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Title: Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine, Volume 59, No. 365, March, 1846

Author: Various

Release Date: August 30, 2009 [EBook #29858]

Language: English

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BLACKWOOD'S

EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

No. CCCLXV. MARCH, 1846. Vol. LIX.

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EDINBURGH:

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, 45, GEORGE STREET;

AND 22, PALL-MALL, LONDON.

To whom all Communications (post paid) must be addressed.

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PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND HUGHES, EDINBURGH.

BLACKWOOD'S

EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

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No. CCCLXV. MARCH, 1846. Vol. LIX.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK OF HOMER'S ILIAD,

Attempted in English Hexameters.

[It may be thought idle or presumptuous to make a new attempt towards the naturalization among us of any measure based on the ancient hexameter. Even Mr Southey has not been in general successful in such efforts; yet no one can deny that here and there—as, for instance, at the opening of his *Vision of Judgment*, and in his Fragment on *Mahomet*—he has produced English hexameters of very happy construction, uniting vigour with harmony. His occasional success marks a step of decided progress. Dr Whewell also, in some passages of his *Hermann and Dorothea*, reached a musical effect sufficient to show, that, if he had bestowed more leisure, he might have rendered the whole of Goethe's masterpiece in its original measure, at least as agreeably as the *Faust* has been presented to us hitherto. Mr Coleridge's felicity, both in the Elegiac metre and a slight variation of the Hendecasyllabic, is universally acknowledged.

The present experiment was made before the writer had seen the German Homer of Voss; but in revising his MS. he has had that skillful performance by him, and he has now and then, as he hopes, derived advantage from its study. Part of the first book of the *Iliad* is said to have been accomplished by Wolff in a still superior manner; but the writer has never had the advantage of comparing it with Voss. Nor was he acquainted, until he had finished his task, with a small specimen of the first book in English hexameters, which occurs in the *History of English Rhythms*, lately published by Mr E. Guest, of Caius College, Cambridge.

Like Voss and Mr Guest, he has chosen to adhere to the Homeric names of the deities, in place of adopting the Latin forms; and in this matter he has little doubt that every scholar will approve his choice. Mr Archdeacon Williams has commonly followed the same plan in those very spirited prose translations that adorn his learned Essay, *Homerus*.

It is hardly necessary to interpret these names: as, perhaps, no one will give much attention to the following pages, who does not already know that Zeus answers to Jupiter—and that Kronion is a usual Homeric designation of Zeus, signifying the son of Kronos = Saturn: that Hera is Juno; Poseidon, Neptune: Ares, Mars; Artemis, Diana; Aphrodité, Venus; Hermes, Mercury; and so forth.

Should this experiment be received with any favour, the writer has in his portfolio a good deal of Homer, long since translated in the same manner; and he would not be reluctant to attempt the completion of an Iliad in English Hexameters, such as he can make them.

N.N.T.

London, *Jan.* 31, 1846.]

[Pg 260]

Now the assembly dissolv'd; and the multitude rose and disperst them,
Each making speed to the ships, for the needful refreshment of nature,
Food and the sweetness of sleep; but alone in his tent was Achilles,
Weeping the friend that he lov'd; nor could Sleep, the subduer of all things,
Master his grief; but he turn'd him continually hither and thither,
Thinking of all that was gracious and brave in departed Patroclus,
And of the manifold days they two had been toilfully comrades,
Both in the battles of men and the perilous tempests of ocean.
Now on his side, and anon on his back, or with countenance downward,
Prone in his anguish he sank: then suddenly starting, he wander'd,
Desolate, forth by the shore; till he noted the burst of the morning
As on the waters it gleam'd, and the surf-beaten length of the sand-beach.
Instantly then did he harness his swift-footed horses, and corded
Hector in rear of the car, to be dragg'd at the wheels in dishonour.
Thrice at the speed he encircled the tomb of the son of Menœtius,
Ere he repos'd him again in his tent, and abandon'd the body,
Flung on its face in the dust; but not unobserv'd of Apollo.
He, though the hero was dead, with compassionate tenderness eyed him,
And with the ægis of gold all over protected from blemish,
Not to be mangled or marr'd in the turbulent trailing of anger.

Thus in the rage of his mood did he outrage illustrious Hector;
But from the mansions of bliss the Immortals beheld him with pity,
And to a stealthy removal incited the slayer of Argus.
This by the rest was approv'd; but neither of Hera, the white-arm'd,
Nor of the Blue-eyed Maid, nor of Earth-disturbing Poseidon.
Steadfast were they in their hatred of Troy, and her king, and her people,
Even as of old when they swore to avenge the presumption of Paris,
Who at his shieling insulted majestical Hera and Pallas,
Yielding the glory to her that had bribed him with wanton allurements.
But when suspense had endured to the twelfth reappearance of morning,
Thus, in the midst of the Gods, outspake to them Phœbus Apollo:
"Cruel are ye and ungrateful, O Gods! was there sacrifice never
Either of goats or of beeves on your altars devoted by Hector,
Whom thus, dead as he lies, ye will neither admit to be ransom'd,
Nor to be seen of his wife, or his child, or the mother that bore him,
Nor of his father the king, or the people, with woful concernment
Eager to wrap him in fire and accomplish the rites of departure?
But with the sanction of Gods ye uphold the insensate Achilles,
Brutal, perverted in reason, to every remorseful emotion
Harden'd his heart, as the lion that roams in untameable wildness;
Who, giving sway to the pride of his strength and his truculent impulse,
Rushes on sheep in the fold, and engorges his banquet of murder;
So has the Myrmidon kill'd compassion, nor breathes in his bosom
Shame, which is potent for good among mortals, as well as for evil.
Dear was Patroclus to him, but the mourner that buries a brother,
Yea, and the father forlorn, that has stood by the grave of his offspring,
These, even these, having wept and lamented, are sooth'd into calmness,
For in the spirit of man have the Destinies planted submission.
But because Hector in battle arrested the life of his comrade,
Therefore encircling the tomb, at the speed of his furious horses,
Drags he the corse of the fall'n: Neither seemly the action nor prudent;
He among Us peradventure may rouse a retributing vengeance,
Brave though he be, that insults the insensible clay in his frenzy."

Hera, the white-arm'd queen, thus answer'd Apollo in anger:
"Thou of the Silvern Bow! among them shall thy word have approval,
Who in equivalent honour have counted Achilles and Hector.
This from a man had his blood, and was nurs'd at the breast of a woman;
He that ye estimate with him, conceiv'd in the womb of a Goddess,
Rear'd by myself, and assign'd by myself for the consort of Peleus,
Whom above all of his kindred the love of Immortals exalted.

And ye were witnesses, Gods! Thou, too, at the feast of the Bridal,
Thou, with the lyre in thy hand, ever-treacherous, friend of the guilty!"

But the Compeller of Clouds thus answer'd her, interposing:
"Hera! with Gods the debate, nor beseems the upbraiding of anger.
Not in equivalent honour the twain; yet was generous Hector
Dearest at heart to the Gods among Ilion's blood of the death-doom'd:
Dearest to me; for his gifts from his youth were unfailingly tender'd;
Never to altar of mine was his dutiful sacrifice wanting,
Savour, or costly libation; for such is our homage appointed.
Dear was the generous Hector; yet never for that shall be sanction'd
Stealthy removal, or aught that receives not assent from Achilles.
Daily and nightly, be sure, in his sorrow his mother attends him;
Swiftly some messenger hence, and let Thetis be moved to approach me:
So may some temperate word find way to his heart, and Peleides
Bend to the gifts of the king, and surrender the body of Hector."

Zeus having spoken, up sprang, for his messenger, swift-footed Iris;
And between Samos anon and the rocks of precipitous Imber
Smote on the black sea-wave, and about her the channel resounded:
Then, as the horn-fixt lead drops sheer from the hand of the islesman,
Fatal to ravenous fish, plung'd she to the depth of the ocean:
Where in a cavern'd recess, the abode of the sisterly Sea-nymphs,
Thetis the goddess appear'd, in the midst of them sitting dejected;
For she was ruefully brooding the fate of her glorious offspring,
Doom'd to a Phrygian grave, far off from the land of his fathers.
Near to her standing anon, thus summon'd her wind-footed Iris:
"Thetis, arise! thou art calléd by Zeus whose decrees are eternal."
But she was instantly answer'd by Thetis the silvery-footed:—
"Why hath the Mightiest calléd for me? Overburthen'd with sorrow,
How shall I stand in the place where the Gods are assembled in splendour?
Yet will I go: never word that He speaketh in vain may be spoken."

So having spoken, the Goddess in majesty peerless, arising,
Veil'd her in mantle of black; never gloomier vesture was woven;
And she advanced, but, for guidance, the wind-footed Iris preceded.
Then the o'erhanging abyss of the ocean was parted before them,
And having touched on the shore, up darted the twain into Æther;
Where, in the mansion of Zeus Far-seeing, around him were gather'd
All the assembly of Gods, without sorrow, whose life is eternal:
And by the throne was she seated; for Blue-eyed Pallas Athena
Yielded the place; and, the goblet of gold being tender'd by Hera
Softly with comforting words, soon as Thetis had drank and restored it,
Then did the Father of gods and of men thus open his purpose:
"Thou to Olympus hast come, O Goddess! though press'd with affliction;
Bearing, I know it, within thee a sorrow that ever is wakeful.
Listen then, Thetis, and hear me discover the cause of the summons:
Nine days agone there arose a contention among the Immortals,
Touching the body of Hector and Town-destroying Achilles:
Some to a stealthy removal inciting the slayer of Argus,
But in my bosom prevailing concern for the fame of Peleides,
Love and respect, as of old, toward Thee, and regard of hereafter.
Hasten then, Thou, to the camp, and by Thee let thy son be admonished:
Tell that the Gods are in anger, and I above all the Immortals,
For that the corse is detain'd by the ships, and he spurns at a ransom;
If there be awe toward me, let it move the surrender of Hector.
Iris the while will I send to bid generous Priam adventure,
That he may rescue his son, straightway to the ships of Achaia,
Laden with gifts for Achilles, wherewith to appease and content him."

Nor was the white-footed Thetis unsway'd by the word of Kronion;
But she descended amain, at a leap, from the peaks of Olympus,
And to the tent of her son went straight; and she found him within it
Groaning in heavy unrest—but around him his loving companions

Eager in duty appear'd, as preparing the meal for the midday.
Bulky and woolly the sheep they within the pavilion had slaughter'd.
Then by the side of the chief sat Thetis the mother majestic,
And she caress'd with her hand on his cheek, and address'd him and named him—
"How long wilt thou, my child, thus groan, in a pauseless affliction
Eating thy heart, neither mindful of food nor the pillow of slumber?
Well were it surely for thee to be mingled in love with a woman;
Few are, bethink thee, the days thou shalt live in the sight of thy mother;
Near even now stands Death, and the violent Destiny shades thee.
Listen meantime to my word, for from Zeus is the message I bear thee;
Wrathful, he says, are the Gods, but himself above all the Immortals,
For that in rage thou detainest the dead, nor is ransom accepted.
Haste thee, deliver the corse, and be sooth'd with the gifts of redemption."

Ceased then Thetis divine, and Peleides the swift-footed answer'd:
"So let it be: let a ransom be brought, and the body surrender'd,
Since the Olympian minds it in earnest, and sends the commandment."

