the representative institutions, moral ideas, social atmosphere, and mental habits that make a people, not the mere physical features of the country, and in character the Americans are, as Mr. Aglonby would say, 'Englishmen once removed'—across the Atlantic. You might be quite happy and content among them. Just so."

"Oh, yes, I am sure I shall. You are quite in the right in what you say of them," Mr. Heathcote eagerly replied.

And Sir Robert, who had purposely laid this trap for him, thought to himself, "The boy is certainly in love. I must find out all about it, unless he has the grace to tell me himself."

Much as she liked Niagara, Miss Noel was not sorry, after long delay, to get a letter from Sir Robert, asking her to join him in Chicago, and telling her of a delightful visit he had made to Richmond, where he had been received "with particular kindness" and had met a great number of agreeable people, most of them Virginians of the modern type and scarcely so interesting, in a way, as the Aglonby family, who, as he saw from other individuals, were survivals of a generation rapidly disappearing, to be found only occasionally here and there now,—"a class of aristocrats long a curious anomaly in a republican state, hardly to be matched in Europe to-day outside of Austria, and never to be reproduced."

It did not take Parsons long to do the necessary packing; but Miss Noel consumed a whole day in putting up her carefully-labelled "specimens of the flora of New York;" and Ethel had to settle with Mr. Bates, who would doubtless rather have been rejected by an English-woman than accepted by any American, and was not denied that luxury.

From Chicago the reunited forces went off almost immediately to Salt Lake City, having only three days to give to a little hurried sight-seeing in the "marvellous Sphinx city," as they called it in their letters home.

At Salt Lake Mrs. Sykes was awaiting their arrival, and betrayed a radiant satisfaction at the first glance.

"You can't think how busy I have been and what a lot I have accomplished," she related exultantly. "I have found a whole village of Thompsons with a *p*, and went and boarded there, and have got up a book that Bentley will give me a hundred pounds for. And I have done a lot of sketches to illustrate it, and, so far from being out of pocket, shall have made by my American tour. It has been the greatest fun imaginable, poking about in their houses and dishing them up afterward. And, only fency, I've got a lock of Brigham Young's hair, *well authenticated*. I palmed

myself off on a person that I met as being a very great admirer of his, and she gave me it. When I get home I'm going to have a ring made of it, like the one Lady Bottsford has got made of King John of Abyssinia's wool, which has been so talked of. People have taken to noticing my rings very much ever since I had that tooth of darling Bobo's polished and mounted in brilliants; and this will be unique,—there will not be another like it in all England. I told the person of whom I got it what I meant to do with it, and she said that I must revere him deeply; and, do you know, I quite [Pg 224] forgot my part that I was playing, and said that I didn't care a fig for the old sinner, but that it was a great curiosity. And she was so engry, quite fiawrious, and wanted it back; but of course she didn't get it. When do we leave this?"

They left as soon as Sir Robert had satisfied himself on certain points, and Miss Noel bad been sufficiently shocked by a service in the Tabernacle, and Mr. Heathcote had indulged in a bath in the lake, which he persisted in taking, and in the course of which he went through any number of antics in addition to his usual feats, in themselves remarkable, for he was a vigorous and powerful swimmer. The ex-Devonshire Elder (whom Mrs. Sykes had seen more than once slinking about the streets, she said, but who had not come near her) was pleased to be very polite to Sir Robert, or would have been if he had been allowed; but, not wishing to conduct a Salt Lake campaign *à la* Sykes, Sir Robert was content to see the place in his own way, got a phial of water from the lake, which Miss Noel said reminded her of Sodom and Gomorrah and was "very suited to the odious place," looked at and into such things as could be seen in a short stay, and made temperate, careful records of the same in his note-book.

The next point of interest to the party was "'Frisco and the Yosemite," toward which they pushed as fast as steam could take them, Sir Robert and Miss Noel being vividly interested in many things *en route*, Ethel and Mr. Heathcote pleased by a few, Mrs. Sykes grumbling ceaselessly about the length, monotony, bareness, aridity, stupidity, and general hideousness of the journey. The only thing that really amused her was a quarrel that she got up with a lady who sat near her. The acquaintance promised to be friendly enough for a while, for the lady was an amiable soul,—the wife of "a dry-goods merchant in Topeka," she told Mrs. Sykes. The latter was pleased to ask her a great many questions and to patronize her quite extensively in default of other amusement, so that all went well at first. But the second stage of Mrs. Sykes's friendship was not apt to be so pleasant as the first, and accordingly she much astonished her neighbor one morning by saying to her curtly, "Why don't you speak English?"

"Why, I do. I talk it all the time, don't I?" replied the lady.

"No, you don't. Just look here. I have made a list of the things you say. They are not English at all. I don't know what you mean, often."

"Do you mean to say that you never heard anybody talk like me?" asked the lady indignantly, as she fumbled in her bag for her glasses.

"Oh, I didn't say that. I've heard *some* of the words among our lodging-house-keepers; but you have invented others, and your pronunciation is abominable. You should really mend it, if you can," replied Mrs. Sykes, with decision.

The list which had been so civilly put in the Topekan lady's hands was a long one, and ran as follows: "Chawcolate, pawk, hawrid, cawd, squrl, stoopid, winder, lemmy, gimmy, years (for ears), 'cute, edgercation, conchienchous," etc., etc.

The fingers that held it trembled with rage long before it was finished, for the Topekan lady had wealth and social aspiration, if not "edgercation;" and when Mrs. Sykes broke in with, "Well, what do you say to that?" she had a good deal to say, and said it very forcibly, in such English as she could command, after which she swelled in speechless anger opposite for the remainder of their journey.

"There it is again. If I say the least thing to these Americans they fly out like that," complained Mrs. Sykes to Miss Noel.

But for sheer ill humor nothing could have surpassed her conduct when they had "done" San Francisco, which she declared to be "a dull, dirty, windy place, with a harbor of which entirely too much is made,—ridiculously over-praised, in fact," and got under way for the Yosemite. The [Pg 225] roads, the rough vehicle, the country, could not be sufficiently abused. However, when the spot was reached, she relented, as she had done at Niagara, and, looking up at the giant trees, graciously conceded that they also were "quite up to the mark."

It was a pleasant spectacle to see Sir Roberts enthusiasm. Such gazing and neck-craning and measuring and speculating! Such critical inspection of bark, leaves, soil, lichens! Such questioning of the guides! Such keen delight, wonder, remeasuring, recraning, theories, calculations, endless contemplation! The enjoyment of the others was as nothing, compared to his,—for if there was a thing that he loved it was a fine tree, and had he not some of the best timber in England, which he knew as some generals have known their soldiers and some shepherds their sheep? "Stupendous! Prodigious! Wonderful!" burst from his lips as he walked slowly around them and rode between them as in a dream, perfectly entranced. He could scarcely be dragged away, and at last was only moved by the thought that there was so much that he "must positively see" in the surrounding country which was waiting to be considered volcanically, botanically, geologically, and otherwise. It was one of his vexations that nature, art, science, history, commerce, were so long, and time and a voraciously intelligent but mortal and limited baronet so fleeting. He would have liked to spend several months on the Pacific coast, looking

into a thousand things with unflagging zeal and interest. It was really afflicting to turn his back upon the early Spanish settlers, the Jesuit missions, the grape and olive production, mining interests, earthquake statistics, the Chinese problem, annual rainfall on the great plateau, study of the Sierra Nevada range, and last, most alluring of all, that of the Santa Barbara Islands, described by a companion of Drake as densely populated by a white race with light hair and ruddy cheeks. When Sir Robert thought of that people and of all the bliss of investigation, he almost decided to make a winter of it in California and solve that mystery or perish. But he had still much to accomplish, and he had fixed the day for sailing before leaving England. So back the party came to St. Louis, where they found a mountain of mail-matter from the four quarters of the globe. There were five voluminous epistles from Mrs. Vane to Miss Noel, and others from that household; a simple domestic chronicle from Mabel, describing her daily round and stating her fears and anxieties about "Boy," who was getting "sadly wilful and unruly," and, like a youthful Ajax, had lately "defied husband;" and one of Mr. Ketchum's characteristic epistles:

> "I send you a letter of introduction to my friend Fry in New Orleans (to whom my double-and-twisted), since you will go there. He will put you through all right. But I warn you that you will be nobody and won't be able to hold up your head there at all. No one can after an epidemic, unless he has lost half of his relations and had the other half given up by the doctors and prepared for burial. This reminds me that Brown's scapegrace of a brother has turned up here with a handsome Mexican wife and a million, and has deodorized his reputation by giving large sums to the yellow-fever sufferers, while I am thinking of colonizing all the mothers-in-law of these United there before another season opens, unless business improves. Fairfield has a Benedicts' Club now, and I chose the motto for it, 'Here the women cease from troubling and the wicked are at rest:' so when you want a little peace and comfort you will know where to come. My wife will have nothing less than her love sent you; but I am all the same your friend, J. K."

Having seen a certificate that New Orleans was entirely free from fever, "signed by all the medical men of eminence in the city," Sir Robert was determined not to be frightened out of his visit there altogether. But it was only November, and he did not wish to run any foolish risks, and [Pg 226] the ladies were very nervous on this score. He was still undecided what course to take, when he one day picked up a paper and read an account of the Indian Territory that interested him beyond measure. In an hour he had got out his maps and time-tables and arranged to "put in a week" at Tahlequah, the Falls of St. Anthony, and the Mammoth Cave. As none of the party cared for the first except himself, he went there alone, and felt fully repaid for the effort. Great was his joy at finding "a purely Indian legislative body" and assisting at their deliberations, his lorgnon glued now to one chief and now to another. And then to talk to them, to get their "views," to sketch them, to have a copy of their constitution and laws and a newspaper in their own tongue and characters in which an affinity to the Egyptian, Arabic, Chinese, or any other might perhaps be traced! And then how full his letters to his friends in England were of his "visit to a Choctaw gentleman's plantation,—a most deeply interesting, well-educated man;" "the first-fruits of the new civilization;" "the opinion of a Seminole person on the Indian policy of the American government;" "the beauty of a young Chickasaw female" whom he had seen at one of the schools, and "the extraordinary progress made by some of the other scholars, showing that there is absolutely no limit to the intellectual development of the once-despised savage;" "the crystal clearness of the beautiful rivers, the lovely, fertile plains, framed by the Mozark Mountains, the balmy, delightful climate, and the brutality and wicked greed of an American of the lower class," who had told him that "the country was a million times too good for redskins, who ought all to be exterminated, as 'Indians was p'ison wherever found.'" And then, while the glow of this interest still flushed his mind, he took up the Mississippi River, which was a career in itself and beckoned him on to fresh conquests. He went up to the Falls of St. Anthony, which, after Niagara and the Yosemite, was accounted "tame and overrated" by Mrs. Sykes, but over which he pondered deeply. Before he left there the river had got a strong hold on his imagination that grew ever greater and greater. He spent all his time on the boat studying it. He talked to the pilot about it,—or rather made the pilot talk, and listened with all his ears; he took up the methods now practised for preventing the banks from caving in and forcing the Great Father to lie in the bed he has made, instead of driving honest folk out of theirs by scurvy turns and bends that break up thousands of homes. He drew diagrams of the pile-driving and wattling and willow mattrasses in the diary, with the improvements he thought advisable, and some very scientific suggestions by which the river could be made to checkmate itself, like an automaton chess-player. He hung over the guards continually, observing all that was to be observed, and recorded the same under separate headings, such as "currents," "velocity," "flood-rises," with statistics without end showing that the carrying-trade of the great water highway would amount in 1950 to something so colossal that there is no room for it here, while a future for the cities that stud its banks was predicted that would satisfy their most ambitious citizens.

His heart was not in Louisville nor in the Mammoth Cave, though he went over the first religiously and examined the latter carefully, collected specimens, and even thrilled faintly over an eyeless fish, which aroused considerable enthusiasm in Mr. Heathcote. He was not really himself until he was again on the river, doing a little dredging and sounding on his own account. At Cairo he expanded almost as much as his subject, and for a long while afterward was never weary of tracing the blue and yellow currents that fuse so reluctantly and imperfectly that out in the Gulf of Mexico, it is said, one comes upon patches of the Missouri of the most jaundiced, angry hue.

The sombre majesty of the stream was quite lost upon Mrs. Sykes, who saw in it only "an ugly, wicked-looking river, with a lot of dirty-white villages along its mud banks." Her attention was [Pg 227] given to the passengers and the clerk,—especially the latter. "A clerk that talks to the ladies in the cabin about literature and the dramar! Only fency!" she said to Miss Noel. "And such comical blackies, that the ladies call 'aunty,' and that call me 'honey' and 'child.' As like as not you'll see a snag coming up through the bottom of the boat presently, and you had better try one of the life-preservers on and see how it works; though, after all, we may be blown up instead. Of course we are racing. I am sure of it."

"Dear, dear! How *very* dreadful! How did you discover that? It should really be made known. I shall speak to the captain. I really can't consent to being *raced* with," replied Miss Noel, who did not make sufficient allowance for Mrs. Sykes's love of the sensational. "Robert must call a meeting and protest, or something."

She went to look for Sir Robert, whom she found walking about on deck. He had been reading all the afternoon, and his mind was full of La Salle, and De Soto, and poor Evangeline, so cruelly near to Gabriel and happiness once, only to drift away from both forever. So large was his grasp of any subject that the imaginative phases of a situation appealed to him as powerfully as the practical, and he was not the man to take the Mississippi without its associations, any more than he would have done the Hudson or the Sierras without Irving and Bret Harte. So now he was pacing backward and forward under the stars, thinking of these things, and in no mood for bearding the captain in his cabin; and, having calmed Miss Noel's fears, he stayed on deck until very late, enjoying his cigar and surroundings.

When they got low enough down to come upon levees and see that the river was actually higher than the land, the questions of inundation, protection, blue-clay banks, dikes, sluices, crevasses, water-gates, sediment, currents, swept in upon Sir Robert, and he was still working at them when they reached New Orleans. Fresh interests and employments now awaited him, in which he was soon absorbed, head over ears. Like olives, New Orleans has a flavor of its own, so decided that it is impossible to be indifferent to it: one must either be very fond of it or dislike it heartily. It was soon evident that Sir Robert belonged to the first class and Mrs. Sykes to the second. Its brilliant blue skies, and sunshine, and warmth, the lovely flowers, the good opera and better restaurants, the infectious gayety of the people, as light about the heart as the heels, with enough Gallic quicksilver in their veins to give them a genius for being and looking happy, and, lastly, the warmth of his reception, and a hospitality as refined as limitless, delighted this most amiable of baronets. He had brought good letters, and was admitted to that inner Creole circle which few strangers see, and in which he found among the elders, as he said to Miss Noel, "the atmosphere of the Faubourg Saint-Germain,—a dignity like that of the period to which the Aglonbys belonged, with more grace and *savoir-faire*. And such wonderfully pretty girls, my dear Augusta, with eyes like sloes and skins like the petals of their own magnolia-blossoms. And I observe a sort of patriarchal tribal state of affairs among them,—grandparents, children, grandchildren, all living together in great numbers and perfect amity, apparently." Among the Americans of the city Sir Robert found much to interest him, and he went to visit their "sugar-estates," took down in black and white the astounding number of oranges that one tree is capable of producing, held conversations with many gentlemen about the emancipated slaves, and with many emancipated slaves about their late masters and present condition. And then was there not cotton, the machinery employed on rice-, sugar-, and cotton-plantations to "go, into"? to say nothing of the swamp-flora, the possible introduction of olives into Louisiana, and Voodooism to trace back to [Pg 228] the Vaudois sorcerers of the fourteenth century and connect with the serpent-worship of some parts of Italy, where he had himself seen the peasants make their yearly procession with snakes wrapped about their necks, waists, and wrists? And was there not, too, serious business to be done? How could he secure and forward to England a few things that he must have, such as a gar alligator, a pair of mocking-birds, a Floridian flamingo, a ruby humming-bird, "a Texan horned frog, with a distinctly-developed tail, crustaceous, probably antediluvian, and credibly reported to live upon air," not to mention other treasures, and collections previously made, which must be shipped before he left? All this he finally accomplished, and was so pleased by his success that not even a letter from his Kalsing "solicitor," saying that his suit against the "Eagle" had been brought to trial and he had been awarded fifty cents damages, could greatly cloud the content he felt.

Mrs. Sykes, meanwhile, was looking at everything through her own bit of yellow glass or London fog, and seeing only what her prepossessions would let her see through a medium that distorted and magnified every object. As the spittoons at the Capitol had seemed to her far bigger and more striking than the dome, so now the gutters of New Orleans made an immense impression upon her and affected her most painfully, although the Mississippi failed to impress her at all. The climate she found odious, the people spoke neither pure French nor good English, and many a fault besides she found, chiefly with what she politely termed "the Creowls," whom she was never tired of ridiculing as lazy, ignorant, effeminate, and morbidly conceited. She was not an ideal companion when they made an expedition into the lovely pastoral Tèche country, the Acadia of exiled Acadians and Eden of Louisiana, but her lack of enthusiasm did not damp the ardor of Sir Robert. Miss Noel thought it a beautiful country, but added that it looked "sadly damp, and as if it might be malarious," and insisted on "dear Ethel's" taking ten grains of quinine daily during their stay and wearing a potato in her pocket,—precautionary measures adopted by herself, and known to have nipped jungle-fever in the bud repeatedly in India, so she said. It seemed to Sir Robert's heated fancy that even Ethel praised this ideal spot but tepidly, and when she had started out of a revery three times with an "I beg pardon" while he was reading "Evangeline" to

her under the shade of one of those noble oaks "from whose branches garlands of Spanish moss floated," fit monuments of the sorrowful maiden of ever-green memory, he put down the book impatiently, saying, "It is only the old that are young nowadays; I am boring you,"—a speech that made her blush guiltily, since she did not care to explain where her thoughts had wandered. He was not bored. The bayous were a fascinating novelty to him, the trees and fields and glades were eloquent to him, the simple French peasants who belong to the seventeenth century and by some miracle lead its idyllic life in the nineteenth interested him, and he could see Basil, Gabriel, and Father Félicien at every step.

The next week found them on a steamer bound for Havana and New York, followed by friendly faces and good claret to the last, leaving three baskets of champagne and about a ton of flowers out of account. For an account of Havana, Matanzas, Spanish atrocities, Cuban exports, coolie slavery, and the like topics, the reader is respectfully referred to the book since published by Sir Robert,—"Eight Months in the United States, Cuba, and Canada,"—a work pronounced in critical quarters "the best book of travels in America ever published in England" (high praise, surely), though it attracted less general attention than a very spicy, entertaining volume by Mrs. Arundel Sykes, called "A Britisher among the Yankees," (to quote from another English journal) said to contain "a not very flattering picture of the life, society, and institutions of the Great Republic, [Pg 229] which must be a true one, since it is so universally resented by the American press. People will cry out when they are hit, as every one knows."

On arriving in New York our party went at once to Mr. Brown's, that gentleman being established there for the winter and having urged them to stay with him. Their idea was to sail for home almost immediately, as soon as Sir Robert had seen his friend General Bludyer, with whom he had some business and who was bringing out his two sons to establish them in America. But an unexpected delay occurred. On the day after their arrival, Mr. Heathcote ran up to his aunt's room to bid her good-by before taking himself off to Baltimore,—he had made a full confession to Sir Robert, and received much advice and counsel, together with a qualified approval of his plans and hopes,—and he found Miss Noel still in bed, although it was mid-day and she not the least punctual and energetic of her sex. In reply to his playful reproaches she replied that she was "feeling very, very queer," and he cheerfully assured her that she "had best stop in bed a day or two and all would be well," after which he told her that he was not going back to England with the party, and, with a further remark to the effect that she "was looking awfully seedy," discovered that he was late for his train, was again pleasantly sure that she would "be all right soon," and hurried off to the station, well pleased to think that he should see Edith in a few hours. It is not always possible, however, for a woman to fulfil the optimistic predictions of her careless male relatives, and in a few hours Miss Noel was feeling really ill. "Who is your doctor, my dear?" she asked of Bijou, who had herself arranged and carried up a little tray of delicacies with which to tempt her. "How very sweet of you to trouble! Why did you not let Parsons do that? Do you know I am making myself quite wretched lest I should be sickening with something,—something serious? I must have a doctor at once. Would you kindly send for one, or, rather, tell Parsons where to go? I can't rest until I get the opinion of a medical man."

"Now, don't you worry about *that*," said Bijou, bestowing an embrace upon her and then perching herself on the foot of the bed. "You are not going to be ill; and if you are, why, you are with friends who will take the best sort of care of you, that's all. I'll nurse you; and popper says I am just a natural-born nurse, if there ever was one. You can see the doctor if you want to, but most likely you will be a great deal better to-morrow."

"But, my dear, suppose I should be worse? It would be too dreadful! I can't be ill in your house, you know," said Miss Noel disconsolately.

"Why, why not?" queried Bijou, in surprise.

"Why not? Can you ask why? Think of all the trouble I should be putting you to, the house upset, and the servants giving warning very likely, and all that. Oh, no! I hope and trust it is nothing; but if it should be serious I could not dream of putting you out like that," replied Miss Noel, with emphasis.

"Why, do you mean to say that anybody would care for *that*, or think of the *trouble*, with a friend lying sick in their house? I never heard of such a thing," exclaimed Bijou, expressing the liveliest emotions of astonishment and contempt in face and voice. "Of course we don't want you to get sick, for your own sake; but if you do we'll do everything in this world to make you comfortable and cure you. And the house won't be upset at all; and we don't care a snap what the servants think. You must put that perfectly ridiculous idea right out of your head, and turn over and try to go to sleep."

When the doctor came he looked grave even for a doctor, and felt it his duty to tell Miss Noel that she might have yellow fever. It was always to be had for the catching in Cuba, and her symptoms were suspicious, though he could not, of course, be positive. Here was a sensation. It was curious to see the effect this declaration had on the different members of the household. Sir Robert, after [Pg 230] turning pale and saying "God bless my soul! you don't mean it," to the doctor, rallied from the shock as soon as he had left the house, and refused to believe anything of the kind, talked about "the art conjectural," and did all he could to impress this view on Miss Noel, who promptly gave herself up as lost, told him that she had made her will "before leaving town for the North" the year before, asked that her body might be "taken back to dear old England," if this could be done without risk to others, and begged that she might be "sent straight away to the hospital" and no one allowed to come in contact with her meanwhile. Bijou, Ethel, and Parsons stoutly refused to

be hustled out of her room, declaring that they had already been exposed to the danger, if danger there was, and protested that they were ready to nurse her through anything. Mr. Brown, coming home to dinner, was horrified as by some impiety to hear it proposed that Miss Noel should go to a hospital. "Admitting, for the sake of argument," said this ever-judicial host, "that the doctor is right, what follows? Why, that Miss Noel will require great care, and, humanly speaking, will incur additional risk in leaving my house. I cannot dream of allowing it. My married daughter has taken her children to see their grandmother; there are only Bijou and myself to be considered, and neither of us has any fear of the disease, or, indeed, any great belief in the reality of the danger. I cannot think of letting a guest, and that guest a stranger here, go to a public place of the kind and commit herself to hired nurses. Oh, no! That is out of the question."

"I never heard of such a thing,—never. It would be perfectly shameful!" protested Bijou afresh. And so Sir Robert was overruled, and, much touched by this view of the matter, tried to express thanks on behalf of Miss Noel, bungled out a few short phrases, very different from his usually fluent utterances, shook Mr. Brown's hand heartily, sat down with a very red face, and then started up and dismissed the carriage, which, pending this decision, had been waiting at the door.

It chanced that Mrs. Sykes had been out for some hours that day, and had then come back and gone into the library, where she spent some time in writing to the friends who had entertained her in Central New York. She had just finished putting up the morning paper for them containing a full and carefully-marked account of the defalcation and disappearance of a bank-president in Delaware in whom she recognized the brother of her former hostess, when Ethel looked in at the door and said, "Oh, you are here," and, coming forward, gave her the dreadful news. It was well that this final mark of her gratitude and graceful interest was complete down to the very postage-stamp, for after this Mrs. Sykes had no time for delicate attentions.

"Stand off! good heavens! Don't come near me. Get away!" she shrieked, and for once every particle of color left her face. The next moment she rushed up-stairs to her room, put on her bonnet and cloak in a flash, and, without farewells of any kind, or thought of so much as her darling Bobo, left the house immediately. She went first, and that as fast as her feet could carry her, to the nearest druggist's, where she invested lavishly in disinfectants and hung innumerable camphor-bags about her person. From there she went to the nearest hotel, from which she wrote to the Browns, giving instructions about her luggage, which she said must be packed by Parsons and sent over to England, to be unpacked at Liverpool, for fear of infection, by "a person" whom she would engage. She then took the first steamer leaving New York, and when she got on board gave vent to a perfectly sincere and devout exclamation, "Thank heaven, I have done with America!" From Liverpool she wrote back a lively account of the passage, and expressed the deepest interest in "dear Miss Noel," about whom she had been "quite wretched," but who she [Pg 231] "hoped was doing nicely by this time and would make a good recovery." She also hoped, and even more earnestly, that "dearest Bobo was not being neglected in the general hubbub, and given his biscuits without their being properly soaked first, and his chicken in great pieces, not carefully minced," and begged that every care should be taken of him, imploring that everybody would remember that "*hot* milk invariably made the poor dear ill." She also sent Bijou a small and particularly hideous pin-cushion, which she said had been made for the Ashantee Bazaar by the Grand Duchess of Aufstadt.

The defection of Mrs. Sykes was not greatly deplored by anybody, but it was deeply resented by Parsons, who it is to be feared was not as devoted to Bobo as his mistress expected.

"I'm not one to run away,—not if it was lions and tigers,—like *some*," she remarked; "but if hever I get back to the hold country I'll go down on my bended knees, if it's in the very cab at Liverpool, and thank 'eaven I'm at 'ome again; which I 'ope I may live to see it."

Happily, Miss Noel did not have yellow fever. Unhappily, she had *a* fever, if not the dreaded one, and was ill for several weeks,—so ill that it seemed at one time as though she had done with travelling-days. Anxious weeks these for Ethel and Sir Robert and Mr. Heathcote, trying ones for Bijou, who had at last found "a rational occupation." For it was she who, with Parsons's help, nursed Miss Noel faithfully, tenderly, efficiently, Ethel being a most willing coadjutress, but sadly out of place in a sick-room. The skill, the self-reliance, and the unselfishness that Bijou showed surprised even those who knew her best, and quite endeared her to Sir Robert.

"That girl is one in a thousand," he said to Ethel more than once; "and I was such a wiseacre that I thought her a useless, spoiled creature who would never be anything but a domestic fetich. I shall ask her pardon, when I get the chance, for having so shamefully underrated and misjudged her. Could there be a kinder family? If Augusta had been a near and dear relative they could scarcely have shown more solicitude. Every luxury, every kindness that the most thoughtful affection could have suggested has been lavished on her. Everything has been subordinated to the one object,—her recovery,—and all their ordinary pursuits, amusements, occupations, cheerfully laid aside, apparently as a mere matter of course. At least, they disclaim the idea of sacrifice; and in all that they have done there has been nothing perfunctory. If they have merely been performing what they considered a duty, I must say that they have had the grace and innate good breeding to make it appear that it was a pleasure. Just so."

Miss Noel had been down-stairs on the sofa for three days, having been officially pronounced convalescent, when who should walk in upon her but the Ketchums,—Mabel serene and smiling, and Job in a state of evident satisfaction and radiant good humor.

"Well, now, this is something like. Up and dressed, and looking first-rate for an invalid," he called out from the door, and then, advancing, took one of her thin hands with much gentleness, and said, "Getting well, ain't you? That's right. I am so glad. Creepin' through mercy, eh? as Father Root used to say."

Mabel slipped into a seat near Miss Noel, and, after some inquiries about Sir Robert, Ethel, and the Browns, told her what concern they had felt about her illness. "Husband telegraphed constantly to know how you were going on; but the replies were often most unsatisfactory; and it is so very nice to see you up again. You will soon be about, and the sea-voyage will set you up wonderfully. That puts me in mind of—Tell her, husband; show her."

Thus stimulated, Mr. Ketchum drew out an enormous pocket-book, stuffed full of papers, and attacked it rather than looked through it, drew out a handful of letters, bills, memorandums, tore up several, crushed others back into his case, walked swiftly into the hall, and came back triumphantly with his over-coat on his arm and a sheet of foolscap in his hand. [Pg 232]

"Dear, dear, husband, you should not mess about like this," said Mabel, "littering up the carpet."

She would have picked up the bits of paper, but he interfered. "Here! I'll do that, Daisy; sit down. Daisy's occupation in the next world, Miss Noel, is going to be sweeping all the dirty clouds out of the sky, and polishing up the harps and crowns, and telling the small angels not to leave the ivory gates ajar, for fear of draughts, and to be sure and put their buckets and spades away tidily when they have done digging in the golden sands, and not to get over-heated and fall ill, because they can't die and have got nowhere to go. Now, look at this" (getting up from his knees and holding up the foolscap, which was covered with drawings of some mechanical contrivance): "I got thinking about you one day and your illness, and that you ought to stay on deck all you could, and to have the right kind of chair, and suddenly this idea hit me right on the head, and I got out my pencil and started in on it. And here it is. This is only the rough draught, you understand."

With growing enthusiasm he explained all the details, while Mabel looked intently and respectfully at the paper he held, and interjected admiring comments: "Isn't it a most wonderful thing? and wasn't it clever of husband to think of it?—but, then, he is always thinking of things. Husband has got such a surprising talent for invention, and grasps an idea at once."

"Oh, no, I haven't. I think I could have found out the way to my mouth as soon as any other baby, that's all. But this is a lucky hit. I am going to have it patented. It's a first-rate thing. This is the way you lash it to the mast when you want to; and when you want to move about you let down the rollers and fasten them with this hook, and go where you please. Twenty-seven changes of position. Why, you can read, eat, sleep, ride, get married, run for Congress, die, and be buried in that chair, if you want to!" he said, by way of final recommendation.

"Thank you, but I don't wish to die. I would rather live," said Miss Noel, laughing cheerfully for the first time since her illness. "And did you really design it for me? How very kind! I must really try to get it worked out, if you think it will answer, as of course you do."

"Oh, don't you bother your head about that," he replied. "I worked it all out one night, and set a smart carpenter at it the next morning before breakfast. And it's a perfect success. And I've got it down at the hotel, ready for you. I'm coming up here to put you in it and take you down to the steamer myself."

Sir Robert and Mr. Heathcote now came in (the latter having returned from Baltimore an affianced man), and Ethel and Bijou followed, and everybody was delighted to see everybody else; and they had so much to talk about that Sir Robert almost forgot that he was engaged to preside over a children's dinner-party at the house of an intimate friend of the De Witts. He hurried off, though; and never had he "looked into" ten more charming little faces than brightened on his arrival. The way in which he radiated good humor, intelligence, benevolence, told stories and jokes that kept the little company shouting with laughter, and finally rose and got off an impromptu piece of doggerel with exactly ten verses, and each child's name and some peculiarity brought out in a way to convulse even mammas and the maids, was as indescribable as delightful. I am not sure that he did not enjoy it more than any of the grand entertainments that he had been asked to; and as for the children, they remember it to this day, although they are on the verge of young-ladyhood and at college now and have very serious demands made on their memories.

After a pleasant little interval of reunion and various diversions, the day came at last for our English people to leave the country. What they felt about this necessity was well expressed for them by Sir Robert in the last letter that he wrote before going on the steamer. [Pg 233]

"I am glad to turn my face toward the old land, which must always seem to me the best of all lands," he said; "but I take with me the pleasantest memories of the new. It has been a constant surprise and pleasure to me to find how like they are to each other in all essentials, greatly as they often seem to differ on the surface. I have had a most interesting and delightful tour. Such opportunities of observation as have come in my way, and such authentic information as I have been able to lay hold of, I have tried to make the most of; but in so short a time I could not do more than glean in a field that offers a rich harvest to more fortunate travellers. From the moment of landing until now I have been made the recipient of a hospitality too generous and too flattering to be appropriated to myself in my individual capacity. I must either set it down to the good will which Americans feel toward England when not irritated and repelled by the insolent and overbearing among us,—who have done more to make a breach between the two peoples than you would fancy, and inflicted wounds that all the ambassadors and public-dinner fine

speeches cannot heal,—or to that true politeness which Americans observe in the most casual relations, and the immense, apparently inexhaustible kindness which it is their habit to show to strangers. I find in them a certain spontaneity and affectionateness that has quite won my heart."

To the credit of Mr. Ketchum be it said that if Miss Noel had been made of cobwebs she could have been safely transported in his invention to the steamer. This feat was comfortably achieved, at all events, and Mr. Ketchum, having superintended it, left Miss Noel in the chair on deck; and there were kisses and embraces between the ladies, a hurried rush to the wharf, and the steamer moved out, with Miss Noel crying softly, and saying, "Dear, dear Bijou! Dear America! How good they have been to me!" and Ethel and Sir Robert hanging over the side; and ashore the Browns, the doctor, Mr. Heathcote, the De Witts, and Mr. Ketchum and Mabel looking earnestly at them and waving their adieux.

"You'll find a couple of barrels of pecans at your place. I forgot to tell you. Good-by! good-by! Call again!" shouted Mr. Ketchum. And then, turning to his wife, he said, "Don't you wish you were going home, too?"

Mabel stopped to straighten little Jared Ponsonby's hat and settle his curls, somewhat disordered by the wind from the river. Then she turned a face full of sweet content toward her husband; her simple and serious look met his twinkling, bantering one for a moment. "No, dearest," she said, as she took his arm and walked away. "You know that I don't. You are my home."

The Ketchums went back to Fairfield, and spent the two years that followed very happily and quite uneventfully in that simple round of duties and pleasures which the foolish find so dull and the wise would not exchange for any other. And not the least agreeable feature of this life was what was known as "the English letters," although this really included books, music, photographs, sketches, and a great variety of things, from the J. pens that came for Mrs. Vane and the larding-needles that housewifely Mabel had coveted that she might "set a proper fowl before husband," up to packages of a disgraceful size and bulk addressed to Mr. Ketchum in Sir Robert's hand. Sir Robert was a regular and delightful correspondent; Miss Noel and Ethel were equally kind about writing; Mrs. Sykes sent a very characteristic epistle or two to the family after her return, and then let "silence like a poultice" come to heal the blows she had inflicted.

"What do you hear from that idiotic young Ramsay?" "How is Ramsay opening the American oyster?" "What of poor Mr. Ramsay?" "Is Mr. Ramsay coming back to England?" were questions [Pg 234] often asked by these correspondents; and Mr. Ketchum was able to give some account of that fascinating fortune-seeker.

Mr. Ramsay wrote to him occasionally, which was the more flattering because he repeatedly said in these productions that he "hated doing a letter most tremendously," and very truly remarked that "the worst of it is that you've got to be thinking what to say, which is an awful bore, and ten to one the pen is bad, and spelling takes a lot out of you if you are not used to looking up the words." Whether, "not being a literary chap," he would have written to Mr. Ketchum at all had not the Ketchum and Brown properties marched and the two families been good friends is one of those nice questions which it is hard to decide. His letters were headed "Out in the Bush" at first, and were full of the adventures and amusements that his novel surroundings afforded him. Then came more sober epistles from "The Ranch," with a good deal in them about "these dirty brutes of Mexicans and ignorant cowboys," the long, dull days, the doubts that had begun to agitate him as to the possibility of getting the millions that had seemed almost within his grasp in London out of "old Brown's farm." Finally, after a long silence, Job got a letter one day, written in pencil, that betrayed the deepest depression and most utter disgust. He had "come an awful cropper from a mustang," and been laid up for three months; his money was all gone; he could get nothing to do. "I tried to get a clerkship in a 'country store' before I got my fall," he explained, "though if I have got to that I had better go back to England, where those fellows get a half-holiday on Saturdays and lots of bank holidays, and are in civilization at least. Perhaps if the governor saw me with a quill behind my ear, or riding down to the city on top of a 'bus, smoking a pipe, he'd do something for me for the honor of the family. But he's in a beastly humor now, and wouldn't send me a fiver to save my life. He says that I'm not worth my salt anywhere, and that he washes his hands of me. And Bill has taken to patronizing me so tremendously that I'd starve rather than ask his help. So I must just stick it out here, I suppose, unless you meant what you said when we parted, and will help me to get back home, where I have friends, a brother-in-law especially, an awfully good sort of fellow, that would stick to a fellow through thick and thin, no matter what other fellows said of him. There's a lot of 'fellows' in this last sentence, but I never was a clever fellow—I had better stop. I am getting worse mixed up than ever."

Mr. Ketchum's reply to this was a short, cordial, hearty note, enclosing a check for five hundred dollars, telling Mr. Ramsay to draw upon him for more if he needed it, bidding him keep "a stiff upper lip," and advising him to stop at Fairfield *en route* to England and see if there wasn't some better way out of his difficulties. About two weeks after this Mr. Ramsay walked into Mr. Ketchum's office and almost wrung his hand off, "Awfully kind of you," "awfully glad to see you," "awfully good news to tell you," was poured out as in one breath by the bronzed, thin, but still beautiful Englishman, whose illness had given a last and quite irresistible charm of spirituality to his handsome face.