Thus at the station of ships had the son and the mother communion.
Iris from Zeus meanwhile had descended to Ilion holy:
"Go," said he, "Iris the swift, and make speed from the seat of Olympus
Down into Ilion, bearing my message to generous Priam.
Forth to the ships let him fare with a ransom to soften Peleides—
Priam alone; not a man from the gates of the city attending:
Save that for driving the mules be some elderly herald appointed,
Who may have charge of the wain with the treasure, and back to the city
Carefully carry the dead that was slain by the godlike Achilles.
Nor be there death in the thought of the king, nor confusion of terror;
Such is the guard I assign for his guiding, the slayer of Argus,
Who shall conduct him in peace till he reaches the ships of Achaia.
Nor when, advancing alone, he has enter'd the tent of Peleides,
Need there be fear that he kill: he would shield him if menac'd by others;
For neither reasonless he, nor yet reckless, nor wilfully wicked:
But when a suppliant bends at his knee he will kindly entreat him."

Swift at the bidding of Zeus arose wind-footed Iris, and nearing
Soon the abode of the king, found misery there and lamenting:
Low on the ground, in the hall, sat the sons of illustrious Priam,
Watering their raiment with tears, and in midst of his sons was the old man,
Wrapt in his mantle, the visage unseen, but the head and the bosom
Cover'd in dust, wherewith, rolling in anguish, his hands had bestrewn them;
But in their chambers remote were the daughters of Priam bewailing,
Mindful of them that, so many, so goodly, in youth had been slaughter'd
Under the Argive hands. But the messenger charged by Kronion

Stood by the king and in whispers address'd him, and hearing he trembled:

"Strengthen thy spirit within thee, Dardantan Priam, and fear not:
For with no message of evil have I to thy dwelling descended,
But with a kindly intent, and I come from the throne of Kronion,
Who, though afar be his seat, with concern and compassion beholds thee.
Thee the Olympian calls to go forth for the ransom of Hector,
Laden with gifts for Peleides, wherewith to appease and content him.
Go thou alone: not a man from the gates of the city attending;
Only for guiding the mules be some elderly herald appointed,
Who may have charge of the wain with its treasure, and back to the city
Carefully carry the dead that was slain by the godlike Achilles."

Thus having spoken to Priam, the wind-footed Iris departed;
And he commanded his sons straightway to make ready the mule-wain,
Strong-built; sturdy of wheel, and upon it to fasten the coffer.
But he himself from the hall to his odorous chamber descended,
Cedarn, lofty of roof, wherein much treasure was garner'd,
And unto Hecuba calling, outspake to her generous Priam:—

"Mourner! but now at my hand hath a messenger stood from Kronion;
Me he commands to go forth to the ships for redeeming of Hector,
Carrying gifts for Peleides, wherewith to appease and content him.
Answer me truly, my spouse, and declare what of this is thy judgment,
For of a surety my heart and my spirit with vehement urgence
Move me to go to the ships and the wide-spread host of Achaians."

Thus did he say; but the spouse of the old man shriekt, and made answer:
"Wo to me! whither are scatter'd the wits that were famous aforetime,
Not with the Trojans alone, but afar in the lands of the stranger?
Wo to me! thou to adventure, alone, to the ships of Achaia,
Into the sight of the man by whose fierceness thy sons have been murder'd,
Many, and comely, and brave! Of a surety thy heart is of iron;
For if he holds thee but once, and his eyes have been fasten'd upon thee,
Bloody and faithless is he, hope thou neither pity nor worship.
Him that is taken away let us mourn for him here in our dwelling,
Since we can see him no more; the immoveable Destiny markt him,
And it was wove in his thread, even so, in the hour that I bare him,
To be the portion of dogs, who shall feast on him far from his parents,
Under the eyes of the foe: whose liver if I could but grapple
Fast by the midst to devour, he then should have just retribution
For what he did to my son; for in no misbehaving he slew him,
But for the men of his land and the well-girt women of Troia
Firm stood Hector in field; neither mindful of flight nor avoidance."

This was her answer from Priam, the old man godlike in presence:—
"Hold me not back when my will is to go; nor thyself in my dwelling
Be the ill-omening bird:—howbe, thou shalt not persuade me.
Had I been bidden to this by a mortal of earth's generation,
Prophet, or Augur, or Priest might he be, I had deem'd him deceitful;
Not to go forth, but to stay, had the more been the bent of my purpose:
But having heard her myself, looking face unto face on the Goddess,
Go I, nor shall the word be in vain; and, if Destiny will'd me,
Going, to meet with my death at the ships of the brass-coated Argives,
So let it be. I refuse not to die by the hand of Achilles,
Clasping my son in mine arms, the desire of my sorrow accomplish'd."

So having spoken, he open'd the coffers that shone in his chamber,
Whence he selected, anon, twelve shawls surpassingly splendid;
Delicate wool-cloaks twelve, and the like of embroidered carpets;
Twelve fair mantles of state, and of tunics as many to match them.
Next, having measur'd his gold, did he heap ten plentiful talents;
Twain were the tripods he chose, twice twain the magnificent platters;
Lastly, a goblet of price, which the chieftains of Thracia tender'd
When he on embassy journey'd: a great gift, yet did the old man
Grudge not to pluck from his store even this, for his spirit impell'd him
Eager to ransom his son: But the people who look'd on his treasure
Them did he chase from the gate, and with bitter reproaches pursued them:—
"Graceless and worthless, begone! in your homes is there nothing to weep for,
That ye in mine will harass me—or lacks it, to fill your contentment,
That the Olympian god has assign'd to me this tribulation—
Loss of a son without peer? But yourselves shall partake my affliction;
Easier far will it be for the pitiless sword of the Argives,
Now he is dead, to make havoc of you. For myself, ere I witness
Ilion storm'd in their wrath, and the fulness of her desolation,

Oh, may the Destiny yield me to enter the dwelling of Hades!"

Speaking, he smote with his staff, and they fled from the wrath of the old man;
But, when they all had disperst, he upbraided his sons and rebuked them;
Deiphobus and Alexander, Hippothöus, generous Dius,
Came at the call of the king, with Antiphonus, Helenus, Pammon,
Agathon, noble of port, and Polites, good at the war-shout:—
These were the nine that he urged and admonish'd with bitter reproaches:—
"Hasten ye, profitless children and vile! if ye all had been slaughter'd,
Fair were the tidings to me, were but Hector in place of ye skaithless!
O, evil-destinied me! that had sons upon sons to sustain me, [Pg 264]
None to compare in the land, and not one that had worth is remaining!
Mentor the gallant and goodly, and Tröilus prompt with the war-team;
Hector, a god among men—he, too, who in nothing resembled
Death-doom'd man's generation, but imaged the seed of Immortals—
Battle hath reft me of these:—but the shames of my house are in safety;
Jesters and singers enow, and enow that can dance on the feast-day;
Scourges and pests of the realm; bold spoilers of kids and of lambkins!
Will ye bestir ye at length, and make ready the wain and the coffer,
Piling in all that ye see, and delay me no more from my journey?"

So did he speak; but the sons, apprehending the wrath of their father,
Speedfully dragg'd to the portal the mule-wain easily-rolling,
New-built, fair to behold; and upon it the coffer was corded.
Next from the pin they unfasten'd the mule-yoke, carv'd of the box-tree,
Shaped with a prominent boss, and with strong rings skilfully fitted.
Then with the bar was unfolded the nine ells' length of the yoke-band;
But when the yoke had been placed on the smooth-wrought pole with adroitness,
Back at the end of the shaft, and the ring had been turn'd on the holder,
Hither and thither the thongs on the boss made three overlappings,
Whence, drawn singly ahead, they were tight-knit under the collar.
Next they produced at the portal, and high on the vehicle seemly
Piled the uncountable worth of the king's Hectorean head-gifts.
Then did they harness the mules, strong-hoof'd, well-matcht in their paces,
Sent of the Mysi to Priam, and splendid the gift of the stranger:
Last, to the yoke they conducted the horses which reverend Priam
Tended and cherish'd himself, of his own hand fed at the manger;
But in the high-built court these harness'd the king and the herald,
None putting hand to the yoke but the old men prudent in counsel.

Hecuba, anxious in soul, had observ'd, and anon she approach'd them,
Goblet of gold in her hand, with the generous juice of the vine-tree,
Careful they might not go forth without worshipful rite of libation.
"Take," said she; "pour unto Zeus, and beseech him in mercy to shield thee
Home again safe from the host, since thy vehement spirit impels thee
Forth to the ships, and my warning avails not to stay thee from going:
Pour it, and call on the Lord of the Black Cloud, greatest Kronion,
Him who, on Ida enthron'd, surveys wide Troia's dominion.
Pray for his messenger fleet to be issued in air on the right hand,
Dearest of birds in his eyes, without peer in the might of the wingéd:
Trustful in whom thou may'st go to the ships of the Danäid horsemen.
But if the Thunderer God vouchsafe not his messenger freely,
Ne'er can I will thee to go, howsoever intent on the ransom."

Thus to her answer'd the king, old Priam, the godlike of presence:
"Spouse, not in this shall mine ear be averse to the voice of thy counsel;
Good is it, lifting our hands, to implore for the grace of the Godhead."

Priam demanded amain of the handmaiden, chief of the household,
Water to lave on his hands; and the handmaiden drew from the fountain
At the command of the king, and with basin and ewer attended:
Then having sprinkled his hands, and from Hecuba taken the wine-cup,
Standing in midst of the court did he worship, and pour it before them,
Fixing his eyes upon heaven, and thus audibly made supplication:

"Father, enthron'd upon Ida, in power and in glory supremest!
Grant me, approaching Peleides, to find with him mercy and favour.
Now, let thy messenger fleet issue forth in the sky on the right hand,
Dearest of birds in thine eyes, without peer in the might of the wingéd,
Seeing and trusting in whom I may go to the ships of Achaia."

So did he make supplication, and Zeus All-Provident heard him,
And on the instant an eagle, of skyborne auguries noblest,
Dark and majestic, the hunter of Æther, was sent from his footstool.
Wide as the doorway framed for the loftiest hall of a rich man

Shows, when the bolts are undrawn and the balancing valves are expanded, [Pg 265]
Such unto either extreme was the stretch of his wings as he darted
Clear from the right, oversweeping the city: and gazing upon him,
Comforted inly were they, every bosom with confidence gladden'd.

Now to his sumptuous car with alacrity Priam ascending,
Forth from the vestibule drove, and the echoing depth of the portal.
First was the fourwheel'd wain with the strong-hoof'd Mysian mule-team,
Guided by careful Idæus, the herald: behind him the horses,
Whom with the scourge overstanding, alone in his chariot the old man
Eagerly urged through the city. But many the friends that attended,
Trooping in sorrowful throng, as if surely to death he were driving.

These, when advancing apace he went down to the plain from the rampart,
Turn'd them to Ilion again, both the sons and the sorrowing kindred.
But as he enter'd the plain, he escap'd not the eye of Kronion.
He took cognisance then, and with merciful favour beholding,
Forthwith spake to his son, ever loving in ministry, Hermes:—
"Go!" said he, "Hermes! for ever I know it thy chiefest contentment
Friendly to succour mankind, and thy pity attends supplication;
Go, and be Priam thy charge, till he reaches the ships of Achaia,
Watching and covering so that no eye of an enemy sees him,
None of the Danäids note, till he comes to the tent of Peleides."

So Zeus; nor disobey'd him the kindly ambassador Hermes.
Under his feet straightway did he fasten the beautiful sandals,
Wingéd, Ambrosian, golden, which carry him, now over ocean,
Now over measureless earth, with the speed of the wind in its blowing.
Also he lifted the wand which, touching the eyelid of mortals,
Soothes into slumber at will, or arouses the soul of the sleeper.
Grasping it, forth did he fly in his vigour, the slayer of Argus,
And to the Hellespont glided apace, and the shore of the Trojan;
Walking whereon he appear'd as a stripling of parentage royal,
Fresh with the beard first-seen, in the comeliest blossom of manhood.

But having reach'd in their journey the mighty memorial of Ilus,
Now were the elders at pause—while the horses and mules in the river
Under the sepulchre drank, and around them was creeping the twilight:
Then was the herald aware of the Argicide over against them,
Near on the shadowy plain, and he started and whisper'd to Priam:
"Think, Dardanides! think—for a prudent decision is urgent;
Yonder a man is in view, and I deem he is minded to slay us.
Come, let us flee on the horses; or instantly, bending before him,
Supplicate, grasping his knees, if perchance he may pity the agéd."

So did he speak; but confusion and great fear fell upon Priam,
And every hair was erect on the tremulous limbs in his faintness.
Dumb and bewilder'd he stood; but beneficent Hermes, approaching,
Tenderly took by the hand, and accosted and questioned the old man:
"Whither, O father! and why art thou driving the mules and the horses
Through the ambrosial night, when the rest of mankind are in slumber?
Is there no terror for thee in the pitiless host of Achaia,
Breathing of fury and hate, and so near to thy path in their leaguer?
Say, if but one of them see thee, 'mid night's swift-vanishing blackness,
Urging so costly a freight, how then might thy courage avail thee?
Thou art not youthful in years, and thy only attendant is agéd;
How, if a spearman arise in thy way, may his arm be resisted?
But fear nothing from me, old man; were another assailing,
Thee would I help, for the father I love is recall'd when I view thee."

Then to him answered Priam, the old man godlike in presence:
"These things are of a truth, dear child, as thy speech has exprest them;
Nevertheless, some God has extended the hand of protection;
He that vouchsafes me to meet in my need a benevolent comrade,
Helpful and gracious as thou, in the blossom of vigorous manhood;
Prudent withal in thy mind—fair offspring of fortunate parents." [Pg 266]

Him again answer'd in turn heaven's kindly ambassador, Hermes:
"True of a surety and wise, old man, are the words thou hast spoken;
But now freely resolve me, and fully discover thy purpose:
Whether the treasures thou bearest, so many, so goodly, are destined
Forth to some distant ally, with whom these may at least be in safety?
Or is it so that ye all are abandoning Ilion the holy—
Stricken with dread since the bravest and best of thy sons is removéd,
He that was ever in battle the peer of the prime of Achaia?"

Thus unto Hermes replied old Priam, the godlike of presence:
"Who, then, noblest! art thou, and from whom is thy worshipful lineage,
Who makest mention so fair of the death of unfortunate Hector?"

But to him spake yet again the ambassador mild of Kronion:
"Dost thou inquire, O king! as to mention of Hector the godlike?
Him have I seen full oft with mine eyes in the glorious battle,
Yea, and when urging the chase he advanced to the ramparted galleys,
Trampling the Argive bands, and with sharp brass strew'd them in slaughter.
We, from the station observing, in wonderment gazed; for Achilles
Held us apart from the fight in his wrath at the wrong of Atreides.
For in his train am I named, and the same fair galley convey'd me;
Born of the Myrmidon blood, in the house of my father, Polyctor.
Noble and wealthy is he in the land, but like thee he is agéd:
Six were the sons in his hall, but myself was the seventh and the youngest,
Whom, when the lots had been cast, it behov'd to depart with Peleides.
Now from the ships to the plain have I come, for to-morrow at dawning
Close to the city again the Achaians will plant them in battle:
Ill do they bear within ramparts to sit, and the kings of Achaia
Now can restrain them no longer, so hot their desire for the onslaught."

Him thus eagerly answer'd old Priam, the godlike in presence:
"Be'st thou indeed of the train of the Peleiades Achilles?
Come then, discover the truth: be there nothing, I pray, of concealment.
Is my son still at the galleys, or has he already been flung forth,
Piecemeal torn, for a feast to the dogs, by the hand of Achilles?"

This was in turn the reply of the kindly ambassador Hermes:
"Fear it not; neither the dogs, old man, nor the birds have devour'd him:
Still to this hour 'mid the tents, by the black-hull'd ship of Peleides,
He forsakenly lies: but though morning has dawn'd on him twelve times
Since he was reft of his breath, yet the body is free from corruption;
Nor have the worms, for whom war-slain men are a banquet, approach'd him.
Truly Peleides, as oft as the east is revived with the day-beam,
Ruthlessly drags him around by the tomb of his brotherly comrade;
But yet he mars not the dead; and with wonder thine eyes would behold him
How he in freshness lies: from about him the blood has been cleanséd,
Dust has not tarnisht the hue, and all clos'd are the lips of the gashes,
All that he had, and not few were the brass-beat lances that pierc'd him.
Guarded so well is thy son by the grace of the blessed Immortals,
Dead though he be; of a surety in life they had favour'd him dearly."

So did he speak: but the elder was gladden'd in spirit, and answer'd:—
"Verily, child, it is good to attend on the blessed Immortals
Duly with reverent gifts; for my son (while, alas! he was living)
Never forgot in his home the Supreme who inherit Olympus:
Wherefore they think of him now, though in death's dark destiny humbled.
But come, take from my hand this magnificent cup: it is giv'n thee
Freely to keep for thyself; and conduct me, the Gods being gracious,
Over the shadowy field, till I reach the abode of Peleides."

Him thus answer'd amain the beneficent messenger Hermes:—
"Cease, old man, from the tempting of youth—for thou shalt not persuade me.
Gift will I none at thy hand without knowledge of noble Achilles.
Great is my terror of him; and in aught to defraud him of treasure,
Far from my breast be the thought, lest hereafter he visit with vengeance.
But for conducting of thee I am ready with reverent service,
Whether on foot or by sea, were it far as to glorious Argos.
None shall assail thee, be sure, in contempt of thy faithful attendant."

So did the Merciful speak: and he sprang on the chariot of Priam,
Seizing with strenuous hand both the reins and the scourge as he mounted:
And into horses and mules vivid energy pass'd from his breathing.
But when at last they arrived at the fosse and the towers of the galleys,
They that had watch at the gates were preparing the meal of the evening;
And the Olympian guide survey'd, and upon them was slumber
Pour'd at his will; and the bars were undone and the gates were expanded,
And he conducted within both the king and the ransoming mule-wain.
Swiftly advancing, anon they were near to the tent of Peleides:
Lofty the shelter and large, for the King by the Myrmidons planted;
Hewn of the pines of the mountain; and rough was the thatch of the roof-tree,
Bulrushes mown on the meadow; and spacious the girth of the bulwark
Spanning with close-set stakes; but the bar of the gate was a pine-beam.
Three of the sons of Achaia were needful to lift it and fasten:

Three to withdraw from its seat the securement huge of the closure:
Such was the toil for the rest—but Achilles lifted it singly.
This the beneficent guide made instantly open for Priam.
And for the treasure of ransom wherewith he would soothe the Peleides;
Then did the Argicide leap from the car to the ground and address'd him:—
"Old man, I from Olympus descended, a god everlasting,
Hermes, appointed the guide of thy way by my father Kronion.
Now I return to my place, nor go in to the sight of Achilles,
Since it beseems not Immortal of lineage divine to reveal him
Waiting with manifest love on the frail generation of mankind.
Enter the dwelling alone, and, embracing the knees of Peleides,
Him by his father adjure, and adjure by the grace of his mother,
And by the child of his love, that his mind may be mov'd at thy pleading."

Thus having spoken, evanish'd, to lofty Olympus ascending,
Hermes: but Priam delay'd not, and sprang from his car on the sea-beach;
And, while Idæus remain'd to have care of the mules and the horses,
On did the old man pass, and he enter'd, and found the Peleides
Seated apart from his train: two only of Myrmidons trustful,
Hero Automedon only, and Alkimus, sapling of Ares,
Near to him minist'ring stood; he repos'd him but now from the meal-time,
Sated with food and with wine, nor remov'd from him yet was the table.
All unobserv'd of them enter'd the old man stately, and forthwith
Grasp'd with his fingers the knees and was kissing the hands of Achilles—
Terrible, murderous hands, by which son upon son had been slaughter'd.
As when a man who has fled from his home with the curse of the blood-guilt,
Kneels in a far-off land, at the hearth of some opulent stranger,
Begging to shelter his head, there is stupor on them that behold him;
So was Achilles dumb at the sight of majestical Priam—
He and his followers all, each gazing on other bewilder'd.
But he uplifted his voice in their silence, and made supplication:—
"Think of thy father at home," (he began,) "O godlike Achilles!
Him, my coëval, like me within age's calamitous threshold!
Haply this day there is trouble upon him, some insolent neighbours
Round him in arms, nor a champion at hand to avert the disaster:
Yet even so there is comfort for him, for he hears of thee living;
Day unto day there is hope for his heart amid worst tribulation,
That yet again he shall see his belovéd from Troia returning.
Misery only is mine; for of all in the land of my fathers,
Bravest and best were the sons I begat, and not one is remaining.
Fifty were mine in the hour that the host of Achaia descended:
Nineteen granted to me out of one womb, royally mother'd,
Stood by my side; but the rest were of handmaids born in my dwelling.
Soon were the limbs of the many unstrung in the fury of Arēs:
But one peerless was left, sole prop of the realm and the people:
And now at last he too, the protector of Ilion, Hector,
Dies by thy hand. For his sake have I come to the ships of Achaia,
Eager to ransom the body with bountiful gifts of redemption.
Thou have respect for the Gods, and on me, O Peleides! have pity,
Calling thy father to mind; but more piteous is my desolation,
Mine, who alone of mankind have been humbled to this of endurance—
Pressing my mouth to the hand that is red with the blood of my children."