"Sit down, man, and tell us all about it," said Mr. Ketchum, when he had given him an embrace

half real, half theatrical. "Delighted to see *you*, if it comes to that."

"Here's that check you sent me," said Mr. Ramsay, going straight to his point, as usual. "I never got it cashed, because I got by the very same post good news from England. My great-aunt Maxwell is dead at Bath and has left me all her money, twenty thousand pounds. Isn't it the luckiest fluke that ever was? But all the same it is a kindness that I shan't forget. You are an awfully good sort to have done it. Most fellows would have seen me in Halifax first, you know. [Pg 235] And if ever you want a friend you'll know where to find him, that's all. Only fancy all this money falling in when I hadn't a penny and was in perfect despair! Such luck! And such a fluke, as I have said. You see, it was all to have been Bill's. He has always been my aunt's favorite, though at first it was to have been divided between us; only when I was a little chap I blew off the tail of her parrot with a bunch of fire-crackers. Haw! haw! haw! I was never allowed there afterward, and she hated the very name of me. She and Bill have hit it off together so well that he never had the least fear of me stepping in. But on last Valentine's Day it seems that she got an awfully cocky, cheeky valentine of an old maid putting on a wig and painting her face, and it had the Stoke-Pogis post-mark, and she took it into her head that Bill had sent it, flew into a most awful rage, and sent for her solicitor and changed her will. And then, most fortunate thing, she died that night, and couldn't make another."

"Well, you are a doting nephew, upon my word," said Job.

"It is no use of me being a hypocrite and going about looking cut up and pretending that I am sorry when I am not," replied Mr. Ramsay. "I haven't seen her for years, and she was nasty to me even when I was a child, and she was a regular old cat, and no good to herself or anybody else. I don't see why I should pull a long face and turn crocodile because she made me her heir to spite Bill, though it comes in most beautifully for me. I don't mean to keep it all, though I could swell it considerably if I did. It would be a dirty thing to do, for Bill has been brought up to expect it and didn't send the valentine at all. I shall go halves with him; that seems fair all round." Mr. Ketchum agreed with him, and Mr. Ramsay went on to make further confidences, in which it appeared that he still cared for Miss Brown, and had "thought an awful lot about her," and now rejoiced to find himself in a position to address her if she was still free. Tom Price, coming in, could scarcely announce that the buggy was at the door for goggling at Mr. Ramsay. The two men drove rapidly out to Fairfield, talking all the way, and Mr. Ramsay stared very hard at the Brown mansion and grounds, and got a pretty welcome from Mabel that warmed his heart not a little. What he said to Bijou in an interview that evening of four hours is no business of ours.

It began after quite formal greetings with, "Do you know that you are looking most awfully well, Miss Brown?" on his part.

"You didn't dream that I cared for you, did you?" said Bijou toward its close, anxious to reassure herself upon a point that had made the last two years a bitterness to her.

"Oh, yes, I did. I twigged that long ago," replied he. "That is why I cut my stick so suddenly. I couldn't support a wife then, and I wasn't goin' to be thought a fortune-hunter, you know." It must have been that he was forgiven the sentimental blunder that is worse than a crime,—a want of frankness,—or how else could they have been married in six weeks and sailed for England? Mr. Alfred Brown, being in California, did not witness this ceremony, but Mr. Ketchum did, and "a large and fashionable company of the *élite* of Kalsing" (*vide* the local paper). And did not Mr. Ketchum give the groom a pair of trotting-horses that afterward attracted much attention in Hyde Park? and did not Mr. Brown present the bride with a considerable fortune on her wedding-day, which her husband insisted should be set apart for her exclusive use and control?

"Haven't you got any other name than Bijou?" he said to her. "That is a most absurd name. Bijou Ramsay. What will my people say?"

"I was baptized Ellen," said she, "but I have never been called that."

"Ellen? A nice, sensible name. I shall call you that," he replied, and kept his word.

And so the immigrant, who thought he had left England forever, went home in a little while and is [Pg 236] living there now in inglorious ease and somewhat enervating luxury, while Mr. Heathcote, who thought that he was coming out for a short visit and couldn't possibly live out of England, is already more than half an American, a successful, practical farmer, and, it may be added, a happy man. "Heart's Content" has been renaissanced, papered, tiled, *portièred*, utterly transformed, and is thought quite a show-place now and much admired; but there are some persons who liked it better when it was only an old-fashioned Virginian home, before their mahogany majesties the old furniture, and those courtly commoners Anne Buller and her brothers, had been swept away with all the other cumbering antiquities.

Sir Robert is now looking into the military, monastic, and baronial architecture of the mediæval period on the Continent, and goes next year to Japan to begin the exhaustive researches which are to culminate in his next book, the "Lives of the Mikados."

F. C. Baylor.

[THE END.]

THE TRUTH ABOUT DOGS.

I am about to do a very unpopular thing,—namely, to write realistically about the dog and to protest mildly against the extravagant and sentimental way of writing about him which has become so fashionable and which threatens to make him a veritable fetich. The intolerance of his worshippers has already attained a height of dogmatism (the pun is hardly a conscious one) which is truly theologic. I have been made aware, when expressing dissent or a low measure of faith, of an ill-concealed scorn, such as curls the lip of a Boston liberal or lights the eye of a "Hard-Shell" or a Covenanter when any one ventures to differ from him.

The theory is gravely advanced of a dog heaven,—not confined to the poor Indian, whose paradise consists of happy hunting-grounds, where, of course, he will need his faithful hound to keep him company. The main argument of white men is generally found to be the superiority of canine virtue over the human. Whether the word "cynic" originates from a similar source I will not undertake to say; but I have more than half a suspicion that such talk proceeds rather from a prejudice against men than a genuine enthusiasm for dogs. This was doubtless the feeling of the Frenchman who said, "*Plus je connais l'homme, plus je préfère le chien.*" As to any argument drawn from the need of compensation elsewhere for privation endured on earth, however it might hold concerning the ancient dog, there is no foundation for the claim now; for verily the modern dog hath his portion in this life,—and a double one, too.

I am impelled by no fanatical zeal, and have no creed or cult of my own to vindicate. I am influenced only by a noble love of truth and a sublime sense of duty in arraying myself with the despised minority,—perhaps I may say by a sense of fair play for the "under dog." I do not ask the *kynolatrist* to "call off his dogs" altogether: I merely ask him to allow those who do not share his enthusiasm to pass by on the other side without his setting the dogs upon them. I would recall to the sentimentalist who goes on repeating his stock phrases and, perhaps, like Mr. Winkle, pretending an enthusiasm which he does not feel, the wholesome advice of Dr. Johnson, "Sir, free your mind of cant." Canon Farrar tells of a gentleman who was seated in the smoking-room of an English hotel when a dog entered. He became violently agitated, so that a waiter had to bend over and whisper to him, "It's a real dog." The poor fellow was subject to a form of delirium tremens which caused him to see imaginary dogs. I fear the disease is epidemic and is on the increase. I would kindly recall the public mind to the real dog. At least, I would suggest that the other side be heard; for those who have had most to say on the subject seem to me to exhibit a one-sided habit of mind, analogous to the manner of running observable in their favorites.

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It is difficult to trace the origin of this new theology, the apotheosis of the Dog. It is certainly altogether un-Biblical. The whole tenor of Scripture is decidedly uncomplimentary to the species. It is even proclaimed as a new commandment, "Beware of dogs." They are everywhere presented as the symbol of all that is unclean, noisy, greedy, and dangerous. The nearest to a compliment I can find is the saying that "a living dog is better than a dead lion." The only good deed recorded of them is that of licking the wounds of poor Lazarus. When Hazael would express in the strongest terms his incapability of the most shocking conduct, he asks, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" Job seems to have felt that he could say nothing more scathing of certain persons who derided him than that "their fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock." Instead of a dog heaven, we are told that one of the bright distinctions and blessed securities of the New Jerusalem will be that "without are dogs."

Nor would it seem to be a religion of nature. I find little, if any, more respect shown to the species in mythology,—the nearest to an apotheosis being the assignment of the janitorship of hell to a dog with three heads. Egyptian mythology found it convenient to have a dog-headed man —Anubis—as the attendant of Isis and Osiris. The *cynocephali* whom the Egyptians venerated were more properly baboons: so that their dog heaven, one might say, was only such on its face.

Language is the amber which preserves the thought of man. We need not dig far into the etymological strata to be impressed by the unenviable place which the dog has made for himself in the tradition and experience of our race. The name itself, and still more its variations, such as cur, hound, puppy, and whelp, are anything but complimentary when applied to mankind; and its derivatives, such as "dogged" and "doggerel," are not of dignified suggestion. And, mark you, these associations with the names do not seem to "let go," any more than the dog itself from his bone.

The dog slipped into literature at a very early date after the Fall, but slunk about with his tail between his legs, as it were, and was kicked and cursed with entire unanimity. It is difficult to say just when his dogship began to stand up on his hind legs in literature. He has little or no classical standing. The dog of Ulysses is, I believe, a solitary instance. Shakespeare's "view" comes out in Lear's climacteric execration of his "dog-hearted daughters." Sir Henry Holland once lost a bet of a guinea owing to his failure to find a dog kindly spoken of by Shakespeare. Milton for the most part sublimely passes them by, except to embellish his "portress at hell's gate" with a canine appendix. Goethe's aversion to them is well known. Old Dr. Watts is an authority on moral traits, and the best word he has for them is that "dogs delight to bark and bite, for 'tis their nature to."

Let it not be supposed that I altogether endorse this apparent conspiracy of the ages to give the dog a bad name,—always supposing that he did not himself furnish the bad name to literature. I am not impervious to advanced thought, and I like to see fair play. When a dog is down, and everybody is down on him, he ought to be let up. It is no wonder that a reaction set in, as will

always be the case in extremes, and, as usual, to the opposite extreme. English literature [Pg 238] experienced about the beginning of this century an invasion of shepherd kings, such as Walter Scott, Christopher North, the Ettrick Shepherd, and the like, who brought with them a great gust of outdoor air, and with it a renaissance of the dog. But the great apostle of the new movement was the late Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, whose famous "Rab and his Friends" has inoculated the reading public with something which might be called a species of *rabies*. This charming writer reminds me of certain gentle inhabitants of the asylum, who have so identified themselves in imagination with dogs that they greet you with a bark.

We owe a debt of gratitude to these amiable enthusiasts for their demurrers to the one-sided verdict of history and for their discoveries of exceptional dogs and of exceptional traits in the canine character. For are we not bidden, "if there be *any* virtue, and if there be any praise," to "think on these things"?

We do think of them, and we are grateful. We do not, to be sure, find ourselves starting off incontinently to the dog-fancier's in order to present our wife with a poodle or to transform our quiet premises into a howling wilderness, but we think better of the world as a place to live in, and we have a higher sense of the charity and patience of human nature. Nevertheless, while yielding to none in my tender feeling for dear Dr. Brown and his gentle fellow-kynophilists, I am not prepared to obey the new commandment which this new canine gospel inculcates, "Love me, love my dog."

Probably my personal acquaintance with the species has been unfortunate, but I have not happened to meet with these superhuman creatures. I once tried, in my extreme childhood, to make a pet of a Newfoundland pup of high degree; but the little brute sickened and killed himself one day by eating a mess of the foulest refuse. In the village where I lived there was a crabbed little hump-backed tailor, whose house and shop were on a corner, and with him lived a vicious yellow bull-dog. It was a question which was the most unpopular and the most obnoxious *bête noire* with the villagers. We boys took a fearful delight in stealthily approaching the little tailor's back door in the evening, and then, with a sudden shout, taking to our heels around the corner, whereat the yellow fiend would burst out after us, with "Bunky" close behind.

The only other dog in our village of which I have any recollection was a great animal, facetiously known as a watch-dog, whose mission it was to lie in wait behind the house of the man he owned, and, as soon as he heard a step upon the gravel walk or the tinkle of the door-bell, to dart out upon the intruder with a howl and a spring. The result was that one day my father, the most quiet and respectable of men, in attempting to pay a friendly visit, was set upon, knocked down, throttled, and, but for timely rescue, would probably have fallen a victim to the habits of this hospitable mansion. And from that day he left his friends to their preference of companions. My own experiences of the premises were such that I followed for once the paternal example, in giving them a wide berth.

My social footsteps have always been guided by a knowledge of the kennel, as well as of the house. Even as the pastor of a human flock, I confess that I have many a time stood at men's gates balancing the question of duty or safety before I girded up a martyr spirit and resolved to enter. Not that I loved the sheep and lambs less, but that I hated their growling, leaping, four-footed favorites more.

It is not a mere question of wisdom or of taste, this prevalence and idolatry of dogs. If it were only an amiable weakness, and a matter affecting the person indulging it, some such form of image-worship as the rage for bric-à-brac and old china, I should not take the trouble to enter my protest. But hath not a dog teeth? Hath not a dog great, dirty paws, a venomous and fiery tongue, and a throat which is the organ of all discords? Hath he not feet which can carry his [Pg 239] unpleasantnesses into other people's presence, perhaps deposit them on your lap, or cause you to stumble and be offended and made weak by standing in your way? An ideal dog, a china dog, a dog behind a picture-frame, the dog of literature, are not without their æsthetic side,—are certainly things to be let alone. But the realistic, vigorously vital, intrusively affectionate, or faithfully suspicious dog can no more be "let alone" than could Mr. Jefferson Davis and his rebellious States once upon a time, for the simple reason that he will not let us alone. It is as curious an exhibition of human nature to note the surprise which always seizes the owner when one of these "faithful" creatures bites any of his friends and neighbors as is the proverbial incapacity of the householder to admit the existence of malaria on his premises. A little friend of mine who can hardly toddle, while visiting with his parents, was recently sprung upon by a great house-dog and bitten seriously in the cheek. And the philosophical explanation, which ought to have been highly satisfactory, was, "The dog dislikes children, but has never been known to hurt grown people"!

I have alluded to the testimony of Scripture concerning dogs. Herein, at least, Science is in accord with Revelation. It tells us that there is nothing in the osteology of this family (*Canidæ*) to distinguish the domestic dog from the wolf or fox or jackal. His "brain-cavity is small," his strong point being "his powerful muscles of mastication." His "sense of taste is dull and coarse." He is "not as cleanly in his habits as the cat." He is "not courageous in proportion to his strength." Let me illustrate this last point by what I saw this afternoon. A dog about as large and strong as a young lion was barking vigorously behind a low fence at a cat, who sat serenely on the other side, meeting his Bombastes Furioso plunges at the intervening pickets with a contemptuous hiss and an occasional buffet with her claw upon his muzzle. I have yet to see a dog that dares attack my goat of a year old, except when he is harnessed to his wagon. They are not, however, afraid of

sheep. And they are much more clear in their minds about attacking children than strong men with clubs. A man is safe before them in proportion as he is not in fear. They know a coward at once, with all a coward's instinct.

Another little peculiarity of this family in all its branches is the hydrophobia, an accomplishment which they are very generous in imparting, and which is to be taken into account in estimating their usefulness.

Cuvier, however, puts forward the ingenious claim—worthy of the Buckle and Taine type of scientific speculators, who are never so happy as when they think they have accounted for the world without the hypothesis of a God, and who naturally catch at an opportunity of reading that name backward (or the name Dog backward, whichever you like)—that "the dog was necessary to the establishment of human society." This startling dogma of the new kynolatry is a good illustration of the way in which this class of theorists persist in putting the cart before the horse. The truth is that man was necessary to the establishment of canine society. Except as human skill and patience subdued, trained, and developed the dog, the latter was incapable of rising, and was one of man's most dangerous foes,—the fox robbing his hen-roosts and grape-vines, the wolf eating him and his children, and the jackal and hyena picking his bones and rifling his grave. The same ridiculous claim of being the corner-stone of human society has been made by some wiseacre in behalf of the goat. The plain truth is that only one animal can justly lay claim to such a distinction. At the threshold of human society and civilization lies the slimy figure of the snake, who persuaded man to purchase knowledge at the cost of innocence, a lesson which has been learned by heart and been worked out in all the "history of civilization," for verily "the trail of the serpent is over it still." [Pg 240]

Few persons realize the comparative un-worth of the dog. There is even a hazy notion in most minds that he is to be classed with the horse, the cow, the sheep, and the gentle swine, that he is entitled to lift up his voice with the morn-saluting cock, or to roam with the mouse-disturbing cat, or with that patient pair, the harnessed billy- and the lactiferous nanny-goat.[A] Hence an enormous revenue is required for his support. For example, we are told that "the dogs in Iowa eat enough annually to feed a hundred thousand workmen, and cost the State nine million dollars, or double the education of all its children." I should like to know how many of these costly and pampered creatures earn their salt. They toil not, they spin not, they contribute neither food nor wool nor "power." There are extreme cases where they have proved serviceable for defence and special purposes. The Laplanders are forced to make shift with them in default of better draught-animals. There was a time when the dogs of St. Bernard were a great convenience to the philanthropic monks,—who, by the way, never received one-hundredth part of the credit which has been lavished by the sentimentalists upon their half-automaton assistants. The slave-hunters have found the race still more serviceable for their ends. On great moors and lonely mountains and in the exigencies of frontier-life, the shepherd, the hunter, and the pioneer have turned them to account.

Far be it from me to disparage their assistance in these exceptional instances and in others which might be named. The dog, like the bull or the frogs of Egypt, is good in his place. But it does not follow that we should have a bull in every door-yard, nor that it was an advantage to the land of Egypt to be covered with frogs in-doors and out. The notion that a dog is needful for defence in settled, civilized communities is on a par with the delusion that a man is safer for carrying a loaded pistol, more harm being done to honest people, and even to those of them who resort to fire-arms, than to their enemies. One needs only to consider the dogs of one's own neighborhood and compare the number of burglars they have routed with the number of children or innocent passers-by they have scared or bitten. My experience convinces me that more houses and hen roosts are robbed where there are dogs than where there are none. And it is easily explained. People who have a blind trust in watch-dogs cease to watch for themselves. Moreover, the false alarms of the dog are so numerous, and his barking so indiscriminating of the difference between friend and foe, and even between real and imaginary persons, that his owner soon ceases to take note of them. For who is going to get up every time the dog barks in the night? The dog is, of course, one of the conditions to be provided for in the burglar's plan. But when he has silenced, overpowered, or eluded the watch, he has turned the defence over to his own side, and proceeds with a special sense of security.

At all events, I do not find that dogs are chiefly kept by those who most need to be defended, but rather by the strong and by persons living in closely-settled neighborhoods. Nor do I find that people affect dogs at all in the ratio or for the sake of the protection, but for the amusement which they afford, as something to be taken care of as pets rather than to take care of them.

The watch-dog is an admirable protection from one's friends. What a boon he is to the misanthrope! What an isolation reigns about the home, especially in the evening, where a real savage beast stands guard, roaming in the shadows or clanking his chain beside the path! The ingenious Mr. Quilp turned this fact to fine account, as he escorted Sampson Brass to the door of his counting-house on a dark night: [Pg 241]

"Be careful how you go, my dear friend. There's a dog in the lane. He bit a man last night, and a woman the night before, and last Tuesday he killed a child; but that was in play. Don't go too near him."

"Which side of the road is he, sir?" asked Brass, in great dismay.

"He lives on the right hand," said Quilp, "but sometimes he hides on the left, ready for a spring.

He's uncertain in that respect. Mind you take care of yourself. I'll never forgive you if you don't."

An exceedingly social institution, the watch-dog, and a delightful attraction to one's visitors and would-be callers. A *watch*-dog indeed; for is he not the one thing to be on the watch for, now that the day of spring-guns and man-traps is past?

It is all very well for Byron to rhapsodize about "the watch-dog's honest bark," and to think it "sweet" when it "bays deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home;" but when one has got inside of that home and gone to bed, and wants to sleep off his fatigue, it is not always so sweet to have some neighbor's watch-dog keeping up a dishonest bark at everything and nothing half through the night. As to the moral quality of the noise, the only honest bark is that of the mosquito, who is too sincere either to attack you without warning or to give a false alarm. I have thrown my share of boot-jacks and other missiles at the nightly cat, and with some small measure of success; but what boot-jack will reach the howling mastiff domiciled several doors off, and whose owner says in effect, "Boot me, boot my dog," or the converse? And what an "aid to reflection," which Coleridge never conceived of, is that wretched little whelp that explodes under my study window at the critical moment of intellectual inspiration, like a pack of animated fire-crackers! Who shall pretend to set off the occasional service which the canine voice has rendered to man against the long and varied agonies which it has inflicted on our race? Emerson has a fine touch of nature, which will go to many a heart, when he enumerates among the recollected experiences of childhood "the fear of dogs." Goethe's aversion to dogs, already alluded to, seems to have been based chiefly upon their noisiness at night. Charles Reade had a habit of hitting the nail on the head, and never showed it more pithily than when he answered "Ouida's" application for a name for her new pet poodle: "Call it Tonic, for it is sure to be a mixture of bark, steal, and whine."

As to poodles and pugs, it is difficult for the masculine "man of letters" to write. Fortunately, no member of my family has thus far evinced any symptom of the poodle mania, so akin to the singular malady which reduced poor Titania to the abject adoration of ass-headed Bottom. Therefore any repugnance (this is purely an *ex post facto* pun) on my part cannot be attributed to jealousy. I feel that I cannot be too thankful not to be numbered among the unhappy husbands indicated by the following recent incident:

"Hello, old man!" said a gentleman to a friend, "what's that you've got under your coat?"

"That," was the sad reply, as he brought it forth, "is my wife's little pug dog."

"What are you going to do with him? Take him somewhere and drown him?"

"I wish I might," earnestly responded the gentleman, fetching a sigh. "No, I am not going to drown him. My wife is having a new spring suit made to harmonize with Beauty, as she is pleased to call the disgusting little brute, and I am on my way to a dry-goods store to match him for half a yard more of material." [Pg 242]

Ladies will pay as much as ten dollars a week for the board of a poodle in summer. And here is a specimen order at the inn wherein his puppyship is taking his ease:

"Room No. 122.—To the clerk of —— Hotel: Please send to my room, for the use of my little pet 'Watch,' a choice porter-house steak, cooked rare, and two chicken-wings, and charge to account of Mrs. ——."

But it is not always practicable to take our "dumb companions" with us in our travels. Accordingly, the following advertisement is said to have been recently inserted in the papers:

"Wanted, by a lady, a careful man to look after the house and be company for her dog during her absence in Europe."

I myself lately witnessed a suggestive scene in a drawing-room car at the Grand Central Dépôt. A portly old gentleman of opulent appearance was stepping aboard with his daughter (or wife?), a fine specimen of Amazonian beauty, accompanied by a third member of the family, a yellow and dirty-looking little pug with its hair in its eyes. But, alas! the latter was arrested at the platform, according to rule, and was being conveyed to the baggage-car. I have no power to picture the blazing indignation of his devoted mistress, or the eloquent storm with which she assailed the officials, or the undignified haste and distress of mind into which the old gentleman was thrown in his part of negotiator between the contending parties. The lady was inconsolable and inexorable. She would not go without her beloved. She would *never* subject him to the discomfort and indignity of the baggage-car. She would "rather ride in the common car" herself. How the case was settled I did not see. She left the hateful drawing-room car with her packages and her papa(?). Whether she abandoned her tour, or went into the baggage-car to share the shame and sorrow of her poodle, or whether a compromise was effected in favor of the "common car," I never ascertained, I trust she was not the lady of Baltimore who last summer went insane and tried to kill herself on account of the death of her pet dog.

And this leads me to make a point in favor of dogs, at least so far as their claim to being "so human" is concerned. There has been supposed to be nothing more distinctive of human nature than its propensity to suicide, arising from its capacity, as it rises in civilization and enlightenment, of finding out that life is not worth living. But a number of well-authenticated cases have come to my observation which show that the dog is rapidly learning this supreme accomplishment. A dog at Warwick, New York, whose master had neglected him for a new-

comer, became morose and sulky, took to watching the railway-trains with great interest, and one day threw himself under a passing car and was crushed to death. Another, in Marseilles, whose owner had avoided him from fear of hydrophobia, and which had been driven from the door of a friend of his master, ran straight for the river and plunged in, never to rise till he was dead. A Newfoundland dog on the relief-ship Bear, and two or three of the Esquimaux dogs belonging to the relief expedition, drowned themselves deliberately, after showing great depression for several days. Dr. Lauder Lindsay, in his "Mind in the Lower Animals," tells of a Newfoundland that, being refused an accustomed outing with the children and being playfully whipped with a handkerchief, took it so deeply to heart that he went and drowned himself by resolutely holding his head under water in a shallow ditch.

But, seriously, it is a nice psychological question whether there is something human about dogs, or something canine about men. At any rate, it may well be asked whether it is really the dog-nature which attracts us, and not rather a somewhat of the human in the brute. For when we see the dog in the man we are repelled.

The above is undoubtedly the most honorable, if not the most obvious, reason why the dog has succeeded in winning the companionship, and even the affection, of so large a portion of [Pg 243] mankind. Another reason lies in the fact that, as a dog, he has been wonderfully improved. There is no denying that he comes of a bad stock. As already intimated, his "family" includes, besides himself, the wolf, the fox, and the jackal, with the hyena as a sort of step-brother. But he has proved himself "the flower of the family," and, like all flowers, he has been "cultivated" and developed, differentiated in species, till a grand bench-show will display all the varieties, from little fluff balls, "small enough to put in your waistcoat-pocket," to the splendid deerhound, valued at ten thousand dollars, with his "silver-gray hair, muscular flanks, and calm, resolute eyes." I shall never forget coming suddenly, in the streets of Montgomery, Alabama, upon one of the veritable bloodhounds which were employed once upon a time in tracking fugitive slaves. His dimensions were beyond all my previous conceptions of the canine race. He impressed me rather as an institution than an animal. And as he stood across my path in a statuesque repose, with his red tongue and massive jaws, and a slumbering fire in his eye, I conceived a new idea and even admiration of "brute force."

The intelligence of the dog has also been developed, notwithstanding the smallness of his brain and his natural inferiority in this respect to many other animals, until he has almost rivalled the feats of the learned pig and the industrious fleas. His moral character must be admitted to have shown itself capable of great development, despite the recent effort of writers like Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson to prove that he develops chiefly the worst and meanest traits of human nature. His capacity for hero-worship and his patience under ill usage from the one who has mastered him are conspicuous. He has a sublime indifference to that master's moral character, however, being as subservient to Bill Sykes or Daniel Quilp as to Leatherstocking or Dr. John Brown himself. This fidelity to me does not imply that he may not be highly treacherous to others, just as his protective value to me is in proportion to his savage and perilous possibilities to the not-me. Therefore I ought not to insist that my lovers must love my dog also. I should rather estimate their steadfast affection for me all the more on his account.

It is argued by the dog-haters that we must not judge the whole vast and varied race of *Canidæ* from a few exceptional individuals and highly-cultivated breeds. But it may be retorted that neither are all men Shakespeares and St. Augustines. The credit is so much the greater to those of the species which have overcome the disadvantages of a low and repulsive origin. None the less, however, will a strict veracity of mind and speech be careful not to generalize too sweepingly from a few particulars, and also not to make too indiscriminate and imperious a demand upon other people's enthusiasm. Especially will it be unwise for the friends of the dog to persist in their attempt to exalt him by depreciating man, inasmuch as man is the party to be won over to their way of thinking. Man has, unfortunately, been endowed by his Creator with a notion of his superiority even to the hound and the terrier, and naturally winces at the comparison, and is in danger of being thrown to the other extreme. I myself am able to present these considerations thus dispassionately as a friend of humanity rather than a foe to caninity; but all are not favored with a judicial spirit.

I suspect, in fact, that this inclining of our race to these brute servitors is largely due to the same cause which promotes the love of "horse-flesh." Man must assert his dominion over the brutes. He wants some tangible evidence, always beside him and running at his heels, of his superiority to something. It is a great upholder of his self-respect. It is so consoling, amid our conscious defeats and snubbings by a proud and unmanageable world, to have at hand a fellow-creature, strong enough to tear us in pieces, who will grovel at our feet, and quail before our eye, and let us laugh at him while he makes a fool of himself at our bidding. Even the most successful and [Pg 244] superior men find herein a grateful outlet for their surplus masterfulness.

But I prefer to ascribe the tender and enthusiastic feeling which men have for their dogs not so much to the merits of the latter as to an overflowing and supererogatory goodness in the former. The human runs readily into the humane. Man is, after all, a loving animal, and is disposed to lavish his affection upon all who come into the right relation and moral angle with himself. He loves to be munificent as well as magnificent, and to be the patron of somebody or something. He has no little magnanimity toward such as put themselves in an abject dependence upon his honor and justice. He is ready to see all good in those who come not in competition with himself. He has a fund of generous enthusiasm which finds too little occupation in the world, and is glad to find or create an object for it near at hand. So that his dog, unconsciously to himself, is seen rather in

the reflection of his own light. He clothes him with those amiable qualities which superabound in his own heart, and attributes to him a fidelity which is really far more remarkable on his own side.

Dogs are remarkable for their dreaming capacity. A dog never seems to sleep but he dreams, and very likely is quite unable to distinguish his waking and sleeping impressions. And is it not altogether probable that those who have much to do with them catch the infection, so that they view the canine race through a dream-like medium and as slumbering dogs are haunted by imaginary flies?

But I fear lest I shall be suspected of having caught at least one quality of my subject and of following up this scent at a wearisome length. And yet I have not begun to exhaust my theme, and have hardly given a glimpse of its many lights and shades. Inasmuch as there is an excessive tendency just now to show the lights only, it may have been noticed that I have rather emphasized the shades. Perhaps I shall not have written in vain if I have succeeded in moderating the present *kynomania*, surpassing in virulence even the æsthetic craze. The dog is having his day now,—that is clear. I presume it is the order of nature, and that we must expect a season in human history when the dog-star will rage. But it may not be unseasonable to recommend a slight muzzle to the dog-bitten, especially of the literary *gens*.

F. N. Zabriskie.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] By a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Maine, the judges standing six to one, it was decided that dogs are not to be classed with domestic animals. The learned Court affirms "that they retain in great measure their vicious habits, furnish no support to the family, add nothing in a legal sense to the wealth of the community, and are not inventoried as property of a debtor or dead man's estate, or as liable to taxation except under a special provision of the statute; that when kept it is for pleasure, or, if any usefulness is obtained from them, it is founded upon the ferocity natural to them, by which they are made to serve as a watch or for hunting; and that while because of his attachment to his master, from which arises a well-founded expectation of his return when lost, the law gives the owner the right of reclamation, the owner in all other respects has only that qualified property in them which he may have in wild animals generally."

RENA'S WARNING.

"If anything be anything," said Frederick Brent, "the Pennsylvania mountains are what Oscar Wilde called them."

"Oh, you miserable agnostic!" exclaimed his friend Professor Helfenstein. "Can you not, in the face of this so beautiful landscape, get rid of your eternal subjunctive mood? *If*, indeed!"

The two men had stopped at a high point on the road they had been traversing, and were looking across a fair and fertile valley, flooded by the summer-morning sunlight, to the mountains on its western rim.

A slight smile showed Brent's pleasure in arousing his companion's indignation.

"Well," said he, "my ideas of natural beauty and those of the æsthetic Wilde may be entirely false; or the whole scene may be an optical illusion; or—*Rosenduft und Maienblumen*, observe me this lovely maiden!" [Pg 245]

"If anything be anything? You can be positive enough where a pretty girl is concerned. She *is* pretty, though, and as *deutsch* as her ancestors were a century or two ago, when they left the Rhineland and crossed the sea. A pure blonde German type. Tacitus would have included her among the Non-Suevi."

Their attention had been drawn from the scenery by the approach of a young woman and a little boy. The former was above the medium height, and was about twenty years old, but the infantile mould of her features and the innocent look in her large blue eyes gave strangers a bewildering impression that she was somewhere in the neighborhood of five. She was charmingly pretty in her way, and her wide-brimmed hat of dark straw set off to full advantage the pale golden hue of her braided hair and the delicate purity of her complexion.

Brent could not resist the temptation to accost this mild and grave young beauty. Stepping forward as she was passing, he lifted his hat, and said, "Will you be good enough to tell me the way to the nearest encampment of Indians?"

"Indians?" she repeated, with a timid wonder in the tones of her soft voice.

"Yes. We are Europeans, travelling in this country, and we should like to find some Indians who will help us to hunt buffaloes. Are there many buffaloes near here? We haven't seen any sitting on the branches of the trees as we came along."

"I don't think buffaloes *could* get up in the trees," said the girl in a meekly explanatory manner.

"Why, you don't mean to say that the buffaloes in this country can't climb, do you?"

"I never saw a buffalo; but I don't *think* they can."

She looked despairingly at her small brother, who, having not yet reached the age of six years, was unable to afford any help in deciding a question in zoology.

"This is very interesting," said Brent, turning toward his companion. "It seems that American buffaloes are forced to spend all their time on the ground."

"*Narrheit!*" growled the professor, beginning to walk away.

"Well, I'm very much obliged to you," said Brent. "Good-morning."

Then he followed his friend, who was already descending a hill in the road.

"Sister Rena, what did that man want still?" asked the little boy.

"I don't know, love," said his sister faintly. Her ideas were in a hopeless state of confusion, and she was troubled by a fear that a lack of intelligence had made her seem disobliging.

When Brent overtook the professor, the latter said, "All Englishmen are ridiculous; and you are a good specimen of the race. Why should you stop on the public highway and talk nothingness to a harmless girl?"

"All Germans are prejudiced; and Professor Helfenstein is a true *Deutscher*," answered Brent. "My remarks to the young Non-Sueve no doubt interested her deeply, and I fancy she will reflect on them, as Piers Plowman says,—

> With inwit and outwit,
> Imagynyng and studie."

They were both good walkers, and, though the heat became somewhat oppressive at noon, they did not halt until they had reached the village where they intended to pass the night. In this place Helfenstein heard the Pennsylvania-German dialect spoken to his heart's content. After dinner he sat on the porch of the inn for several hours, talking to a number of the indigenes and making copious notes.

When Brent returned from a visit to one of the village stores, he found him looking over the result of his investigations.

"Will the 'Allgemeine Zeitung' have the benefit of your researches?" asked the Englishman.

"Most like. The people at home love to have tidings of shoots from the old German lingual stock. The dialect of this locality is a truly noteworthy one." [Pg 246]

"I heard it spoken just now by the young blossom we met on the road this morning."

"Does she live here?"

"No. She had driven in to the village to make some purchases. Her father is one Reinfelter, who tills the soil of his ancestral demesne over there near the mountains."

"From whom did you learn these facts?"

"From the tradesman with whom she had been talking."

"Will agnosticism let you be absolutely sure his statements are true?"

"No; and even less sure that they are untrue. It seems to me that a vast amount of credulity is needed for positive unbelief. Do atheists ever have doubts about anything?"

"We don't sit still and say, '*Quien sabe?*' like you agnostics. When nobody shall believe or disbelieve, who will *act*?"

"I give it up."

With a look of profound disgust, the professor pocketed his note-book and went to seek refreshment in the shape of beer.

Notwithstanding the difference in their ways of thinking, these two men had something in common which furnished a strong bond of union between them. Helfenstein sometimes said to himself, "Well, if he *is* a pitiable doubter, he at least doubts in earnest. This makes him better than the miserable tric-trac men who are always ready to agree that black is white, or deny that two and two make four, when it suits their convenience or interest."

And, in fact, though Brent often paraded his agnosticism merely to draw forth the professor's scornful comments, he really had a humble and hopeless consciousness that if truth be visible to any human mind it was hidden from his. The possession of an ample fortune and the lack of family ties and active interests in life had fostered his tendency toward introspection till it became morbid. Now, at the age of thirty, he had no positive beliefs or aims, and felt the despairing self-contempt which inspired Hamlet's cry, "What should such fellows as I do,

crawling between earth and heaven?"

Before retiring, the travellers agreed to spend the next day in making an excursion on foot to the neighboring mountains. But when the hour for starting arrived, Brent had not risen, and the professor, who allowed nothing to interfere with his plans if he could help it, set out alone.

A little before sunset he returned, full of enthusiasm over the scenery, and highly pleased with the people in the farm-houses where he had stopped.

"They are a good, honest, *kreuzbraves Volk*," he said. "They have kept the old German home-feeling all unchanged. There is a certain Bärnthaler over there at the foot of the mountains who is worthy to be a native of the Fatherland,—a noble-looking fellow, with the lion-front of a young Marcomannic chief."

"The Marcomanni were a Suevic race, were they not?"

"Yes; I should have known his ancestors were dark-haired Swabians even if he had not told me so. He is something of a scholar, I should say, and he seems as true a gentleman as ever lived. What a shame it is that his good South-German name should have been corrupted into Barndollar!"

"I heard this Barndollar's praises sounded about three hours ago."

"By whom?"

"By the father of Miss Reinfelter, the mild-eyed blonde who had her doubts about the ability of buffaloes to climb trees. He was here this afternoon, and we became intimate in five minutes. He told me his ancestors came from the neighborhood of Heidelberg; and when he heard I was there last summer his expansive face was illumined with joy. He answered my questions about the old German settlers intelligently enough; but he said nobody could tell me as much about such matters as 'Melker Barndollar,' of whom he spoke with 'bated breath. He also invited me to visit him." [Pg 247]

"Shall you accept his invitation?"