Hereon Achilles, awak'd to a yearning remembrance of Peleus,
Rose up, took by the hand, and remov'd from him gently the old man.
Sadness possessing the twain—one, mindful of valorous Hector,
Wept with o'erflowing tears, lowlaid at the feet of Achilles;
He, sometime for his father, anon at the thought of Patroclus,
Wept, and aloft in the dwelling their long lamentation ascended.
But when the bursting of grief had contented the godlike Peleides,
And from his heart and his limbs irresistible yearning departed,
Then from his seat rose he, and with tenderness lifted the old man,
Viewing the hoary head and the hoary beard with compassion:
And he address'd him, and these were the air-wing'd words that he utter'd:—
"Ah unhappy! thy spirit in truth has been burden'd with evils.
How could the daring be thine to come forth to the ships of Achaia
Singly, to stand in the eyes of the man by whose weapon thy children,
Many and gallant, have died? full surely thy heart is of iron.
But now seat thee in peace, old man, and let mourning entirely
Pause for a space in our minds, although heavy on both be affliction;
For without profit and vain is the fulness of sad lamentation,
Since it was destined so of the Gods for unfortunate mortals
Ever in trouble to live, but they only partake not of sorrow;
For by the threshold of Zeus two urns have their station of old time,
Whereof the one holds dolings of good, but the other of evil;

And to whom mixt are the doles of the thunder-delighting Kronion,
He sometime is of blessing partaker, of misery sometime;
But if he gives of the ill, he has fixt him the mark of disaster,
And over bountiful earth the devouring Necessity drives him,
Wandering ever forlorn, unregarded of gods and of mortals.
Thus of a truth did the Gods grant glorious gifts unto Peleus,
Even from the hour of his birth, for above compare was he favour'd,
Whether in wealth or in power, in the land of the Myrmidons reigning;
And albeit a mortal, his spouse was a goddess appointed.
Yet even to him of the God was there evil apportion'd—that never
Lineage of sons should be born in his home, to inherit dominion.
One son alone he begat, to untimely calamity foredoom'd;
Nor do I cherish his age, since afar from the land of my fathers
Here in the Troad I sit, to the torment of thee and thy children.
And we have heard, old man, of thine ancient prosperity also,
Lord of whatever is held between Lesbos the seat of the Macar,
Up to the Phrygian bound and the measureless Hellespontos;
Ruling and blest above all, nor in wealth nor in progeny equall'd;
Yet from the hour that the Gods brought this visitation upon thee,
Day unto day is thy city surrounded with battles and bloodshed.
How so, bear what is sent, nor be griev'd in thy soul without ceasing.
Nothing avails it, O king! to lament for the son that has fallen;
Him thou canst raise up no more, but thyself may have new tribulation."

So having said, he was answer'd by Priam the aged and godlike:
"Seat not me on the chair, O belov'd of Olympus! while Hector
Lies in the tent uninterr'd; but I pray thee deliver him swiftly, [Pg 269]
That I may see with mine eyes: and, accepting the gifts of redemption,
Therein have joy to thy heart; and return thou homeward in safety,
Since of thy mercy I live and shall look on the light of the morning."

Darkly regarding the King, thus answer'd the rapid Achilles:
"Stir me to anger no more, old man; of myself I am minded
To the release of the dead, for a messenger came from Kronion
Hither, the mother that bore me, the child of the Ancient of Ocean.
Thee, too, I know in my mind, nor has aught of thy passage escap'd me;
How that some God was the guide of thy steps to the ships of Achaia.
For never mortal had dared to advance, were he blooming in manhood,
Here to the host by himself; nor could sentinels all be avoided;
Nor by an imbecile push might the bar be dislodg'd at my bulwark.
Therefore excite me no more, old man, when my soul is in sorrow,
Lest to thyself peradventure forbearance continue not alway,
Suppliant all that thou art—but I break the behest of the Godhead."

So did he speak; but the old man fear'd, and obey'd his commandment.
Forth of the door of his dwelling then leapt like a lion Peleides;
But not alone: of his household were twain that attended his going,
Hero Automedon first, and young Alkimus, he that was honour'd
Chief of the comrades around since the death of belovéd Patroclus.
These from the yoke straightway unharness'd the mules and the horses,
And they conducted within the coëval attendant of Priam,
Bidding him sit in the tent: then swiftly their hands from the mule-wain
Raise the uncountable wealth of the King's Hectorean head-gifts.
But two mantles they leave and a tunic of beautiful texture,
Seemly for wrapping the dead as the ransomer carries him homeward.
Then were the handmaidens call'd, and commanded to wash and anoint him,
Privately lifted aside, lest the son should be seen of the father,
Lest in the grief of his soul he restrain not his anger within him,
Seeing the corse of his son, but enkindle the heart of Achilles,
And he smite him to death, and transgress the command of Kronion.
But when the dead had been wash'd and anointed with oil by the maidens,
And in the tunic array'd and enwrapt in the beautiful mantle,
Then by Peleides himself was he rais'd and compos'd on the hand-bier;
Which when the comrades had lifted and borne to its place in the mule-wain,
Then groan'd he; and he call'd on the name of his friend, the belovéd:—
"Be not wroth with me now, O Patroclus, if haply thou hearest,
Though within Hades obscure, that I yield the illustrious Hector
Back to his father dear. Not unworthy the gifts of redemption;
And unto thee will I render thereof whatsoever is seemly."

So said the noble Peleides, and ent'ring again the pavilion,
Sat on the fair-carv'd chair from whence he had risen aforetime,
Hard by the opposite wall, and accosted the reverend Priam:—
"Now has thy son, old man, been restor'd to thee as thou requiredst.
He on his bier has been laid, and thyself shall behold and remove him

Soon as the dawning appears: but of food meanwhile be we mindful.
For not unmindful of food in her sorrow was Niobe, fair-hair'd,
Albeit she in her dwelling lamented for twelve of her offspring.
Six were the daughters, and six were the sons in the flower of their manhood.
These unto death went down by the silvern bow of Apollo,
Wrathful to Niobe—those smote Artemis arrow-delighting;
For that she vaunted her equal in honour to Leto the rosy,
Saying her births were but twain, and herself was abundant in offspring:
Wherefore, twain as they were, they confounded them all in destruction.
Nine days, then, did they lie in their blood as they fell, and approach'd them
None to inter, for mankind had been turn'd into stones of Kronion;
But they had sepulture due on the tenth from the gods everlasting;
And then, mindful of food, rose Niobe, weary of weeping.
Yet still, far among rocks, in some wilderness lone of the mountains—
Sipylus holds there, they say, where the nymphs in the desert repose them.
They that in beauty divine lead dances beside Achelöus;—
There still, stone though she be, doth she brood on her harm from the god-heads.
But, O reverend king, let us also of needful refreshment
Think now. Time will hereafter be thine to bewail thy belovéd;
Home into Ilion borne—many tears may of right be his portion!"

So did he speak; and upspringing anon, swift-footed Achilles
Slaughter'd a white-wool'd sheep, and his followers skinn'd it expertly.
Skilfully then they divided, and skewer'd, and carefully roasting,
Drew from the spits; and Automedon came, bringing bread to the table,
Piled upon baskets fair; but for all of them carv'd the Peleides;
And each, stretching his hand, partook of the food that was offer'd.
But when of meat and of wine from them all the desire was departed,
Then did Dardanian Priam in wonderment gaze on Achilles,
Stately and strong to behold, for in aspect the Gods he resembled;
While on Dardanian Priam gazed also with wonder Achilles,
Seeing the countenance goodly, and hearing the words of the old man.
Till, when contemplating either the other they both were contented,
Him thus first bespake old Priam, the godlike in presence:
"Speedfully now let the couch be prepar'd for me, lov'd of Kronion!
And let us taste once more of the sweetness of slumber, reclining:
For never yet have mine eyes been clos'd for me under my eyelids,
Never since under thy hands was out-breathéd the spirit of Hector;
Groaning since then has been mine, and the brooding of sorrows unnumber'd,
In the recess of my hall, low-rolling in dust and in ashes.
But now of bread and of meat have I tasted again, and the black wine
Pour'd in my throat once more—whereof, since he was slain, I partook not."

So did he speak; and Achilles commanded the comrades and handmaids
Under the porch of the dwelling to place fair couches, and spread them
Duly with cushions on cushions of purple, and delicate carpets,
Also with mantles of wool, to be wrapt over all on the sleepers.
But they speedily past, bearing torches in hand, from the dwelling,
And two couches anon were with diligence order'd and garnish'd.

Then to the king, in a sport, thus spoke swift-footed Achilles:
"Rest thee without, old guest, lest some vigilant chief of Achaia
Chance to arrive, one of those who frequent me when counsel is needful;
Who, if he see thee belike amid night's fast-vanishing darkness,
Straightway warns in his tent Agamemnon, the Shepherd of peoples,
And the completion of ransom meets yet peradventure with hindrance.
But come, answer me this, and discover the whole of thy purpose,—
How many days thou design'st for entombing illustrious Hector;
That I may rest from the battle till then, and restrain the Achaians."

So he; and he was answer'd by Priam, the aged and godlike:
"If 'tis thy will that I bury illustrious Hector in honour,
Deal with me thus, O Peleides, and crown the desire of my spirit.
Well dost thou know how the town is begirt, and the wood at a distance,
Down from the hills to be brought, and the people are humbled in terror.
Nine days' space we would yield in our dwelling to due lamentation,
Bury the dead on the tenth, and thereafter the people be feasted;
On the eleventh let us toil till the funeral mound be completed,
But on the twelfth to the battle once more, if the battle be needful."

Instantly this was the answer of swift-footed noble Achilles:
"Reverend king, be it also in these things as thou requirest;
I for the space thou hast meted will hold the Achaians from warring."

Thus said the noble Peleides, and, grasping the wrist of the right hand,

Strengthen'd the mind of the king, that his fear might not linger within him.
They then sank to repose forthwith in the porch of the dwelling,
Priam the king and the herald coëval and prudent in counsel;
But in the inmost recess of the well-built lordly pavilion
Slept the Peleides, and by him down laid her the rosy Briséis. [Pg 271]

All then of Gods upon high, ever-living, and warrior horsemen,
Slept through the livelong night in the gentle dominion of slumber;
But never slumber approach'd to the eyes of beneficent Hermes,
As in his mind he revolv'd how best to retire from the galleys
Priam the king, unobserv'd of the sentinels sworn for the night-watch.
Over his head, as he slept, stood the Argicide now, and address'd him:
"Old man, bodings of evil disturb not thy spirit, who slumber'st
Here among numberless foes, because noble Peleides has spared thee.
True that thy son has been ransom'd, and costly the worth of the head-gifts;
Yet would the sons that are left thee have three times more to surrender,
Wert thou but seen by the host, and the warning convey'd to Atreides."

Thus did he speak, but the king was in terror, and waken'd the herald.
Then, when beneficent Hermes had harness'd the mules and the horses,
Swiftly he drove through the camp, nor did any observe the departure.
So did they pass to the ford of the river of beautiful waters,
Xanthus the gulfy, begotten of thunder-delighting Kronion;
Then from the chariot he rose and ascended to lofty Olympus.

But now wide over earth spread morning mantled in saffron,
As amid groaning and weeping they drew to the city; the mule-wain
Bearing behind them the dead: Nor did any in Ilion see them,
Either of men, as they came, or the well-girt women of Troia:
Only Cassandra, that imaged in grace Aphrodité the golden,
Had to the Pergamus clomb, and from thence she discover'd her father
Standing afoot on the car, and beside him the summoning herald;
And in the waggon behind them the wrapt corse laid on the death-bier.
Then did she shriek, and her cry to the ends of the city resounded:

"Come forth, woman and man, and behold the returning of Hector!
Come, if ye e'er in his life, at his home-coming safe from the battle
joyfully troop'd; and with joy might it fill both the town and the people."

So did she cry; nor anon was there one soul left in the city,
Woman or man, for at hand and afar was the yearning awaken'd.
Near to the gate was the king when they met him conducting the death-wain.
First rush'd, rending their hair, to behold him the wife and the mother,
And as they handled the head, all weeping the multitude stood near:—
And they had all day long till the sun went down into darkness
There on the field by the rampart lamented with tears over Hector,
But that the father arose in the car and entreated the people:
"Yield me to pass, good friends, make way for the mules—and hereafter
All shall have weeping enow when the dead has been borne to the dwelling."
So did he speak, and they, parting asunder, made way for the mule-wain.
But when they brought him at last to the famous abode of the princes,
He on a fair-carv'd bed was compos'd, and the singers around him
Rang'd, who begin the lament; and they, lifting their sorrowful voices,
Chanted the wail for the dead, and the women bemoan'd at its pausings.
But in the burst of her woe was the beauteous Andromache foremost,
Holding the head in her hands as she mourn'd for the slayer of heroes:—

"Husband! in youth hast thou parted from life, and a desolate widow
Here am I left in our home; and the child is a stammering infant
Whom thou and I unhappy begat, nor will he, to my thinking,
Reach to the blossom of youth; ere then, from the roof to the basement
Down shall the city be hurl'd—since her only protector has perish'd,
And without succour are now chaste mother and stammering infant.
Soon shall their destiny be to depart in the ships of the stranger,
I in the midst of them bound; and, my child, thou go with them also,
Doom'd for the far-off shore and the tarnishing toil of the bondman,
Slaving for lord unkind. Or perchance some remorseless Achaian
Hurl from the gripe of his hand, from the battlement down to perdition,
Raging revenge for some brother perchance that was slaughter'd of Hector,
Father, it may be, or son; for not few of the race of Achaia
Seiz'd broad earth with their teeth, when they sank from the handling of Hector;
For not mild was thy father, O babe, in the blackness of battle— [Pg 272]
Wherefore, now he is gone, through the city the people bewail him.
But the unspeakable anguish of misery bides with thy parents,
Hector! with me above all the distress that has no consolation:

For never, dying, to me didst thou stretch forth hand from the pillow,
Nor didst thou whisper, departing, one secret word to be hoarded
Ever by day and by night in the tears of eternal remembrance."

Weeping Andromache ceased, and the women bemoan'd at her pausing;
Then in her measureless grief spake Hecuba, next of the mourners:
"Hector! of all that I bore ever dearest by far to my heart-strings!
Dear above all wert thou also in life to the gods everlasting;
Wherefore they care for thee now, though in death's dark destiny humbled!
Others enow of my sons did the terrible runner Achilles
Sell, whomsoever he took, far over the waste of the waters,
Either to Samos or Imber, or rock-bound harbourless Lemnos;
But with the long-headed spear did he rifle the life from thy bosom,
And in the dust did he drag thee, oft times, by the tomb of his comrade,
Him thou hadst slain; though not so out of death could he rescue Patroclus.
Yet now, ransom'd at last, and restored to the home of thy parents,
Dewy and fresh liest thou, like one that has easily parted,
Under a pangless shaft from the silvern bow of Apollo."

So did the mother lament, and a measureless moaning received her;
Till, at their pausing anew, spake Helena, third of the mourners:—
"Hector! dearest to me above all in the house of my husband!
Husband, alas! that I call him; oh! better that death had befallen!
Summer and winter have flown, and the twentieth year is accomplish'd
Since the calamity came, and I fled from the land of my fathers;
Yet never a word of complaint have I heard from thee, never of hardness;
But if another reproach'd, were it brother or sister of Paris,
Yea, or his mother, (for mild evermore as a father was Priam,)
Them didst thou check in their scorn, and the bitterness yielded before thee,
Touch'd by thy kindness of soul and the words of thy gentle persuasion.
Therefore I weep, both for thee and myself to all misery destined,
For there remains to me now in the war-swept wideness of Troia,
None either courteous or kind—but in all that behold me is horror."

So did she cease amid tears, and the women bemoan'd at her pausing;
But King Priam arose, and he spake in the gate to the people:—
"Hasten ye, Trojans, arise, and bring speedily wood to the city:
Nor be there fear in your minds of some ambush of lurking Achaians,
For when I came from the galleys the promise was pledged of Peleides,
Not to disturb us with harm till the twelfth reappearance of morning."

So did he speak: and the men to their wains put the mules and the oxen,
And they assembled with speed on the field by the gates of the city.
Nine days' space did they labour, and great was the heap from the forest:
But on the tenth resurrection for mortals of luminous morning,
Forth did they carry, with weeping, the corse of the warrior Hector,
Laid him on high on the pyre, and enkindled the branches beneath him.

Now, with the rose-finger'd dawn once more in the orient shining,
All reassembled again at the pyre of illustrious Hector.
First was the black wine pour'd on the wide-spread heap of the embers,
Quenching wherever had linger'd the strength of the glow: and thereafter,
Brethren and comrades belov'd from the ashes collected the white bones,
Bending with reverent tears, every cheek in the company flowing.
But when they all had been found, and the casket of gold that receiv'd them,
Carefully folded around amid fair soft veilings of purple,
Deep in the grave they were laid, and the huge stones piled to the margin.

Swiftly the earth-mound rose: but on all sides watchers were planted,
Fearful of rush unawares from the well-greaved bands of Achaia.
Last, when the mound was complete, and the men had return'd to the city,
All in the halls of the King were with splendid solemnity feasted.

Thus was the sepulture order'd of Hector the Tamer of Horses.

[Pg 273]

THE STUDENT OF SALAMANCA.

PART V.

Va vienon chapelchurris
Con corneta y clarin,

Para entrar en Bilbao
A beber chacolin.

Mal chacolin tuvieron
Y dia tan fatal,
Que con la borrachera
Se murió el general.
Christino Song.

"Ten—fifteen—thirty—all plump full-weighted coins of Fernando Septimo and Carlos Quarto. Truly, Jaime, the trade thou drivest is a pleasant and profitable one. Little to do, and good pay for it."

It was a June day, a little past the middle of the month. Just within the forest that extended nearly up to the western wall of the Dominican convent, upon a plot of smooth turf, under the shadow of tall bushes and venerable trees, Jaime, the gipsy, had seated himself, and was engaged in an occupation which, to judge from the unusually well-pleased expression of his countenance, was highly congenial to his tastes. The resting-place he had chosen had the double advantage of coolness and seclusion. Whilst in the court of the convent, and in the hollow square in the interior of the building, where the nuns cultivated a few flowers, and which was sprinkled by the waters of a fountain, the heat was so great as to drive the sisters to their cells and shady cloisters, in the forest a delicious freshness prevailed. A light air played between the moss-clad tree-trunks, and the soft turf, protected by the foliage from the scorching rays of the sun, felt cool to the foot that pressed it. Nay, in some places, where the shade was thickest, and where a current of air flowed up through the long vistas of trees, might still be seen, although the sun was in the zenith, tiny drops of the morning dew, spangling the grass-blades. Into those innermost recesses of the greenwood, however, the esquilador had not thought it necessary to penetrate: habituated to the African temperature of Southern Spain, he was satisfied with the moderate degree of shelter obtained in the little glade he occupied; into which, although the sunbeams did not enter, a certain degree of heat was reflected from the convent walls, of whose grey surface he obtained a glimpse through the branches. The sheep-skin jacket which was his constant wear—its looseness rendering it a more endurable summer garment than might have been inferred from its warm material—lay upon the grass beside him, exposing to view a woollen shirt, composed of broad alternate stripes of red and white; the latter colour having assumed, from length of wear and lack of washing, a tint bordering upon the orange. He had untwisted the long red sash which he wore coiled round his waist, and withdrawn from its folds, at one of its extremities, forming a sort of purse, a goodly handful of gold coin, the result of the more or less honest enterprises in which he had recently been engaged. This he was counting out, and arranging according to its kind, in glittering piles of four, eight, and sixteen-dollar pieces. A grim contortion of feature, his nearest approach to a smile, testified the pleasure he experienced in thus handling and reckoning his treasure; and, in unusual contradiction to his taciturn habits, he indulged, as he gloated over his gold, in a muttered and disjointed soliloquy.

"Hurra for the war!" so ran his monologue; "may it last till Jaime bids it cease. 'Tis meat and drink to him—ay, and better still." Here he glanced complacently at his wealth. "Surely 'tis rare fun to see the foolish Busné cutting each other's throats, and the poor Zincalo reaping the benefit. I've had fine chances certainly, and have not thrown them away. Zumalacarregui does not pay badly; then that affair of the Christino officer was worth a good forty ounces, between him and the fool Paco; and now Don Baltasar—but he is the worst pay of all. Promises in plenty; he rattles them off his tongue as glib as the old nuns do their *paters*; but if he opens his mouth he takes good care to keep his purse shut. A pitiful two score dollars are all I have had from him for a month's service—I should have made more by spying for Zumalacarregui; with more risk, perhaps—though I am not sure of that. Both the noble colonel and myself would stretch a rope if the general heard of our doings. And hear of them he will, sooner or later unless Don Baltasar marries the girl by force, and cuts Paco's throat. Curse him! why doesn't he pay me the fifty ounces he promised me? If he did that, I would get out of the way till I heard how the thing turned. I must have the money next time I see him, or"——

What alternative the esquilador was about to propound must remain unknown; for, at that moment, the sound of his name, uttered near at hand, and in a cautious tone, caused him to start violently and interrupt his soliloquy. Hastily sweeping up his money, and thrusting it into the end of his sash, he seized his jacket, and was about to seek concealment in the neighbouring bushes. Before doing so, however, he cast a glance in the direction whence the sound had proceeded, and for the first time became aware that the spot selected for the telling of his ill-gotten gains was not so secure from observation as he had imagined. In the outer wall of the western wing of the convent, and at some distance from the ground, two windows broke the uniformity of the stone surface. Hitherto, whenever the gipsy had noticed them, they had appeared hermetically blocked up by closely-fitting shutters, painted to match the colour of the wall, of which they almost seemed to form a part. On taking up his position just within the skirt of the forest, the possibility of these casements being opened, and his proceedings observed, had not occurred to him; and it so happened that from one of them, through an opening in the branches, the retreat he had chosen was completely commanded. The shutter of this window had now been pushed open, and the lovely, but pallid and emaciated countenance of Rita, was seen gazing through the strong bars which traversed the aperture.

"Jaime!" she repeated; "Jaime, I would speak with you."

Upon seeing whom it was who thus addressed him, the gipsy's alarm ceased. He deliberately put on and knotted his sash; and casting his jacket over his shoulder, turned to leave the spot.

"Jaime!" cried Rita for the third time, "come hither, I implore you."

The gipsy shook his head, and was walking slowly away, his face, however, still turned towards the fair prisoner, when she suddenly exclaimed—

"Behold! For one minute's conversation it is yours."

And in the shadow cast by the embrasure of the casement, Jaime saw a sparkle, the cause of which his covetous eye at once detected. Three bounds, and he stood under the window. Rita passed her arm through the bars, and a jewelled ring dropped into his extended palm.

"*Hermoso!*" exclaimed the esquilador, his eyes sparkling almost as vividly as the stones that excited his admiration. "Beautiful! Diamonds of the finest water!"

The shock of her father's death, coupled with previous fatigue and excitement, had thrown Rita into a delirious fever, which for more than three weeks confined her to her bed. Within a few hours of her arrival at the convent, Don Baltasar had been compelled to leave it to resume his military duties; and he had not again returned, although, twice during her illness, he sent the gipsy to obtain intelligence of her health. On learning her convalescence, he dispatched him thither for a third time, with a letter to Rita, urging her acceptance of his hand—their union having been, as he assured her, her father's latest wish. As her nearest surviving relative, he had assumed the office of her guardian, and allotted to her the convent as a residence; until such time as other arrangements could be made, or until she should be willing to give him a nearer right to protect her. Jaime had now been two days at the convent awaiting a reply to this letter, without which Don Baltasar had forbidden him to return. This reply, however, Rita, indignant at the restraint imposed upon her, had as yet, in spite of the arguments of the abbess, shown no disposition to pen.