"I have fully made up my mind to go; but that doesn't make it certain that I shall."

"Should you go if he possessed not a pretty daughter?"

"Probably not."

The next morning Brent rode over to the Reinfelter farm. The farm-house interested him at the first view. It was a quaint old stone building, with four gables and a slated roof, from the projecting windows in which the mountain-line could be seen stretching away to the southwest and growing more and more indistinct until their faint outlines were lost on the far horizon. Ivy concealed more than half the gray stones from sight, and fragrant pink roses were blooming against the southern wall, while thick bushes of flowering jessamine grew on both sides of the front door.

The visitor received a welcome which made him feel as if he had reached his own home. He had grown so weary of wandering aimlessly around the world, and had become so disgusted with conventional forms and ceremonies, that the peaceful home-like and simple, kindly manners of these unsophisticated people gave him an agreeable sense of rest and freedom from restraint.

He allowed himself to be prevailed on to stay until late in the afternoon; and before his visit ended he circumspectly inquired whether they would receive him as a boarder. The promptness and pleasure with which both the farmer and his wife agreed to his proposal showed him that his fear of giving offence had been entirely groundless.

When he returned to the inn, the professor informed him that on the succeeding day he was going on to the next county.

"I shall stay in this neighborhood some time longer," said Brent.

"So? What is the especial attraction? The young woman over there where the mountains stand?"

"Perhaps; but my own motives are about the last things I should attempt to analyze."

"Well, I expect to come back this way in three months, and, if I find you here and ready to depart, we can return to New York together."

"Like nearly all other imaginable things, what you state is not impossible."

Helfenstein went on his way the next morning, and Brent began his sojourn at the farm-house on the same day.

The burdens of Rena Reinfelter's life immediately became very much more numerous. The Englishman found an unfailing satisfaction in bewildering and horrifying her, and tried systematically to find out whether there was really any limit to her patience and gentleness. He induced her to go with him to the mountains near at hand, and took every opportunity to place himself in positions where he was in imminent danger of falling some hundreds of feet and being dashed to pieces on the rocks. Her dearly-beloved cat was suddenly lost to sight, and when it reappeared, uttering meek appeals for sympathy and help, its personal adornments were as

striking as they were varied. He proved to her conclusively that all cats are utterly incapable of affection, and that their characters are vicious and treacherous to the last degree. His favorite method, however, was to begin by asking her some trivial question and then involve her in a network of apparent self-contradictions, which filled her conscientious soul with anguish and dismay at her own untruthfulness. Sometimes he felt a little ashamed of these amusements, and determined to forego them; but the temptation was too great for his powers of resistance, and he soon began transgressing again.

One morning Rena received a visit from her most intimate friend, Elsa Barndollar, who was only fifteen years old, but, having spent the preceding season at a city boarding-school, considered herself a grown woman with an unusually wide experience. Although passionately devoted to Rena, she was as fond of teasing her as Brent himself. Yet as soon as the latter began indulging himself with that diversion, she became highly indignant, and scornfully betook herself to the garden. [Pg 248]

When Rena had followed her thither, she gave vent to her wrath without restraint.

"That's the most hateful man I ever saw!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, no, Elsa!" said Rena deprecatingly.

"Yes, he is. He's perfectly horrid! What does he mean by teasing you as if you were a little white kitten, or a green and yellow parrot, or some other ridiculous thing? I suppose he thinks country-people are all idiots. I never *did* see the use of Englishmen, anyhow."

"Oh, he only does it for fun. He's always polite to father and mother, and little Casper thinks he's the nicest man he ever saw."

"Oh, yes! If he's good to your relations you don't care how he treats you. It's a shame, and he ought to be told so, too."

Rena tried to pacify her young friend, but the attempt was not successful. The latter made her visit a very short one, and when she reached home her anger and jealousy found expression in very vigorous terms.

Her brother visited the Reinfelters a short time afterward. His interest in the Englishman was evidently very strong, but if he shared his sister's feelings toward him they did not prevent his treating him with perfect courtesy.

"Helfenstein is right," thought Brent, as the young farmer rode away. "He's as handsome a fellow as I ever saw. I wonder whether he's Sister Rena's lover so bold."

But although Melchior Barndollar was far superior to the Reinfelters in culture and in knowledge of the world, he did not interest Brent as much as they did. The positiveness of their beliefs was a special source of wonder to him. From the father, who had no doubt about the existence of ghosts, to the little boy, who firmly believed in the reality of *Belsnickel*,—hides, horns, and all,—they were the most frankly credulous people he had ever known. But the superstition and anthropomorphism mingled with their faith did not make him think it less enviable. He would have been glad to believe anything as firmly as they did the traditions which had come down to them from their ancestors, unchallenged by doubt and unchanged by time.

One evening, after Rena had, as usual, sat beside her little brother's bed until he was sound asleep, she joined her parents and Brent, who were sitting in the garden behind the house.

The full moon was high above the mountains, and the whole landscape was almost as distinct as it had been before the sun went down. A whippoorwill's notes, mellowed by distance, resounded from the farthest part of the orchard, and a tinkling chorus arose from the leaves and blades of grass, where the myriads of nocturnal musicians were disporting themselves after the heat and glare of the day. But the sounds made by these performers were so regular and monotonous that they seemed merely a part of the calm summer night.

Suddenly another sound came down from the lower part of the mountains. It began with a deep, long-drawn, hollow cry, between a howl and a moan, and then broke into a wild, piercing shriek.

The farmer started to his feet, and stood gazing in the direction from which the cry had come.

"It's only a stray dog howling," said Brent.

Reinfelter turned toward his wife, and the moonlight showed that his face was white with terror.

"*De warnoong!*" he said, in a low voice. "*D'r geishter-shray foon de bairga!*"

The woman covered her face with her hands, and began trembling and sobbing. Rena put her arms around her mother's neck and tried to comfort her, as if *she* had been the mother instead of the child.

The sound broke out again, and this time it was louder and more distinct than before. As the melancholy echoes died away, Rena rose, and, taking her mother's hand in hers, led her toward the house. [Pg 249]

When they had gone, Brent said, "What do you think that sound is?"

"It's the warning still," said Reinfelter. "It's the warning of death."

"What is it made by?"

"A ghost. It goes up there in the mount'ins an' calls, an' the one it calls is soon in the graveyard already. It's called the mother, or Rena, or me, this night."

"Maybe I was the one it meant."

"No; it only calls the Reinfelters still. It's been so ever since the Injun massacree, a long time ago."

"Did that happen here?"

"Yes. My great-grandfather an' his oldest son was up in the mount'ins, and his wife was a-comin' back from there by herself once. Just as she got where she could see her little children a-playin' in the yard, three Injuns jumped out o' the woods that was nigh to the house then, an' run into the yard an' killed the children right before her eyes. The men up there heard her scream, an' they run down, an' found her a-layin' there where she fell, an' they thought she was dead already. She come to herself ag'in, but after that she just sort o' pined away, an' in less than two months she died. It's her ghost that goes up there an' calls us still."

"Did you ever hear the call before?"

"No; I never heard it myself. But the night my little girl died, nine years ago, she rose up in bed once, an' she says, 'Who is that a-cryin' up there in the mount'ins?' We couldn't hear nothin' still, but we knew what *she* had heard, an' after that we didn't have no more hope."

Brent did not think of the banshee as a positive reality, but he would not have denied that its existence was possible, and he felt that it would be useless for him to try to shake the farmer's faith in the tradition which had such a strong hold on his mind.

After a brief silence, he said he would take a short walk before going to bed. Leaving the garden, he strolled toward the mountains, which rose like a vast wall above the foot-hills at their base.

As he drew near the rising ground which marked the verge of the valley, the strange sound once more fell on his ear, and he walked in the direction from which it came. Passing through a grove of chestnut-trees, he reached an elevated open space, where the moonlight shone on the almost level surface of large gray rocks. Near the middle of this clear space he saw a black, shaggy object moving slowly about, with its lowered head turned away from him. He stepped forward to get a closer view of this creature, and as he did so it turned its head and looked at him. The next instant it bounded away and disappeared among the nearest trees.

"Just as I thought," said Brent to himself. "It *was* a dog, and a villanous-looking cur, too. Exactly the sort of brute to howl and shriek at the moon on a night like this."

But, as he sauntered back to the house, various doubts entered his mind. He reflected that he had seen the animal only for an instant, by moonlight and at some distance, and that he could not be sure it was really a dog. Neither could he be confident it had uttered the mysterious cry, for while it was within his sight it had made no sound of any kind. "Perhaps it went up there for the same reason I did,—to find out what was going on," he thought.

As usual, he ended by informing himself that he was under no responsibility to settle the question, and that, as far as he was concerned, it would probably remain unsettled.

The next morning he found the farmer and his wife very much depressed, but he had no hope of being able to convince them that they had heard nothing supernatural, and thought it best to avoid the subject. He passed the day in calling on some of the neighbors who had asked him to visit them, and returned to the farm-house just before nightfall.

He found Rena standing at the door, and, while talking to her, he mentioned his moonlight walk.

"I saw what I took to be a stray dog up there," he said. "Perhaps it made the sound we heard." [Pg 250]

"Was it a black dog, with rough, curly hair?" asked Rena.

"I think it was; but I couldn't see it very well. Do you know whose it is?"

"No; but this morning when I came out of the dairy a dog that looked like that was standing in the path, a little way off, and I was thinking it might have been the same one."

As she looked away again, Brent said, "I didn't tell your father and mother about the dog I saw, because I thought it would be well for them to forget the whole matter as soon as possible."

"Thank you," said Rena, turning her face and looking at him gratefully.

He had lost the desire to tease her, and treated her as he had never done before. Thinking of this, not long afterward, he wondered whether a presentiment of what was coming had caused the change, or whether it merely arose from a consciousness of the gloom which had already settled on the household.

During his call on the Barndollars that morning, he had partly overcome Elsa's unfavorable impression of him by treating her, to some extent, "like a grown-up woman" and showing by his manner that he was not unconscious of the handsome young brunette's personal attractions. On her next visit, a little more than two weeks later, she noticed that he had entirely given up the

objectionable teasings; and this removed the last obstacle in the way of her considering him extremely "nice." She had mentally admitted, even at the first view, that he possessed the degree of good looks and stylishness rigorously exacted from the male sex by the canons of boarding school taste, and she now candidly acknowledged to herself that his being an Englishman was, strictly speaking, not his own fault.

When she was ready to go, she made her adieux with an agreeable sense of having been both entertaining and instructive. She forgot to take leave of her friend the aged and decrepit mastiff, which was sitting just inside the hall; but he called attention to his presence by three raps of his tail on the floor. Elsa laughed, and went through the form of shaking his huge paw,—an attention which he acknowledged by a prolonged caudal tattoo.

"Oh, Rena!" said Elsa, stopping on the topmost step, "I forgot to tell you what happened to our Scotch shepherd-dog, Macbeth. You know Melker and I made friends with him the first day, but we were the only ones he'd be intimate with. Well, about two weeks ago an ugly old black dog came prowling around the house, and when Mac went up to it it bit him and then ran away to the mountains. Soon after that, we heard that a black dog with the hydrophobia had been killed up there, and Derrick and Jake said they believed it was the same one. Melker was in Philadelphia, and before he came home Mac went mad. Derrick shot at him out of the barn, and scared him so much that he ran off down the road, and we haven't heard anything about him since."

Rena was bending over one of the jessamine-bushes, and seemed to be absorbed in removing some dead leaves.

"Did your dog come this way, Elsa?" asked Mrs. Reinfelter nervously.

"No, indeed," replied Elsa. "He ran up the road to the village. Good-by, Kuno. I won't forget you again."

Brent followed her down the steps to assist her in mounting, but she sprang into the saddle without waiting for his help, and rode away at a brisk canter.

The farmer and his wife conferred together anxiously about the two mad dogs, while their little son stood near them, listening intently to all they said. Unnoticed by them, Rena walked across the yard and passed around the corner of the house in the direction of the garden.

Something in her manner caught Brent's attention, and in a little while he followed her. He found her sitting in the garden; and, though she tried to keep her face turned away from him, its death like pallor did not escape his sight. He sat down at her side and asked her to tell him what had happened. The sympathy in his voice went straight to her heart and won her whole confidence. [Pg 251]

"The warning was for me," she answered, "I'm not afraid to die; but father and mother and my little brother—"

She did not sob or make any sound, but great tears welled from her eyes, and she was unable to go on.

When she could speak again, she told him that on the day after the warning, when she found a black, shaggy-haired dog standing near the dairy door, she put out her hand, intending to stroke its head, but it caught her hand with its teeth, and left a wound from which the blood fell in large drops. The dog ran away in the direction of the Barndollar farm, and she bound up her hand and managed to keep the wound from being noticed while it was healing, for she was anxious to avoid increasing the anxiety her parents already felt. Only a slight scar now remained; but Elsa's account of the mad dogs left no doubt in her mind that she was in imminent danger of a frightful death.

Brent had once witnessed a sight which rose before his eyes many times afterward and would not be blotted from his memory. It all came back to him now once more,—the agonized, horribly glaring eyes, the clinched hands and quivering throat, and the convulsive sobbing and gasping which would not cease tearing the wasted frame until death should bring the only possible help. It made him sick at heart to think that the gentle unselfish girl who was even then forgetting herself in her care for others would be seized by those paroxysms of frightful madness.

He knew that many people who are bitten by mad dogs escape hydrophobia entirely, but he could not doubt that when the teeth have entered the bare flesh, and strong remedies are not instantly applied, there is very little ground for hope.

"Was your hand entirely uncovered?" he asked.

"Yes; I never wear gloves."

With a desperate impulse to do something, he said, "I'll go to Philadelphia and bring a physician. We can be here to-morrow."

"I'm afraid it's too late for that now," said Rena. "It would only frighten father and mother. I want to keep them from knowing it as long as I can."

"I won't bring anybody back with me if you are unwilling; but I must go and find out what I can do to help you."

"Do you think anything can be done to keep me from hurting anybody else?"

"I'm sure of that. I'll find out the best way to do it."

"Oh, thank you. You're so good to me!"

The earnestness of her gratitude made him think with sorrow and shame of the time when his chief pleasure had been to make her unhappy. He could hardly believe he had really been as selfish and heartless as he appeared in the picture rising before him now out of the unchangeable past. His dormant human interest was awakening, and his soul was beginning to resist the tyranny of his mind.

He was so impatient to begin his journey that he proposed setting off immediately and riding to the nearest railroad-station. But Rena was afraid this would alarm her parents: so he agreed to wait until the next morning and take the stage in the village.

That night Rena stayed longer than usual in the room with her little brother after he had sunk into peaceful slumber in the midst of his small confidences and grave interrogations.

Soon after she came down, her mother said, "Rena, sing us one of the nice German songs Mr. Brent learned you once. Sing the one about the lady that set up on the high rock an' combed her hair with a golden comb. What did they call her still? 'De Lower Liar'?"

As Rena turned toward Brent and the lamplight fell on her face, he was sure that if she tried to sing her voice would tell what she was trying to keep unknown.

"I don't think 'Die Lorelei' is a very lively song, Mrs. Reinfelter," said he. "Maybe I can find some prettier ones in Philadelphia to-morrow, if I have time. I must be sure to bring Casper something. [Pg 252] What do you think he would like best?"

This question introduced a topic which banished all others; and when Brent looked at Rena again he saw he had come to the rescue in good time. He was glad to think he could at least do this, and he determined to be on the watch for such opportunities.

The result of his consultations the next day gave him very little ground for hope. All he could depend on doing was to save Rena from suffering and prevent what she feared most by making her insensible as soon as the madness showed signs of taking an active form.

When he had gotten what was needed for this purpose and had been fully advised as to his course of action, he went back with a heavy heart to the farm among the mountains.

At the first opportunity he repeated to Rena all he had learned in the city, and told her what he proposed doing. The prospect that was so dispiriting to him removed her greatest care; but her eager thanks humiliated him as he felt his utter helplessness in the hands of fate. A sudden fear that she might hurt him before he could make her unconscious brought back her anxiety; but he reassured her by promising to be constantly on his guard and take every possible means to insure his own safety.

Watching her closely as the days went by, he saw the full extent of her calm and steadfast courage. She made no effort to hide from him her grief at the prospect of separation from those she loved so dearly; but of anguish or terror on her own account there was never any sign. He did not doubt that this came from her perfect faith and trust in a higher power, and, though he could not share her feeling, it comforted him to know that she had such a strong support as she drew near to death.

Near the close of the fifth day after his return he and Rena were standing together at the gate in front of the house. Deep shadows were advancing up the sides of the mountains, but their summits were still bright with the evening glow. Both of them watched the narrowing line of light without speaking. Their minds were full of the same thoughts, and there was a sympathetic communion between them which did not need to be expressed in words.

Hearing footsteps on the road, they looked around, and saw Melchior Barndollar coming toward them. A large and very handsome dog of the Scotch shepherd breed was running along before him, and when he stopped at the gate it came back and stood near him, with its intelligent brown eyes fixed on his face.

"You have got another collie, I see," said Brent.

"No; this is the only one I've ever owned," replied Barndollar.

He had been surprised at the Englishman's remark, and he was entirely unable to account for the effect of his answer on both the others. They turned quickly toward each other with a look of eager interest, mingled with something else which he could not understand.

"I thought your collie went mad," said Brent.

"Oh, you heard that report, then?"

"Yes. The last time your sister was here she mentioned it. Was there nothing in it?"

"It wasn't even founded on an apparent fact," said the young farmer, smiling and looking down at the dog, which immediately began wagging its tail so forcibly that at least one-third of its body partook of the motion. "The men on my mother's farm have regaled themselves so often with stories about mad dogs that they have become their pet horror. When I came home I found that

their fire from behind intrenchments had driven poor Mac off the place; though if he had been better acquainted with their marksmanship he would probably have gone to sleep while they were shooting at him. I went out to hunt for him, and found him at a house near the village, as free from hydrophobia as I am. To make sure, I traced the dog that bit him back to its owner's hut in the mountains, and found it there, sneaking around the lot and looking as vicious and mean-spirited as ever. Its master said the dog that was shot came from the other side of the mountains, and was worth a dozen such curs as his." [Pg 253]

Rena stepped into the road and began stroking the dog's head and neck. As she did so, her father came out of the house, and, seeing Barndollar at the gate, he came down to speak to him.

While the two farmers were talking, Brent walked away to a grove of oaks near the road and a short distance below the gate. Standing among the trees as the twilight came on, he thought over the episode which had just come to a close, and wondered at its effect on him. Instead of pondering over the uncertainties of the case until it lost all reality to him, he had been too much concerned to think of probabilities at all. Sensibility had overcome his agnosticism, and he had forgotten that it was possible to doubt. He knew he had not acted philosophically; but he felt that philosophy, compared with sympathy and self-forgetfulness, is of very slight account.

Professor Helfenstein returned to the little Pennsylvania village at the time he had indicated, which was about the middle of October. The innkeeper told him his friend had not yet left the farm-house, and the next morning he set out on foot to visit him there.

The mountain-woods, all arrayed in their autumn foliage, were glowing with rich, warm color. Silvery cloud-banks heightened the deep blue of the sky, and their slowly-floating shadows intensified the brightness of the sunlight. "*Ueberall Sonnenschein!*" said the nature-loving German. "*Ach, 's ist ein wunderschönes Land!*"

Brent saw him enter the yard, and came to the door to meet him. The family had dispersed soon after breakfast, and, as there was no one in the house for him to see, Helfenstein declined going in, but stood on the door-step, describing his journeyings in the West.

"Well," said he at last, "are you ready to start with me for New York to-morrow morning, and for Liverpool next Monday?"

"My starting for any place out of sight of these mountains," answered Brent, "depends chiefly on the views of a certain young woman. At present the indications are that no such pilgrimage will ever begin."

"*Alle Wetter!* Are you married?"

"No; but I expect to be in two weeks."

"Is it the maiden who dwells in this house?"

"The very same."

For a few moments the professor gazed in silence at the prospective bride-groom. Besides feeling a personal interest in the case, he considered it a good subject for psychic investigation.

"My good friend," he said, with judicial calmness, "why do you wish to espouse Miss Reinfelter?"

Brent knew this question was not meant to be offensive, but was propounded in a spirit of critical analysis. He was about to answer it with a pretence of deep gravity, when Casper came around the corner of the house and asked him where "Sister Rena" was.

"She has gone to the village," replied Brent.

As the boy turned away, his disappointment was so evident that Brent said, "Do you want her to do anything for you, Casper?"

"No, sir," said Casper dejectedly. "I just *want* her."

Brent smiled, and turned to the professor again.

"I couldn't find a better answer to your question if I thought for a week," he said. "I just *want* her."

W. W. Crane.

MUSTER-DAY IN NEW ENGLAND. [Pg 254]

Arms and the men we sing,—not those panoplied and helmeted according to Virgil, nor those of our own day, armed with repeating rifles and drum-majored into popular favor, but rather the heroes of the flint-lock and the priming-wire in the New England of two or three generations ago, the sturdy train-bands that have left scarce one John Gilpin to tell the tale of their valor.

"Train-bands are the trustiest and most proper strength of a free people," wrote Milton, and the colonists of Massachusetts Bay were of a like opinion, from Miles Standish down to the humbler men of prowess. By the law of 1666, all males in the colony were required to attend "military exercises and service." Companies were exercised six days yearly, prayer being offered by the captain at the beginning and at the end of every "training." A regimental training was ordered once in three years. Every company of foot was composed two-thirds of "musketeers" and one-third of "pikemen," the pike of Connecticut being two feet shorter than the rod-pike of England. Some of the lighter muskets were fired with a simple match, but the greater number were supported by "rests," forked at the top and stuck into the ground. They were fired by "match-locks," the "cock" being that part which held the burning match aloft before it was applied to the powder in the pan. Hence "to go off half cocked" originally meant that the burning fuse dropped into the powder pan before it was wanted. Single charges of powder were carried by the musketeers in wooden, tin, or copper boxes, and twelve of these boxes, fitted to a belt and slung over the left shoulder, made the "bandolier," which jingled like a band of sleigh-bells if the boxes were metallic. The belt also secured the "primer with priming-powder," the "bullet-bag," the "priming-wire," and the "match-cord." The soldier being thus a slave to his weapon, we are not surprised to note that his manual of arms was the following, from Elton's "Postures of the Musket:"

Stand to your arms.
Take up your bandoliers.
Put on your bandoliers.
Take up your match.
Take up your rest.
Put the string of your rest about
your left wrist.
Take up your musket.
Rest your musket.
Poise your musket.
Shoulder your musket.
Unshoulder your musket and poise.
Join your rest to the outside of your musket.
Open your pan.
Clear your pan.
Prime your pan.
Shut your pan.
Cast off your loose corns.
Blow off your loose corns, and bring
about your musket to the left side.
Trail your rest.
Balance your musket in your left hand.
Find out your charge.
Open your charge.
Charge with powder.
Draw forth your scouring-stick.
Turn and shorten him to an inch.
Charge with bullet.
Put your scouring-stick into your musket.
Ram home your charge.
Withdraw your scouring-stick.
Turn and shorten him to a handful.
Return your scouring-stick.
Bring forward your musket and rest.
Poise your musket and recover your rest.
Join your rest to the outside of your musket.
Draw forth your match. [Pg 255]
Blow your coal.
Cock your match.
Guard your pan.
Blow the ashes from your coal.
Open your pan.
Present upon your rest.
Give fire breast-high.
Dismount your musket, joining the rest to the outside of your musket.
Uncock and return your match.
Clear your pan.
Poise your musket.
Rest your musket.
Take your musket off the rest and set
the butt end to the ground.
Lay down your musket.
Lay down your match.
Take your rest into your right hand,
clearing the string from your left wrist.
Lay down your rest.

Take off your bandoliers.
Lay down your bandoliers.
Here endeth the postures of the musket.

The "Postures of the Pike" gave these orders: "Handle, raise, charge, order, advance, shoulder, port, comport, check, trail, and lay down,"—the words "your pikes" being given with every order.

Elton's "Instructions to a Company of Horsemen" were as follows:

Horse,—*i.e.*, mount your horse.
Uncap your pistol-case.
Draw your pistol.
Order your pistol.
Span your pistol.
Prime your pistol.
Shut your pan.
Cast your pistol.
Gage your flasque.
Lode your pistol.
Draw your rammer.
Lode with bullet and ram home.
Return your rammer.
Pull down the cock.
Recover your pistol.
Present and give fire.
Return your pistol.

Our fathers might have gone on in this lumbering way for many years if they had seen nothing worth imitating in the red men. The Indians of King Philip's War brought out their "snap-hances," or flint-locks, and the colonists were not slow to see the improvement. Experimentally at first, and afterward by a law of Massachusetts, the old pikes and heavy match-lock rifles were replaced with lighter muskets bearing the flint. The soldier ceased to be a slave to his weapon. Tactics were revolutionized; and the newly-developed military spirit was met by "The Complete Soldier," compiled from Elton, Bariff, and other authorities, and published by Nicholas Boone, of Boston, in 1701. This, the first military book in the British colonies, directed the soldiers to appear "with their hair, or periwigs, tied up in bags, and their hats briskly cocked." We hear also for the first time of the "powder-horn" and the "cartouch-box." The "bagnets" that are mentioned were of little use against the Indians, and they were scarcely known in America until the wars with France. But with the appearance of the bayonet came also the revival of the fife, which had been discarded in England in the time of Shakespeare. The military experiences gained in the French wars were of immense benefit when the Continentals and the volunteers formed themselves in line for the American Revolution. And yet the *esprit de corps* was contemptible; for every movement contemplated and every order given by a superior officer had to be discussed, approved, or disapproved by the inferior officers and by the humblest privates. It was years before the army ceased to be a great debating-society with a sharp rivalry as to which regiment should have the handsomest silk banner. But Steuben—the great drill-master—brought order out of the turmoil with his "Regulations for the Discipline of the Troops of the United States," although the evolutions in the field did not go much beyond the old-time marching that clings to the Hartford Phalanx of to-day. An Englishman who lived in Massachusetts during the Revolution had this to say: "The females are fond of dress and love to rule. The men are fond of the military art. But in Connecticut the men are less so, while the women stay at home and spin." [Pg 256]

The Revolution being over, the several States of the new republic enacted military laws of their own. In New York every able-bodied male between eighteen and forty-five was required to meet with his company four times in each year "for training and discipline,"—once by brigade, once by regiment, and twice by company,—for such length of time as the governor might direct. Similar laws were in force in the New-England States, and upon them was based the United States law of 1792 which sought to establish a uniform militia throughout the country. The attempt was a failure, because the President is commander-in-chief of the militia only when it is in the actual service of the United States. The several States, therefore, kept up their ununiformed militia until it became a laughing-stock,—an army with broom-sticks, to evade serving in which but fifty cents a year was required,—and then the present uniformed militia arose from the ruins. Our present inquiry concerns the militia of New England during the fifty years from 1790 to 1840. In those days the "military duty" consisted of two "company trainings" of half a day each in May and October, and one "general training" or "regimental muster" of one day in October. While no uniforms were required at the trainings, except to distinguish the officers, yet there were usually enough public-spirited people in every town to furnish uniforms to the crack company. The other company, the tatterdemalions of the town, was called "the flood-wood." The regiment consisted of one company each of artillery, grenadiers, light infantry, and riflemen from adjoining towns,—the cavalry being recruited wherever a farm-house could be found which was able to stand the shock of war. Then came the flood-wood companies, outnumbering the uniformed companies almost two to one.

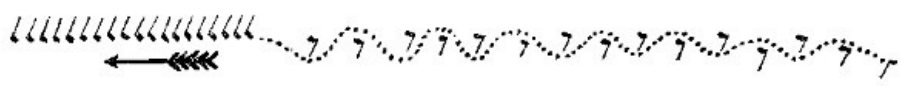
The cavalry—it was before the days of Hackett and Poinsett and McClellan saddles and Solingen sabres—appeared to treasure up the memory of "Light-Horse Harry Lee" and Major Winston of the Legionary Cavalry that helped Mad Anthony Wayne against the Indians of the West. They had

not heard of the valor of the elder Hampton or the daring rides of Major Davies, of Kentucky. "Tone's Tactics" was unknown to them. And yet they were admired in their black suits faced and corded with red (the militia repudiated the colors of the regular army), and they were a terror with their cutlasses and holsters for the brace of huge horse-pistols that they were required to carry. The uniform of the artillery and grenadiers differed little from that of the cavalry. The latter were topped off with helmets of red leather. Upon the hats of the flood-wood, tin or sheet-iron plates showed the name of the company,—the L. I. standing for "Light Infantry,"—just as you know the porter of your hotel by his badge. The riflemen wore gray spencers and gray pantaloons. Their hats were stiff black beavers, for the comfort of a soft felt hat had not yet been discovered. Most gorgeous of all were the men of the infantry, in their white pantaloons and blue coats, the latter covered by cross-belts of white, to which priming-wires, brushes, and extra flints were chained. A cap of black leather, sprung outward at the top, carried a black feather tipped with red. The musicians, when there were any, followed the uniform of the company which they attended, with some slight differences, like turned-over plates and tasselled ends, to show that they were non-combatants. Altogether, as one looked at the "fuss and feathers," the broad lapels, and the bob-tailed coats, he might well recall Thoreau's description of the manner in which the salt cod are spread out on the fish-flakes to dry: "They were everywhere lying on their backs, their collar-bones standing out like the lapels of a man-o'-war-man's jacket.... If you should wrap a large salt fish around a small boy, he would have a coat of such fashion as I have seen many a [Pg 257] one wear at muster." Or, if we wish to go back still further, we might exclaim, with Falstaff, "You would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals, lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks.... No eye hath seen such scarecrows."

We are at the training "in the fall of the year,"—a far more important occasion than that in the spring, because the annual "muster" is only a week or ten days ahead. It is a private show. The uniformed infantry and the flood-wood have met at Walton Centre, but they, and all the spectators too, are from "our town," with its various outlying settlements. Let the other towns boast, let Stormont show her grenadiers, Leicester her riflemen, and Acton her artillery, but when "muster-day" comes look out for Walton and her infantry. The law requires every soldier to have a musket or rifle,—flint-lock of course,—a bayonet, a priming-wire and brush, a knapsack, a cartridge-box, and two spare flints. The lack of any one of these may lead to a fine. The regular order of the manual is, open pan, tear cartridge, prime, shut pan, ram down cartridge, ready, aim, fire. But cartridges are not often to be had, and flasks must be used, with a pause in the manual to allow the measuring of a charge. The lack of cartridges leads also to the carrying of powder in bulk in the pantaloons pocket, so that the soldier may move quickly when the order is given to "load and fire as fast as possible." Still more quick in his movements will the soldier be when, led on by the excitement of the hour, he becomes careless of his pocket-magazine and allows it to explode, with a great wreckage of hair, whiskers, and eyebrows, though no one was ever known to lose his life thereby.

But the "evolutions" of the fall training-day make up its greatest worth. It is not enough that squads of "our company" advance, fire, and fall back, the drummer drumming his loudest all the while. It is mere boy's play to march in single and double files or in platoons. We are to meet the companies from the other towns at the muster, and they must be forced to admit our superiority in spite of themselves, or else our town will not come out ahead. Now, if there is any one manœuvre on which the Walton infantry prides itself, the "lock-step and sit-down" is that one. The company is marched about in single file until a circle is formed, care being taken that the captain shall be in the inside and the musicians on the outside. Gradually drawing toward the centre, the circle contracts to slow music, until the whole company is in lock-step, like a gang of convicts. At the word of command, each man seats himself in the lap of the man behind him, and the whole company is in the attitude of frogs as they are ready to leap. The captain, raised aloft in the middle by some convenient mackerel-keg, draws his sword, and the tableau lasts while the music sounds the "three cheers."

Another "evolution," such as Darwin never dreamed of, is begun by facing the company to the front in a single rank. The left hand of each man resting on his next neighbor's right shoulder, space is taken until all the men are an arm's length apart. At a given signal they all face to the right. The captain, "with drawn sword," followed by the music, the drum beating vigorously, runs at double-quick time in and out of the spaces, like a very undignified performance of the Virginia Reel. As each man is passed, he joins the rapidly-increasing file, until the whole line expends its snake-like activity and marches off in "common time" on a straight course, like this:



Both of these "evolutions" are calculated to inspire the enemy with terror, but the latter especially so. On beholding it, the enemy cannot help giving applause, and in applauding he must [Pg 258] necessarily drop his arms. The Walton Light Infantry, equal to any emergency, may now show their superior discipline by capturing the enemy before he can recover from his surprise and admiration. Even the very boys on a training-day seek to terrorize the enemy with broom-sticks and tin pans, until they become a nuisance to the older folk and are sent off to some field to play base-ball after the old method, the "Massachusetts game," which allows the "plunking" of a batter when he is not on his base. But the boys will claim their share of the extra cards of gingerbread that have been laid in at the stores, and they will be on hand to see the half-day's sport of training-day end before early tea-time with the flashing of powder and the departure of the

"sojers" for their homes.

A very different affair is the "muster-day" of the early fall, before the cold days and nights have come to stay. The several adjoining towns, that furnish each its own company or its quota of cavalry, take care of the "regiment," by rotation, at such a time as this. No matter how centrally located the town may be, the grenadiers must come a long way over the hills from Stormont, and the riflemen must leave Acton soon after midnight in order to obey the signal of the seven-o'clock gun, which demands the presence of every company on the "parade-ground:" it goes by the name of "the common" every other day in the year. The night marches or rides are orderly, the more so in anticipation of what is to follow. The sun rises upon a gala-day for the men and youth: the boys had their time at the training. Now the crowd is greater, and there is no room for the boys, except those who live in the town where the muster is held. The field, at a respectful distance from the regimental line, is covered with auctioneers' stands, peddlers' wagons, refreshment-booths of rough boards, and planked platforms for dancing to the music of the violin. It is the picture of a college town on "commencement-day," magnified to ten times the proportions. As you stand,—no seats are allowed,—you can partake of sweet cider, lemonade, apples, gingerbread, and pies and buns of all kinds. If you call for it, you can have New-England rum, or its more popular substitute, "black-strap," one-half rum and the other half molasses. Awaiting the inspection, soldiers on leave of absence mingle with the commoners, partake of the refreshments, including the black-strap, and nod their plumes or rattle their swords while they dance the "double shuffle" or "cut a double pigeon-wing" on the platforms, to the great wonder of the crowd.

When the regiment gathers itself together it is a sight to behold. There are perhaps five hundred men, all told, in two ranks. A part of them rejoice in gayly-colored uniforms, but the majority are "the flood-wood," dressed in sheep's gray and blue jeans and armed with rifles, muskets, and fowling-pieces of every pattern. This motley band "toe the mark,"—a small trench that has been cut in the turf to save their reputation for alignment. Then they break into platoons, and are inspected, man by man, by the adjutant and his aides. The inspection being over about eleven o'clock, the colonel appears, all glorious in brass buttons, epaulets as large as tin plates, and a cocked hat of great proportions. Once more the regiment forms in double ranks, with presented arms. The colonel and his "staff" ride slowly down the line, turn back, and take their stand for review. The music, just as it came from every town contributing to the regiment, has been "pooled" and placed in the charge of a leader. It is a strange medley of snare-, kettle-, and bass drums, of fifes, clarionets, and piccolos, with an occasional "Kent bugle"—the predecessor of the cornet—or some other instrument of brass. It is poor music at the best, and it cannot go far beyond marking time for the marching. But is it not better than the simple drum and fife of a common training-day? The "full brass band," we must recollect, is too expensive a luxury except for the most extraordinary occasions, and even then we run the risk of hearing "Highland Mary" [Pg 259] repeated all day long, so scant is the *répertoire*. The regiment, headed by the cavalry and the music, passes the colonel and his staff. The music wheels out of the line, gives "three cheers," and remains at the colonel's side till the regiment has returned to its place. A hollow square is formed, in imitation of the great Napoleon at Waterloo, and the colonel addresses his "brother-officers and fellow-soldiers" in a few fitting words, and retires from the field.

And now comes dinner,—a most important feature of muster-day. No one has had a bite since his breakfast at home by candle-light,—unless he has patronized the refreshment-booths. Even then he will not allow his appetite for the noonday meal to become impaired. By previous arrangement, each company dines by itself, or it joins forces with some friendly company and hires the services of a caterer. The hotel of the village cannot begin to accommodate the public, whether martial or civilian, and temporary sheds cover long lines of tables on which the feast is spread. It is a jolly company, and the scrambling for the viands and the vintages, if there are any, is done in a good-natured way. As the repast draws to a close and dessert is in order, the caterer appears at the end of one of the tables in shirt-sleeves that are more than wet with perspiration. Under his arm he holds a pile of plateless pies, just as the newsboy on the train secures a pile of magazines. The caterer marches down the length of the table with the half-inquiring, half-defiant announcement, "Pies, gentlemen! pies, gentlemen!" At every step he reaches for a pie, gives it a dexterous twirl between his thumb and finger, and sends it spinning to the recipient with a skill and accuracy of aim which would have done credit to the disk-thrower of the ancient Romans.