With her forehead pressed against the bars of the window, Rita noted the delight manifested by the gipsy at the present she had made him. She had already observed him feasting his eyes with the sight of his money; and although she knew him to be an agent of Don Baltasar, his evident avarice gave her hopes, that by promise of large reward she might induce him to betray his employer and serve her. Producing a second ring, of greater value than the one she had already bestowed upon him, she showed it to the wondering esquilador. He held up his hands instinctively to catch it.

"You may earn it," said Rita; "and twenty such."

And whilst with one hand she continued to expose the ring to the greedy gaze of the gipsy, with the other she held up a letter.

"For Don Baltasar?" asked the Gitano.

"No," said she. "For Zumalacarregui."

Jaime made a step backwards, and again shook his head. Rita feared that he was about to leave her.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I entreat, I beseech you, assist me in this strait. Whatever sum your vile employer has promised you, I will give tenfold. Take my letter, and name your reward."

"That's what the other said," muttered Jaime; "'name your reward,' but he is in no hurry to pay it. If I thought her promises better than his"——

And again he looked up at the window, and seemed to hesitate.

"Listen," cried Rita, who saw him waver; "I am rich—you are poor. I have farms, estates, vineyards—you shall choose amongst them wherewith to live happily for the rest of your days. Convey this letter safely, and exchange your comfortless and disreputable wanderings for a settled home and opulence."

Jaime made a gesture of refusal.

"Your lands and your vineyards, your fields and farms, are no temptation to the Zincalo, señora. What would they avail him? Your countrymen would say, 'Out upon the gipsy! See the thief!' and they would defraud him of his lands, and spit on him if he complained. No, señorita, give me a roving life, and the wealth that I can carry in my girdle, and defend with my knife."

"It shall be as you will," cried Rita, eagerly. "Gold, jewels, whatever you prefer. This letter will procure my freedom; and, once free, you shall find me both able and disposed to reward you beyond your wildest dreams."

"Yes, if the general does not hang me when he learns my share in the business."

"I have not named you to him, nor will I. The letter is unsealed; you can read before delivering it. Your name shall never be breathed by me, save as that of my preserver."

There was an accent of sincerity in Rita's promises that rendered it impossible to mistrust them. The gipsy, sorely tempted, was evidently about to yield. He gazed wistfully at the ring, which Rita still held up to his view; his eyes twinkled with covetousness, and he half extended his hand. Rita

slipped the ring into the fold of the letter, and threw both down to him. Dexterously catching, and thrusting them into his breast, he glanced furtively around, to see that he was unobserved. He stood near the wall, just under the window, and the iron bars preventing Rita from putting out her head, only the upper half of his figure was visible to her. At that moment, to her infinite surprise and alarm, she saw an extraordinary change come over his features. Their expression of greedy cunning was replaced, with a suddenness that appeared almost magical, by one of pain and terror; and scarcely had Rita had time to observe the transformation, when he lay upon the ground, struggling violently, but in vain, against some unseen power, that drew him towards the wall. He caught at the grass and weeds, which grew in profusion on the rarely-trodden path; he writhed, and endeavoured to turn himself upon his face, but without success. With pale and terrified visage, but in dogged silence, he strove against an agency invisible to Rita, and which he was totally unable to resist. His body speedily vanished from her sight, then his head, and finally his outstretched arms; the rustling noise, occasioned by his passage through the herbage, ceased; and Rita, aghast at this extraordinary and mysterious occurrence, again found herself alone. We will leave her to her astonishment and conjecture, whilst we follow the gipsy to the place whither he had been so involuntarily and unceremoniously conveyed, a description of which will furnish a key to his seemingly unaccountable disappearance. [Pg 276]

It was a vault of considerable extent, surrounded by casks of various sizes, most of which would, on being touched, have given, by their ringing sound, assurance of their emptiness. In bins, at one extremity of the cellar, were a number of bottles, whose thick mantle of dust and cobwebs spoke volumes for the ripe and racy nature of their contents. A large chest of cedar-wood stood in the innermost nook of the cellar, with raised lid, disclosing a quantity of cigars, worm-eaten and musty from extreme age. In the massive wall, forming one end of the vault, and which was in fact the foundation of the outer wall of the convent, was a large doorway; but the door had been removed, and the aperture filled with stones and plaster, forming a barrier more solid in appearance than reality. This barrier had recently been knocked down; its materials lay scattered on the ground, and through the opening thus made, came the only light that was allowed to enter the vault. It proceeded from the cell in which Paco, the muleteer, had for more than a month been imprisoned.

Long, very long and wearisome, had that month of captivity appeared to Paco. Accustomed to a life of constant activity and change, it would have been difficult to devise for him a severer punishment than inaction and confinement. The first day he passed in tolerable tranquillity of mind, occupied by vain endeavours to conjecture the motives of the violence offered to him, and momentarily anticipating his release; and although evening came without its taking place, he went to sleep, fully convinced that the next morning would be the term of his durance. Conscious of no crime, ignorant of Count Villabuena's death, and of Don Baltasar's designs, he was totally unable to assign a reason for his imprisonment. The next morning came, the bolts of his dungeon-door were withdrawn; he started from his pallet. The door opened, and a man entered, bringing a supply of fresh water and a meagre gaspacho. This he laid down; and was leaving the cell without replying to Paco's indignant and loudly-uttered interrogatories; when the muleteer followed, and attempted to force his way out. He was met by a stern "Back!" and the muzzle of a cocked blunderbuss touched his breast. A sturdy convent servitor barred the passage, and compelled him to retreat into his prison.

Paco now gave free course to his impatience. During the whole of that day he paced his cell with the wild restlessness of a newly-caged panther; the gaspacho remained untasted, but the water-jug was quickly drained, for his throat was dry with cursing. The next morning another visit, another gaspacho and supply of water, and another attempt to leave the prison, repulsed like the previous one. On the third day, however, his hopes of a prompt liberation having melted away before the dogged silence and methodical regularity of his jailers, Paco began to cast about in his mind for means of liberating himself. First he shook and examined the door, but he might as well have attempted to shake the Pyrenees; its thick hard wood and solid fastenings mocked his efforts, and moreover he had no instruments, not so much as a rusty nail, to aid him in his attempt. The two side-walls next received his attention; but they were of great blocks of stone, joined by a cement of nearly equal hardness, and on which, although he worked till his nails were torn to shreds, and his fingers ran blood, he could not make the slightest impression. As to the wall opposite to the door, he did not even examine it; for it was easy to judge, from the grass and bushes growing against the window in its top, that it was the outer wall of the convent. On this, since he could make nothing of the partition-walls, all labour would of course be thrown away; and even if he could bore through it, he must find the solid earth on the other side, and be discovered before he could possibly burrow his way out. As to the window, or rather the iron-barred opening through which came light and air, for any purposes of escape it might as well not have been there, for its lower edge was nearly fourteen feet from the ground; and although Paco, who was a first-rate leaper, did, in his desperation, and in the early days of his captivity, make several violent attempts to jump up and catch hold of the grating, they were all, as may be supposed, entirely without result. [Pg 277]

It was the thirty-fifth day of his imprisonment, an hour after daybreak. His provisions for the next twenty-four hours had been brought to him, and, as usual, he had made an unsuccessful effort to induce his sullen jailer to inform him why he was confined, and when he should be released. Gloomy and disconsolate, he seated himself on the ground, and leaned his back against the end wall of his dreary dungeon. The light from the window above his head fell upon the opposite door, and illuminated the spot where he had scratched, with the shank of a button, a line for each day of his imprisonment. The melancholy calendar already reached one quarter across the door, and

Paco was speculating and wondering how far it might be prolonged, when he thought he felt a stream of cold wind against his ear. He placed his hand where his ear had been, and plainly distinguished a current of air issuing from a small crevice in the wall, which otherwise was smooth and covered with plaster. Without being much of a natural philosopher, it was evident to Paco, that if wind came through, there must be a vault on the other side of the wall, and not the solid earth, as he had hitherto believed; and it also became probable that the wall was deficient either in thickness or solidity. After some scratching at the plaster, he succeeded in uncovering the side of a small stone of irregular shape. A vigorous push entirely dislodged it, and it fell from him, leaving an opening through which he could pass his arm. This he did, and found that although on one side of the aperture the wall was upwards of two feet thick, on the other it was not more than six or eight inches, and of loose construction. By a very little labour he knocked out half-a-dozen stones, and then, weary of thus making an opening piecemeal, he receded as far as he could, took a short run, and threw himself against the wall with all his force. After a few repetitions of this vigorous but not very prudent proceeding, the frail bulwark gave way, and amidst a shower of dust and mortar, Paco entered the vault into which he had conquered his passage.

The vault had apparently served, during some former occupation of the convent by monks, as the wine-cellar of the holy fathers; and had been walled up, not improbably, to protect it from the depredations of the French soldiery during Napoleon's occupation of Spain. As already mentioned, it was well stocked with casks of all sorts and sizes, most of them empty and with bottles, for the most part full. Several of the latter Paco lost no time in decapitating; and a trial of their contents satisfied him that the proprietors of the cellar, whatever else they might have been, were decidedly good judges of wine. Cheered and invigorated by the pleasant liquor of which he had now so long been deprived, he commenced, as soon as his eyes had got a little accustomed to the exceedingly dim twilight that reigned in the vault, a thorough investigation of the place, in hopes of finding either an outlet, or the means of making one. In the former part of his hopes he was disappointed; but after a patient search, his pains were rewarded by the discovery of several pieces of old rope, and of a wooden bar or lever, which had probably served to raise and shift the wine-casks. The rope did not seem likely to be of any use, but the lever was an invaluable acquisition; and by its aid Paco entertained strong hopes of accomplishing his escape. He at once set to work to knock down the remainder of the stones blocking up the doorway, and when they were cleared he began to roll and drag empty casks into his cell. Of a number of these, and with some labour, he formed a scaffolding, by means of which he was enabled to reach the window, taking his crowbar with him. His hand trembled as it grasped the grating, on the possibility of whose removal every thing depended. Viewed from the floor of his prison, the bars appeared of a formidable thickness, and he dreaded lest the time that would elapse till the next visit of his jailer, should be insufficient for him to overcome the obstacle. To his unspeakable delight, however, his first effort caused the grating to shake and rattle. The stone into which the extremities of the bars were riveted was of no very hard description; the iron was corroded by the rust of centuries, and Paco at once saw, that what he had looked forward to as a task of severe difficulty, would be accomplished with the utmost ease. He set to work with good courage, and after a couple of hours' toil, the grating was removed, and the passage free.

Paco's first impulse was to spring through the opening into the bright sunshine without; but a moment's reflection checked him. He remembered that he was unarmed and unacquainted with the neighbourhood; and his appearance outside the convent in broad daylight, might lead to his instant recapture by some of those, whoever they were, who found an interest or a gratification in keeping him prisoner. He resolved, therefore, unwillingly enough it is true, to curb his impatience, and defer his departure till nightfall. Of a visit from his jailers he felt no apprehension, for they had never yet shown themselves to him more than once a-day, and that, invariably, at an early hour of the morning. Partly, however, to be prepared for instant flight, should he hear his dungeon door open, and still more for the sake of inhaling the warm and aromatic breeze, which blew over to him from the neighbouring woods and fields, he seated himself upon the top of his casks, his head just on a level with the window, and, cautiously making a small opening in the matted vegetable screen that grew before it, gazed out upon the face of nature with a feeling of enjoyment, only to be appreciated by those who, like him, have passed five weeks in a cold, gloomy, subterranean dungeon. The little he was able to distinguish of the locality was highly satisfactory. Within thirty paces of the convent wall was the commencement of a thick wood, wherein he doubted not that he should find shelter and security if observed in his flight. He would greatly have preferred waiting the approach of night in the forest, instead of in his cell; but with a prudence hardly to be expected from him, and which the horror he had of a prolongation of his captivity, perhaps alone induced him to exercise, he would not risk crossing the strip of open land intervening between him and the wood; judging, not without reason, that it might be overlooked by the convent windows.