The "noon gun," fired after dinner, calls the regiment back to the parade-ground. The real work of the day is over; and now come recreation and amusement. The remarkable "evolutions" of the several companies are shown, each town striving to outdo the others. Of course the Walton Light Infantry will excel all the rest; but it may be no easy matter to make every one think as we do. The newest evolution—that of the snake on training-day—certainly "brings down the house," even if it fails to carry an admission of its superiority. When this friendly rivalry is over, the sham fight proceeds. A rough structure of boards and boughs has been prepared to represent a fort, and one of the companies is imprisoned therein, with little air or light, and with no means of defence except to discharge their guns upward. The advancing regiment fires by platoons, which wheel outward and retire to the rear to load. The artillery fires blank charges from a neighboring hill. The sweltering soldiers within the fort are only too glad to capitulate and let some other company take their place; the new company, in turn, to capitulate and march out with the honors of war. Meanwhile, the cavalry—whose horses are more used to the plough than to the din of battle—has retired to a distance, and indulges in a sham fight on its own account. And yet, in spite of all this preparation and in spite of the pains that have been taken to show the fancy movements of the soldiers, you will seldom see a company that is really well drilled in the most simple movements;

for drill-masters are unknown.

The sham fight goes on till toward sunset, when the regiment is dismissed at the signal of the evening gun. And now comes the hurry to reach home. Such reckless driving, such wild racing over the hills and along the rough roads and ledges, and such a desire to "take off somebody's wheel," you never saw, unless you have been to a muster-day before. This is a part of the fun; and if you do not take it as the correct thing, and enjoy it too, you might as well have stayed away from the muster altogether.

FREDERIC G. MATHER.

THE STORY OF A STORY.

[Pg 260]

I.

THE HEROINE.

A horse-car, for all it is so common a sight, is not without its picturesque side. To stand on a long bridge at night, while the lights twinkle in the perspective, and watch one of these animated servants, with its colored globular eye, come scrambling toward you, is to see a clumsy, good-natured Caliban of this mechanical age. One of these days, when the horse-car is superseded by some electric skipping wicker-basket or what not, the Austin Dobson of the time will doubtless expend his light sympathy of verse on the pathetic old abandoned conveyance.

Such picturesqueness, however, is rather for one who seeks, than a view which thrusts itself upon the merely casual observer. At any rate, another Austin,—Austin Buckingham,—who was engaged one winter evening at the end of a long bridge in idealizing horse-cars, hit upon this way of looking at the one he was waiting for, out of sheer desperation of intellect. He was a young *littérateur* who was out of work. He was not, like other workmen in similar straits, going from one shop to another looking for a job. Not at all. He recognized the situation. He had only to write a clever story and he could quickly dispose of it. He had written a good many stories in his short day. Now he wished to write another. The pity of it was that he had no story to tell,—absolutely nothing. He had been through his note-books, but they gave him no help; he had kept his ears open for some suggestive little incident, but the whole world seemed suddenly given over to the dreariest commonplace. He had walked out this evening, slowly revolving in his mind the various odds and ends which came upon demand of his rag-picking memory, and yet nothing of value had turned up. He was tired, and determined to take a horse-car for the rest of the way.

It was while he stood watching for the one which took him nearest to his door, that he made the slight reflection with which this story opens. "Could I make a horse-car the hero of my story?" he asked himself, with a petulant tone, as he thought how dismally dull he was. The jingling car came up, and he jumped upon the rear platform, wedged his way through the men and boys who crowded the steps and platform, and so pushed into the interior. He found half a dozen men in various attitudes of neglect, but all hanging abjectly by the loops which a considerate company had provided for its patrons. For his part, he preferred to brace himself against the forward door, which gave him a position where he could watch his fellow-prisoners.

His eye fell at once on a girl for whom he always looked. He did not know her name, but, as the saying goes, he knew her face very well. She lived on the same street where he had his lodging, so that when they met in a horse-car they always got out together. From the regularity with which she came out in a certain car, Buckingham had sagely concluded that she was one of the multitude of girls who earned their living, for whom as a class he had great respect, though he did not happen to know any single member. He liked to look at her. She was shy and discreet in bearing; she usually entertained herself with a book, which permitted him larger liberty of eye; and she dressed with a neatness which had an individuality: she evidently expressed herself in her clothes. That is not all. She was undeniably pretty.

Now, our young friend had seen her in his horse-car a great many times, but never under the conditions which existed at this time. People rarely exclaim to themselves except in novels, but Buckingham did deliberately shout to himself, "Why, this—this is my heroine! I have only to find a hero and a plot. I know this girl very well. I am sure I can make a story about her. Give me a hero, give me a plot, and there is my story!"

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II.

MISS MARTINDALE.

When the horse-car stopped at the foot of Grove Street, Austin Buckingham and the prospective heroine of his story got out so nearly at the same time that when they reached the sidewalk they were side by side. Beneath the gas-light stood a tallish man who was looking up to read the name of the street upon the lamp. The light thus fell on his face and brought it into distinctness; especially it disclosed a scar upon his cheek. He caught sight now of these two people, and at once addressed Buckingham:

"Can you tell me whereabouts Mr. Martindale lives?"

Buckingham hesitated, not because he knew and did not wish to tell, but because he did not know, but wished to, if possible, out of courtesy. He was trying to remember. The answer, however, came a moment after from the girl, who had checked her walk upon hearing the name.

"I am going directly there," she said, and the two walked off together, the young man lifting his broad-brimmed felt hat in acknowledgment of her civility. He lifted it by seizing the crown in a bunch. It is difficult to lift a soft hat gracefully. Buckingham followed the pair, and when he had reached his own door-way he continued to follow them with his eyes until they were lost at a bend in the street. Then he entered the house where he lodged, and sat down in his study. He was greatly pleased with this little turn in affairs.

"That is one step further in my story," he said to himself, for there was no one else to say it to. "So she is Miss Martindale, and this young man with a scar has come to see her father on business. He will stay to tea. The father will—what will the father do or say? I must look out the name in the directory, so as to get some solid basis of fact about the father,—something to avoid, of course, when I arrange him in the story. If he is a stone-cutter I must make him a house- and sign-painter. I must disguise him so that his most intimate friend will not detect him."

Austin Buckingham was in the most agreeable humor as he proceeded to prepare his solitary tea, for he was a bachelor and yet he detested restaurants and boarding-houses. His dinner he needed to buy, and eat where he bought it, but his breakfast and tea he provided in the room which served as study and dining-room. He did not wash his dishes, it may be remarked, with the exception of a Kaga cup which was too precious to be intrusted to his landlady.

He had set aside his tea-things, and, with a paper and pencil, was proceeding to sketch a plot for his story, with Miss Martindale for the heroine and the young man with a scar for a hero, when there was a knock at the door, and the servant came in, bearing a card. It contained the name of Henry Dale Wilding, a correspondent whom he had never met, but who had begun with asking for his autograph, and had now ended, it seems, with calling in person.

"Show him up," said the story-teller; and Mr. Wilding, who was two steps behind the servant, instantly presented himself. His face was certainly familiar. Ah! it was the scar upon the face which made the recognition easy.

III.

MR. WILDING.

"This is very pleasant," said Buckingham cordially, as he bade the young man lay aside his coat and take a seat by the fire. While his guest was obeying him, the host said in an aside,—only the aside was inaudible, contrary to the custom of asides,—"He does not recognize me. I will draw him out."

"I was in town this evening,—in fact, in this very street," said Mr. Wilding,—"and I could not resist the temptation to call on you." [Pg 262]

"I am very glad you didn't," said Buckingham heartily. "It is evident you were led into it. Have you many friends in town?"

"Not very many. I know one or two men in college. I thought at one time of coming here to college myself. I gave that up, however, and now I am thinking of taking a special course, perhaps in English. Indeed, that is one reason why I came to town to-day."

"Well, the college is hospitable enough. It is a great hotel, with accommodations for regular boarders, but with reduced tickets for the *table-d'hôte*, and a restaurant for any one who happens in, where one may dine *à la carte*."

"I have not had a classical education," said the young man.

"Very well: you can make a special point of that. Very few of our later writers have had a classical education. Scholarship is no longer a part of general culture. It is a profession by itself. It is scientific, not literary."

"But you had a classical education, Mr. Buckingham?"

"Yes, I had once. I don't deny that I am glad I had; but I am forced to conceal it nowadays."

"And you still read the classics," he went on, with a respectful glance at a Greek book lying open on the table. Buckingham hastily closed the book.

"Yes, when no one is looking. But tell me about your plans. Shall you room in the college buildings?"

"I have come so late in the year that I cannot get any satisfactory rooms."

"Why not try getting a room somewhere in this neighborhood? There are students, I think, who live on this street. I am afraid there are no vacant rooms in this house, or I would introduce you to my landlady."

"I am not sure but I shall. In fact, I have been looking at a room farther up the street this evening."

"Indeed! What house did you find it in?"

"I found two or three houses that had rooms to let for students. They were not boarding-houses. I don't care to board."

"Mr. Wilding, my opinion of you rises with each sentiment you express. First you think of studying English in a scholarly fashion; then you detest boarding. I am sure we shall be friends. I shall invite you to take tea with me,—not to-night, for I have already had my tea, but when you are settled in your room."

"Thank you; I accept with pleasure. I am glad you did not insist on my taking tea with you to-night, for I have just come from tea."

"Oh! I remember you said you had friends in town."

"Yes; I have some cousins of an indefinite degree. They live on this street, and they will make it pleasant for me. But they know very little about the college, and I ventured to call to ask your advice about this matter of a special course. Would you try for a degree?"

Mr. Buckingham had nothing to do with the college; he was not even a graduate of this particular one; but he dearly loved to give advice. He took down the college catalogue, and talked with great animation for some time to his young friend, who confided to him that his ambition was to be an author, and that he had already written several sketches of character.

"Excellent," said Buckingham to himself. "You shall be my hero; only you will write short poems. Then nobody will detect your likeness."

Wilding stayed an hour, and then made ready to leave.

"If you are going to take the car, you are just in time," said his host, as they shook hands by the door of his room.

"I am going first to my cousin's," said the young man.

"Oh, are you? Wait a moment. I should like a little airing. I will walk along with you." And Buckingham, with a sudden admiration for his prompt seizure of the hour, put on his hat and coat.

IV.

THE PLAY MYSTERY.

Two young women were sitting over their worsted-work in the house numbered 17 Grove Street. [Pg 263]

"Twenty-five, twenty-six," said the elder. "Lillie, if I were you, I would always carry one of his books with me in the horse-car, prepared to open and read it whenever he chanced to hang by the straps over me. He would be sure to try to read it upside down, and—"

"Nonsense, Julia! you speak exactly as if I were running after him."

"Not running, my dear, but waiting for him. Confess it; don't you make up stories about this Mr. Buckingham? don't you call him Austin all by yourself?"

"Julia, you are shameless! I have a great mind to roll up my work and go up-stairs."

"Oh, no, Lillie. Stay here; for Henry will surely be back soon, and we shall learn exactly how the lion looked in his den. What a singularly good piece of fortune it was that Henry should have met you both!"

"Julia! you don't suppose that cousin of yours has been telling! You don't suppose he has mentioned me to Mr. Buckingham!"

"It is impossible to say. You get two men talking together, and you may be sure they forget all their promises of secrecy. Now, I shouldn't wonder if Henry were at this very moment—"

"You are simply—"

"Hark! There's Henry now."

For the door opened, and Mr. Wilding entered, the remains of a smile upon his face.

"I really should like to know, Julia," he said, "what you two ladies have been talking about. We could almost hear. We certainly could see."

"We, Henry? Pray, who is we?"

"Why, Mr. Buckingham and I. You have certainly a most hospitable fashion of leaving your shades up. He walked out with me after I had called on him, and he seemed to have a good deal to say after we came to the door. There is an excellent view of the interior from the door; and Miss Vila and you were certainly animated."

"This is really dreadful! Lillie, do you suppose he saw us talk?"

"I don't know. I feel as if he heard every word.—Mr. Wilding, I hope you didn't repeat any of the foolish speeches your cousin made at the tea-table?"

"I was discreetness itself, Miss Vila."

"But why didn't you invite him in, Henry?" asked his cousin.

"Upon my word, this is reasonable! First I am made to promise solemnly that I won't disclose Miss Vila's name, and then I am asked why I didn't bring him in and introduce him. He wanted to come in, I know."

"He wanted to!"

"Yes; he tried to worm out of me who my cousin was, and he walked up here on purpose to find out where you lived."

"How lucky there is no name on the door!" exclaimed the cousin.

"But he heard me ask for your husband's house,—did he not, Miss Vila? And why on earth you should make such a mystery of it all I can't see."

"Do draw the shade, Julia. It makes me nervous. I feel as if he were looking in now."

"Nonsense, Lillie! he's a gentleman."

"But why do you make such a mystery of it all?" persisted the young man.

"There is no mystery," said Miss Vila stiffly. And, gathering up her work, she went up-stairs.

"It's only play mystery, Henry," said his cousin, when they were alone. "You see, Lillie Vila has been coming out in the horse-car with him every night for a long time; and she has seen him watching her. Of course she has seen him, but he has not seen that she has seen him. Men are so stupid. And she knows that he has tried in vain to find out who she is. He saw her once go into the library. She was dreadfully afraid he would come in and see her working behind the screen; but he evidently fancied she went in to get a book. Then he is always managing to stand or sit near her, and he peeks at her book when she is reading. He is just dying, I know, to find out who she is." [Pg 264]

V.

THE REAL MYSTERY.

Mr. Austin Buckingham found on his table, when he returned from his walk with Henry Wilding, a scrap of paper. It had nothing on it but the words "The Mystery." This was the heading which he had made for his story. He had been interrupted by his caller just as he had written the words. He had not the remotest notion when he set them down what the mystery was which he meant to reveal. The title now seemed like a prophecy to him. Instead, however, of jotting down an outline of his story, he took out his note-book and wrote busily:

"I wish I knew just what I saw this evening. I had walked out with Henry Wilding, who called, and who was going, he said, to his cousin's. Now, I will not conceal from my faithful journal that I was moved by a desire to know just who his cousin was and where he or she lived; for by a most fortunate chance I have found out that my maiden without a name lives, or probably lives, at a Mr. Martindale's, on this street. I tried to draw Wilding out without betraying my own interest, but he was very obtuse, and even seemed to be ashamed of his cousin. At any rate, he parried my questions, and of course I could not push my curiosity. However, I got the better of him, and walked out with him when he left. As luck would have it again, the shades were drawn at the house where he stopped, and the bright light within made the scene perfectly distinct. I talked on the door-step about I know not what, half hoping that Wilding would invite me in, but really absorbed in watching two ladies who sat by a table. One was my fair unknown, the other a lady whom I have occasionally seen, and whom I take to be Wilding's cousin,—though this is all guess-work. Whether she is or not, she is evidently a very unpleasant sort of body, for, whatever she said, the other was plainly exceedingly vexed and mortified. She covered her face with her hands. At one time she made a movement as if to leave. She looked earnest and troubled. I could vow she was about to burst into tears. Her face was very expressive. No one who shows such sudden changes can help being a person of rare sensibility. I am almost out of conceit of making her the heroine of my story, though, to be sure, I am not likely to interfere with her personal rights, so long as I do not know either her name or her history.

"To come back to the pantomime which I saw through the window. It was probably by no means so mysterious in reality as it appeared to me. Yet what could it have been? or, rather, how can I appropriate it for my purposes? I have it! The very situation of looking through a window shall serve as the critical point in my story, only it shall be the hero of my story, and not an idle spectator like myself, who does the looking. The young poet, Wilding in disguise, only walks out at night. He is a shy fellow, who even in public holds his hat, as it were, before his face. He keeps by himself in his garret, brooding over his poems, and seeing no one, until he almost loses the power of ordinary association with other people. When night comes, he walks, sometimes through the night. But his loneliness has generated a desire for companionship which he can

satisfy only by ghostly intercourse. So, instead of knowing people, he imagines them, and falls in love with his imaginations. He observes that one house looking toward the sea always keeps its curtains drawn. He falls into the way of stealing by every night to catch a glimpse of a fireside. There he sees a fair girl,—and I may as well draw her portrait like that of my unknown friend,—with eyes that are downcast but when raised suddenly grow large and lustrous, with hands that fold themselves when disengaged, with hair that peeps shyly over the forehead, and with a figure that seems always to be listening. She becomes the world to him. He has renounced all common association with men and women, and he peoples the world which he has thus brushed out with shapes caught from this one girl. The very silence which separates them makes him more quick [Pg 265] in his imagination to invest her with the grace which her distant presence never denies."

"Bah! what superfine nonsense I am writing!" exclaimed Buckingham, pushing his note-book aside, but continuing to sit before his fire in revery.

VI.

THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE TAPESTRY.

Mr. Henry Wilding suited himself easily to a room in a house which stood just beyond his cousin's. He wanted little to make him at home; for he had only pitched his tent in this university town, and had no thought of settling in it. His wish was to get what he came for and to go again as little encumbered with baggage as he had come. Something of this sort he had been saying, not long after his established routine had begun, in a letter to the lady to whom he had the good fortune to be engaged. "I never could feel settled so far from you," he went on gallantly; "and I want only so much home at hand as will keep me from daily discontent. So it is exceedingly convenient to have my cousin Julia next door. I feel as one might who lived over a grocery-shop: there would be no fear of starving, at all events. When my supply of family feeling runs low, I drop in upon Julia and lay in enough to last a few days. Her friend, who makes a home with her, of whom I wrote in my last, does not greatly interest me. She says very little; but I am willing to grant that she is uncommonly pretty. I don't know why I say this in such grudging fashion. If some one else be fair to me, what care I how fair this 't other one be? Julia admires her greatly; but I suspect she is one of the kind whom one needs to marry ever to get at. Julia is as much married to her as one woman can be to another; and that explains why she sees so much in her. She sometimes reports scraps of conversations which she has held with this Miss Lillie Vila. Unless Julia makes up both sides of the conversation, her friend certainly is intelligent, and, I am afraid, witty. I say this last because it piques me that I have never extracted any witty remark from her.

"As for John, he is imperturbably good-natured. His profession keeps him away a good deal; but when he is at home he seems to do nothing but read a book by the fireside and chuckle to himself. Julia and Miss Vila both admire him greatly; but I suspect it is necessary to reconstruct him out of imaginary material before one can get to think very highly of him. Women do this naturally. I can always make myself humble by thinking that you do it with me.

"Buckingham is decidedly more interesting. I have not seen him since the evening I called upon him; but as I recall him, his air, his conversation, and the shell of a room which he has been forming about him, I constantly find something new to enjoy. He has a good deal of insight. I am not uncomfortable when I remember how steadily he looked at me; for he is not cynical. Indeed, I should say that he had managed to preserve an unusual amount of sentiment,—more than is generally found in one at his time of life. I am convinced that he ought to marry; and if he ever does, I am sure that he will give up writing stories. He is just one of those men who will find such satisfaction in domestic life as to become indifferent to imaginative experiences. I notice that in his stories he always seems to be groping about for some agreeable domestic conclusion. His room shows it. It looks as if a woman had been in it, but had left before she had put the final touch to it. She ought to come back."

VII.

MR. BUCKINGHAM MAKES A MOVE.

A week after Henry Wilding had called on Austin Buckingham, that gentleman tried to return his call. It must be confessed that his motive was not so much a commendable desire to get even socially with his new acquaintance, nor to give him good advice, as it was to get a nearer view of [Pg 266] the heroine of his story. Candor compels me to say that every evening for the week past Buckingham had taken an airing, and always in the same direction. He had always found the shade drawn at No. 17, and often he had caught a glimpse, as he sauntered past, of the figure which he now knew so well. It is true that he had never again seen Miss Vila in so dramatic a character as upon the first evening when he had discovered her *en famille;* but he had seen her, not as one sees a portrait, which always looks in the same direction. In the horse-car she had been such a portrait to him,—the "Portrait of a Lady Reading." Behind the window of Mr. Martindale's house she had been a figure in a *tableau vivant*, often animated, always disclosing some new grace of attitude, some new charm of manner. He faintly told himself that these views enabled him to form a more distinct impression of the character of his heroine: whenever he should have his plot ready, his heroine would in the various situations instantly appear to him with the vividness and richness of reality.

He bethought himself that it was high time to see a little more of his hero; and so he persuaded himself that in going to call upon him he was engaged in a strictly professional occupation. If by any chance he should hear the rustle of the heroine's dress, why, that could not possibly injure any impressions which he might receive of his hero's individuality. These two people had become important factors in his story. He had not yet succeeded in sketching his plot. He felt it all the more necessary that they should sketch it for him. He was sure that he should readily catch at any hint which they might drop. He would therefore go into the society of his hero—and heroine.

For, somehow or other, whenever he essayed to call up the image of his hero and make it yield some distinct personality, the heroine would gently come to the fore. It was like going to a party and finding the eye glancing off from every black-coated figure to the richly-draped presence which made the party different from a town-meeting.

He was so much under the influence of all this reflex sentiment that he dressed himself with care before he went out, and so presented himself at the door of Mr. Martindale's house. It did not occur to him that Wilding lived anywhere else. He had taken it for granted that the young man was still at his cousin's. So when the door was opened for him he asked if Mr. Wilding were in, at the same time presenting his card. It chanced that the maid-servant had that day entered Mr. Martindale's service,—not a very rare chance in any household,—and, never having heard Mr. Wilding's name, indeed, not now hearing it, but hearing instead the name Miss Vila, cordially welcomed the distinguished-looking visitor, and marched before him into the little parlor, where she presented the card, on a salver which she had snatched on the way, to Miss Vila, who was sitting with Mrs. Martindale. The two ladies were playing backgammon.

VIII.

THE INTERRUPTED GAME.

"For me!" exclaimed Miss Vila, in a dismayed undertone. "Julia!"

Mrs. Martindale glanced at the card. She rose at once, just as Mr. Buckingham entered the room with a little hesitation in his step. As the two ladies held the backgammon-board in their laps, one effect of the sudden movement was to send the men rolling in every direction about the room. It was weeks before one of the men—a black one—was found.

Mr. Buckingham saw his card in Miss Vila's hands. He addressed himself to her:

"Possibly your servant misunderstood me. I asked for Mr. Wilding."

"She is a new servant," said Mrs. Martindale, and then added, with alacrity, as she seized the accident by its nearest horn, "her mistake was probably one of the ear. She thought you asked for [Pg 267] Miss Vila." Mrs. Martindale had it in her to wave her hand toward the young lady, as if showing off wax-works, and to explain, "This is Miss Vila," but Mr. Buckingham was quick enough not to need the line upon line.

"I must beg Miss Vila's pardon. There certainly is a likeness in the names, if you spell it with a *we*."

"I will speak to Mr. Wilding," said Mrs. Martindale, jerking an eyeful of mysterious intelligence at Miss Vila and whisking out of the room.

"I hope you were just about to be beaten, Miss Vila," said Buckingham, "for I see I have spoiled the game."

"It is nothing," said she.

She had said nothing, but she had said it with a singularly musical voice, and, after all, it is not the significant words but the significant tones which touch one.

"No. It is nothing," he repeated. "A game may always be interrupted, because it is not the conclusion but the playing which gives it any value. I suspect it is like the stories we read,—somebody comes in, and we lay the book down before we come to the end. It is no great matter if we never take it up again. We got our pleasure, not from knowing how things turned out, but from knowing things." He blushed a little as he said this. In fact, his own inchoate story came to his mind. Besides, Miss Vila had his card. Since she read so constantly, it was odds but she knew of him. He blushed a little more as this thought crossed his mind.

"Do you think so?" she asked, and her downcast eyes were suddenly up-turned in full, the look which he had often patiently watched for as he had seen her in the horse-car. "I find the end necessary. If I stop half-way I think I have done the story-teller an injustice. I have not given him the chance to tell me all he intended to tell me. He lets out the secret of his characters by degrees. He could justly say to me, 'You do not know the heroine; you have not seen her in that scene which is going to test her.'"

"You are quite right," said Buckingham, "if you really think you are under any obligation to the story-teller."

"Why, of course I am," she exclaimed, with wide-open surprise. Then she blushed in turn,—first a little color of half-indignant rebuke, then a warm hue as she thought of her unnecessary earnestness, then a deep crimson as there rushed over her the sudden recollection of the hours

she had spent in Buckingham's company, and the silent admiration which she had bestowed from the shelter of ignorance upon this gentleman who now sat composedly before her. It was by an effort of self-control that she did not spring from her seat and leave the room. The effort blanched her face. It was as she sat thus, her eyes cast down, her lips set, her countenance pale, that Mrs. Martindale returned.

IX.

THE UNNECESSARY HERO.

"My cousin will be here presently," she said, as she entered the room. And then her eye fell on Miss Vila and glanced quickly at Mr. Buckingham, who was nervously fingering his stick. "Meanwhile," she added, with a mischievous look, "I will ask you to remain with us, as Mr. Wilding will be obliged to see you here. Lillie, you have the gentleman's card. It seems awkward to wait for the formality of Henry's introduction. Will you have the kindness to make us acquainted?"

Miss Vila gravely performed the ceremony.

"Your cousin is fortunate in finding friends in town, Mrs. Martindale," said Buckingham; "for a collegian coming here freshly, especially one in a special course, is apt to be slow in breaking through the hedge which divides the college from the town."

"Yes, he is quite fortunate," said his cousin. "I exercise an influence over him. You know we exercise an influence over students, don't you?"

Buckingham laughed.

"I supposed that was what the town was for." [Pg 268]

"When they are away from home and parents and all those refining influences, we serve as substitutes. Henry is away, not so much from his parents, who are dead, as from the lady to whom he is engaged. That is why I feel bound to exercise an influence over him." Mrs. Martindale made this explanation with a serious air, but Buckingham, whose eye never stayed far from Miss Vila, detected that young lady casting a reproachful, not to say indignant, glance at the speaker. Miss Vila, indeed, made a motion as if to leave, but, with another quick blush, as if she had betrayed a secret thought, settled again into her chair. To tell the secret, she had a sudden misgiving that her reckless friend might take it into her head to make ingenuous revelations concerning her.

"I hope he finds his work agreeable," said Buckingham; not that he cared a straw, but by way of keeping up his end of the conversation.

"Oh, I have no doubt he does, or he would come to see us oftener. I mean," she explained hurriedly, "he would stay in his room less."

"He certainly takes his time now in coming down," thought the visitor. There was, however, a movement in the passage, and Mrs. Martindale darted out. She came back immediately, looking somewhat embarrassed.

"I am sorry," she faltered, "but I find I am mistaken. He is not in."

"I am afraid you are not exerting enough influence, Mrs. Martindale," said Buckingham pleasantly, but somewhat perplexed in his mind at the length of time it had taken to make this discovery, and at the hallucination which had seemed to possess his cousin's mind when she announced him as about to appear. As for Miss Vila, she persistently refused to look up. She scarcely looked up, indeed, when Mr. Buckingham bowed himself out, though he looked eagerly at her, in hopes once more of catching the full light of her eyes.

She did look up, however, when the door closed behind the visitor, and she looked straight at Mrs. Martindale. That lady answered her look with one tear and a good many words:

"Well, Lillie, if you knew how I felt at getting into such a scrape, you wouldn't look at me as if you were an Avenging Conscience, or a Nemesis, or any of those horrid furies. No; and you wouldn't look speechlessly sorrowful, either. Of course I ought to have told him at once that Henry did not live here, and I ought to have sent him next door instead of sending Kate, and I ought not to have pretended that he was coming the next moment; but of course I thought he was at home, and then when he came I could have laughed it off; but he didn't come, and I was too frightened to laugh it off. Oh, yes, I am a criminal of the deepest dye; but he's introduced, Lillie, and you've introduced him to me, and we're all—we're all introduced."

X.

THE REAL HERO.

When a pile of wood has been laid upon smouldering embers, a thin curl of smoke crawls lazily up the chimney, another follows with like indolence, and it looks after a while as if the wood would not burn at all. Suddenly a little whiff of air enters the pile, when, presto! up blazes the

fire, and soon there is a famous glow.

It was somewhat thus with Mr. Austin Buckingham. He had been toying with the fancy of his story, and especially of this maiden to whom his eyes had become so wonted, and had allowed himself to look at her in so many lights, that she had gradually come to be always before him. The figure of the hero had as gradually disappeared: it was only by an effort that he could revive it. Suddenly he had sat a long quarter of an hour with the girl, he had heard her voice, he had seen her smile, he had felt the graciousness of her near presence when he was not merely at hand, but the direct object of her thought. What a world of difference there was between sitting by her side in a crowded horse-car and sitting even half a room-breadth's away, when they two were the only ones in the room! [Pg 269]

By all this experience, as much perhaps by what had gone before as by what had followed suddenly after, Buckingham now stood revealed to himself. He was ablaze with this new, tingling, searching ardor. When he had entered the room and shut the door, he saw lying upon his table his note-book, open as he had left it. He had been amusing himself, just before he went out, with further suggestions for his story. He dipped his pen into the ink and drew a bold, straight line across the page. He stood looking at the leaf,—idle fancy above the line, a blank below it.

A knock at the door, and Henry Wilding entered. Buckingham greeted him with a sudden excess of fervor which puzzled the young man.

"I was sorry to miss finding you," he began, and then checked himself. "Not so very sorry either, since fortune made me acquainted with—your cousin—and with Miss Vila," he added, after an embarrassed pause.

"I don't understand," said Wilding. "Have I missed a call from you?"

"Yes. I just came from your house. Your cousin at first thought you were at home. Now I think of it, she—"

"But I don't live at my cousin's," said Wilding.

"Where do you live, then?"

"Next door to her house."

"Oh! then she sent out for you. That explains it." And so Mr. Buckingham, intent on his own affairs, brushed away the duplicity of the fair hostess. "But I was very glad to hear a piece of news about you from her. Let me congratulate you. I did not know you were engaged." And he shook Wilding's hand warmly. He was not so generous at the moment as he appeared. In reality, he was shaking his own hand in anticipation. Wilding responded with a good-natured laugh.

"I have sometimes wondered, Mr. Buckingham," he said, "how you, who write stories of love and marriage, should remain unmarried."

"Let us put it the other way. How can I who am unmarried write such stories? In truth, I have a dim sense that persons like you, who know the matter by experience, must laugh inwardly at my innocent attempts at realistic treatment."

"Why not, then, have the experience first?" said Wilding lightly.

"God forbid!" said Buckingham, with a somewhat unintelligible seriousness. "If I were ever in love, it seems to me I should stop writing love-stories."

Now, this was just what happened, for a time at least. To any one so dead in love as Buckingham was at this time, all circumstances are favorable. It needs but a given moment, and the hero is on hand ready to seize it. The next night he could not ride out from the city; he must walk. When he got beyond the bridge, he wondered that he saw no horse-cars coming toward him. He remembered that he had seen none for some time, but now he noticed a long line of them standing before him, pointed outward. He heard the puff of a steam fire-engine, and saw that travel by rail was stopped by a fire. The hose crossed the track, and the incoming horse-cars were in a long line beyond it. He looked at the cars which he had over-taken. Midway in the line stood the one he had been accustomed to take. He caught sight of a familiar head bent over a book. He stepped into the car and stood before Miss Vila. He bent forward, and she looked up as he spoke:

"The cars are stopped by a fire. We may be delayed a long while. Why not walk home from here? It is a fine night."

He spoke somewhat hurriedly. He did not know how appealingly he looked. She did, however, and she closed her book and followed him.

The story, then, never was written, even though the heroine had been found. Everything else had disappeared,—the hero, the mystery, the plot. Nothing was left but the heroine and—love.

HORACE E. SCUDDER.

SHADOWS ALL. [Pg 270]

Shadows all!
  From the birth-robe to the pall,
  In this travesty of life,
  Hollow calm and fruitless strife,
Whatsoe'er the actors seem,
They are posturing in a dream;
  Fates may rise, and fates may fall,
  Shadows are we, shadows all!

From what sphere
Float these phantoms flickering here?
  From what mystic circle cast
  In the dim æonian Past?
Many voices make reply,
But they only rise to die
Down the midnight mystery,
  While earth's mocking echoes call,
  Shadows, shadows, shadows all!

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

ROSES OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

It always seemed to me, as a child, that the birds put their hearts more wholly into their songs in that special little corner of Paradise on the Hudson River than they did anywhere else. Not that it was really so very little a corner, being small only in comparison with an entire Paradise, composed of many such bits, that lines the shore of the beautiful Hudson.

It was so great a delight to the child who knew little of country pleasures to be called away from some task or commonplace "every-day" pastime and to be told that there was an invitation to spend an afternoon, or perhaps several days, at Professor Morse's place, "Locust Grove."

There would be the drive, leaning back in the barouche (with a feeling of easy importance lent by the consciousness of wondrous delights to come) and looking up with a species of admiring awe at the herculean form of the French coachman, who seemed to be concealing romantically brigandish recollections behind his fiery black eyes and wide-spreading, ferocious moustache. Along the dusty "South Road" we would go, under the green lights and shadows of the maple-trees, over the two miles which stretch between Poughkeepsie town and "Locust Grove,"—past "Eastman's Park," with its smart decorations, past the small, unambitious houses, draped with many-hued, old-fashioned roses, that straggled along the dividing-line between the narrow restrictions of town and the fragrant wideness of the country, where the air was cool with the breath of the river, and the breezes brought suggestions of freshly-cut grass, just blown locust-blossoms, and the thousand sweet, indefinable scents of the woods.

On approaching the boundaries of "the Grove," the perfume of the locust-flowers assumed due prominence, as the name of the place implies they should, while their white clusters drooped from the heavily-loaded branches till they fairly touched the high posts of the gate. And then would come the drive up the dim avenue, flecked with patches of sunshine that lay like fallen gold pieces in the dusk shadow, while if one glanced upward or on either side one saw nothing save the arching trees,—pines and locusts, and maples no less stately,—until a space was reached where the grove was less dense and the view widened to a stretch of velvet grass whitened with daisies lying soft on the tops of the blades in a way to make one fancy a summer fall of snow. At the turn of the avenue one caught a glimpse of the house, with its vine-wreathed tower, generous piazzas, and hospitable *porte-cochère*, and in the background, beyond the lawn, the river, with the blue hills on the opposite shore veiled by a light, lace like haze, just enough of a haze to lend mystery to the distance. [Pg 271]

The loud clattering of the horses' shoes on the stone pavement under the *porte-cochère*, which informed the occupants of the house that visitors had come, seemed always to tell the youngest, most insignificant, yet happiest of those visitors that the anticipated hour of many delights had actually arrived. And of these delights there were to the heart of the child a thousand and one such as could scarcely be realized or even dreamed of at the home in town. There were the broad, shady piazzas to be walked over with dainty footfalls, lest the grown people should be disturbed. There was the mystic retreat within the circle of a group of low-branching pines, the secret of which one penetrated by stepping down from the front piazza at a certain place and there insinuating one's self into a small opening, which only the initiated could discover, among the trees. Here one had a little fragrant sanctum all one's own, carpeted with pine needles, green and brown, and arched over by ceiling and walls of thick branches, from out of which peeped startled robins, who soon, finding that no harm was meant them, went on with their song. Then there was the garden, fragrant and brilliant, which one might explore when one had promised Thomas, the presiding genius, that one would not touch his cherished sweets, for it "went to his heart" to see a single blossom torn from its parent stem. And there were the grape-houses, for which the place was famous far and near,—hot, and odorous of moist soil and growing vines,

among which white and purple clusters hung temptingly heavy and low.

One especial pleasure was to walk along the gravelled path that skirted the smooth, level stretch of lawn at the back of the house, and thus to reach the brow of the hill overlooking the "farm" and the river. There were seats on the edge of this bluff, and a large spring-board on which one might ride and jump to one's heart's content. By following this path still farther, and to the left, one soon deserted the well-kept lawn and found one's self on a narrow, winding walk overhanging a deep, wooded ravine, in the depths of which a little brook ran curving about among the ferns and daisies; and presently, far out of sight of the house, in shade so dense as to lend a certain pleasing enchantment, one came upon a rustic summer-house, with odd, three-cornered-seats, and a table surrounding the tree-trunk that supported the centre of the roof.

There were manifold other out-of-door enjoyments, such as visiting the pigeon-house, and, as a rare favor, rioting in the scented hay in the loft over the barn, visiting the gardener's wife (whose home was in that part of the old Livingston mansion which its master and time had allowed to stand), and being permitted to draw water from the ancient well, about which hung so many stories of generations past. How exciting it was, and with what delicious awe one listened, when the little lady who was a fairy grandmamma instead of a fairy godmother in the household told a [Pg 272] certain story regarding this well! It was a story before the time of her own birth, when two of her older sisters were very tiny girls. One day, when the mother was busy in superintending some homely task (such as the manufacturing of the "cream cheese," perhaps, for which she was noted), the baby of two years toddled in and began to lisp over and over the same broken words, "Tatie in 'ell, Tatie in 'ell." She had repeated them many times, with increasing insistence, before the busy mother realized that they possessed a meaning. "Tatie in 'ell, Tatie in 'ell," the little one said, pulling at her mother's gown, half crying as she spoke; and then it dawned upon the latter that her baby had something serious to tell. She yielded to the little importunate hands upon her dress, and followed the child out of doors to the well and there looked down. "Katie" was indeed in the well, as the lisping tongue had tried to say, and, gazing into the darkness below, the mother could see the frightened, pitiful little face turned up to her, while two small hands convulsively grasped the edge of the great bucket. The husband and father was away from home, all the men employed about the place were working at a distance, and there was no time to lose: those frail hands must soon relax their hold, and the child was sorely terrified and begging to be saved. As the mother hesitated, in an agony of doubt, out from the house came a stout, elderly serving-woman, who had lived in the family for many years, and who was especially devoted to little Kate. She had heard her mistress's cry, and, running to look into the well, without even waiting to explain, she set about the execution of a hazardous and original plan of rescue. Climbing over the curb, she began to descend by striding the well and planting her feet upon the rough, protruding stones of which the sides were formed. Not one woman in a thousand could or would have done such a thing; but this one was tall and strong, and brave as a lion with the might of her love for little Kate. She saved the child, who had suffered no graver injury than a thorough drenching and a fright which served as a warning for herself and the children of her own and several generations to come.

Interesting as was this story and others told of the past, and delightful as it was to play under the great trees, roaming at one's own sweet will all about "the Grove," better than everything else was it to be admitted into the "sanctum sanctorum" of the place,—Professor Morse's study,—where the master sat among his books and treasures, his kindly, clear-featured face and bright brown eyes, framed in by silver hair and beard, shining out from the curtained dimness of the room. There were many objects fascinating even to a child in that study, which opened out of the family library with its store of books. The library was very good, but the study was still better. There, under a glass case, was the first telegraph-instrument that had ever been made. One or two of Professor Morse's early paintings hung upon the wall, and sometimes he would display a few sketches to the older members of the party, who were naturally regardless of the fact that there was "a chiel amang 'em, takin' notes." The crowning treat offered within the study-walls, however, was to have the marvels of the Professor's immense and powerful microscope displayed before our wondering gaze. There we became acquainted with the rainbow-tinted plumes of the fly's wing and the jewels that lie hidden from ordinary ken in the pollen and petals of the simplest blossoms. And the master of it all, to whom the marvels were as familiar as the common objects themselves, seemed to derive a genuine pleasure from that which he bestowed upon his guests.

When Professor Morse purchased Locust Grove, before his second marriage, he was not aware that it had belonged to the family of the lady who was soon to become his wife. Indeed, it was not until some friend remarked, "How delightful for you to take your bride to the old ancestral place [Pg 273] owned by her kindred for so many generations!" that he knew the home would possess any associations, save those to be formed in the future, for his *fiancée*. But no doubt at the beginning of their life there Locust Grove was thus rendered doubly dear to both. The old Livingston mansion was at that time standing, much nearer to the entrance-gates than the more modern residence inhabited by the owner's family; and the quaint well, with the stone curb, the water of which was so remarkable for its purity that travellers came from a distance to ask the privilege of drinking, formed an object of interest at least, if not of actual beauty, before the old vine-grown porch. Gradually the house fell into decay, and the greater portion was torn down, leaving but five or six rooms, with their odd, hooded windows and strangely-fashioned fireplaces and mantels, the porch, with its broad, shallow seats, and the green-painted, "divided" front doors, to tell the tale of what once had been the home of so much hospitality and happiness.

So all remained painted with unfading colors on the canvas of my memory, each object as I had

known and loved it when a child. And then the child went far away and grew to womanhood, having looked on many places and "things of beauty," but, while forgetting much that belonged to the old days, never forgot Locust Grove. The scent of the new locust-blossoms, the songs of the birds, and the beauty of the lights and shadows dancing on the river were as vivid in recollection as they had been in actuality; and after a severe and tedious illness it seemed that no tonic could prove so effectual as a visit to that dear old place, not seen for years, and which I had loved so well.

There is generally experienced a vague yet bitter disappointment in returning to a spot hallowed by associations after an absence of any appreciable length of time. It is wellnigh impossible for the reality to equal what has through the filtering of fancy become scarcely more than a remembered dream.

> Nothing can be as it has been;
> Better, so call it, only—not the same.

And yet Locust Grove in 1884 looked almost as unchanged as though it had shared the slumbers of the "Sleeping Beauty" since 1871. Only, a certain potent charm had fled with the presence of the departed master. It was now but his pictured eyes and silver hair that lit up the dimness of the room that had been sacred to him. The books and papers covering the desk belonged to a later and more careless generation. The microscope stood unused under its glass case, the sketches were lovingly laid away out of sight, and altogether a subtile change could be detected in the atmosphere. There were things, however, about the house which perhaps had always been there, and yet which I looked upon now with a new and keener appreciation. The picture of Professor Morse when a child of five or six years, standing by his father, who is clad in the quaint robes which then distinguished a Congregationalist divine, seemed to me one that might interest others besides myself. Also the portrait of his mother, with pearls in her puffed and powdered hair, and her beautiful bare arms holding the older child, Sidney (a baby in oddly-fashioned long robes), was charming to look at because of its intrinsic beauty as well as the associations attached to it. And the life-size painting of General Washington's mother,—said to be the only one of the kind in existence,—which looked down from its broad frame over the dining-room mantel, possessed a special fascination for me. One felt rather insignificant with that scornful smile and those languid eyes brooding over one as one sat engaged in the discussion of soup; and it was impossible to keep from imagining that the stiff and stately dame in her mathematically correct white and green draperies was drawing invidious comparisons between the way one did one's hair and the way in which she had considered it proper to arrange her abundant pale-brown locks.

About the place itself were more changes than at first would strike the eye. The old Livingston homestead had been razed to the ground, and smooth, emerald grass thrived upon its site, while the chief gardener, Thomas, had been promoted to a new æsthetic cottage of the latest approved colors and style. Even the famous well was no more; for a small and inconspicuous pump had been put in its stead, to save unwary children from instituting a too curious search for the "truth" popularly supposed to lie within its depths. The graperies were gone, and in their stead nourished rose-houses,—visiting the interior of which seemed fairly to transport one into the famous "Vale of Cashmere." Roses of all colors and all descriptions here found an ideal home, and with their beauty served the purses of their two young masters, who superintended their culture. It was in the early summer that I saw the place again after my long absence, and the rose-houses of course could not be seen at their best, as they can in winter. There are four large houses, opening into a long, narrow frame building, at one end of which is the office where the young gentlemen managers transact their business. Here all was—and still is, no doubt—immaculately neat, the walls adorned with colored prints and paintings of flowers, an array of books, papers, and ledgers carefully arranged in their exact places on the desk, and everything kept free from dust, swept and garnished. In the long, bare room from which the office opens are stored gardening-tools, watering-cans of all shapes and descriptions (some of which to an untutored eye present a striking resemblance to coffee-pots such as the Brobdingnag giants might have used), baskets for packing the roses, with all their paraphernalia, earthen pots for plants great and small, and many other utensils such as those unlearned in gardening lore would consider uncouth in the extreme. On one side of the room stands the big table upon which the baskets are set, and above this are ranged numerous rows of shelves. Four doors open into the rose-houses, and at the east end is the one devoted exclusively to the culture of Jacqueminots,—the "Jack"-house it is irreverently, if not slangily, styled. Here the glass roof stands open all the summer long, for the breezes to blow and the soft rains to fall upon the petted plants; and here the sunshine holds high revel, bronzing the intricate tracery of stem and branch and turning half the leaves to shining emeralds.

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It was in the "Jack"-house that I one morning found Thomas Devoy, the gardener, at work with his great oddly-shaped shears or scissors, and detained him long enough to make a little sketch of him among his flowers; and while I worked with pencils and paper he told me divers anecdotes of the twenty-eight years he had spent in Professor Morse's service. "I entered service in the old country when I was very young," he said; "and even as a little boy I was fond of gardening. One time, when I was a child, I was going through some splendid greenhouses with the head-gardener who took care of them. There was one very rare plant of which he was exceedingly proud, and I begged him for a tiny slip to take home with me. But he refused; and so, in passing by, I quietly broke off one little leaf. Some time afterward I was able to show him a plant as fine as his own which I had raised from that one leaf, and then I told him its story."

All the fine, large Jacqueminots in the "Jack"-house were raised from one parent plant with cuttings made about four years or so before, the gardener told me, while I, gazing in amazement at their high-reaching branches, thought, with "Topsy," it was something to boast of that they had "jest growed."

In the winter the rose-houses become things of beauty and a joy forever, seeming to have imprisoned the very heart of summer within their walls, while outside—shut away from the warmth and glowing tints of red and pink, yellow and lustrous rosy pearl—lie the snow and the ice, and through the bare branches of the trees the wind whistles drearily. [Pg 275]

But in the summer the aspect of the rose-houses is very different. All then is preparation and making over for the coming autumn and winter. Some of the houses are planted with tiny cuttings just lifting little tender sprays above the warm, moist soil. Men are at work here and there with hammers and nails, repairing any slight damage that may have been done in previous months. Hose-pipes coil over the floors, and one must walk by them daintily. In other houses one would exclaim with pleasure at finding one's self in a wilderness of roses, pink, yellow, and white, only to be told, rather contemptuously, "*That* is nothing. There are no roses here now. You must wait till winter if you want something worth seeing. We have roses as large as tea-saucers then, and any quantity of them."

Outside the buildings, and fairly surrounding them, are large square beds of hybrid roses of many varieties, each sort planted in separate rows by itself. There are beds of cuttings also, and one long, narrow bed of red hybrids running the entire length of the greenhouse. "Catherine Mermet," "La Reine," "Adam," "Paul Neyron," the exquisite "La France," "John Hopper," the "Duke of Connaught," "Niphetos," and "Perle des Jardins" are here in profusion, with others of every shade and tint, too numerous almost to count, and the perfume arising from beds and hot-houses is intoxicating in its strength and sweetness. Some bushes are merely set in earthen pots out of doors; and these are supposed to be in a dormant state, undergoing the process of "drying off," or "hardening," receiving very little water, and are to be so kept until September, when they will be repotted and "started" for growing,—thus illustrating the truth of the saying that there is a blessing for those who only stand and wait. But one could not help pitying them, when one thought how their more fortunate companions with their uncramped roots were exploring underground passages and enjoying all the freedom and moisture of the rich soil.

"During the fall and winter we are very busy in a different way," said Thomas Devoy, as he displayed his treasures. And then he told me how every day in the later months all hands are occupied in tending, cutting, and packing the roses which are daily expressed to a certain New York florist. The beautiful half-blown buds are carefully cut, with long, leafy stems, and laid in the great market-baskets standing on the table ready to receive them. Row after row and layer after layer are laid in, sprinkled until leaves and petals sparkle with a diamond dew. Only buds at a certain stage of unfolding are used, and the most exquisite roses with their petals opening one pink or pearly crease too far are discarded as unfit to send away. Tissue-paper covers the flowers as they lie ready in their baskets, then oiled paper is placed on top, and finally a thin red oilcloth is fastened over all.

Thus from two to four hundred roses of almost every variety are daily put upon the New York train and expressed to the florist, at whose establishment they arrive, after a few hours, as fresh, dewy, and fragrant as when they left their parent plants.

And yet, with all these that are sent away, the home is not forgotten. Gorgeous blooms in exquisite foreign vases adorn table, cabinet-shelf, and mantel in every inhabited room in the house, where, among relics of the old time, the roses of yesterday and to-day meet in a rivalry so lovely that one is at a loss in deciding the merits of their separate claims. The roses of to-day are freshest, and it may even be fairest; yet there is a little poem which asks,—

> What's the rose that I hold to the rose that is dead?

And thus, to one who has known and loved the place in days gone by, when what has become a mere association and memory now made its very life and soul, there is something in the suggestion of that verse which at least lets itself be readily understood.

ALICE KING HAMILTON.

A HOOSIER IDYL.

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It was a part of the Great West which in the past fifty or seventy-five years has been transformed from unbroken forests, the home of the red Indian and the deer, to a thickly-settled farming-country, dotted with comfortable homes and traversed by railways and wagon-roads. Here and there in retired districts the log cabins of the pioneers remained, and wherever one looked an horizon of woods met his eye; but the numerous towns and villages gave evidence of a higher and ever-increasing degree of civilization.

It was a land of rich soil and lush natural growth, without rocks or hills or swiftly-running streams, a region of corn- and wheat-fields and orchards, of clover-pastures and melon-patches.

The human *physique* showed good development and abundant nourishment, but the dwellers along the sluggish creeks sometimes had a tinge of yellow beneath the sunburn of their faces. Caste distinctions, pride of station, were unknown here; all the people, whether their possessions were great or small, drew their nurture from the soil, and greeted each other with a friendly "Howdy?" when they met, conscious of perfect equality. It was much better to be poor in a place like this than in a great city,—to have at least physical abundance if one could not have other advantages. Elvira Hill was not conscious of being poor, though just now she was anxious to get a country school to teach. All her life had been spent amid these familiar scenes, her condition in life was neither worse nor better than that of her acquaintances, and it never occurred to her to be discontented with her lot and rebel against fate. She had been brought up on a farm, had known what it was to go after the cows of an evening, to drive them to the barn-lot bars and milk them, to catch a horse in the pasture and saddle and ride it, to hunt hens' nests in the hay-mow, to churn, and wash dishes, and get vegetables from the garden, and pick the raspberries and blackberries that ripened in the fence corners along the fields and woods. But just now she was living with her grandmother in a little brown house in the cluster of houses called Hill's Station. There were two stores, a post-office, a blacksmith's shop, and a mill; the mail-trains stopped here, and a daily hack carried passengers northward two miles and a half to a larger village, Sassafrasville, where there was an excellent academy. The national pike ran through Hill's Station, and there was a great deal of travel on this road,—local travel of various kinds, peddlers' wagons which stopped in every town, and long rows of white-covered movers' wagons going West to Illinois or Iowa or Kansas. What wonder, then, that with all these advantages the people of Hill's Station thought themselves centrally located, and watched with complaisant interest the passing trains, the daily hack, and the teams going along the pike? That they were pleasantly located there was no doubt. Tall beech- and sugar-maple-trees, part of the original forest, stood singly here and there and cast pleasant islands of shade upon the expanse of sunshine, and from the fields which bordered the road came the scent of clover-blooms.

Elvira Hill had gone to the little country schools, sometimes to the one a mile west of town, sometimes to the one a mile east, and for the past three years had attended the Sassafrasville Academy: so that now, at seventeen, she was considered to have a good education, and expected to follow the example of many of the young people of that section and go to teaching. She talked it over with her grandmother, and decided that she had better try a subscription school in the country first; then, if she succeeded in giving satisfaction, she would apply in the winter for the position of assistant in the Hill's Station school. [Pg 277]

Her grandmother, placid and fair, with a cap of sheer white muslin resting on her yet brown hair, and a pair of gold-bowed spectacles pushed up on her forehead above her kindly blue eyes, was considered a handsome old woman, and showed few traces of the life of toil through which she had passed. She read a great deal in a New Testament with large print, and often sat a long time in thought, with it open on her knees. Another work which she frequently perused was Mrs. Ellet's "Women of the Revolution," in two volumes, containing steel engravings of stately dames in laced bodices and powdered hair.

Elvira borrowed a horse of one of the neighbors, put her grandmother's much-worn red plush side saddle upon it, and started out in search of a school. She rode east and she rode north; but in the first district they had a teacher already engaged, and in the second they had concluded they wouldn't have any school that summer. Did they know of any other school where a teacher was wanted? she inquired. No, they couldn't say they did; but she might hear of one by inquiring further, the honest district trustees said. So she rode homeward again, in no wise discouraged, and asked the postmaster to inquire of the farmers who came in from other neighborhoods in regard to this matter.

He promised that he would, and a week later called her in as she was passing, and said, "There was a man here yesterday from Buck Creek district who said they wanted a teacher in their school this summer. You might try there. His name is Sapp, and he lives right by the school-house. You go two miles and a half south till you come to a mud road, then two miles and a half east till you come to a pike. You can't miss the place."

Elvira thanked him, and a little while later, when her accommodating neighbor was not using his horse, she borrowed it again and rode forth on her quest. It had been raining, the mud road was muddy, and clouds still hung in the sky; but the country through which she passed was a rich, fresh green, and the fruit-orchards were in bloom. From solitary farm-houses big dogs and little dogs issued forth to bark at the sound of her horse's feet, and bareheaded children at this signal ran out to the gate to see who was passing.

The school-house of Buck Creek district, a neat wooden building, painted white, stood in a grassy acre lot, bordered on two sides by thick woods, on the other two by the roads which crossed here. In the corner diagonally across from it stood a snug cabin, with a garden around it, a well-sweep in the rear, and a log stable not far distant. She alighted in front of it, and was proceeding to hitch her horse, when the door opened, and a man stepped out, greeting her with a friendly "Howdy?"

She responded, and asked if Mr. Sapp lived here.

"My name is Sapp," he said, and, tying her horse, invited her in.

There she found the rest of the family,—the mother, a grown daughter, and two half-grown sons: they seemed friendly, but a little shy, and stood in the background while she transacted her

business.

"Yes," Mr. Sapp said, in answer to her question, "they wanted a three-months' school, but had no teacher engaged. Had she ever taught before?"

No, she had had no experience in teaching; but she had attended the Sassafrasville Academy several terms, and was qualified to teach the common branches,—arithmetic, grammar, and geography, reading, writing, and spelling.

Well, he would bring her application before the other two trustees, and guessed they would elect her: there was no other applicant. Now, about the terms: three dollars a scholar for the term of twelve weeks was the usual rate. If she would draw up a subscription-paper, he would take it round himself and get as many names as he could; thought he could get twelve scholars signed, and knew that more would be sent. The children had to be kept at home in busy times, and the [Pg 278] farmers didn't like to bind themselves to pay the full amount for all that they would send. He himself would sign one and send two. Charley could go all the time; but Jack would have to help about mowing and reaping and threshing, and couldn't attend regularly.

So Elvira drew up the paper according to his dictation, and, leaving it with him, rode home in the dusk of the evening, feeling happy over her prospects.

Her grandmother had supper ready in the little kitchen; and it tasted so good, the salt-rising bread and butter and hash, the little tea-cakes, and the preserved pears. While the grandmother drank her cup of tea, Elvira told her the incidents of the afternoon; and the night closed around them as they sat secure and content in their humble home.

The great world was full of great problems which wearied and perplexed men's brains and seemed wellnigh unsolvable, but she had solved her own little problem in her own little way, and was at peace.

In a few days Mr. Sapp called with the subscription-paper. He had got sixteen scholars signed,—more than he expected. That was a good prospect for a summer school. They wanted her to begin on the following Monday; which she promised to do. Then she asked him if she could board at his house a week or two, until she could make some arrangements to ride from home. Yes, she could; he guessed a dollar and a half a week for board would be about the fair thing.

So, early Monday morning she bade her grandmother good-by, and, with her books under her arm, set forth to walk to Buck Creek district. The school-house door was locked when she got there, but a few timid country-children were sitting on the door-steps or on the fence, with their school-books and dinner-buckets. Mr. Sapp came over and unlocked the door; then, as it was half-past eight, Elvira rang the little bell which she found on the teacher's desk, and school began. After taking down the children's names and ages and assigning desks to them, she heard them read in their first, second, or third readers, and questioned them about the progress they had made in other branches. Other children came in from time to time, until there were twenty-two present. And when Mr. Sapp went home at "little recess," as the intermission of fifteen minutes in the middle of the forenoon was called, he told her that her school opened very well. "Big recess" was the intermission from twelve o'clock till half-past one. In that time the children ate their dinners and then scattered to play in the large grassy yard or in the shade of the adjoining woods. Elvira won their hearts by going out and playing prisoners' base and two or three other games with them. When she rang the bell again, the children said, "It's books now," meaning the time allotted to study and recitation, came in red and panting, and, with the energy generated by violent exercise, got out their books and turned to their lessons as if they meant to learn everything there. But as their blood cooled their efforts relaxed, and they were soon looking idly around the school-room for some source of entertainment. When Elvira called up a class to recite, the children at their seats looked and listened with absorbed interest, till reminded by their teacher that they had lessons of their own to learn. There was another "little recess" in the afternoon; then, at half-past four, school closed, or "broke," as the children called it, and they rushed forth with their empty dinner-buckets in hand, laughing and shouting and chasing each other as they started home. Some of the little girls waited to say good-by to the school-ma'am and to kiss her, and one of them said, in a shamefaced way, "I like you real well."

When all had gone, Elvira sprinkled and swept the floor and put her own desk in order. Then, locking the door, she went over to Sapp's cabin, which was to be her home for a while.

Mrs. Sapp rose up from the quilt she was quilting, and, greeting Elvira cordially, invited her to [Pg 279] lay off her things—meaning her hat and cloak—and take a chair. Mary was in the kitchen, a small shed-room attached to the cabin, getting supper. Elvira looked around her. The hewn logs which formed the walls were well chinked in the cracks, and neatly whitewashed. A home-made rag carpet covered the floor. Two beds stood foot to foot in the back part of the room, and a third in the corner by the fireplace. On the wall, over the beds, hung various articles of clothing,—a dozen calico dresses, several pairs of pantaloons, and coats, turned wrong side out. In the corner, between the window and the fireplace, stood a bureau, covered with a white muslin cloth, the borders ornamented with open-work made by drawing out the horizontal threads in narrow strips and knotting the others together in various patterns. Over the mantel hung an almanac, and two highly-colored pictures representing a brunette beauty and a blonde, named Caroline and Matilda. Mrs. Sapp, meantime, was giving a biographical account of the school-children and their parents,—saying how Mrs. Brown was bound her two little girls should get some schooling, if she had to pay for it herself out of money she got by selling eggs and butter, and how the Sanders

children didn't have any clothes in the world besides those they wore to school, except some old ragged ones, and how they had to change them at night as soon as they got home.

"I saw 'Tildy White at school to-day," she continued, "but I guess she won't get to come much. Her step-mother keeps her at home and makes her work, while her *own* children can go all the time. The three Mays children were there too, but you needn't care whether they come regular or not: Mr. Mays is mighty poor pay, and I suppose you won't ever get your dues from him; but maybe Mr. Sapp can collect it off of him some way. And Bert Mowrer was there: he's a sassy boy. His folks don't make him mind at home at all, and 'most every teacher has trouble with him. Mr. Redding, the teacher we had last winter, licked him with a beech gad, and he behaved hisself after that. And there's Maggie Loper; her mother needs her at home real bad, but she'll get to come all summer. She's the only girl, and there are six grown boys; and the family set a heap o' store by Maggie."

This stream of talk was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Sapp and the two boys; and soon after Mary called them all to supper. There was hardly space to pass between the stove and the table in the kitchen, and several splint-bottomed chairs had to be brought from the front room; but at last all were seated, and, after Mr. Sapp said grace, conversation began in a loud and cheerful tone. The plate of hot biscuits was first passed to Elvira, then the platter of fried ham, then the butter, the young radishes and onions, and later the blue bowl containing stewed dried apples. Mrs. Sapp poured out the hot coffee, saying, "Our folks want coffee three times a day, and want it pretty strong." The sugar-bowl, containing brown sugar, was passed around, that each one might sweeten his coffee according to his taste; then the cream-pitcher, full of rich cream. Mr. Sapp drank three cups of coffee, and ate in proportion, and frequently passed the meat and bread to Elvira, hospitably urging her to eat more.

After supper, Mrs. Sapp invited Elvira to come out and see her little chickens. She had sixty, all hatched within the last two or three weeks, and another hen would come off next week with a brood. "I've got some young turkeys, too," she said, "but they hain't done very well this spring, because it was so rainy. Two died, and I have to look after the others to keep 'em out of the wet grass." Then they looked at the garden, and Mrs. Sapp remarked that the boys must stick the peas right off, went on to the milk-house,—a log shanty beyond the well,—and finally came back to the sitting-room, where, as there was yet an hour of daylight, Mrs. Sapp sat down to the quilting-frame. Elvira borrowed a thimble and assisted her, having only to ply her needle and [Pg 280] listen. The stream of talk ran on the subject of quilts, the various patterns in which they were pieced and quilted, the Rising Sun, the Lion's Paw, and the Star of Bethlehem being Mrs. Sapp's favorites. From the pile resting on a chair between the two beds at the back of the cabin, quilts representing these patterns were brought and unfolded for Elvira to admire; and each one had reminiscences connected with it which she must hear. One was pieced when Jack was a baby, one was Mary's work and property, and another was quilted in one day by the neighbor women on the occasion of a quilting-bee, which Mrs. Sapp proceeded to describe in all its particulars.

As darkness settled down, the other members of the family came in from their various chores, and, as the evenings were yet cool, a fire was made in the fireplace. Then, seating himself by one of the jambs, Mr. Sapp opened the spelling-book, and, calling Charley into the middle of the floor, pronounced one row of words after another for him to spell, until several pages had been gone over and not a single word missed, greatly to the pride and admiration of the father. But by nine o'clock the fire got low, and the family began to yawn. It was time to go to bed, and, without saying good-night, the different members retired to their allotted quarters,—Mr. and Mrs. Sapp to the bed by the fireplace, Jack and Charley to one bed in the back part of the room, and Mary and the school-ma'am to the other.

Thus, with few variations, the days passed until the first week of school had gone. Elvira became better acquainted with her pupils, with the Sapp family, and, through them, with the news and gossip of the neighborhood. One evening she found Mary, who was a young woman grown and older than herself, standing outside the back door, crying bitterly, while her mother stood by, talking to her with the air of one who could be liberal in some views and yield many points, but who felt that a firm stand must be made somewhere. On explanation, it appeared that Mary wanted to go to the nearest station on the railroad and ride to the next station east, a distance of thirteen miles, for the purpose of making a visit; but Mrs. Sapp was not willing that she should do so, giving as her objection that there was so much danger in riding on the cars, adding that if Mary would wait till corn-planting was over, her father would take her through in a wagon. She had never been on the cars herself, and could not give her consent for one of her family to enter upon such risks. So Mary, with much disappointment, had to give up her proposed visit for the time.

When Friday evening came, Elvira walked home to Hill's Station, feeling that she had made a good beginning in her new work, and related to her grandmother all the incidents of the week. On Saturday she went about among the neighbors, who were most of them farmers, to see if she could hire a horse for the summer. All the good horses, however, were in constant use, and could not be spared by their owners. At last, one farmer said that he had a horse which wasn't worth much at its best, and just now had a sore head, so that he had put it out to pasture for the summer on a farm several miles distant. She could have it to use, and be welcome, if she would provide pasturage for it and give it now and then a few ears of corn. Elvira accepted the offer gratefully, and he promised to have it at Hill's Station for her by another Saturday. She boarded at Sapp's another week, and after that rode from home every morning and back every night. Her steed did not seem to have an arch or curve in its whole body, but to be made up of straight lines

and angles. It reminded her of the corn-stalk horses she used to make when a little girl. Its favorite gait was a slow walk, with its head in a drooping dejected attitude, and sometimes it came to an entire stand-still, as if it had reached its journey's end. When she was about to meet some one, or heard wheels coming behind her, she tried to urge it into a spirited trot, and to rein [Pg 281] it in so that its neck would have some slight appearance of a curve; but it only threw its nose into the air, presenting a longer straight line than before, and, after trotting a little way, it came to a sudden pause about the time the people passed or met her. More than once she heard them laugh and felt her face burn. If she had not known better days, she had at least known better horses, and was aware that her steed presented a sorry appearance. The only time it displayed any life was in the morning, when she came to catch and saddle it. Then it trotted repeatedly around the pasture-lot, occasionally sticking its head over the top rails, as if it had a notion to jump the fence and run away. During the day it fed on the grass in the school-house yard, and every day at noon she took it over to Sapp's, drew water from their well, and gave it as many bucketfuls as it would drink. Elvira carried her dinner, consisting generally of bread and butter, cold meat, and pie, in a little basket hung on the horn of the saddle, and sometimes, when she had been trotting, found on reaching school that part of it had fallen out on the way.

The road over which she passed every morning and evening grew familiar to her, even to the individual trees, the mossy old stumps, the fence-corners over-grown with wild vines. The life of the farm-houses, as daily presented to her, furnished perpetual entertainment. She came to know every member of every family by sight, and to associate certain traits of character with them. Some two-story white houses stood back from the road in the retirement of fruit- and shade-trees, and seemed reserved and dignified; other smaller houses were only a few steps removed, and had their wood-piles on the side of the road. One little new cabin in the corner of a strip of woods especially interested Elvira. It was the home of a lately-married pair, young folks full of energy and ambition. The husband chopped down trees, ploughed, or ditched his land, as if he were working for a wager, and the wife was equally active and industrious. Her bright tin milk-pans were out sunning early every morning, her churning and ironing were done in the cool part of the forenoons, her front yard was always neatly swept, and the borders were bright with balsams, petunias, and other flowers.

Then the world of nature unfolded every day something fresh to the solitary rider,—the blue depths of summer sky in which great masses of dazzling white clouds were heaped, the thick beech woods, where it was always cool and pleasant, the swamps, with their spicy fragrance, their variety of growth, and their slow-running streams of clear brown water. The blossoming blue-flags of May gave way in June to the fragrant wild roses, and these were followed in July and August by ripe raspberries and blackberries, which grew plentifully along the fence-corners and could be had for the picking.

Toward the latter part of the term, Elvira was frequently invited by her pupils to go home with them on Friday night and spend Saturday at their house, now one girl, now another, saying, "Miss Hill, mother said ask you to come home with us to-night." And when she went, she found that the farmer's wife had prepared something extra for supper in expectation of her coming,—fried chicken, and honey, and other home luxuries,—and seemed glad of the little break in the monotony of farm-life which the school-ma'am's visit afforded. The faded family photographs and old daguerreotypes were brought out for her entertainment, and she was told that "This is Aunt Lizzie Barnwell: she lives in Grant County, and this is her husband, and these are her children. This is Grandpa and Grandma Brown, and this is grandma's brother, ma's uncle. For a long time he thought that was a cancer on his nose, but it turned out to be only a wart. And this is Mr. and Mrs. Holmes: they used to live neighbors to us, but now they have moved to Kansas. And this is Johnnie and Sarah and Nelson Holmes. Nelson used to be real mean: he pulled our hair at school, and threw clods of dirt at us when we were coming home of nights, and we always thought he [Pg 282] stole our watermelons, and we were glad when he moved away; but we liked Sarah and Johnnie." And so on through the list of relatives and acquaintances. On these visits Elvira generally slept on a high feather bed in the best room, or in a little bedroom opening from the parlor,—for not all the homes were as humble as Sapp's,—and the oldest daughter of the family slept with her. On Saturday forenoon she often went berry-picking with the children, crossing the corn-fields in the hot sun, climbing fences, and so gaining the thickets or woods where the blackberry-vines grew wild, with gallons of ripe berries ready for nimble finders. "Look out for snakes!" the children used to call to each other when deep in the bushes, but they never saw anything more than a harmless garter-snake, or perhaps a water-snake in the swamp. Saturday afternoons she sat and talked with the farmer's wife, assisting in the sewing or quilting or whatever work of this kind was on hand; and when she rode home in the cool of the evening it was always with some little delicacy in her basket for her grandmother,—a glass tumbler of honey, a cake, some pickles or preserves, or a quart bottle of maple syrup, which her hostess had given her at parting.

Near the end of the term, Maggie Loper invited Elvira to go home with her Friday night and spend Saturday. "Mother says for you to come. We're going to thrash, Saturday, and we'll have a big dinner and lots of fun." She meant that they were to thresh wheat, and it was the stir and excitement of this event which she called fun. Elvira accepted the invitation, and went home with Maggie at the time appointed. She felt at home among these farm festivals, and enjoyed them, the work included, for she had as yet acted only as assistant, and had not felt the responsibility of "cookin' for thrashers" which weighs so heavily on housewives. It is not alone the fact that they must provide dinner and supper for fifteen or twenty hungry men, but the knowledge that their viands will be compared, favorably or unfavorably, with those of other women in the neighborhood. So they exert themselves to provide a variety, and load their tables with rich food,

insomuch that "goin' with the thrashers" means to farm-workers in this section a round of sumptuous living. The Loper family rose Saturday morning while the east was red, and did the milking and despatched breakfast earlier than usual. The threshers were coming at eight o'clock, and they hoped to get the engine and threshing-machine in order and be well under way at nine. Two neighbor women came over to help Mrs. Loper, and Elvira assisted Maggie in all her tasks. Together they cleaned and scraped a tub half full of potatoes, plucked the feathers of two fat hens, gathered a lot of beets and summer squashes, and sliced cucumbers and tomatoes into dishes of vinegar, adding pepper and salt; they brought eggs from the barn, rousing a protesting cackle among the hens by scaring some of them off their nests, and milk and butter from the spring-house.

In the mean time Mrs. Loper and her two assistants, warm and red, but sustained by the importance of the occasion, were at work in the kitchen, beating eggs and stirring sugar and butter together for cakes, making pies, and roasting, baking, boiling, and stewing. When their other tasks were done, Maggie and Elvira were deputed to set the table. Two long tables were placed end to end in the shade of some maple-trees which stood near the house, and covered with white cloths, then the plates, knives and forks, and drinking-glasses were placed in order. The Loper supply of dishes was not sufficient, but there were two large basketfuls which had been borrowed from neighbors for the occasion, and, by having recourse to these, the tables were furnished. Chairs were brought from kitchen and parlor and every room in the house, but even then two were lacking. "Never mind," said Maggie: "Joe and Will can sit on nail-kegs," referring to two of her brothers. [Pg 283]

The men and machinery and wagons had come early in the day, the engine drawn by two oxen, the threshing-machine by four horses. The oxen swayed hither and thither as they were driven through the gates and into the barn-lot, and the driver cracked his whip and cried, "You Buck! You Berry! Gee! Haw! Whoa!" till one was ready to wonder that the bewildered animals did anything right. At last the engine was in the desired position, and the oxen were released from their yoke, to stand with panting sides in the shade of the barn. Then the threshing-machine was stationed in its place, and the broad band put on which connected it with the engine. In the mean time, those whose duty it was to haul water from the creek had brought three or four barrelfuls to the boiler, fire had been built in the engine, and the engineer "got up steam." Two wagons were off to the field, where the wheat still stood in shocks, and as soon as they returned, piled high with yellow sheaves, the work began in earnest. Two men—cutters and feeders, as they were called—received the sheaves tossed to them from the wagons, cut the withes of straw which bound them, and pushed them evenly into the thresher. Farmer Loper himself and one of his sons stood at the place where the grain ran out, and as fast as one bushel-measure was filled another one was set in its place and the wheat poured into a sack. When a sack was full it was tied up and set back out of the way. Other laborers stood at the back part of the thresher, where the straw came out, and, with pitch-forks in hand, tossed it about until the foundation for a stack was formed. Then they stood on the stack, rising higher as it rose, trampling the straw and pitching it into place. The chaff and dust flew upon them until their faces, their hat-brims, and the shoulders of their colored shirts were covered, and the perspiration streamed from every pore. No wonder that the wives and mothers of these farmers dreaded the wash-days after a week of threshing. There was noise and excitement enough in connection with the dust and work,—the puffing of the engine, the whir and shake and rattle of the threshing-machine, and the raised voices of the men calling to each other or giving orders. The engineer and the feeders and cutters were conceded to have the most responsible positions, but the duties of the other workers were also important. There must be water for the boiler, and the wheat must be brought from the field fast enough to keep a constant supply on hand, the straw must be stacked well, and the grain accurately measured. At exactly twelve o'clock the engineer blew a long loud whistle, the band was thrown off, the wheels of the thresher ceased to revolve, and the work came to a stand-still. Comments were exchanged on the progress made during the forenoon and the quality of the wheat, then the tired horses were unharnessed and fed, and Farmer Loper led the way toward the house. Here on a bench by the well were all the wash-pans and wash-bowls the house afforded, and clean towels hung on the roller and on nails outside the door. The men washed their hands and faces, and, by the aid of a small looking-glass hung by the towels, and a comb attached to a string, combed their hair. To the women it was the most exciting moment of the day. They were dishing up the dinner and putting the finishing-touches to the table. Finally all was ready. Mrs. Loper spoke to her husband, and he said, "Come, men, dinner's ready," and led the way to the table. He took the chair at one end, his oldest son that at the other, and the others ranged themselves at will between.

Mrs. Loper poured out coffee in the kitchen, the neighbor women carried the cups and saucers, Maggie waited on the table, passing the bread around first, and Elvira stood with a bunch of peacock's feathers in her hand and kept off the flies. A boiled ham was at the head of the table, a pair of roast fowls at the foot; between stood a long row of vegetables,—potatoes, string-beans, squash, beets, and others,—and near the large tureens were smaller dishes,—cold-slaw, [Pg 284] tomatoes, cucumbers, pickles and preserves of various kinds. A large cake stood on a glass cake-stand in the middle of the table, flanked on one side by a deep glass dish full of canned peaches, on the other by a similar one of floating island, while all the available remaining space was occupied by pies,—apple-pies, custard, berry-pies, cream-pies. To have a variety of pies on a festal occasion was the ambition of every housewife, seven different kinds of pies and three kinds of cake being not uncommon. If a map of the region where pie prevails is ever drawn up and printed, this section of the country will be shaded unusually dark. To have company to dinner and not set pie before them would be considered a breach of an ancient and well-grounded custom:

the best of puddings or other forms of dessert would be regarded only as an evasion. Pie was not out of place at supper; and the instance of one family comes to mind where steamed mince-pie for breakfast was eaten, and considered both appropriate and delicious.