For some time Paco remained seated upon his pile of casks, feasting his eyes with the sunshine, to which they had so long been strangers; his ear on the watch, his fingers mechanically plucking and twisting the blades of grass that grew in through the window. He was arranging in his mind what route he should take, and considering where he was most likely to find Count Villabuena, when he was surprised by the sound of words, proceeding apparently from a considerable distance above his head, but some of which nevertheless reached his quick and practised ear. Of these the one most distinctly spoken was the name of Jaime, and in the voice that spoke it, Paco was convinced that he recognised that of Count Villabuena's daughter. A few moments elapsed, something else was said, what, he was unable to make out, and then, to his no small alarm, his

old acquaintance and recent betrayer, Jaime the esquilador, stood within arm's length of his window. He instinctively drew back; the gipsy was so near, that only the growth of weeds before mentioned interposed between him and the muleteer. But Paco soon saw that his proximity was unsuspected by Jaime, who had commenced the dialogue with Rita already recorded. Paco at once comprehended the situation; and emboldened by the knowledge that he, and even the aperture of the window, was concealed from sight by the grass and bushes, he again put his head as far forward as was prudent, and attentively listened. Not a word spoken by the esquilador escaped him, but he could scarcely hear any thing of what Rita said; for the distance between her and Jaime being diminished, she spoke in a very low tone. He made out, however, that she was endeavouring to bribe the gipsy to take a letter—to whom, he did not hear—and a scheme occurred to him, the execution of which he only deferred till he should see the missive in the possession of Jaime, on whose every gesture and movement he kept a vigilant watch. At the same instant that the letter was deposited in the gipsy's pocket, Paco thrust both his hands through the grass, seized the naked ankles of the esquilador in a vicelike grip, and by a sudden jerk throwing him upon his back, proceeded to drag him through the aperture, behind which he himself was stationed. His strength and adroitness, and the suddenness of the attack, ensured its success; and in spite of the gipsy's struggles, Paco speedily pulled him completely into the dungeon, upon the ground of which he cast him down with a force that might well have broken the bones, but, as it happened, merely took away the senses, of the terrified esquilador.

The strange and mysterious manner of the assault, the stunning violence of his fall, and his position on regaining the consciousness of which he had for a brief space been deprived, combined to bewilder the gipsy, and temporarily to quell the courage, or, as it should perhaps rather be termed, the passive stoicism, usually exhibited by him in circumstances of danger. He had been dragged into the wine-cellar, and seated with his back against a cask; his wrists and ankles were bound with ropes, and beside him knelt a man busily engaged in searching, his pockets. The light was so faint that at first he could not distinguish the features of this person; but when at last he recognized those of Paco, he conjectured to a certain extent the nature of the snare into which he had fallen, and, as he did so, his usual coolness and confidence in some degree returned. His first words were an attempt to intimidate the muleteer.

"Untie my hands," said he, "or I shout for help. I have only to call out, to be released immediately."

"If that were true, you would have done it, and not told me of it," retorted Paco, with his usual acuteness. "The walls are thick; and the vault deep, and I believe you might shout a long while before any one heard you. But I advise you not to try. The first word you speak in a louder tone than pleases me, I cut your throat like a pig; with your own knife, too."

And, by way of confirming this agreeable assurance, he drew the cold blade across Jaime's throat, with such a fierce determined movement, that the startled gipsy involuntarily shrunk back. Paco marked the effect of his menace.

"You see," said he, sticking the knife in the ground beside him, and continuing his in investigation of the esquilador's pockets; "you had better be quiet, and answer my questions civilly. For whom is this letter?" continued he, holding up Rita's missive, which he had extracted from the gipsy's jacket.

But although the esquilador (partly on account of Paco's threats, and partly because he knew that his cries were unlikely to bring assistance) made no attempt to call out, he did not, on the other hand, show any disposition to communicativeness. Instead of replying to the questions put to him, he maintained a surly, dogged silence. Paco repeated the interrogatory without obtaining a better result, and then, as if weary of questioning a man who would not answer, he continued his search without further waste of words. The two rings and Rita's letter he had already found; they were succeeded by a number of miscellaneous objects which he threw carelessly aside; and having rummaged the esquilador's various pockets, he proceeded to unfasten his sash. The first demonstration of a design upon this receptacle of his wealth, produced, on the part of the gipsy, a violent but fruitless effort to liberate his wrists from the cords that confined them.

"Oho!" said Paco, "is that the sore place? Faith! there is reason for your wincing," he added, as the gold contained in the girdle fell jingling on the floor. "This was not all got by clipping mules."

"It was received from you, the greater part of it," exclaimed the gipsy, forced out of his taciturnity by his agony at seeing Paco, after replacing the money in the sash, deliberately bind it round his own waist.

"I worked hard and ran risk for it, and you paid it me willingly. Surely you will not rob me!"

Without attending to this expostulation, Paco secured the gold, and then rising to his feet, again repeated the question he had already twice put to his prisoner.

"To whom is this letter?" said he.

"You may read it yourself," returned Jaime, who, notwithstanding the intelligible hint to be tractable which he had already received, found it a hard matter to restrain his sulkiness. "It is addressed, and open."

Read it, was exactly what Paco would have done, had he been able; but it so happened that the muleteer was a self-educated man, and that, whilst teaching himself many things which he had

on various occasions found of much utility, he had given but a moderate share of his attention to the acquirement of letters. When on the road with his mules, he could distinguish the large printed capitals painted on the packages entrusted to his care; he was also able, from long habit, fluently to read the usual announcement of "*Vinos y licores finos*," inscribed above tavern doors; and, when required, he could even perpetrate a hieroglyphic intended for the signature of his name; but these were the extent of his acquirements. As to deciphering the contents or superscription of the letter now in his possession, he knew that it would be mere lost labour to attempt it. He was far too wary, however, to display his ignorance to the gipsy, and thus to strengthen him in his refusal to say for whom it was intended.

"Of course I may read it," he replied "but here it is too dark, and I have no mind to leave you alone. Answer me, or it will be worse for you."

Either suspecting how the case really stood, or through mere sullenness at the loss of his money, the gipsy remained, with lowering brow and compressed lips, obstinately silent. For a few moments Paco awaited a reply, and then walking to a short distance, he picked up something that lay in a dark corner of the vault, returned to the gipsy, and placing his hands upon the edge of the tall cask against which the latter was seated, sprang actively upon the top of it. Soon he again descended, and, upsetting the cask, gave it a shove with his foot that sent it rolling into the middle of the cellar. The gipsy, although motionless, and to all appearance inattentive to what passed, lost not one of the muleteer's movements. His head stirred not but his sunken beadlike eyes shifted their glances with extraordinary keenness and rapidity. At the moment when, surprised by the sudden removal of the cask, he screwed his head round to see what was going on behind him, a rope was passed swiftly over his face, and the next instant he felt his neck encircled by a halter. A number of strong hooks and wooden brackets, used to support shelves and suspend wine-skins, were firmly fixed in the cellar wall, at various distances from the ground. Over one of the highest of these, Paco had cast a rope, one end of which he held, whilst the other, as already mentioned, was fixed round the neck of the gipsy. Retiring a couple of paces, the muleteer hauled on the rope; it tightened round the neck of the unlucky Jaime, and even lifted him a little from the ground. He strove to rise to his feet from the sitting posture in which he was, but his bonds prevented him. Stumbling and helpless, he fell over on one side, and would inevitably have been strangled, had not Paco given him more line. The fear of death came over him. He trembled violently, and his face, which was smeared with blood from the scratches he had received in his passage through the bushes, became of an ash-like paleness. He cast a piteous look at Paco, who surveyed him with unrelenting aspect. [Pg 281]

"Not the first time I've had you at a rope's end," said he; "although the knot wasn't always in the same place. Come, I've no time to lose! Will you answer, or hang?"

"What do you want to know?"

"I have already asked you three times," returned Paco, impatiently, "who this letter is for, and what about."

"For Zumalacarregui," replied Jaime; "and now you know as much as I do."

"Why have I been kept in prison?" demanded Paco.

"Why did you come with the lady?" replied the esquilador. "Had you stopped at Segura, no one would have meddled with you."

"I came because I was ordered. Where is Doña Rita?"

The gipsy hesitated, and then answered surlily. "I do not know."

Paco gave the rope a twitch which brought the esquilador's tongue out of his mouth.

"Liar!" he exclaimed; "I heard you speaking to her just now. What does she here?"

"A prisoner," muttered the half-strangled gipsy.

"Whose?"

"Colonel Villabuena's."

"And the Señor Conde. Where is he?"

"Dead."

"Dead!" repeated Paco, letting the rope go, grasping the esquilador by the collar, and furiously shaking him. "The noble count dead! When did he die? Or is it a lie of your invention?"

"He was dead before I fetched the young lady from Segura," said Jaime. "The story of his being wounded, and wishing to see her, was merely a stratagem to bring her here."

Relinquishing his hold, Paco took a step backwards, in grief and great astonishment. The answers he had forced from Jaime, and his own natural quickness of apprehension, were sufficient to enlighten him as to the main outline of what he had hitherto found a mystery. He at once conjectured Don Baltasar's designs, and the motives of Doña Rita's imprisonment and his own. That the count was really dead he could not doubt; for otherwise Baltasar would hardly have ventured upon his daughter's abduction. Aware that the count's duties and usual occupations did not lead him into actual collision with the enemy, and that they could scarcely, except by a

casualty, endanger his life, it occurred to Paco, as highly probable, that he had met his death by unfair means, at the hands of Don Baltasar and the gipsy. The colonel he suspected, and Jaime he knew, to be capable of any iniquity. Such were some of the reflections that passed rapidly through his mind during the few moments that he stood beside Jaime, mute and motionless, meditating on what had passed, and on what he should now do. Naturally prompt and decided, and accustomed to perilous emergencies, he was not long in making up his mind. Suddenly starting from his immobility, he seized the end of the halter, and, to the horror of the gipsy, whose eyes were fixed upon him, began pulling furiously at it, hand over hand, like a sailor tugging at a hawser.

"*Misericordia!*" screamed the horror-stricken esquilador, as he found himself lifted from the ground by the neck. "Mercy! mercy!"