At Farmer Loper's harvest-table sweet milk and fresh buttermilk were among the drinks, but most of the men preferred coffee, and drank it hot out of the saucers. Some sets of dishes included tiny cup-plates, in which to set the coffee-cups that they might not stain the table-cloth; but Mrs. Loper had none, and the men scraped their cups on the edge of the saucers before placing them on the clean white cloth. One man drank six cups of coffee, then said he guessed he wouldn't take any more, adding, "It's best to be moderate." At this all the men burst into a roar of laughter, except one, who grew red in the face and ate his dinner in silence. It seemed that while hauling that day one of his horses had balked, and in his anger he had lifted one foot to kick it, but missed it, lost his balance, and fell. He arose from the fall somewhat ashamed, and remarked, "It's best to be moderate." This incident had amused the others very much, and any allusion to it caused laughter.

The women waited on the table, not in the sense of changing plates and bringing fresh courses, for all the dinner was before them, but replenishing cups and glasses when they were empty, refilling the vegetable-tureens and bread-plates, cutting the pies and cake and passing them around, and serving out the canned peaches and the custard in small dishes. They were also careful to see that the pickles and preserves were passed to every one.

With most of the men present Elvira was acquainted: they were the patrons of her school, and found time in the midst of eating and general conversation to ask how Johnnie was a-comin' on in his spellin', or if Annie was gettin' along well in her 'rithmetic, adding, "I'll be wantin' her to calkilate interest for me by and by." Bert Mowrer's father inquired about his boy, then added cheerfully, "If he don't behave, lick him,—lick him: that's what I tell every teacher."

Farmer Loper and the engineer fell to discussing how many bushels of wheat to the acre the neighboring farms had produced, and how many this would probably produce, with various comments on the weather and the soil. A little farther down the table a young farmer was telling of the speed made by his brown mare Kitty,—how she passed every team on the road, and that he wouldn't take a hundred and fifty dollars for her; and farther still, two or three were discussing the affairs of an absent neighbor,—how he had bought the Caldwell place, but, not being able to pay for it, had given a mortgage, and hadn't managed the farm very well, had let the interest run behind, they had heard, so there was a prospect of his losing it.

"I guess he won't have to give it up," said one: "the woman that raised his wife has got plenty of money, and if he can't make it, she'll pay for the place and let them live on it. She's helped them several times already. If he wasn't so lazy and shiftless he might have everything in good shape."

But a conversation which was going on at the lower end of the table interested Elvira most of all. [Pg 285] It was about birds, including some of her favorites of the woods and fields which she had noticed a great deal in her solitary rides that summer. The principal speaker was a young farmer whom she had never seen before. He seemed to be acquainted with the names and habits of all the birds which lived in that section, besides many which merely passed through it on their way northward every spring and southward every fall.

"I have kept a record of the time of each arrival," he said, "and notes of rare birds. The bluebird came first, and the humming-bird last. And I discovered two birds that were new to me. One is a Northern bunting. A flock stayed one day in our orchard on their way northward to their summer home, and I succeeded in killing and stuffing a pair. The feathers of the male were a beautiful pink-red. The other strange bird seemed to come with the scarlet tanager, and is much like a pee-wee in shape and size, with feathers of a greenish yellow."

"When do you find time to learn so much about birds?" asked George Loper, who knew only a few of the more common ones,—blackbirds, crows, jays, hawks, and robins,—and had no eyes for the variety of feathered life around him.

"I keep my eyes open as I work and as I go along the road," answered young Farmer Worth; "then I look up their names and read something about them in a book on birds which I have. You've no idea how much enjoyment there is in it. I have quite a collection of birds which I have stuffed, and more than a hundred different kinds of eggs, besides my cabinet of mineral specimens. I nailed two ladders together, and climbed thirty feet above these and got a crow's nest; and this spring we found a hawk's nest in a high tree. We tied a stout twine to a small stone, which we threw over the forks of the tree, and with this drew a large rope over. Then I sat in the noose of the rope, and three boys pulled me up sixty feet to the nest. It was rather scary, I can tell you, and I was glad to get down to the ground again; but I got the hawk's nest."

Then Elvira asked him if he could tell her the name of the bird with a yellow head, but otherwise black plumage, which she had noticed not long before in a flock of common blackbirds; and they were soon in an animated conversation on the subject of birds in general. Elvira had noticed many that summer which she could describe, but whose names she did not know.

Soon the men began to leave the table, for it was not the custom to wait till all had done eating, but for each one to go when he was ready. George Loper went away grumbling that he couldn't see any use in learning about birds: all he wanted was for the crows and blackbirds to keep away from the corn when it was first planted. But Elvira and young Worth talked ten minutes longer, finding more and more that they were interested in the same subjects. Then the women began to

clear away the plates and cups and knives, and Elvira turned to assist them, while her new acquaintance joined his companions, who were resting in the shade of the trees. There he encountered some good-natured chaff from the younger members, who began by asking him if he was struck with the school-ma'am. The responsibility of the threshers' dinner being over, Mrs. Loper and her assistants sat down to the table, to eat their own dinner at ease, and exchange remarks with each other, complimenting or criticising their cooking.

"This chicken-stuffin' is real good," said one of the neighbors to Mrs. Loper.

"Well, I don't know," said Mrs. Loper, tasting some of it on the end of her knife: "'pears to me I put a leetle too much sage in it. But the gravy you made, Mirandy, that couldn't be better. Didn't you see how the men kept askin' for it to be passed? And they've et up all the summer squash and all the cream-pie. Taste some of these plum preserves, Mis' Brown, and don't let me forget to send some to your little girls: I remember how well they like 'em. This cake is real light and good, [Pg 286] but I was afraid it would fall. This float would 'a' been better if I'd had a little lemon flavor to put in it. But I guess, on the whole, the dinner went off middlin' well." Then, seeing Elvira and Maggie sitting on the opposite side of the table, some deeper thoughts were stirred in her motherly heart, and she began to talk of the daughter she had lost years before: "If Lucy had lived, she'd 'a' been seventeen this spring,—just your age; and you remind me of her sometimes. She always had such red cheeks, and was never sick a day till she was taken down with the diphtheria."

For a while the affairs of the present were forgotten, as the old and never-wholly-healed wound was opened afresh and she dwelt upon her bereavement; but soon the round of work must be taken up, the dishes must be washed, the victuals set away, and supper for the threshers must be planned and prepared. It was best so. "Time, the healer, and work, the consoler," enable us to bear many things which in the first keen freshness of grief seem unbearable.

The threshers thought they would be done by six o'clock, so they decided not to stop for supper at five, as was the custom, but wait for their evening meal till the work of the day was completed. Elvira started home before this time, and good Mrs. Loper not only filled her own little basket, but made her take a larger one packed with remains of the feast.

There were three weeks more of her school, and during that time she saw young Farmer Worth several times. Twice she met him in the road, and once he stopped at the school-house to bring her Wilson's book on birds, which he had promised to lend her. But the day before school closed he came and helped Jack Sapp and some other boys make a platform in the woods, on which the children could speak their declamations and sing their songs, and on the afternoon of the last day of school was present in the crowd of parents, brothers, sisters, and friends assembled on that important and, to the children, most exciting occasion. There were declamations from the third and fourth readers,—"How big was Alexander, Pa?" and "He never smiled again," and "Lord Ullin's Daughter,"—and Maggie Loper held the audience spell-bound by an entirely new one, which Elvira had selected and copied for her out of a book of poems,—"The Dream of Eugene Aram." Then there were songs, and dialogues, and two compositions, one on "Rats" and one on "Planting Corn," which had been produced by their respective authors after much wear of brain fibre and much blotting of writing-paper. Last of all, Elvira read one of Longfellow's poems, after which she said that the exercises of the school were over, but that remarks from visitors would be gladly received. Then one of the trustees arose, and said that education was a great blessing, that he hoped the children of the present day would appreciate their advantages and grow up to be useful men and women, adding that all the schooling he had received was three winter terms in a log school-house, one entire end of which was occupied by the fireplace, and which had no glass windows, the light being admitted through holes cut in the logs and covered with greased foolscap-paper. No other remarks being offered, the audience was dismissed, and the children began in an excited hurry to collect their possessions, and bid their teacher good-by as if for a life-long parting. Some of them even shed tears, and this occasioned the cynical remark from a by-stander, "Them Mays children needn't to take on so: the school-ma'am will have to call at their house often enough before she gits her money."

Soon the spot was deserted, and the squirrels came down from the trees to retake possession of their old haunts, to scamper across the platform, to sniff at the fallen rose-petals of the bouquets, and to nibble the crumbs of cake and bread dropped from the lunch-baskets.

The next outing for the people of Buck Creek neighborhood was the county fair, which occurred [Pg 287] in September. They went in spring-wagons, in farm-wagons, in buggies, and on horseback, starting early in the morning, and taking an ample supply of provisions for themselves as well as feed for their horses.

The sunshine poured down hot upon them, and there was much dust, but they were happy. There were crowds of people from all the surrounding country; there were displays of vegetables, fruit, honey, butter, in tents and sheds,—in short, all the products of a farming region; there were cakes, loaves of bread, glasses of jelly, and jars of pickles and preserves, made by farmers' wives; and in the department allotted to needle-work there were quilts of various patterns and various claims to public notice: one had three thousand five hundred and forty-four pieces in it, and was made by a great-granddaughter of Daniel Boone, the pioneer; another was pieced by an old lady of eighty-one without the aid of glasses. Among the live-stock were fat cattle and prancing three-year-old colts, with red or blue ribbons fastened to their manes, indicating that they had received the first or second prize, and fat hogs; there were various breeds of poultry in coops, and before each stall or pen or coop stood a group of spectators, admiring, commenting, or asking questions

of the owner; there were agricultural machines and implements, and patent pumps for stock-yards, and improved cross-cut saws, each strongly recommended to the public by a glib-tongued agent. Then there were stands for the sale of ice-cream, lemonade, and peanuts and candy; and no rural beau felt that he had done the polite thing unless he took his girl up to the counter and treated her. When he had strolled all over the ground with her, and perhaps taken her into one or two side-shows, where there were negro minstrels or the Wild Australian Children, he went and sat in a buggy with her, and they talked, and waited for the horse-race, or balloon-ascension, or wire-walking, which was the especial attraction of the afternoon.

"Why, who's that with Tom Worth?" asked one Buck Creek belle of her escort as they were thus sitting together. "I didn't know that he was goin' with anybody?"

"I didn't, either," was the response; then, after a little pause, "I'll swan, it's Miss Hill, the school-ma'am. Who'd 'a' thought they would be here together? I didn't know they were acquainted."

And this remark was echoed by other Buck Creek people as they saw the couple walking together. But there is a law of affinity by which people are drawn together as lovers or as friends, which is like some of the hidden forces of nature: we cannot see their operation, we can only see their results. Some one has made the paradoxical remark that we are acquainted with our friends before we ever see them; meaning that our tastes for the same pursuits or subjects, traits of character that harmonize, views that coincide, have been ripening apart, and, when at last we meet, that is sufficient; it does not require a long acquaintanceship to reveal one to the other.

Young Farmer Worth was now in the habit of frequently calling to see Elvira Hill, and of taking her out riding in his buggy, that being an approved form of courtship in this section. They talked of their favorite books and studies, their ambitions for the future as regarded mental culture, and their individual plans.

Elvira had applied for the position of assistant in the Hill's Station school, and had been engaged as first assistant instead of second, which was better than she had hoped. She would have to hear some advanced classes from the principal's room, and this would require her to study, which would be a source of improvement.

Young Farmer Worth, whose father had died three years before, had bought the home farm, and was now working to pay his older brothers and sisters for their shares in it and to comfortably support his mother in her declining years.

"There are eighty acres in it, well improved, and with good buildings," he said one day, while [Pg 288] unfolding his plans to Elvira, "and I think I can make a good home of it, and a happy one, where I can feel independent, and no one's servant, as I could not at any other business. Farming is a profession, and I intend to work with my head as well as my hands, to read and study on the subject, to take the best agricultural papers, and keep up with the times. My fondness for ornithology and mineralogy can be indulged in connection with my work on the farm and without in any wise interfering with it."

In the winter he came occasionally to take her to lectures at Sassafrasville or another neighboring town, and they always found food for thought in what they heard, and pleasure in discussing it afterward.

The gossips said, "There's a match;" but it was not until spring that they were engaged. Then he took her to see his mother, and showed her the old home, the farm, and the improvements he was making. The old lady received Elvira with mingled dignity and cordiality, but, finding her interested in all she heard and saw, warmed toward her more and more, and told much of her own life, unfolding the store of memories on which her thoughts chiefly dwelt nowadays, talking of her husband, the children she had lost, and bringing forth their pictures, opening closed rooms, and showing dishes, linen, and other household goods which dated back to her own girlhood and early married life.

Elvira felt an attachment for Mrs. Worth which deepened when, in the ensuing autumn, her dear grandmother died after a brief illness, and she experienced the loneliness of bereavement and homelessness. The little brown house in Hill's Station was sold, and Elvira went to board with one of the neighbors: she was still teaching in the village school.

When June came round again, with its beauty of earth and sky, it brought her wedding-day. A very quiet wedding it was; but the home-coming, or the "in-fare," to use a good old-fashioned word, was the occasion of much joy and merry-making. It seemed as if all the Buck Creek neighborhood had assembled to welcome the bride. Two of the farmers' wives had been at the Worth homestead all the preceding day, and many of them brought cakes with them.

In the centre of the table stood a roast pig, with an apple in its mouth, and around it were a great abundance of the substantial viands and delicacies usually provided on such occasions. There were also many presents for the bride from her old friends, not costly or fine, but in keeping with their manner of living. Mrs. Loper brought a sheep-skin for a mat, the wool combed out smoothly and colored crimson, Maggie a white crocheted tidy as big as a cart-wheel, Mrs. Sapp a wooden butter-stamp, Mary Sapp a picture-frame made of pasteboard, with beech-nuts glued together thickly upon it and varnished.

So, amid good wishes and rejoicing, the young married pair entered upon their new life together, contented, yet energetic, and happy in the fact that their own lives afforded fulness and

enjoyment, and that in their own efforts lay the fulfilment of their ambitions.

LOUISE COFFIN JONES.

INTO THY HANDS.

Into thy hands, my Father, I commit
  All, all my spirit's care,
  The sorest burden this dim life can bear,
The sweetest hope wherewith its paths are lit!
Into thy hands, that hold so closely knit [Pg 289]
  What our blind, aching heart
  Calls joy or grief,—we know them not apart!
Into the hands whence leap
 The hurling tempest, and the gentle breath
Kissing the babe to sleep,
 The flaming bolt that smites with instant death
The giant oak, and the refreshing shower
Whose balmy drops make glad the tender flower.

What though, even as lent jewels passing bright,
  That crowned me happy king
  For one sweet revel of one night in spring,
I must surrender in the morning light,
That cold and gray breaks on my tearful sight,
  Youth, hope, and joy, and love,
  And—oh, all other gems, all price, above!—
The deathless certainty
  Of the deep life beyond this pallid sun,
That golden shore and sea
  Which to my youthful feet seemed wellnigh won,
So fair, so close, so clear, methought I heard
The trees' soft whisper and faint song of bird;

What though this fair dream, too, fled long ago,
  And on my straining eyes
  There break no more visions of mellow skies
'Neath which dear friends, called dead, move on in low
Sweet converse through wide, happy fields aglow
  With heavenly flower and star,—
  What though, like some poor pilgrim who from far
Sees, through a slender rift
  In the dark rocks that hem his toilsome way,
The clouds an instant lift
  From countries bathed in everlasting day,
I stand and stretch my yearning arms in vain
Toward the blest light, too swiftly lost again?

Into thy hands, my Father, I commit
  This dearest, last hope too,
  Old as the world, and yet forever new,—
The hope wherewith our dimmest paths are lit,
With life itself indissolubly knit!
  That too is well, I know,
  In thy eternal keeping. Ah! and so
Let my poor soul dismiss
  Each fear and doubt, hush every anxious cry,
Forget all thought save this,
  Some time,—oh, dream of joy that cannot die!—
In those beloved hands, a priceless store,
All our lost jewels shall be found once more!

STUART STERNE.

A CHAPTER OF MYSTERY. [Pg 290]

Science, as a rule, has avoided the subject of Spiritualism. Its results are too much unlike the hard, visible, tangible facts of scientific research to attract those accustomed to positive investigations. And its methods and conditions are usually of a character to set a scientist beside

himself with impatience. Crucial tests do not seem acceptable to spirits in general. They decline to be placed on the microscopic slide or to show their ghostly forms in the glare of the electric light, and prefer to haunt the society of those who do not pester them with too exacting *conditions*. Thus they have been mainly given over to a class of somewhat credulous and, in some instances, not well-balanced mortals, whose statements have very little weight with the general public, and whose strong powers of digesting the marvellous have originated a plentiful crop of fraud and trickery sufficient to throw discredit on the whole business.

It cannot be said, however, that all the adherents of Spiritualism are of this character, or that science has completely failed to investigate it. It has won over many persons of good sense and sound logic, including several prominent scientists, to a belief in the truth of its claims. Were its adherents all cranks or credulous believers, and its phenomena only such common sleight-of-hand performances as suffice to convince the open-mouthed swallowers of conjurers' tricks, it would be idle to give it any attention. But phenomena sufficiently striking to convert such men as Hare, Crooks, Wallace, Zöllner, and the like are certainly worthy of some attention, and cannot be at once dismissed as results of skilful prestidigitation.

In fact, it is evident to those who have taken the trouble to investigate the question seriously, and who do not dismiss it with an *a priori* decision, that in addition to the fraudulent mediums who make it their business to trick the public, and are ready to produce a new marvel for every new dollar, and to call "spirits from the vasty deep" of the unseen universe in form and shape to suit every customer, there are some private and strictly honest mediums, and many phenomena which no theory of conjuring will explain. To what they are due is another question, in regard to which no hypothesis is here offered. It may be said here, however, that the work of the Psychic Research Society has demonstrated rather conclusively that certain hitherto unknown and unsuspected powers and laws of nature do exist, and that man's five senses are not the only means by which he gains a knowledge of what is going on in other minds than his own. The facts of thought-transference, of mesmeric control, of apparitions of the living, and the like, as critically tested by the members of this society, seem to indicate clearly that mind can affect, influence, and control mind through some other channel than that of the senses, usually over short distances, but in case of strong mental concentration over long distances. That some psychic medium, some ethereal atmosphere, infiltrates our grosser atmosphere, and is capable of conveying waves of thought as the luminiferous ether conveys waves of light, is the theory advanced in explanation of these phenomena. Spiritualists had long before advanced a like theory in explanation of their phenomena, claiming that disembodied as well as living minds have the power of influencing and controlling other minds, through the agency of such a psychic atmosphere, and also of acting upon and moving physical substances through a like agency. As to the probability of all this, no opinion is here offered.

It is our purpose simply to select some of the more striking instances of spiritualistic phenomena, as recorded by scientific observers. Those placed on record by the numerous unscientific and [Pg 291] unknown investigators are not the kind of material to present to the general public. Statements of an unusual character need to be thoroughly substantiated before they can be accepted, and the remarkable phenomena adduced as spiritual demand evidence of the most unquestionable character. There is always the feeling that the observer may have been deceived by some shrewd trickery, or have credulously accepted what others would have readily seen through, or that the senses may have been under some form of mesmeric control. Instances of such phenomena, therefore, need to be attested by the names of persons of well-known honesty, judgment, and discrimination, and attended with an exact statement of the tests applied, before they can be accepted as thoroughly trustworthy accounts. Some instances of this character may be here given.

The phenomena known under the general name of spirit-manifestations vary greatly in different instances. In some cases they take the form of strange dreams, in which some warning or information concerning coming events is given that afterward proves true. In others they occur as seeming apparitions of persons recently or long dead. In others, as in the case of haunted houses, there are noises of great variety, moving of objects, opening and shutting of doors, appearances of unknown forms, and all the phenomena which might be produced by an invisible inhabitant of the house who was able to become visible under certain circumstances. More ordinary manifestations are rapping sounds and lifting of heavy bodies, writing either with or without apparent human agency, and mental communication of facts unknown to or forgotten by the persons present. Other phases are those presented by professional mediums,—the tying and untying of ropes, playing on musical instruments, the production of luminous phenomena, slate-writing under tables, and the like. Performances of this character are usually done in the dark, and the fraud which may be present is therefore not easily detected. It is impossible to apply tests under such circumstances, and nothing can be accepted as positive that cannot be tested. Performances similarly surprising are constantly offered by professional conjurers, and nothing claiming the high origin of spiritual phenomena can be received in evidence where trickery is possible or has not been rendered impossible by the employment of adequate tests.

To the same class belong the cabinet performances and the so-called materialization of spirit forms, which have been the favorite cards of professional mediums of late years. So far as yet offered in public, they may be dismissed in the mass as pure trickery. The fact that stage-performers of sleight-of-hand tricks can repeat the cabinet phenomena in every detail, and that the materialized spirit showmen have been caught in numerous instances in the very act of fraud, throws utter discredit on the business. No repetition by new mediums of other forms of the

exposed tricks carries any weight. In fact, in a matter of such importance nothing can be accepted as settled until it has been subjected to the strictest scientific tests and every possible opportunity for deceit or trickery eliminated. We are not ready to believe that the spirits of our departed friends are able and willing to talk with or show themselves to us, or create disturbances in the arrangement of our furniture, unless we are absolutely positive that our eyes, ears, and nerves are not being cleverly fooled by some skilled and unscrupulous show-man, or that we are not self-deceived by some temporary vagary of our brains or senses.

In addition to the purely physical phenomena are others of a more or less mental character. One interesting phase of the latter is that of planchette-writing, which attracted so much attention a few years ago. The planchette, a heart-shaped board moving easily on casters, and with a pencil supporting it at one extremity, moves with great readiness when touched by mediumistic fingers, [Pg 292] and is responsible for acres of communications purporting to come from the world of spirits, and conveying the greatest variety of information, alike as to the thoughts and deeds of particular spirits and the general conditions of disembodied spiritual existence. In other instances the planchette is dispensed with, and the writing done by a pencil held in the hand of the medium, or occasionally, as some persons positively declare, by a pencil that is held in no mortal hand. In still other cases the medium, either awake or entranced, gives the communication by word of mouth. And this is asserted to be the case not only in respect to brief messages, but in long addresses, which are given every Sunday in our principal cities before large audiences, and in the writing of books of considerable length, but not, as a rule, of any great profundity or literary value. To all these claims, however, we can simply record the verdict "not proven." When a man writes or says anything we want more than his mere assertion to prove that it does not come from his own mind. And, even if we are satisfied that he is not consciously deceiving, the possibility remains that he is affected by some unconscious mental action. We shall certainly not accept his declaration that spirits of the dead are talking through him unless he gives information that could not possibly have been in his own mind, and could not have been received by thought-transference from the mind of any other person present or in *rapport* with him at a distance. The discoveries in thought-transference open possibilities of mental influence between living persons which aid to explain many hitherto incomprehensible phenomena.

Clairvoyant and clairaudiant mediums fall into the same category. They profess to see forms which no one else can see, and to hear voices which no one else can hear, and describe these forms, or repeat the words of these voices, often with the effect of recalling the appearance or character of deceased persons whom they could not possibly have known. Yet the fact remains that the persons who recognize these descriptions as accurate must have known the parties described, and it becomes possible that the mental impression of the medium may have been received by thought-transference from them. We do not assert that it has been so received. We assert nothing. In fact, phenomena are claimed to occur which it is difficult or impossible to explain on any such theory, or on any other theory yet promulgated. Among these is the conveyance of matter through matter, as of an object from the interior to the exterior of a corked and sealed bottle, of other objects from a distance into locked rooms, of writing by a sliver of pencil in the interior of a double slate firmly screwed together, of the placing of close-fitting steel rings in one solid piece around human necks, and their subsequent removal, of writing and speaking in languages unknown to some or all of the persons present, and a considerable variety of similar performances, declared to have occurred under strict test-conditions. Yet if we cannot explain we retain the right to doubt, and such statements cannot be received as facts except on the strongest substantiation.

The phenomena whose main forms we have here given, but whose actual variety we cannot attempt to give, are offered on the testimony of a great variety of persons, many of whom are plainly too credulous for their evidence to be of any value whatever, while others, who seem to have exercised great caution and cool judgment, are unknown to the general public, and therefore not likely to be accepted as witnesses in such a critical case. Others, again, who are well known and highly respected, have invalidated their testimony by clearly letting themselves be deceived. Such was the case with Robert Dale Owen, one of the main historians of spiritual phenomena, who permitted himself to be pitifully humbugged in Philadelphia by the somewhat famous spirit of Katie King, whose spirit face was afterward discovered on the sturdy shoulders of a very decidedly incarnate young lady. This was one of the first instances of that throng of [Pg 293] materialized frauds with which this country has ever since been well supplied.

But there have been numerous investigators of spiritualism who cannot be placed in any such category, many of them men of high standing in the scientific world, whose word is still taken as positive evidence in support of very surprising scientific statements, since they are known to examine and test phenomena with the closest and most accurate scrutiny. This class of observers is particularly abundant in the London scientific world, and includes in its list such noted names as Alfred Russel Wallace, the celebrated naturalist, Dr. William Crooks, whose discoveries in chemistry and physics have been of a remarkable character, and Dr. Huggins, the equally celebrated astronomer. In America the most noted scientific observer was the late Dr. Hare, of Philadelphia, a chemist of world-wide fame. Of those who, if not professed scientists, have been otherwise of high standing, Professor Wallace names, in a recent communication to the "Times," Dr. Robert Chambers, Dr. Elliotson, and Professor William Gregory, of Edinburgh, Dr. Gully, a scientific physician of Malvern, and Judge Edmonds, one of the best known American lawyers. Names of similar reputation in the scientific and professional world might be adduced from Germany and France, prominent among them the late Professor Zöllner, of Leipsic, a well-known astronomer; but the above-given will suffice as evidence that the investigation of spiritualism has

not been confined to the unknown, unlearned, and credulous, but has been pursued by men of the very highest standing for probity, learning, sound judgment, and critical discrimination.

The results reached by these men are therefore of great weight, and go far to fix the status of the phenomena examined. We may say here that several of them have become acknowledged converts to the spiritual theory. More generally, however, they have declined to express positive opinions as to the cause of these phenomena, while positively testifying that they are not the result of trickery, but that they indicate the existence of some power or energy in nature which is able to suspend or overcome the operation of nature's ordinary forces. Only two prominent scientists, who have made any pretence to examine these phenomena, have declared that they are *in toto* the result of fraud. These two are Professor Faraday and Dr. Carpenter. But the investigations made by these noted personages were too trivial to render their decision of any value. Faraday briefly examined the phenomena of table-tipping, and decided that it was due to involuntary muscular movement. Dr. Carpenter reasserted the same, years after this explanation had been shown to be entirely inadequate, and declared that the mental phenomena were due only to *unconscious cerebration*, or the action of memories and ideas long since stored in the mind, when the consciousness is otherwise engaged and the person is unaware of the activity of his mental stores. This theory, we may also say, is utterly inadequate to explain all the phenomena, and only applies by a strained interpretation to the instances which Dr. Carpenter gives in illustration.

One of the most striking of these instances we may here append. A student relates that a professor had said to his class in mathematics, of which this student was a member, "'A question of great difficulty has been referred to me by a banker, a very complicated question of accounts, which they themselves have not been able to bring to a satisfactory issue, and they have asked my assistance. I have been trying, and I cannot resolve it. I have covered whole sheets of paper with calculations and have not been able to make it out. Will you try?' He gave it as a sort of problem to his class, and said he would be extremely obliged to any one who would bring him the solution on a certain day. This gentleman tried it over and over again. He covered many slates with figures, but could not succeed in resolving it. He was a little put on his mettle, and very [Pg 294] much desired to attain the solution. But he went to bed on the night before the solution, if attained, was to be given in, without having succeeded. In the morning, when he went to his desk, he found the whole problem worked out in his own hand. He was perfectly sure that it was his own hand. And this was a curious part of it, that the result was attained by a process very much shorter than any he had tried. He had covered three or four sheets of paper in his attempts, and this was all worked out on one page, and correctly worked, as the result proved. He inquired of the woman who attended to his room, and she said that she was certain no one had entered it during the night. It was perfectly clear that this had been worked out by himself."

Instances of this kind are certainly very curious, and seem to show that the mind, when set in any train of thought by intense concentration, may pursue it after consciousness has been withdrawn. And the result indicates that the mind acts with innate logic when not disturbed by distracting considerations, and can be trusted to do more correct work when thus set going and left to run of itself than when consciously held to its work. Yet an examination of every recorded instance of this kind strongly indicates that no such unconscious mental action ever takes place except when the consciousness has been earnestly directed to the subject in advance, that no marked instances of this activity ever occur except in the unconsciousness of sleep or trance, and that it ceases when the mental excitement that started it has gradually subsided. There is not an instance on record to show that the mind ever originates unconscious action, or that any of its remote stores or powers ever spring into activity without being aroused by sensation or conscious thought. Thus the doctrine of *unconscious cerebration* has been carried much further than the facts warrant. It need hardly be said that it is utterly inapplicable as a theory to many of the facts adduced by the Society for Psychic Research.

In the year 1869 the London Dialectical Society, an association of cultured liberals, embracing many well-known personages, appointed a committee to examine "the asserted phenomena of Spiritualism." The committee divided itself into six sub-committees, each of which submitted a report, and according to a general report, published in 1871, "these reports substantially corroborated each other." We may therefore quote the more interesting points from the report of one of the sub-committees:

"All of these meetings were held at the private residences of members of the committee, purposely to preclude the possibility of prearranged mechanism or contrivance. The furniture of the room in which the experiments were conducted was on every occasion its accustomed furniture. The tables were in all cases heavy dining-tables, and required a strong effort to move them. The smallest of them was five feet nine inches long and four feet wide, and the largest nine feet three inches long and four and a half feet wide, and of proportionate weight. The rooms, tables, and furniture generally were repeatedly subjected to careful examination, before, during, and after the experiments, to ascertain that no concealed machinery, instrument, or other contrivance existed, by means of which the sounds or movements hereinafter mentioned could be caused. The experiments were conducted in the light of gas, except on the few occasions specially noted in the minutes.

"Of the members of your sub-committee about four-fifths entered upon the investigation wholly sceptical as to the reality of the alleged phenomena, firmly believing them to be the result either of *imposture*, or of *delusion*, or of *involuntary muscular action*. It was only by irresistible evidence, under conditions that precluded the possibility of either of these solutions, and after

trials and tests many times repeated, that the most sceptical of your sub-committee were slowly and reluctantly convinced that the phenomena exhibited in the course of their protracted inquiry were *veritable facts*. The result of their long-continued and carefully-conducted experiments, after trial by every delicate test they could devise, has been to establish *conclusively*,— [Pg 295]

"First. That under certain *bodily* and *mental* conditions of one or more of the persons present a force is exhibited sufficient to set in motion heavy substances, without the employment of any muscular force, and without contact or material connection of any kind between such substances and the body of any person present.

"Second. That this force can cause sounds to proceed, distinctly audible to all present, from solid substances not in contact with nor having any visible or material connection with the body of any person present, and which sounds are proved to proceed from such substances by the vibrations which are distinctly felt when they are touched.

"Third. That this force is frequently directed by intelligence."

Of the many experiments described in this report we will quote here but one:

"On one occasion, when eleven members of your sub-committee had been sitting around one of the dining-tables above described for forty minutes, and various sounds and motions had occurred, they, by way of test, turned the backs of their chairs to the table, at about nine inches from it. They all then knelt upon their chairs, placing their arms upon the backs thereof. In this position their feet were of course turned away from the table, and by no possibility could be placed under it or touch the floor. The hands of each person were extended over the table, at about four inches from the surface. Contact, therefore, with any part of the table could not take place without detection. In less than a minute the table, untouched, moved four times,—at first about four inches to one side, then about twelve to the other side, and then, in like manner, four and six inches respectively."

The committee further remarks that after this experiment "the table was carefully examined, turned upside down, and taken to pieces, but nothing was discovered to account for the phenomenon. Delusion was out of the question. The movements were in various directions, and were witnessed simultaneously by all present. They were matters of *measurement*, and not of opinion or fancy. Your sub-committee have not collectively obtained any evidence as to the nature and source of this force, but simply as to the *fact of its existence*."

Mr. Sergeant Cox, a member of this sub-committee and a prominent member of the English bar, relates that he experimented elsewhere in the same manner as that above described, and with similar results, a heavy dining-table being employed. Afterward, when all the party stood in a circle round the table, holding hands, at first two and then three feet distant, the table lurched four times, once more than two feet and with great force, and moved to such an extent as to become completely turned round. After the party had broken up, and were standing in groups about the room, the table, which was about two feet from its original position, swung violently back to its proper place and set itself exactly square with the room, with such force as literally to knock down a lady who was standing in the way putting on her shawl for departure.

Mr. Cox, after a close examination of these phenomena, offered a theory in explanation somewhat differing from that already mentioned. He believes that they are due to the action of some psychic force, originating in the nervous system and analogous in character to magnetic attraction. He relates several instances of heavy bodies moving toward the mediums, as if attracted, and remarks, "In another experiment in my own lighted drawing-room, as the psychic [the medium] was entering the room with myself, *no other person being there*, an easy-chair of great weight that was standing fourteen feet from us was suddenly lifted from the floor and drawn to him with great rapidity, precisely as a heavy magnet will attract a mass of iron." [Pg 296]

Another phase of these phenomena, as observed by the committee, was the sudden and considerable change of weight in the table, it becoming light or heavy as desired. To prove this scientifically, a weighing-machine was attached, and the change of weight clearly proved. "One instance will suffice. Weighed by the machine, the normal weight of a table raised from the floor eighteen inches on one side was eight pounds. Desired to be light, the index fell to five pounds; desired to be heavy, it advanced to eighty-two pounds. And these changes were instantaneous and repeated many times."

The most remarkable evidence adduced by scientific observers is that presented by Professor Crooks. He is a chemist of high reputation, the editor of the "Chemical News" and for many years of the "Quarterly Journal of Science," the discoverer of the metallic element thallium, and of recent years noted for his remarkable discoveries in the conditions of matter in highly-exhausted vacuum-tubes. In 1870 he undertook the investigation of Spiritualism, with the full expectation of exposing it as a compound of trickery on the one side and of credulity and self-deception on the other. In January, 1874, he published, in the "Quarterly Journal of Science," a brief compend of the notes of his investigations during the four years preceding. Some of the phenomena here recorded are so extraordinary that they would not be worthy an instant's attention but for the attestation of a witness of such standing, and one accustomed to the employment of the severest scientific tests.

The phenomena recorded, as he declares, with few exceptions, all took place in his own house and in full light, at times appointed by himself, "and under conditions that absolutely precluded the employment of the very simplest instrumental aid." In all cases only private friends were

present besides the medium. The mediums employed were the noted D. D. Home and Miss Kate Fox, of Rochester-rappings notoriety. Of the simpler phenomena observed were the movement of heavy bodies with contact, but without mechanism or exertion, percussive and other sounds, etc. He remarks,—

"I have had these sounds proceeding from the floor, walls, etc., when the medium's hands and feet were held, when she was standing on a chair, when she was suspended in a swing from the ceiling, when she was enclosed in a wire cage, and when she had fallen fainting on a sofa. I have had them on a glass harmonicon. I have felt them on my own shoulder and under my own hands. I have heard them on a sheet of paper held between the fingers by a piece of thread passed through one corner. I have tested them in every way that I could devise; and there has been no escape from the conviction that they were true objective occurrences, not produced by trickery or mechanical means." Intelligence is manifested by these sounds, "sometimes of such a character as to lead to the belief that it does not emanate from any person present."

He records numerous instances of the movement of heavy bodies when not touched: "My own chair has been twisted partly round while my feet were off the floor. A chair was seen by all present to move slowly up to the table from a far corner when all were watching it; on another occasion an arm-chair moved to where we were sitting, and then moved slowly back again (a distance of about three feet) at my request."

"On five separate occasions a heavy dining-table rose between a few inches and one and a half feet off the floor, under special circumstances which rendered trickery impossible.... On another occasion the table rose from the floor, not only when no person was touching it, but under conditions which I had prearranged so as to assure unquestionable proof of the fact."

As to the power of overcoming gravity, he tested it by the use of a weighing-machine specially constructed and very delicate in its operation, being so arranged that its extremity could not possibly move downward without external pressure. Yet it did so move downward when the medium's fingers were held over it without touching it. This experiment was conducted in a way that renders it absolutely certain that some force beyond those visible to the persons present was in operation. [Pg 297]

He also describes the lifting of human bodies without visible external aid: "On one occasion I witnessed a chair, with a lady sitting on it, rise several inches from the ground.... At another time two children, on separate occasions, rose from the floor with their chairs, in full daylight, under (to me) most satisfactory conditions; for I was kneeling and keeping close watch upon the feet of the chair, and observing that no one might touch them."

Among other strange manifestations, he positively declares that his library-bell was brought into a room in which he was sitting with the medium, with locked doors, both he and his children having seen and handled the bell a short time before in the library. Also a piece of China grass was taken from a vase on the table, and before his eyes seemed to pass through the substance of the table. Observation showed that there was a crack in the table through which it had apparently passed. But this crack was much narrower than the diameter of the grass, yet the latter showed no signs of abrasion or change of shape.

As to the intelligence manifested by this strange power he gives the following instance. A lady was writing with a planchette. "I asked, 'Can you see the contents of this room?' 'Yes,' wrote the planchette. 'Can you see to read this newspaper?' said I, putting my finger on a copy of the 'Times' which was on the table behind me, but without looking at it. 'Yes,' was the reply of the planchette. 'Well,' I said, 'if you can see that, write the word that is now covered by my finger, and I will believe you.' The planchette commenced to move. Slowly and with great difficulty the word 'however' was written out. I turned round, and saw that the word 'however' was covered by the tip of my finger. I had purposely avoided looking at the newspaper when I tried this experiment, and it was impossible for the lady, had she tried, to have seen any of the printed words, for she was sitting at one table, and the paper was on another table behind, my body intervening."

The most remarkable phenomena attested by Professor Crooks, however, are those classed as luminous appearances, and particularly as luminous hands. Some of the most striking of those may be here quoted:

"Under the strictest test-conditions I have seen a self-luminous body, the size and nearly the shape of a turkey's egg, float noiselessly about the room, at one time higher than any one present could reach standing on tiptoe, and then gently descend to the floor. It was visible more than ten minutes, and before it faded away struck the table three times with a sound like that of a hard, solid body. During this time the medium was lying back, apparently insensible, in an easy-chair."

"I have had an alphabetic communication given by luminous flashes occurring before me in the air while my hand was moving about among them. I was sitting next to the medium, Miss Fox, the only other persons present being my wife and a lady relative, and I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, while her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us, and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil. A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and, after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up above our heads, gradually fading into darkness."

"In the night I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side-table, break a sprig

off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about." [Pg 298]

These hands he claims to have frequently seen, sometimes in darkness, sometimes in light. On one occasion "a beautifully-formed small hand rose up from an opening in a dining-table and gave me a flower; it appeared and then disappeared three times at intervals: this occurred in the light, in my own room, while I was holding the medium's hands and feet."

The hand often seemed to form from a luminous cloud. "It is not always a mere form, but sometimes appears perfectly life-like and graceful, the fingers moving, the flesh appearing as human as that of any in the room. At the wrist or arm it becomes hazy and fades off into a luminous cloud.... I have retained one of these hands in my own, firmly resolved not to let it escape. There was no struggle or effort made to get loose, but it gradually seemed to resolve itself into vapor, and faded in that manner from my grasp."

We should not venture to quote these most remarkable statements but for the fact that they are made by a gentleman of such high standing for accuracy of observation, who knew perfectly well that he was imperilling his position in the scientific world and exposing himself to the contumely and accusation of loss of sanity that followed. In regard to this point it need only be said that his most valuable scientific work has been done since that period, and that his statements on scientific subjects are received everywhere to-day as unquestionably accurate and important. That he saw what he believed to be luminous hands there can be no doubt. Whether he was deceived is another question.

As to the producing cause of these manifestations Professor Crooks offers no theory. Whether the power and the intelligence displayed came from some one present or from some disembodied spirit he makes no suggestion, but simply presents the facts as evidence that there are mysteries in nature transcending any that have yet been weighed and measured, and which must engage the attention of the science of the future.

Of the other scientists named, Professor Wallace openly accepts the spiritualistic explanation of these phenomena. He has not, so far as we are aware, published any detailed statement of his investigations, though we have been told that they consisted in part in what is known as "spirit photography," or the taking of photographs of persons known to be dead, by his own private apparatus and in his own private rooms. As to the character of the results obtained by him, however, we are unable to make any statement.

Professor Zöllner also became a believer in Spiritualism, mainly through experiments with the American medium Mr. Slade. He published a work on the subject, in which he advances the theory, which has of late attracted so much attention, of a fourth dimension in space; that is, that, in addition to length, breadth, and thickness, bodies may have a fourth dimension, beyond the powers of human observation. The untying of knots in sealed ropes, passage of matter through matter, etc., he attempts to explain as possibly done by agents capable of working in this fourth dimension of matter. Science, however, is as little inclined to accept this theory as to accept that of spirit communication.

Of the American scientific observers Professor Hare is far the most noted for his critical discernment, his accuracy of observation, and his obstinate determination not to be convinced that there was anything occult in these phenomena. He was remarkably skilful in the making of scientific apparatus, and he tested the phenomena received by a series of instruments of delicate construction and capable of exposing the least attempt at fraud. Those who were present at the circles with him declare that he would frequently make his appearance with a new instrument and a face full of grim expectancy that he would now baffle the powers that had baffled him on previous occasions, and that he would retire with a countenance of settled despondency as the unseen *something* set at nought his deep-laid plans and secret hopes. It will suffice to say here [Pg 299] that his experiments ended in his accepting the spiritual explanation of the phenomena and publishing a work on the subject.

The same was the case with Judge Edmonds, from whose published work we may make a few quotations, as his high standing as a jurist and reputation for veracity and legal shrewdness make him a witness whose word would be accepted without question on any ordinary subject. He gives the following strange experience: "During the last illness of my revered old friend Isaac T. Hopper I was a good deal with him, and on the day when he died I was with him from noon till about seven o'clock in the evening. I then supposed he would live yet for several days, and at that hour I left to attend my circle, proposing to call again on my way home. About ten o'clock in the evening, while attending the circle, I asked if I might put a mental question. I did so, and I know that no person present could know what it was, or to what subject even it referred. My question related to Mr. Hopper, and I received for answer through the rappings, as from himself, that he was dead. I hastened immediately to his house, and found that it was so. That could not have been from any one present, for they did not know of his death, nor did they understand the answer I received. It could not have been the reflex of my own mind, for I had left him alive, and thought that he would live several days."

Of his statements in regard to physical phenomena the following may be quoted: "I have known a pine table with four legs lifted bodily up from the floor in the centre of a circle of six or eight persons, turned upside down, and laid upon its top at our feet, then lifted up over our heads and put leaning against the back of the sofa on which we sat. I have seen a mahogany table, having only a centre leg, and with a lamp burning upon it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, in spite of

the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a goblet in his hand, and the lamp retain its place, though its glass pendants rung again. I have seen the same table tipped up with the lamp upon it, so that the lamp must have fallen off unless retained there by something else than its own gravity; yet it fell not, moved not. I have known a mahogany chair thrown on its side and moved swiftly back and forth on the floor, no one touching it, through a room where there were at least a dozen persons sitting; and it was repeatedly stopped within a few inches of me, when it was coming with a violence which, if not arrested, must have broken my legs."

Of the phenomena classed under the head of spiritualistic three explanations have been offered. One is that they are purely the result of fraud in the mediums and self-delusion in the believers. A second is that they are due to some unknown law and force of nature, the physical manifestations being ascribed to a psychic energy of nervous origin, the mental to *unconscious cerebration*. A third explanation is that they are due to the action of disembodied spirits, who are able to return to the earth and make their presence manifest in all the methods above recounted. Of these explanations the first is that given by the general public, and particularly by those who know nothing practically about the subject, but have reached their opinions by their own inner consciousness and without troubling themselves to investigate the facts. That it does apply, however, to much of what is known as spiritual manifestations there can be no doubt. Of frauds under the name of mediums there has been an abundance. Of dupes under the name of Spiritualists there has been an equal abundance. And the tricks of false mediums have been so often detected as to throw a shadow of doubt over everything connected with the asserted phenomena. Yet that it is not all fraud has been abundantly proved by the testimony of the men above named and many others of equal powers of discrimination, and by the occurrence of numerous phenomena under circumstances that absolutely precluded deception, either in [Pg 300] medium or audience. To these cases one or other of the second and third explanations must be given. Acceptance of the third, that they are really the work of spirits, would of course settle the whole business and explain all the phenomena in a word. But the great body of critical observers are disinclined to accept this theory, for the reason that many of the scientific class doubt the existence of any spirit beyond the earth-life, that many of the religious class question the possibility of freed spirits returning to earth, and that many of an intermediate class consider the manifestations too puerile and the mental communications given too unsatisfactory and too far below the mental calibre of the professed speakers to be worthy of assignment to any such source. These communications seem usually painted by the mind of the medium, and are often notably feeble, absurd, and valueless.

To the members of this class the second explanation is the only tenable one,—namely, that there are certain extraordinary powers resident in the nervous organism which are capable of acting in opposition to the ordinary energies of nature; that an intangible material exists outside the body and penetrates physical objects, through whose aid the nerve-power somehow operates to produce sounds and motions of bodies; that this nerve-power may act unconsciously to the person who possesses it in even a highly-developed state; that its action may be controlled by the mind, acting either consciously or unconsciously; that old and long-forgotten stores of the memory may take part in this action; and that other minds may act through the medium's mind and set in action his psychic powers unconsciously to himself.

That there is such a supersensible substance, and that the human mind has such hitherto unknown powers, is not easy to admit. And yet when we consider all the facts bearing upon the case it becomes equally hard to deny. The history of mankind is full of stories of occult operations and so-called supernatural performances. Those recorded are, of course, but the merest fraction of those that have been observed. At the present day this world of mystery seems everywhere around us. Outside of what is put on record, almost every person one meets can relate some such mysterious occurrence which has happened to himself or some of his acquaintances. That a very great proportion of this has been self-deception must be admitted. But all mankind is not blind and gullible; and if we strain these stories of the marvellous through the sieve of criticism, some considerable residuum will remain, which must be accounted for by another theory than that of delusion.

The theory above given accounts in some degree for most of the facts, though there are others which it is not easy to make fit in. Such are the instances in which information unknown to any person present has been given. We may instance the writing of the word covered by Professor Crooks's finger, and the answer to Judge Edmonds's mental question concerning his dying friend. Other striking instances of the same character might be given, some of which have happened within the knowledge of the writer. We may give in illustration the case of one gentleman, a prominent businessman of Philadelphia, who received from a medium a statement of the date of the death of a child that had occurred many years before. The gentleman denied the correctness of the date, and gave what he believed to be the correct one. But the medium insisted on the date given. On going home and consulting his family record, to his surprise the gentleman found that the medium was right and he wrong,—that the child had died on the date stated, not on that which had been impressed upon his memory.

Taking the case of mentality as a whole, it is certain that we are yet far from being acquainted with all the powers and mysteries of the human mental and nervous organism, despite all the researches of late years. Nor do we know all the conditions and capabilities of the world of matter which surrounds us, or the possibilities of intercommunication of minds without the aid of [Pg 301] the senses. On the other hand, Spiritualists assert that we are equally far from knowing all the

possibilities of spirit existence or of communication between embodied and disembodied mind. As to all this, it is perhaps best to remain in a state of suspended decision and await the results of accurate observation to settle the question definitely on one side or other. The investigation now being carried on by a committee appointed by the University of Pennsylvania, under the conditions of a bequest from the late Mr. Seybert, will, it may be hoped, tend to clear up the mystery.

CHARLES MORRIS.

THE STORY OF AN ITALIAN WORKWOMAN'S LIFE.[B]

Si, signora, there are four of us,—Fausta, and Flavia, and Marc Antonio, and I. La Mamma was left a widow when Marc Antonio was twelve years old and Fausta ten, Flavia was eight, little Teresina (who died in childhood) six, and I was only sixteen months old. All the rest can remember Babbo [daddy], and many's the time, when I was a little one, I have cried my eyes out with anger and jealousy because I couldn't remember him too. Babbo was a good man, signora. Never an angry word, La Mamma says,—not one,—in all the fifteen years they were married, and *allegro, allegro* (cheerful). He was a carrier, and he had only a little time at home; but then he always played with the little ones and made them happy. La Mamma loved him with all her heart; and often she says, "Ah, if I ever come to Paradise, I pray our Lord to make me find my Pietro again." Si, signora, I know our Lord said there was no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven; La Mamma knows it too; but we shall know each other, you know, up there, and our Blessed Lord is merciful, and won't part those who love each other. La Mamma says so; and I hope so, too. If ever I gain the rest of Paradise,—may our Blessed Lord and the Madonna and all the saints grant it!—I want to find my Luigi there too. Well, but I promised to tell the signora how the Mamma brought us all up on only a franc a day. As I said already, Babbo was a carrier. He did well, and sent Marc Antonio and Fausta and Flavia to school, and me to a *balia* in the country, and put something by besides. La Mamma was a silk-weaver,—one of the best in Florence then,—and she put by something too; for she worked hard every day. Everything went well with them until the day that I came home from the *baliatico* (period of nursing in the country). I was well weaned, and a strong, fine baby, and the *balia* was proud of me; and Babbo was so pleased to find me so well and lively that he gave the *balia* two francs more than he had agreed to do. But Babbo was always generous. Well, the next day La Mamma took me in her arms and went to the silk-shop where she had been at work, to see about selling her loom; for the master of the shop was old and was giving up his business and selling everything: it was just at that time that the silk-trade began to go down in Florence. When the loom was sold, La Mamma put the money in her purse, and then she went to put it in the bank, and then home. When she got into the Borgo degli Santi [Pg 302] Apostoli she saw several people standing before our door; but she thought nothing of that, for we lived on the top floor, and there were several other families in the house. But when La Mamma came up to the door, she saw old Martia, her aunt, and Miniato, her brother, there. They were both crying.

"Oh, *poverina, poverina*! here she is," says Miniato.

"*Madonna santissima*! how shall we ever tell her?" says Aunt Martia.

"For the love of God, tell me what it is!" said poor mamma, and her heart died in her.

Well, in a few minutes, *adagio, adagio*, little by little, they told her how it was. Near the Porta San Niccolò a heavy load of bricks had been overturned, and poor Babbo, who was passing at the time, had been badly hurt. His fine gray mule Giannetta was killed. So two troubles came together. After a little the Misericordia brought Babbo home, and they put him in bed, and one of the Brethren stayed to watch him that night. He was badly hurt, and he never took a step again, though he lived for six months. La Mamma did her best: the weaving was over,—she could not have found much more weaving to do, even if Babbo had been able to bear the noise of the loom,—but she knitted, and sewed, and did what she could. Still, the money melted away. Babbo might have been put into a hospital, but La Mamma couldn't bear to part with him, even though he said often, as the days went on and he got no better, that he would rather go into a hospital than lie there and feel that he was eating up the little money he had put away for his wife and children. "*Povera* Leonora," he used to say,—"*povera* Leonora, who must work so hard while I lie here and play the signore!" And once or twice he cried a little. But for the most part he was cheerful and bore his pain with patience.

All the time *la povera Mamma* kept up her courage, and made Babbo believe that the money went three times as far as it did. But it melted away; and, the day before Babbo died, when she counted it over she knew that she had a hard struggle before her. She did not let him know it, however. He thought she had money to last for two or three months. So Easter came round, and still Babbo lay helpless and full of pain. The priest came to confess and communicate him, as he does all the bedridden at Easter-time, and that afternoon Babbo had less pain than for many a day. He kissed and blessed us as usual at bedtime, and then he told La Mamma to call him in the morning, so that he might light the lamp for her. This was because the table with the lamp stood by his side of the bed, and often La Mamma, who had to get up early, used to strike the light without waking him. "But now that I have no pain," says Babbo, "I'll strike a light for you, *cara mia*, so that you may have that comfort." Easter fell early that year, in March, and the weather

was cold and stormy. When La Mamma woke up at four o'clock, the bells were ringing for first mass, but it was cold and dark, and a storm was raging. She could not bear to wake Babbo up, but she had promised to do so, and she had a long day's work before her and no time to lose. So she called him, very gently at first, and then louder. There was no answer, and she touched his shoulder and shook him a little. Still there was no answer, and, being frightened, she leaned over and touched his face. *Povera mamma!* it was cold as ice, and stiff. Then she put her hand on his heart, but it was still. She jumped up quickly, but, in her fright and grief, she could not find the matches. At last she did so, and then she saw that he was dead. Little Teresa slept between them, and he had her hand in his, clasped so tightly that it was many minutes before La Mamma could set it free. She did so without waking the child, and then she put her into bed with Flavia and Fausta, and woke Marc Antonio and sent him for the doctor. When he was gone she lighted the fire and did what she could to warm Babbo and bring the life back, though her heart told her, as did the doctor when he came, that all was over. By and by the children woke and cried, and La [Pg 303] Mamma wondered that she could find words to quiet them, and yet she did. When everything was over and the house quiet, the poor soul felt her heart die in her breast, and would have been glad to lie down and die too; but no, she could not. She had to take out the purse and count the money again, and then she found that after buying a reserved grave for Babbo at the Campo Santo at Trespiano she would have just enough to pay the rent for the next six months. You know, signora, that if a reserved grave is not bought at Trespiano the bodies are put into the *fossa comune*, and that is the end. The graves are not marked. La Mamma could not bear the thought of that, and so she bought a reserved grave. Then came the funeral; and she called the children together and told them that if they each wanted to carry a taper for Babbo they would have to go without their supper that night. They were very hungry, every one, for, what with the trouble, and the care, and the sorrow of that last day, La Mamma had not been able to cook the dinner, and they had had nothing all day but a piece of bread. Ah, they were hungry! They had cried until they were tired out, and they were as empty as organ-tubes. Marc Antonio has told me many a time about it. "God forgive me," says he, "but when La Mamma said that, I felt the hunger grip me like a tiger, and the devil tempted me, and I said to myself, 'Babbo's gone to the world over there, and what good will a taper do him? He was never the one to want us to go to bed hungry as well as with a sore heart.'" But even while he thought the wicked thoughts the love for Babbo came into his heart again. He burst out crying and sobbing, and cried out, "Mamma, mamma, I don't want any supper to-night; I don't! I don't!" *Poverino*! he was growing and strong, and so hungry. Fausta and Flavia and little Teresa said the same, but it hurt them less, and they did not cry. And then little Teresa spoke up,—she was always as wise as a little angel:

"Mamma," says she, "the baby must have her supper, mustn't she?"

"*Poverina!* what would you have?" says La Mamma. "Yes, the poor baby must have her supper, indeed. She knows nothing, poor little one, of the sorrow in the house, or she would not grudge Babbo a taper any more than the rest of you."

Little Teresa smiled, "Then, mamma, I've baby's supper for her," says she. "I did not eat my bread all day, and you can have it now to make a *pappa* for her."

So La Mamma took me in her arms and went into the kitchen, and then Marc Antonio held me while she and Fausta and Flavia and Teresa made the *pappa*; and then each one took it in turn to feed me. You cannot know, signora, how often I have lain awake and cried to think that I should have been the only one of us all to eat like a pig that night, while dear Babbo lay dead in the house and the rest were sad and hungry. *Pazienza*! we need patience in this world, even with ourselves sometimes.

When the funeral was over, La Mamma put the house in order, and then she took out all her papers and accounts and counted over all she had. Just a little of the money that Babbo had saved was left,—enough, if she never touched it, to bring in seventy-three francs a year,—that is, twenty centimes [four cents] a day. She made up her mind that she would never touch it, so that each day, as long as we lived, we might have at least a piece of bread bought with Babbo's money. Then there was the parish, which gave her some help. The guardians of the poor widows appointed a guardian for us,—the Conte Bertoli, a good man, God rest his soul,—and he applied to the poor widows' fund for La Mamma and got her an allowance of fifty centimes [ten cents] a day until Marc Antonio should be fifteen and able to work; and then the Signor Conte himself added to that twenty centimes more, so that altogether La Mamma had a franc a day. But there were six of us. Thankful enough she was to have the franc; but still, as you may suppose, signora, [Pg 304] she had to think a good deal and work hard to keep us. The elder children had all been put to a school near by, a nice school, but where Babbo had had to pay for them; now that was changed. Fausta and Flavia and Teresa were sent to the convent of the Doratei Sisters, and Marc Antonio to the Frate Scalopi. There was nothing to pay at either place, and the children were taught well and taken good care of. The convent of the Doratei is in the Via dei Malcontenti, and that of the Frate Scalopi in the Piazza Santa Croce. Marc Antonio and Fausta and Flavia and Teresa used to set off at seven every morning, winter and summer, and La Mamma walked with them, carrying me in her arms. She gave all the children a good breakfast of hot *pappa* before they set out for school, and some bread and apple, or bread and onions, in a basket, to eat at dinner-time. At night, when they came home, they had a good supper of *casalingo* [household, *i.e.*, black] bread and milk. Then they were washed and put to bed; for La Mamma was very strict, and never allowed any one out of bed after eight o'clock. As soon as I was two years old I was sent to the Doratei too; and the big dark convent, with the great garden behind, is the first thing I ever remember. The good sisters were very kind to us. They taught all the older girls to read and

write, and sew and knit, not only plain sewing, but fine stitching, and open-work, and fine darning, and button-holes, and lace-work, and so on. They also taught them to make beds, and sweep, and dust, and cook a little,—that is, how to make broth, and *pappa*, and such simple things. From twelve to two every day there was recreation. At twelve all the children, big and little, sat down to dinner in the refectory with the nuns. The nuns had their own dinner,—a very plain one always, for their rule is severe,—and the children had whatever they brought with them. If anything was brought that could be warmed over and made more nourishing, Sister Cherubina never grudged the trouble. When dinner was over we sang a grace, and then we all ran into the garden and had a good game of play. Of course the very little ones did nothing all day but play and sleep. Sister Arcangela took care of them. Sometimes on fine days the sisters used to take us all out for a walk in the country. Twice every week we had religious instruction. Padre Giovanni, our confessor, taught us everything, our Credo and Pater Noster, and our holy religion, and the holy gospel, and all the beautiful stories in the Bible, and the legends of the saints. Which of our Lord's miracles does the signora think the finest? For myself, I always liked the story of the night in which our Blessed Redeemer came to his disciples walking on the water. And then of the older stories I liked the one of poor Joseph and his brethren. What bad devils the brothers were! But God brought good out of evil, and rewarded poor Joseph, who was an angel, by making him a great king. Well, still I am babbling on and telling you about our school, and forgetting La Mamma. I told you she had a franc a day. Our rent cost a hundred francs a year. That was a little more than twenty-five centimes a day, and that left La Mamma about seventy centimes a day for food, and clothing, and lights, and so on. La Mamma worked day and night. Whenever she could, she used to sit up at night with sick people, for that was paid well,—a franc a night; sometimes in grand houses as much as two francs,—and then she could rest in the day-time when we were at school. But, whatever she did, or wherever she went, she always managed to be at the convent gate every evening at half-past five to bring us home. If by any chance she could not do that, Marc Antonio always waited for us and brought us home very carefully. He was a good, steady boy, and never stopped to play when we were with him, and always shut himself in with us at home and did his best to take care of us until La Mamma came back. God forgive me! but I used to think La Mamma very hard in those days. She would never let us go the length of a [Pg 305] yard alone; and once when she caught me running out on the stairs to play hide-and-seek with some girls and boys who lived on the floor below us, she gave me such a slap that my ears rang again. Well, to tell truth, we had so much playing in the convent garden, and such a long walk home in the evening, that we were generally rather tired and glad to get quickly to bed as mamma bade us. She, *poverina!* always sat up, patching and darning, long after we were in bed, so that we might go decently to school.

I remember well the first real dolls we ever had. It was at the Feast of the Assumption, and there was a fair outside the Roman gate. Marc Antonio was to be apprenticed the next day to a very decent *vetturino*, and he had begged La Mamma to treat us all to some fried dumplings. We were all day at the fair, though of course we bought nothing; but it was a great pleasure to us to walk about and look at the booths full of gay things. We were nearly ready to come home, when Teresina spied some dolls and began to beg for one. She was such a sweet, good, gentle child that La Mamma could not bear to refuse her, especially as she scarcely ever asked for anything. And she seemed to have a passion for that doll, so pretty it was, all in pink and spangles. At last, as she begged so hard, La Mamma gave her ten centimes, and told her that if she could get it for that she might have it; and Teresina bargained so well that she got it for eight centimes; and then nothing would satisfy her but that we all should have dolls. It was in vain that La Mamma said no; Teresina would have her way. And so at last we all had dolls, and La Mamma, poor soul! spent thirty-six centimes! It seemed a mortal sin to her; and she has told me many a time how she lay awake that night and cried, and prayed to God and the saints to forgive her for that wicked extravagance. And yet she could not but feel glad to see how happy we all were with our dolls. And she was glad afterward for another reason, which I will explain presently. Little Teresina never went out again after the Feast of the Assumption. She was the first to fall ill, but before ten days were over we were all (all the girls, I mean,—Marc Antonio was not at home) struck down with smallpox. Teresina suffered most. I remember it well, how strange it seemed to me to hear her calling constantly for water and other things,—strange, because she was always the one who waited on the others, and never before thought of herself. La Mamma did everything for her that could be done, but she grew daily worse. Once mamma brought her doll and put it in her hands. I can see now—my bed was opposite to hers—how mamma watched Teresina, and how Teresina looked at the doll. In my own heart I thought, "Surely she will get better, now that she has her pretty doll." It seemed to me that she must do so. But in a moment she heaved a deep sigh, and said, "Too tired! too tired!" And then she threw the doll away from her and closed her eyes. *La povera Mamma* picked up the doll and put it away in a drawer, and then she sat still and looked at Teresina, with the tears rolling down her face. Whenever I woke up in the night it was always the same, mamma fanning Teresina or putting bits of ice in her mouth, and never moving her eyes from her, and Teresina no longer restless, but quite still,—so still that I had never seen anything like it. Quite early the next day the archbishop came to confirm her, and while I was looking at the grand robes he wore, and at the priests who came with him, and watching the lighted tapers blow about in the wind, for the window was open and there was a strong draught, suddenly I felt a pain in my head which was worse than anything I had felt before,—a dreadful pain, which made me feel giddy and confused. I felt myself sinking, and I suppose I must have cried out, for I remember that some one lifted me and put a wet cloth on my head. The last thing I saw was Teresina's pale, quiet face, with the white and gold confirmation ribbon bound about [Pg 306] her brows. I never saw her again. When I came to myself, days afterward, the corner where her bed used to stand was empty, and I knew, without asking, that she was in Paradise.

Flavia and Fausta and I got well over it, but much disfigured, as you see; and yet God is good, and has sent me as kind and loving a husband as if I had been the most beautiful person in the world.

Well, the time went on, just as before, until Flavia was old enough to be apprenticed to Madama Castagna, the grand dressmaker. She had always been a good, steady, hard-working girl, and, thanks to the good Doratei Sisters, she sewed so beautifully that very soon Madama allowed her twenty centimes a day. She had to work from eight till eight; but of course she could not expect more than twenty centimes while she was learning.

Fausta was not so fortunate. She was a good girl, and the cleverest and quickest of us all,—yes, indeed, cleverer than I am, although the signora does think so well of me,—but she changed too often. First, she wanted to learn how to bind shoes (I forgot to say that they taught that in the convent), and so, while the rest of us were learning to sew and knit, she was binding shoes. Then, suddenly, she thought she would like to learn to weave, and she went to her godmother, the Contessa Minia, and told her so. The contessa was good and generous, and she gave her a loom, and Sister Annunziata taught her to weave. But just at the time that Fausta ought to have been apprenticed, the silk-trade, which, as I said before, had been going down for several years, failed altogether, and Fausta had to sell her loom for what it would bring. Then she thought that she would like to learn lace-mending: so the contessa got her a lace-cushion, and apprenticed her to a lace-mender for four years. Just as her time was out, poor Fausta had a bad fall, broke her right arm and injured her leg, so that for many months she was confined to her bed, and was unable to walk for more than a year. Then, as if the poor girl were destined to trouble, she must needs fall in love, and with a bad, good-for-nothing fellow. La Mamma would not consent, and we all begged and prayed her not to have him, but Fausta was obstinate, and married him. *Poverina!* she has had one trouble after another, and will have to the end.

As soon as I had passed my fourteenth birthday I was apprenticed to Madama. Flavia was one of her best workwomen then, as she has been ever since. After the first six months I received twenty centimes a day, and at the end of the first year thirty centimes. We went away from home every morning at seven o'clock. La Mamma gave us a good breakfast of black bread and coffee before we set out, and black bread and onions or apples for our dinner. Sometimes, instead of onions or apples, she would give us ten or fifteen centimes; and that we liked better, because then we could make a bank. Making a bank we called it when we put all our money together. Madama had then twenty-five apprentices, and at dinner-time we used to put all our money together and send out and buy something. One would buy anchovies, another ham, another olives, another cheese, and so on. There was one apprentice who always did the marketing for us. Then we used to clear the work-table and set out our food, and dine merrily enough. I was an apprentice at Madama's for five years, and then began to work for myself. If Madama had been willing to pay me a franc a day and give me my dinner besides, I dare say that I might have been there now; but she would not, and so I plucked up my courage and tried my hand alone. For some time before I left her I had been working so well, at cutting out and fitting, finishing, and so on, that she used to give me all the finest and most difficult work to do; but still she never did and never would pay me more than eighty centimes [sixteen cents] a day. None of us got more than that. What we always liked to do was to carry the dresses home, because then the ladies usually gave us something. And at Christmas, when we went to wish our patrons all happiness, we got [Pg 307] very nice presents. One Christmas we received thirty francs. When we carried dresses home we generally got twenty or thirty centimes. That made fifteen centimes for each of us, because we always did errands in couples. One night at ten o'clock we had to go quite across Florence in a driving rain to carry a lady a ball-dress. We were dripping wet when we reached her palace, but the dress was in good order, and we hoped, considering the lateness of the hour, and the bad weather, and so on, that the lady would give us something handsome, perhaps as much as half a franc. Well, she was very glad to see us, and, after putting on the dress, she said that she must give us something. And so she did,—five centimes [one cent] to each of us! I swallowed my anger, and put the coin into my pocket, but my companion fitted hers nicely into the key-hole of the hall door as soon as it was closed behind us. "There!" says she; "now my lady miser will have to send for a locksmith, and that will teach her not to be so stingy another time." So we both ran home laughing, in spite of our disappointment. But we were not so fortunate as to get off without a scolding. The next day the lady came to Madama and complained of our impertinence. Madama scolded us a little; but when she heard what a pitiful *buona mano* the lady had given us, she could not help laughing herself.

Still, she never thought of raising our pay, and as I improved, and felt myself quite mistress of my trade, I began to work over hours, at one or two houses where La Mamma had patrons, and in that way I got on very quickly. It was a proud day for me, signora, when I first began to give La Mamma something toward the housekeeping. I wanted to give her two-thirds of all I earned, but she would not let me. When I began to earn a franc and a half a day, she accepted half a franc, but she made me put away the franc for my *dote*. La Mamma always walked with me to the houses where I went to work, and in the evening either came for me herself or sent Marc Antonio. And she bade me be very careful and watchful and keep myself to myself. Often I thought her severe and suspicious, but now I thank God for the mother he gave us. We owe all the happiness of our lives to her.

I had been working for myself, as I have said, for more than five years. I had plenty of patrons, and was well thought of. Plain as I am, signora, I had not wanted for opportunities to go wrong; but, thank God, I never did. Once, too, I had thought of being married, but, happily for me, I

found out in time that I had set my love on a bad man, so I broke off my engagement, and put the thought of marriage away from me. Fausta had been married a long time, and so had Marc Antonio. Flavia said that she never would leave La Mamma, and I thought that I would do the same. But it was not to be. One morning La Mamma, who had been sitting up with a sick baby at the Albergo della Stella, came home and told me that I was born to good fortune,—that Signorina Teodora, the landlord's daughter, was going to be married, and that I was wanted to work at the *trousseau*. It was all to be made at home, and the signorina engaged me for three months. It was the first time that I had ever gone to an hotel to work; and La Mamma gave me a great many counsels about my behavior. Signorina Teodora was very kind, and the work was just exactly what I liked to do. I used to sew in the *guarda-roba* (linen-room), where the linen-keeper, a very respectable woman, was busy all day, mending and arranging the linen. That was all well enough, but at meal-times I was very uncomfortable. I used to go down to the servants' dining-room, and there the talk, and the manners too, were coarse and rude. I did not like to complain, but my position was a very hard one. I had taught the men to keep their distance, and they did so, but they were cross and disagreeable to me, and nicknamed me "La Superba" (the proud one). The women-servants all said that I gave myself airs, and if they could do anything to annoy me they [Pg 308] did. At last I proposed to Signorina Teodora that I should be allowed to take my meals in the *guarda-roba*, so that I might be nearer my work. But she said no, that would not do, but that I might have them in a little room next the padrone's dining-room, and that she would say that this was because I was wanted for trying on her dresses just at the time that the servants' dinner was served. The first time I went down to dinner alone I felt very much frightened; but my dinner was put on the table very nicely, and one of the men-servants, whom I had never spoken to before, waited on me. He did so just as politely as if I had been a lady, but he was very quiet. The next day he began to talk a little, and told me about his mother (who was dead), and about his childhood, and the customs of the Abruzzi, because he came from that part of Italy. We used to talk together so, day after day, while he waited on me, and we became very good friends. At last, when the time of my engagement was nearly run out, Luigi—that was the waiter's name—became very silent, but he served my dinner as nicely and carefully as ever. I was a little afraid that I had offended him, because every evening he used to say, as I rose from the table, "Are you coming back to-morrow?" And every time I said yes, he would answer, "Well, then, I can say what I have to say to-morrow," At last one night, when he said as usual, "Are you coming back to-morrow, *sarta* [dressmaker]?" I answered no,—that my work was over. "Well, then," says Luigi, "I must find courage to tell you to-night, *sarta*, that I love you, and I want you to be my wife!"

I sat still a moment, quite thunder-struck, and then I jumped up and ran out of the room. "I can say not a word," I said, as I passed him, "You know you ought to have spoken to La Mamma first."

"If that's all," says he, following me to the foot of the stairs, "I can speak to La Mamma to-morrow night."

"And then I may say no," I called out as I ran up-stairs.

Well, the next night he came to see La Mamma, and brought his uncle with him. This uncle was a very decent man, who had been gardener for thirty years in Count Gemiani's family. He was the only relation Luigi had in the world, and he gave him an excellent character. But I would not say a word. I told Luigi I could not tell whether I liked him or not until I saw him *in borghese* [*i.e.*, dressed in ordinary clothes], because you know, signora, I had only seen him dressed in black, with a white cravat. Well, he was very patient, and, as soon as he was at liberty, he came again, dressed *in borghese*, and then he pleased me, and I made up my mind to have him.

But then came another trouble. The match was not well looked upon by La Mamma and my brother and sisters, because Luigi was a person in service, and that had never happened in our family before. Babbo, as I have said, was a carrier; Mamma, a silk-weaver; Marc Antonio had married a *cucitrice di bianco* [shirt-maker]; Fausta, a candle-maker,—but, to be sure, her marriage did not matter, because her husband was a bad man. However, I was obstinate, and La Mamma liked Luigi in her heart, and so at last we were engaged. He used to come and see me two evenings in the week. Sometimes La Mamma sat with us, and sometimes Flavia. When it was Flavia's turn Luigi used to laugh and say the sentinel was changed. We had to keep our engagement very quiet, because you know that the men-servants at Italian hotels are not allowed to marry, and, though most of them are in reality married men, they always pretend to be bachelors. Gradually we made our preparations. Luigi had nearly eight hundred francs saved, and I had about four hundred. We spent about three hundred in getting our furniture and linen and so on, and Luigi took an apartment in the Borgo Santo Jacopo. I chose the house because it is directly opposite the Albergo della Stella, and I knew that I should feel happier if I could look across the river to the hotel lights and think that my Luigi was there. We were married on the [Pg 309] morning of the 30th of August, and when we had been *promessi sposi* for six months. The religious marriage was just after the early mass [five o'clock], and we all walked over together to the church. I felt quite calm,—not frightened at all; but when, four hours later, we had to go over to the Palazzo Vecchio for the civil marriage, I was all tears and trembling. However, that passed, like other things. We had quite a fine wedding breakfast. Marc Antonio had brought a friend of his, a nice, quiet man, who was a very good cook. He was out of place just then, and he had offered to cook for us if we would give him his breakfast. We had a mixed fry, and macaroni, and *ravaioli*, and a melon, one course after another, just like signori. Everybody had a good appetite, except Luigi and me, and La Mamma said that it did her soul good to hear the sound of frying in the house. *Poverina!* she did not often hear it. Well, after breakfast we all took a walk in the country, and when we came home again Flavia began to prepare supper, but Luigi said no, *we*

must go home, that our supper was waiting for us there. So I put my bonnet on, and then, when we were ready to say good-by, every one burst into tears,—La Mamma, and Flavia, and Fausta, and Marc Antonio and his wife, and I, and even Luigi, though he said afterward he was sure he did not know why. And how we all embraced! The signora would have thought that we were going over the sea, instead of just across the Ponte Vecchio. At last we went away arm in arm, and when we got to our own home there I found that Luigi had arranged the table so nicely, just as he used to do at the *albergo*, and had put a bunch of flowers in the centre. So we sat down to supper, and pretended to be signori just for that one evening.

The next day, being Sunday, we all went to high mass at the Duomo, and I wore my new wedding-gown of black cashmere. In the afternoon we went out to Certosa; and that was the end of my wedding-journey, for the next morning Luigi had to go back to his work at the *albergo*, and I had to take up my sewing again. It seemed so strange to be sitting down to work in my own house, and to look across the Arno at the great *albergo* and think that I had a husband there. Luigi could not come home as often as he longed to do, because he had but two free nights in the week. And he dared scarcely look out of the window, for fear some one should suspect that he was married, and then he would have lost his place. However, everything went well. We have been married eight years now, and, what with Luigi's fifty francs a month, and the *incerti* [*pour-boires*] and my work, we do pretty well. Luigi, thank God, is a good man, faithful and true and kind. I have never heard an angry word from him yet. And then he has no faults,—he does not smoke, or drink wine, or gamble; and regularly every month he brings me all his money to take care of. He is such a good son to La Mamma, too. He would never take a mouthful of food until he had helped her; and if a famine came to Florence, and there was but a piece of bread between Luigi and La Mamma, he would make her eat it, I know. Si, signora, we all live together now; La Mamma takes care of our little boy, and Flavia is head-woman in Madama Castagna's workroom, while I go out by the day, as I always did. It is a little harder for us this winter than usual, because there are so few *forestieri*. It really seemed as if the *alberghi* would never open. Luigi said that every evening there would be a crowd of people—waiters, and *facchini*, and so on—waiting at the door of the *albergo* and begging for work. And the *padrone* [landlord] used to say, "Find me the *forestieri*, and I'll find you the work." My Luigi is such a good servant that the *padrone* keeps him employed all the year round; but he felt very anxious this winter when he saw how few *forestieri* there were, and tried to save in every possible way. But, thank God, he never grudges La Mamma [Pg 310] anything, and she often says that these are her happiest days. She still works at knitting stockings, and braiding straw, and such light work; and she takes our baby boy out to walk twice a day, and every day at noon, rain or shine, she goes to mass. Many a quiet hour she has now in church to pray for Babbo, whom she never forgets, and for all of us. Then when we all come home from our work we have such pleasant evenings. I tell about the fine gowns I make for my ladies, and Luigi has so many stories about the grand *forestieri* and all their strange caprices, and then Marc Antonio and his wife come in, and he tells us about the ladies and gentlemen he drives out in his *vettura*, and she describes the fine linen she makes for her ladies. Well, if signori live for nothing else, they give us a great deal of pleasure.

Si, signora, we still live in the same apartment in the Borgo Santo Jacopo, on the south side of the Arno. I would not go away, because when my husband is at the *albergo* I can look across the river and think that he is there. Very often when I sit up late at my work, and all the rest are asleep and Luigi at the *albergo*, I look over the river, and the lights at the "Stella" seem to keep me company. Luigi, too, watches my light. I always sit by my window and keep my lamp there, so that he may know how late I work. Well, here is the signora's gown quite finished, and the end of my poor story. So good-night, signora, and may the good Lord send the signora a happy New Year!

MARIE L. THOMPSON.

FOOTNOTES:

[B] This true history—a picture, in its general features, of thousands of lives—is given, as nearly as possible, exactly as it fell from the lips of the narrator.

OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.

Tourgéneff's Idea of Bazaroff.

A volume containing several hundred of Tourgéneff's letters was published last winter in St. Petersburg by the "Society for Assisting Impecunious Authors and Scholars." It is to be followed by a second, and the proceeds are to be devoted to the foundation of a "Tourgéneff Memorial Fund." The whole collection will, we may hope, be translated into English. The following extracts relate chiefly to the character which is considered by many readers his finest creation, but which, as is well known, made him for a time very unpopular in Russia:

BOUGIVAL, August 18, 1871.

DEAR A. P.,—Although you do not ask me for a reply, and do not seem to wish for one, yet the

confidence which you have reposed in me and the feeling of sympathy and respect which you have awakened in me make it my duty to say a few words to you about your letter.... What? You say, too, that I meant to caricature the youth of Russia in Bazaroff? you repeat this—pardon the frankness of the expression—nonsensical accusation? Bazaroff,—this is my favorite child, for whose sake I quarrelled with Katkoff, upon whom I used all the color at my command. Bazaroff, this fine mind, this hero, a caricature? But it seems that there is nothing to be done in the case. Just as people accuse Louis Blanc to this day, in spite of all his protestations, of having introduced the national workshops, they attribute to me a wish to represent our youth as a caricature. I have long regarded the slander with contempt: I did not expect the feeling to be renewed on reading your letter.

Now to turn to your "elderly lady,"—that is, to current criticism, to the public. Like every elderly person, she holds fast to preconceived ideas, however preposterous they may be. For example, [Pg 311] she is perpetually asserting that since my "Annals of a Sportsman" my works are weak, because, having lived abroad, I cannot know Russia. But this accusation can touch only what I have written since 1863; for until then—*i.e.*, until my forty-fifth year—I lived almost uninterruptedly in Russia, except in 1848-49, when I wrote the "Annals of a Sportsman," while "Roudine," "A Nest of Nobles," "Ellen," and "Fathers and Sons" were written in Russia. But all that means nothing to the "elderly person:" *son siège est fait*.

The second weakness of the elderly one is that she persistently follows the fashion. At present the fashion in literature is politics. Everything non-political is for her rubbish and nonsense.

It is somewhat inconvenient to defend one's own works; but—fancy it!—I cannot even admit that "Stuk-Stuk" is nonsense. "What is it, then?" you will ask. It is this: it is a study of the Russian suicide epidemic, which rarely presents anything poetic or pathetic, but almost always results, on the contrary, from ambition, narrowness, with a mixture of mysticism or fatalism. You will object that my study is not successful. Possibly not; but I wished to point you to the right and fitness of investigating purely psychological (non-political and non-social) questions.

The elderly person reproaches me further with having no convictions. As an answer to that, my thirty years of literary activity will suffice. For no line which I have written have I had cause to blush, none have I had occasion to repudiate. Let another say this of himself. However, let the elderly person babble. I have not heeded her hitherto: I shall not begin now.

I do not know whether I shall write my novel; and I know in advance that it will have many defects.... But, permit me, dear A. P., why do not the oncoming young people take this task upon themselves? The old ones would gladly yield them place and honor, and would be the first to rejoice at the accession of new forces. But in the literary arena there figure the contributors to the "Djelo"[C] such as H.

You see, dear A. P., that you are not alone in being able to speak the whole truth, regardless of consequences. I hope you too will not be angry because of it, and will at least take notice of what I am saying.

I am still suffering from gout,—have reached Bougival, but still go about upon crutches, and shall hardly reach Paris within a month. You may be sure that I shall return the portfolio safely.

BOUGIVAL, September 11, 1874.

Your letter is so sweet and friendly, dear A. P., that I shall not delay answering it. You began with Bazaroff; I will begin with him too. You look for him in real life, and you do not find him. I will tell you why, at once. The times are changed; Bazaroffs are not needed now. For the social activity that is before us neither extraordinary talent nor even extraordinary mental power is needed; nothing great, distinguished, very individual. Industry and patience are required. Men and women must be ready to sacrifice themselves without fame or glory, must be able to conquer, having no fear of petty, obscure, necessary, elementary work. What, for instance, can be more necessary or elementary than teaching the peasant to read and write, helping him to get hospitals, etc.? Of what use are talents, even learning, for such work? One needs only a heart that can sacrifice its own egotism. You cannot even speak of a profession in the case (much less of our friend Blank's star). A sense of duty, the magnificent feeling of patriotism in the true sense of the word,—that is all that is needed. Bazaroff was the type of "one sent with a message," a great figure, gifted with a definite charm, not without a certain aureole. All that is not needed [Pg 312] now, and it is ridiculous to speak of heroes and artists of work. Brilliant figures in literature will probably not appear. Those who plunge into politics will only destroy themselves in vain. This is all true; but many cannot reconcile themselves at first to the fact, to the uncongenial *milieu*, to this modest resolve, especially such responsive and enthusiastic women as yourself. They may say what they please, they want to be charmed, carried away. You yourself say that you wish to bow in reverence; but before *useful* people one does not bow in reverence. We are entering an era of *merely useful* people; and these will be the best. Of these there will probably be many, of beautiful, charming workers very few. And in the very search for a Bazaroff—a living one—is perhaps unconsciously betrayed the thirst for beauty, naturally of a single peculiar type. All these illusions one must get rid of.

I should not have reproached your acquaintances with a want of talent if they had not made pretensions. If they were plodding workers, they would leave nothing to be desired; but when they loom up and claim admiration, one cannot pass on without reminding them that they have no right to our admiration.

Ah, A. P.! we shall see no typical characters, none of those new creations of whom people talk so much. The life of the people is undergoing a process of development and—throughout the whole mass—of decomposition and recomposition: it needs helpers, not leaders, and only at the end of this period will important, original figures appear. I have just said that you will not see them. You are still young. You will live to see the day: as for me, that is another thing.

For the present, let us learn our A, B, C, and teach others, do good gradually, in which you are already making progress. The letter from your son, which I herewith return, is warm and good. May he, too, enter the ranks of the useful workers and servants of the people, as we once had servants of the Czar!

PARIS, January 3, 1876.

TO M. E. SALTIKOFF:[D]—I received your letter yesterday, dear Michael Jefgrafowitch, and, as you see, I do not delay the answer. Your letter is by no means "dull and blunt," as you say. On the contrary, it is very good and sensible. It gave me pleasure. There hovers about it some power and better health, in sharp contrast with its immediate predecessor, which was an extremely gloomy production. Besides, I am by no means cheerful myself at present: this is the third day in bed with gout.

Now a line or two as to "Fathers and Sons," seeing that you have mentioned the subject. Do you really believe that all that you reproach me with never entered my own mind? For this reason I wish not to vanish from the scene before I finish my comprehensive novel, which I think will clear up many misunderstandings and place me where and as I belong. However, I do not wonder that Bazaroff has remained a riddle for many persons: I cannot understand clearly how I conceived him. There was—do not laugh—something more powerful than the author himself, something independent of him. I know only this,—there was no preconceived idea in me then, no "novel with a purpose" in my thought: I wrote naïvely, as if I myself wondered at what came of it....

Tell me, on your conscience, whether comparison with Bazaroff could be an affront to any one. Don't you perceive yourself that he is the most congenial of all my characters? "A certain fine perfume" is an invention of the reader's; but I am prepared to admit (and have already admitted in print in my "Recollections") that I had no right to give our reactionary mob an opportunity to make of a nickname a name. The author ought to have sacrificed himself to the citizen; and I therefore recognize as justified the estrangement of our youth from me, and all possible reproaches. The question of the time was more important than artistic truth, and I ought to have known this in advance. [Pg 313]

I have only to say once more, wait for my novel, and, until then, do not be indignant that, in order not to grow unaccustomed to the pen, I write slight insignificant things. Who knows?—perhaps it may yet be given to me to fire the hearts of men.

An entertaining writer in the sense of G——wa I shall never be. I would rather be a stupid writer.

But now—*basta*!

I greet you and press your hand most cordially.

IVAN SERGEWITCH TOURGÉNEFF.

Old Songs and Sweet Singers.

I cannot sing the old songs now:
  It is not that I deem them low,
But that I have forgotten how
    They go,

wrote Calverley in his delightful drollery about the advances of old age. Nevertheless he made a mistake, for old songs cling tenaciously to the consciousness; and memory, are retained when everything else in heart and mind has been blurred over, and of all the magic mirrors which reflect back our lives for us the most effective is a melody linked to words which moved us in our youth. When an orchestra stops playing its waltzes and mazourkas of the latest fashion and takes up the strains of "Kathleen Mavourneen," "Oft in the Stilly Night," or "Robin Adair," one may readily observe a change come over the older part of the crowd who listen. The familiar air is like a shell murmuring in their ears sweet, far-off, imperishable memories of youth, and that special epoch of youth best described as "*les heureux jours où l'on était si malheureux!*" It is an experience worth having to have heard the great singers, but it is not of the great singers that I wish to speak here. I fancy that it is with others as with myself, and, in my early days at least, music wrought its chief enchantments and most perfectly allied itself with the great world of fantasy and imagination when I heard it in my own home, or at least quietly and privately, and when its influence was of a constant and regular kind. Why is it that literature, which enshrines so much of what is personal and actual and a part of ideal autobiography, says so little of singers, although the song which moves us, rummaging among our old memories and, to our surprise and delight, bringing back clear pictures, is generally linked to the sweet singer who sang it, who interpreted it for us and made it a part of our imaginative possessions? Heroines of novels are rarely singers, or, if they sing, abstain from effective music, and have soft, soothing voices, "as if they only sang at twilight." Heroines of course have to be heroines and nothing else. "Soothing, unspeakable charm of gentle womanhood," wrote George Eliot, "which supersedes all

acquisitions, all accomplishments. You would never have asked at any period of Mrs. Amos Barton's life if she sketched or played the piano. You would perhaps have been rather scandalized if she had descended from the serene dignity of *being* to the assiduous unrest of *doing*." However, when he recalls the female singers he has known, any man will grant that they have been almost without exception very charming women. A really good singer must possess in absolute equipoise ardor and calm. But the first singer I ever heard who made me feel upborne by the music and floated as by the sweep of wings was a man with a high, melancholy, piercingly sweet tenor voice. He had a pale, striking face, with a mobile mouth, intensely brilliant blue eyes, a lofty forehead, and his fine, scanty brown hair hung low on his neck. As he sang with lifted head and eyes which gazed steadfastly before him, he seemed rapt and inspired. Were I to paint an angel I should try to seize his lineaments and the glory shining on his pale face. The song I loved best to hear him sing was Schubert's "Erl-King," which thrilled me with a sense of terror and mystery and made me tremble like a harp-string in response to his piercingly clear tones. Ever [Pg 314] and anon, as I listened to the child's cry of "Oh, father, my father!" I was clutched by the icy hand of the awful phantom he had invoked. Does anybody sing Schubert's songs nowadays, or are they invariably left to the violins, which can interpret their "eternal passion, eternal pain," so thrillingly? I never, I regret to say, heard the "Serenade" sung in a way which seemed to me adequate,—not to compare with the way in which Remenyi plays it. Those wonderful lyrical instruments the violin, the 'cello, and the flute have an almost exclusive right nowadays to some of the greatest songs. Few singers attempt the "Adelaïde" or "Che faro?"

I like to recall the first time I ever heard "Che faro senza Eurydice?" A musical *matinée* was given to an elegant elderly woman, Mrs. P——, who had had a wide social reputation as an accomplished singer. She was still mistress of all the technique of her art, but her voice was worn and it was not easily conceded that she was a delightful vocalist. Many of her songs seemed like the ghosts of the blissful happy songs she had sung in her youth. There was something half painful in their jocund gayety and archness. I went far away from the piano and seated myself with a group of young people, paying little attention to the music. Presently, however, a strain sought me out, a sweet, passionately reiterated strain: it seemed to be supplicating, imploring; it filled me with a restless pain. That cry of "Eurydice!" "Eurydice!" so beseeching, so passionate, so exhausted by longing, drew me with an irresistible power. Gluck certainly achieved the effect he attempted, and showed us what the fabled power of Orpheus was.

Certain songs of indifferent worth often gain charm to us, although it is only the greatest music which has the supreme power of expressing the highest thoughts of man and the most ardent longings of his soul. But there was a time when I found inconceivable sweetness in certain ballads of Abt, and the like. Sara X——, a lovely youthful creature, with a frank, beautiful smile, used to sing them, sitting down at the piano and going on from one song to another, generally beginning with "The Bells are Hushed," which silenced the room when twenty people were buzzing flirtation and gossip. One line of that song, as she sang it, draws the heart out of me still as I remember it:

> Sleep well, sleep well,
> And let thy lovely eyelids close.

The sentiment such songs arouse is soft but poignant. Some songs—the "Adelaïde," for example—are songs to make one commit suicide. But this sort of music stirs and delights while it mocks with the sweetness which soothes us not. "She kept me awake all night, as a strain of Mozart's might do," Keats wrote of his Charmian. There was no song this special songstress sang which she did not make her own by a peculiar and powerful effort. Her instinct was to rouse, charm, fascinate her little audience. Not to move her hearers was to her not to sing, and when she sang as she wished she could sweep away his world of ideas from her listener and recreate a new one. In one song, an Italian composition called "The Dream," she always seemed to be carried beyond herself. In reading Tourgéneff's description of Iakof's singing I could only think of Sara X——: "Iakof became more and more excited; completely master of himself, he gave himself up entirely to the inspiration that had taken possession of him. His voice no longer trembled; it no longer betrayed anything but the emotion of passion, that emotion that so rapidly communicates itself to the hearers. One evening I was by the sea when the tide was coming in; the murmur of the waves was becoming more and more distinct. I saw a gull motionless on the shore, with its white breast facing the purplish sea; from time to time it spread its enormous wings and seemed to greet the incoming waves and the disk of the sun. This came to my mind at that moment." And as I read [Pg 315] these words of Tourgéneff's, Sara X—— singing "The Dream" came to my mind.

A less dramatic singer, but an incomparable singer of Scotch ballads, and indeed of all ballads, at the same period of my life made an imperishable impression upon my mind. Nothing can surpass certain Scotch ballads for the faculty of quickening into susceptibility the elementary poetry which underlies human nature. Every man and every woman becomes again an individual man, an individual woman, who is moved by "John Anderson, my Jo, John," or "Auld Robin Gray." Never was so sweet a voice as this singer's, never did woman have a higher gift of rescuing the soul from every-day use and wont and giving it glimpses from the mountain-summit and the thrill and inspiration which come from the wider view and the purer air. She gave her gift, she enriched the world, and her songs are still incorporate in the hearts and souls of those who loved her.

We do not hear songs enough in our every-day life; and even from the singers on the boards the best songs are rarely heard. There are many songs I should like to repeat the mere name of, so much it means to me; but it might not carry the same music to others. Dr. Johnson said of a

certain work, "There should come out such a book every thirty years, dressed in the words of the times." So there should appear at least twice in every decade of each man's and woman's life an unsurpassed singer of old songs, who should give us not only the "Adelaïde," but "Mignon," "The Serenade," the "Adieu," and all the many-colored ballads on love,—plain, fantastic, descriptive, sad, and sweet,—so that we might enjoy an epitome of our life-long musical pleasures, and not have to cry, like Faust, but in vain, "Give me my youth again."

L. M.

A Chess Village.

The all-pervading influence of chess observable in that peculiar region described in "Through the Looking-Glass" is hardly less perceptible in the little, antiquated German village of Ströbeck, not far from Halberstadt. In the eleventh century this village was noted for the devotion of its people to chess, and they have kept this characteristic feature down to the present day. All the inhabitants, except the very small children, are chess-players of more or less skill, and the game is to them what the world-renowned Passion-play is to the Oberammergauers.

A great many notable men have visited Ströbeck at various times on account of its reputation as a chess-playing community. The council-house contains numerous memorials of these visits, which the villagers take pride in showing to strangers. Among the most highly prized of these memorials are a board and chessmen which were presented to the village in 1651 by Kurfürst Frederick William of Brandenburg.

In June, 1885, the chess societies of the Hartz districts held a "*Schachcongress*," or chess convention, at this appropriate place. Besides the regularly-appointed delegates, a large number of visitors came from various parts of Germany, many of whom were players of wide repute. Among the latter was Herr Schalopp, well known as one of the best chess-players of Berlin. While at Ströbeck, Schalopp played games with thirty-seven persons at the same time. He won thirty-four of the games, and two of the three opponents whom he did not defeat were an old woman of the village, and her grandson, a boy of thirteen.

The convention lasted several days, and the villagers won a large proportion of the silver-ware, chess-boards, and other prizes offered for victory. Every house contains prizes which had been won in such contests on former occasions. The visitors were very much surprised at the fine playing of the village children, who, before the convention adjourned, gave a special exhibition of their skill in the game. The time characteristically chosen for this juvenile tournament was Sunday afternoon. Of course the early development of these small chess-players must have been caused principally by frequent practice and constant study of the game; but students of psychology might find in it an instance of transmitted tendency and the inherited effect of a certain habit of thought. [Pg 316]

Such a rustic society as Ströbeck could hardly exist anywhere but in Germany. The Italian peasants, who give so much of their time to *loto*, are generally too lazy to make the mental exertion required for chess, while in most other European countries the rural population of the lower class entertain themselves chiefly with fights between dogs, cocks, or men who are but little superior to either. Here in the United States there are, no doubt, lovers of chess in nearly every village or small town, as well as in the cities; but in comparison with that of base-ball or roller-skating its popularity is nowhere great enough to be taken into account as an indication of mental tendencies or characteristics.

W. W. C.

FOOTNOTES:

[C] A review of which the belles-lettres department is feeble, but which publishes excellent articles in other departments.

[D] Known in Russian literature as Tschtedrin, one of the ablest satirists, editor until last year of the leading scientific literary review, now suppressed on account of its radical tendencies.

LITERATURE OF THE DAY

"The Congo, and the Founding of its Free State: A Story of Work and Exploration." By Henry M. Stanley. Two Volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers.

It is not as the geographical discoverer and explorer—except incidentally and to a limited extent—that Mr. Stanley appears in these volumes. It is as Bula Matari,—"Breaker of Rocks,"—making roads and bridges, establishing stations, pushing the outposts of civilization into the heart of Africa. He no longer fights his way through hostile tribes or seeks to avoid their notice, anxious

only to penetrate an unknown region, secure his own safety and that of his followers, and report his achievements, leaving no trace behind except a recollection as of some fiery meteor that had vanished without its portents being apprehended. He returns to make the signification clear, a harbinger not of disasters, but of a wonderful new era of peace and prosperity. He bestows lavish gifts, negotiates treaties, purchases territorial rights, and devotes himself to the task of opening avenues to trade and preparing the way for colonization. The same energy and pluck, the same spirit of persistence, that triumphed over the obstacles and dangers of his earlier enterprises are again called into play, combined with the suavity and patience demanded for the attainment of the present object and permitted by the ample means at his disposal and the freedom from any necessity for impetuous haste or hazardous adventures. Experience, counsel, and the sense of higher responsibilities have brought a calmer judgment and greater steadiness of action, but the boyish temperament has not lost its sway, and more than one crisis is brought to a happy issue by methods in which a love of fun mingles with sagacity and foresight and renders their measures more effective.

The work undertaken by the Association of which Mr. Stanley was the agent is of a purely initiatory character. The acquisition of territory and of certain rights of sovereignty under treaties with local chiefs constitutes the "founding" of the "Congo Free State," which has obtained the recognition of the European powers and become one of the contracting parties to the articles adopted by the recent Conference at Berlin for regulating the commercial and political status of the river-basins of Central Africa. Under these articles absolute freedom of trade, intercourse, and settlement is secured to the people of all nations throughout a region of vast extent and unsurpassed fertility, rich in natural products, not so densely peopled as to resist or restrict any conceivable schemes of colonization, yet offering in its numerous village populations material sufficiently available for the needs of industry and commerce and amenable to philanthropic influences. The preparatory labors, which leave no room for doubt on this point, [Pg 317] have been already accomplished, with the exception of what Mr. Stanley regards as the sure and indispensable means of opening up the resources of the country,—viz., the construction of a railway around the rapids that impede the navigation of the Congo. That this crowning enterprise would be highly and immediately remunerative he considers easily demonstrable. "To-day," he writes, "fifty-two thousand pounds are paid per annum for porterage between Stanley Pool and the coast, by native traders, the International Association, and three missions, which is equal to five and one-half per cent. on the nine hundred and forty thousand pounds said to be needed to construct the railway to the Pool. But let the Vivi and Stanley Pool railroad be constructed, and it would require an army of grenadiers to prevent the traders from moving on to secure the favorite places in the commercial El Dorado of Africa." It is, of course, to European capitalists that Mr. Stanley addresses his appeal; and when it is remembered that their least profitable investments have not been those which aided in the development of barbarous countries, it seems not improbable that at no remote period a sufficient portion of the riches that so continually make themselves wings and fly away to distant quarters of the globe may seek the banks of the Congo in preference to those of the Hudson or the Wabash.

While holding out this tempting bait to merchants, manufacturers, and the moneyed classes generally, Mr. Stanley declines to dilate upon the advantages of the Congo basin as a field for immigration. That portion of it which in his view "is blessed with a temperature under which Europeans may thrive and multiply" is at present inaccessible to settlers. It is "the cautious trader, who advances, not without the means of retreat," who is to act as the pioneer and the missionary of civilization, stimulating and directing the industry of the natives. The suppression of the internal slave-trade is another object to be aimed at,—one which Mr. Stanley, in an address recently delivered in London, held up as capable of accomplishment by an outlay of five thousand pounds a year. What rebate should be made, on this point and on others, from the anticipations which a sanguine temperament, that has enabled its possessor to struggle with so many difficulties and to achieve so many enterprises, would naturally tend to heighten and render glowing, is a question that may be reserved for those whom it directly concerns. Equatorial Africa is not likely ever to become the home of a white population, but it need not for that reason be left to "stew in its own juice." On the contrary, it offers on that very account a fit subject for the experiment, which has nowhere yet been adequately tried, of developing latent capacities for progress in races that have raised themselves above the level of absolute savagery without attaining to those ideals which, never wholly realized, are essential to continuous improvement. It has been found easy to enslave, to debase, to exterminate races in this condition, while the ill success of efforts to enlighten and elevate them has led to the inference that this is impracticable. The trial, however, will not have been made till the counteracting influences have ceased to act, or at least to predominate, and time has been allowed for hidden forces that may possibly exist to be called into play. As Mr. Stanley observes, "It is out of the fragments of warring myriads that the present polished nations of Europe have sprung. Had a few of those waves of races flowing and eddying over Northern Africa succeeded in leaping the barrier of the equator, we should have found the black aboriginal races of Southern Africa very different from the savages we meet to-day."

It was the spirit in which Mr. Stanley labored—the ardor and hopefulness, the unfailing patience and good temper, with which he applied himself to the task of cultivating the good will and securing the co-operation of the natives—that made his enterprise a success. With some exceptions, for which he gives ample credit, his European subordinates seem to have been a constant source of embarrassment. Possibly there may have been on his own part a lack of that administrative ability which, acquired through discipline, imparts the skill and power to enforce it. At all events, it is the sympathy and humor with which he portrays his innumerable "blood-

brothers"—greedy, cunning, and capricious, but untainted with ferocity, and consequently manageable, like children, by a judicious blending of severity and indulgence—that give interest and charm to his narrative. It has many faults and deficiencies which in a work of greater literary pretensions would be inexcusable. The grammatical blunders with which it abounds are the least [Pg 318] annoying, since their grossness makes it easy for the reader to supply mentally the needed correction without effort or consideration. Looseness of diction, repetitions and redundancies of all kinds, and, above all, a frequent lack of clearness and vividness both in statement and description, are more serious impediments to the wish to gain comprehension and instruction. Like most untrained writers, Mr. Stanley imagines that, with a sufficiency of matter, it is only necessary to refrain from striving after picturesque effects or ornate embellishments in order to attain the qualities of clearness and simplicity. Happily, the impulsiveness that betrays itself in his style seems to have been kept well under control in the management of his enterprise. It is always, indeed, apparent as a leading characteristic, but it breaks loose only on occasions when it may be safely and not unattractively displayed.

"Life of Frank Buckland." By his Brother-in-Law, George C. Bompas. London: Smith, Elder & Co. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

There is a story told of Sir Edwin Landseer's being presented to the King of Portugal, who impressively greeted the famous painter with, "I am rejoiced to make your acquaintance, Sir Edwin Landseer, *I am so fond of beasts*." An equally ardent sympathy with Frank Buckland's specialty was necessary to his friends while he was alive, and is required by those who read this delightful, bizarre, and admirable history of a man whose fellow-feeling for all creatures endowed with life was as broad and comprehensive as Dame Nature's for all her children. He had, it might seem, no antipathies. Everything excited his interest, curiosity, and tenderness. Bears, eagles, vipers, jackals, hedgehogs, and snakes roomed with him. He not only lived on intimate terms with his zoological curiosities, petting them, training them, studying them, but he finally ate them. As Douglas Jerrold said of the New Zealanders, "Very economical people. We only kill our enemies; they eat 'em. We hate our foes to the last: while there's no learning in the end how Zealanders are brought to relish 'em."

It had been the elder Buckland's habit to try strange dishes. While he was Dean of Westminster, hedgehogs, tortoises, potted ostrich, and occasionally rats, frogs, and snails, were served up for the delectation of favored guests, and alligator was considered a rare delicacy. "Party at the Deanery," one guest notes: "tripe for dinner; don't like crocodile for breakfast." Thus freed, to begin with, from the trammels of habit and prejudice, there was little in the way of fish, flesh, or fowl which Frank Buckland did not sooner or later try, with various results. For instance, to quote from his diary:

"March 9. Party of Huxley, Blagden, Rolfs. Had the lump-fish for dinner; very good,—something like turtle.

"March 10. Rather seedy from lump-fish."

And again:

"B—— called: had a viper for luncheon."

He held a theory that from popular ignorance and superstition much wholesome material is wasted which might be made useful not only in satisfying hunger, but in cheapening the prices of the foods which new control the market. The "Acclimatization Society" was formed by his influence, at the inaugural dinner of which everything that grows on the face of the earth and under the waters was partaken of, from kangaroo hams to sea-slugs. These various studies and experiments, all entered into with unequalled spirit and audacity, led up finally to the great work of Frank Buckland's life, which was the restocking of the watercourses of his own and other countries with the trout and salmon which had once teemed in them, but had been driven away by man's encroachments. The success of his system of fish-culture is too well known to require comment, having had the happiest results in all countries in which it has been introduced. But the perils and vicissitudes encountered in procuring the ova are little realized by most people. "Salmon-egg collecting," Frank Buckland wrote in 1878, "is one of the most difficult, and I may say dangerous, tasks that fall to my lot." And it was, indeed, the frightful exposure attending this search for spawn on a bitter January day in the icy waters of the North Tyne that shortened his bright, useful career.

The biography is most instructive and valuable, besides being highly interesting. And Frank Buckland's life was by far too rich and too many-sided to allow anything less than his full history to give an adequate idea of his patience, his fidelity of purpose, his love of work, and his joy in accomplishment. The birthday entries in his diary almost invariably disclose his satisfaction and [Pg 319] comfort in his own life and endeavors: "December 17, 1870. My birthday. I am very thankful to God to allow me so much prosperity and happiness on my forty-fourth birthday, and that I have been enabled to work so well. I trust he may spare me for many more years to go on with my work."

The book abounds in droll stories, some quite new, and some already given in his lectures and natural-history papers. He generally travelled with some curious collections in his pockets or in bottles; and, whether these were rats, vipers, snails, or frogs, by some strange fatality they were

certain to get loose and turn up among his fellow-passengers in car or diligence. To twine snakes around the necks and arms of young ladies playing quadrilles was another harmless joke. "Don't be afraid," he would say: "they won't hurt you. And do be a good girl, and don't make a fuss." He possessed an easy gift of adapting scientific theories and deductions to popular interest and comprehension, and his "Curiosities in Natural History" and other writings undoubtedly gave a strong impulse to the tastes of this generation, of which the many out-of-doors papers on birds, game, and the habits of all living creatures are the result.

"George Eliot's Poetry, and Other Studies." By Rose Elizabeth Cleveland. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.

Miss Cleveland's book shows wide reading, study, painstaking discrimination, enthusiastic zeal, and, above all, the never-failing impulse of an individual idea. It reveals on every page a healthy, well-poised womanly nature, and the opinions advanced are a part of the conscience and moral being as well as of the intellect. The author has fed her mind and heart with high dreams and lofty ideals, and it is not only a pleasure to her to disclose them, but a sacred duty as well.

"When a high thought comes," she writes in "Reciprocity," "we owe that thought to the world. A great deal of this interment of our best thought-life is justified to ourselves by the plea that such thoughts are too sacred for utterance: a wretched sophistry, a miserable excuse for what is really our fear of criticism." There is nothing trivial or false about the critical and ethical views which Miss Cleveland gives bravely, although they are not invariably rendered with the felicity and pointed phrase which come from a careful selection of words and symbols. She is a little dazzled by the flowers and fruitage of a fancy which most of us are compelled to curb and prune to meet the requisitions of time and space. These papers were prepared chiefly, the dedication tells us, for schools and colleges, and a little of the pedantry and ample leisure of a teacher who has his audience safe under his own control is apparent in them. Little goes without saying; the whole story is told; yet it is always easy to put aside the parasitical growth and get at the solid and useful idea. The book was not written for critics who desire to have everything summed up in a single sentence, and who are apt to praise the volumes which encumber the book-seller's shelves rather than those which run through seven editions in as many days.

Like most other American essayists, she has couched many of her phrases and ideas in the Emersonian mould. Her sentences are short; she uses a homely illustration by preference. "Independence," she says, "in an absolute sense is an impossibility. The nature of things is against it. The human soul was not made to contain itself. It was made to spill over, and it does and will spill over, always as *quid pro quo*, wherever lodged, to the end of time."... "There is a vast amount of thinking which ought to be in the market. We hold our best thoughts and give our second best."... "We do a good deal of shirking in this life on the ground of not being geniuses. The truth is, there is an immense amount of humbug lurking in the folds of those specious theories about genius. Let a man or woman go to work at a thing, and the genius will take care of itself."

Miss Cleveland has gathered a large audience, and it is a satisfaction to feel in reading her book that she holds her place before them with invariable good sense, high faith, and a dignity which commands respect.

"Aulnay Tower." By Blanche Willis Howard. Boston: Ticknor & Co.

There is a good situation in "Aulnay Tower," but the book may be said to be all situation, with little movement, no development, and the very slightest free play of character and motive. The [Pg 320] scene is laid at the château of the Marquis de Montauban, not far from Paris, at the moment in the Franco-German war when Sedan had been fought, the emperor was a prisoner, and the Germans were investing the capital. The marquis, his niece the Countess Nathalie de Vallauris, and his chaplain the Abbé de Navailles, in spite of orders from General Trochu, have remained at this country-seat, apparently indifferent to passing events. Thus it is a rude awakening when they find the Germans knocking at the castle doors and demanding entertainment for the officers of the Saxon grenadiers, who are quartered upon them during most of the time occupied by the siege of Paris.

Here, then, is the situation. The Countess Nathalie, a widow of twenty-three, "a beautiful woman, young, pale, fair-haired, stately and forbidding," confronts these invaders of her private peace and enemies of her country, intending to freeze them by her haughtiness, her indifference, her disdain, but carries away even from the first encounter a haunting and rankling recollection of a tall man in blue; while the tall man in blue, Adjutant von Nordenfels, "from the moment she stood before the officers in her cold protest and unrelenting pride," was madly in love with the countess. The feelings of these two young people being thus from the first removed from the region of doubt and conjecture, what few slight obstacles contrive to separate them for a time carry little weight with the reader. There is a dearth of incident which the side-play of the coquettish maid, Nathalie's *femme-de-chambre*, fails to relieve. The marquis and Manette are the traditional nobleman and soubrette, and flourish before us all the adjuncts of the stage. We give a fragment from a soliloquy of Manette's which suggests the foot-lights and an enforced "wait" in a

comedy during a change of dress for the principal actors: "I adore Countess Nathalie, and am thankful for my blessings. And yet I have my disappointments, my chagrins. To-day, for example, what a field for genius! what a chance for never-to-be-forgotten impressions! A dozen officers! Not a woman in Aulnay but madame and me. Oh, just heaven, what possibilities! My rich imagination dressed us both in the twinkling of an eye. For the Countess Nathalie gentle severity was the key-note of my composition,—heavy black silk, of course. There it lies. Elegance and dignity in the train. Happy surprises in the drapery. Fascination in the sleeves. Defiance, pride, and patriotism in the high collar, tempered by regret in the soft ruche.... She would have been a problem and a poem; while I, in my cheerful reds, my dazzling white, my decisive short skirts, my piquant shoes, my audacious apron, am a conundrum, a pleasantry, an epigram." This would be very pretty on the stage, but a waiting-maid who calls herself an "epigram" passes our imagination under any other circumstances. In fact, Miss Howard seems to us to be altogether on a false tack in this novel,—to have utterly abandoned realism, and in its place to have imposed upon us scenes, characters, and actuating motives which have figured over and over again in book and play, and to which she has not succeeded in imparting any special vivacity or charm. The novel falls far below "Guenn," in which the author riveted and deepened the impression of her first clever little book, "One Summer."

"Married for Fun." Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

The title of "Married for Fun," and the plot of the book itself, might easily suggest its being a screaming farce; and that may actually have been the intention of the author, although she is at times painfully serious. A young lady who, after going through a form of marriage to an utter stranger in a stupid charade, believes herself to be legally his wife, seems to be practically unfitted for the position of heroine in anything except a farce. But there is no fun in the book, and a whole series of absurd and incoherent incidents fail to produce any effect upon the reader save one of deadly ennui. The narrative, if such a host of incongruities and imbecilities can be called a narrative, is perpetually adorned by choice reflections of the author's own, and the itinerancy of an extended European tour is condensed and added to the other attractions.

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