But mercy there was none for him. His cries were stifled by the pressure of the rope, and then he made a desperate effort to gain his feet. In this he succeeded, and stood upright causing the noose for a moment to slacken. He profited by the temporary relief to attempt another ineffectual prayer for pity. A gasping, inarticulate noise in his throat was the sole result; for the muleteer continued his vigorous pulls at the cord, and in an instant the unhappy gipsy felt himself lifted completely off the ground. He made one more violent strain to touch the earth with the point of his foot; but no—all was in vain—higher and higher he went, till the crown of his head struck against the long iron hook through the loop of which the halter ran. When this was the case, Paco caught his end of the rope round another hook at a less height from the ground, twisted and knotted it securely; then stooping, he picked up the esquilador's knife, re-entered the dungeon, and ascended the pile of casks erected below the window. On the top of these he sat himself down for a moment and listened. There proceeded from the wine-cellar a sort of noise, as of a scraping and thumping against the wall. It was the wretched gipsy kicking and struggling in his last agony.

"He dies hard," muttered Paco, a slight expression of compunction coming over his features, "and I strung him up without priest or prayer. But, what then! those gitanos are worse than Jews, they believe neither in God nor devil. As for his death, he deserves it, the dog, ten times over. And if he didn't, Doña Rita's fate depends on my escape, and I could not leave him there to alarm the convent and have me pursued."

His scruples quieted by these arguments, the muleteer again listened. All was silent in the vault. Paco cautiously put his head out at the hole through which he had dragged the gipsy. The coast was clear, the forest within thirty yards. Winding his body noiselessly through the aperture, he sprang to his feet, and with the speed of a greyhound sought the cover of the wood. Upon reaching the shelter of its foremost trees he paused, and turning round, looked back at the convent, hoping to see Rita at a window. But she had disappeared, and the shutters were closed. It would have been folly, under the circumstances, to wait the chance of her return; and once more turning his back upon the place of his captivity, the muleteer, exulting in his newly recovered freedom, plunged, with quick and elastic step, into the innermost recesses of the forest.

Rightly conjecturing that Rita, informed of her father's death, and having no influential friend to whom to address herself for aid, had written to Zumalacarregui with a view to obtain her release, Paco determined to convey the letter to its destination as speedily as possible. To do this it was necessary, first, to ascertain the whereabout of the Carlist general, and secondly, to avoid falling in with Colonel Villabuena, a meeting with whom might not only prevent him from delivering the letter, but also again endanger his liberty, perhaps his life. Shaping his course through the forest in, as nearly as he could judge, a westerly direction, he reached the mountains at sunset, and continued his march along their base—avoiding the more frequented path by which he had approached the convent—until he reached an outlet of the valley. Through this he passed; and still keeping straight forward, without any other immediate object than that of increasing the distance between himself and his late prison, he found himself, some time after midnight, clear of the lofty range of mountains, a limb of the Spanish Pyrenees, in one of whose recesses the convent stood. The country in front, and on both sides of him, was still mountainous, but the elevations were less; and Paco, who had a good general knowledge of the geography of his native province, through most parts of which his avocations as muleteer had often caused him to travel, conjectured that he was on the extreme verge of Navarre and about to enter the province of Guipuzcoa. He had deemed it prudent to avoid all human habitations whilst still in the vicinity of the convent; but having now left it half a dozen leagues in his rear, the necessity for such caution no longer existed, and he began to look about for a convenient place to take a few hours' repose. At the distance of a mile he perceived the white walls of houses shimmering in the moonlight, and he bent his steps in that direction. It was two in the morning and the hamlet was buried in sleep; the sharp, sudden bark of a watch-dog was the only sound that greeted the muleteer as he passed under the irregular avenue of trees preceding its solitary street. Entering a barn, whose door stood invitingly open, he threw himself upon a pile of newly-made hay, and was instantly plunged in a sleep far sounder and more refreshing than any he had enjoyed during the whole period of his captivity.

It was still early morning when he was roused from his slumbers by the entrance of the proprietor of the barn, a sturdy, good-humoured peasant, more surprised, than pleased, to find upon his premises a stranger of Paco's equivocal appearance. The muleteer's exterior was certainly not calculated to give a high opinion of his respectability. His uniform jacket of dark green cloth was soiled and torn; his boina, which had served him for a nightcap during his

imprisonment, was in equally bad plight; he was uncombed and unwashed, and a beard of nearly six weeks' growth adorned his face. It was in a tone of some suspicion that the peasant enquired his business, but Paco had his answer ready. Taken prisoner by the Christinos, he said, he had escaped from Pampeluna after a confinement of some duration, and ignorant of the country, had wandered about for two nights, lying concealed during the day, and afraid to approach villages lest he should again fall into the hands of the enemy. The haggard look he had acquired during his imprisonment, his beard and general appearance, and the circumstance of his being unarmed, although in uniform, seemed to confirm the truth of his tale; and the peasant, who, like all of his class at that time and in that province, was an enthusiastic Carlist, willingly supplied him with the razor and refreshment of which he stood in pressing need. His appearance somewhat improved, and his appetite satisfied, Paco in his turn became the interrogator, and the first answers he received caused him extreme surprise. The most triumphant success had waited on the Carlist arms during the period of his captivity. The Christino generals had been on all hands discomfited by the men at whose discipline and courage, even more than at their poverty and imperfect resources, they affected to sneer, and numerous towns and fortified places had fallen into the hands of Zumalacarregui and his victorious lieutenants. The mere name of the Carlist chief had become a tower of strength to his followers, and a terror to his foes; and several ably managed surprises had greatly increased the panic dread with which the news of his approach now inspired the Christino troops. On the heights of Descarga a strong column of the Queen's army had been attacked in the night, and routed with prodigious loss, by the Carlist general Eraso; in the valley of the Baztan General Oraa had been beaten by Sagastibelza, leaving ninety officers and seven hundred men in the hands of the victors; Estella, Vergara, Tolosa, Villafranca, and numerous other considerable towns, were held by the soldiers of the Pretender; and, to crown all, Paco learned, to his astonishment, that Zumalacarregui and his army were then in front of Bilboa, vigorously besieging that rich and important city.

Towards Bilboa, then, did Paco bend his steps. The remote position of the village where he had obtained the above information, caused it to be but irregularly supplied with intelligence from the army; and it was not till the evening of his first day's march, that the muleteer heard a piece of news which redoubled his eagerness to reach the Carlist headquarters. Zumalacarregui, he was informed, had received, whilst directing the operations of the siege, a severe and dangerous wound. Fearing he might die before he reached him, Paco endeavoured to hire or purchase a horse, but all that could be spared had been taken for the Carlist army; and he rightly judged that through so mountainous a country he should make better progress on foot than on any Rosinante offered to him. He pushed forward, therefore, with all possible haste; but his feet had grown tender during his imprisonment, and he was but indifferently satisfied with his rate of marching. On the following day, however, his anxiety was considerably dissipated by learning that Zumalacarregui's wound was slight, and that the surgeons had predicted a rapid cure. He nevertheless continued his journey without abatement of speed, and on the afternoon of the fourth day arrived on the summit of the hills that overlook Bilboa. The suburbs were occupied by the Carlists, whose slender battering train kept up a fire that was vigorously replied to by the forty or fifty cannon bristling the fortifications. Entering the faubourg known as the Barrio de Bolueta, he approached a group of soldiers lounging in front of their quarters, and enquired where the general was lodged. The men looked at him in some surprise, and asked which general he meant.

"The general-in-chief, Zumalacarregui, to be sure," replied Paco impatiently.

"Where come you from, amigo?" said one of the soldiers, "not to know that Zumalacarregui left the lines the day after he was wounded, and is now getting cured at Cegama?"

Great was Paco's vexation at finding that the person he had come so far to seek, had been all the while at a village within a day's march of the Dominican convent. His annoyance was so legibly written upon his countenance, that one of the soldiers took upon himself to offer a word of consolation.

"Never mind, comrade," said he, "if you want to see Tio Tomas, you can't do better than remain here. You won't have long to wait. He has only got a scratch on the leg, and we expect every day to see him ride into the lines. He's not the man to be laid up long by such a trifle."

"Is Colonel Villabuena here?" said Paco, somewhat reassured by this last information.

"What, Black Baltasar, as they call him? Ay, that he is, and be hanged to him. It's only two days since he ordered me an extra turn of picket for forgetting to salute him as he passed my beat. Curse him for a soldier's plague!"

Paco left the soldiers and walked on till he came to a small house, which the juniper bush suspended above the door proclaimed to be a tavern. Entering the smoky low-roofed room upon the ground-floor, which just then chanced to be unoccupied, he sat down by the open window and called for a quartillo of wine. A measure of the vinegar-flavoured liquid known by the name of chacolin, and drunk for wine in the province of Biscay, was brought to him, and after washing the dust out of his throat, he began to think what was best to do in his present dilemma. He was desirous to get out of Don Baltasar's neighbourhood, and, moreover, if he did not rejoin his regiment or report himself to the military authorities, he was liable to be arrested as a deserter. In that case, he could hardly hope that the strange story he would have to tell of his imprisonment at the convent would find credit, and, even if it did, delay would inevitably ensue. He finally made up his mind to remain where he was for the night, and to start early next morning for Cegama. A better and more speedy plan would perhaps have been to seek out one of

Zumalacarregui's aides-de-camp, relate to him his recent adventures, produce Rita's letter in corroboration of his veracity, and request him to forward it, or provide him with a horse to take it himself. But although this plan occurred to him, the gain in time appeared insufficient to compensate for the risk of meeting Don Baltasar whilst searching for the aide-de-camp, and of being by him thrown into prison and deprived of the letter.

The day had been most sultry, and Paco had walked, with but a ten minutes' halt, from sunrise till afternoon. Overcome by fatigue and drowsiness, he had no sooner decided on his future proceedings, and emptied his quartillo, events which were about coincident, than his head began to nod and droop, and after a few faint struggles against the sleepy impulse, it fell forward upon the table, and he slept as men sleep after a twelve hours' march under a Spanish sun in the month of June. During his slumbers various persons, soldiers and others, passed in and out of the room; but there was nothing unusual in seeing a soldier dozing off his wine or fatigue on a tavern table, and no one disturbed or took especial notice of him. Paco slept on.

It was evening when he awoke, and rose from his bench with a hearty stretch of his stiffened limbs. As he did so, he heard the sound of footsteps in the street. They ceased near the window, and a dialogue commenced, a portion of which reached his ears.

"Have you heard the news?" said one of the speakers.

"No," was the reply, in a voice that made Paco start. "I am now going to Eraso's quarters to get them. I am told that a courier arrived from Durango half an hour since, covered with foam, and spurring as on a life or death errand."

Whilst this was saying, Paco noiselessly approached the window, which was large and square, about four feet above the street, and closed only by a clumsy shutter, at that moment wide open. Crouching down, he cautiously raised his head so as to obtain a view of the street, without exposing more than the upper part of his face to the possible observation of the persons outside. What he saw, confirmed the testimony of his ears: two officers in staff uniforms stood within twenty paces of the window, and in the one who had last spoken, Paco recognised Don Baltasar. His face was towards the tavern, but his eyes were fixed upon his interlocutor, who replied to his last observation—

"On an errand of death, indeed!" said he, in tones which, although suppressed, were distinctly audible to the muleteer. "Zumalacarregui is no more."

In his consternation at the intelligence thus unwittingly conveyed to him, Paco forgot for a second the caution rendered imperative by his position. A half-smothered exclamation escaped him, and by an involuntary start he raised his head completely above the window-sill. As he did so, he fancied he saw Don Baltasar glance at the window, and in his turn slightly start; but the sun had already passed the horizon, the light was waning fast, and Colonel Villabuena took no further notice, but remained talking with his companion, Paco made sure that he had either not seen him, or, what was still more probable, not remembered his face. Nevertheless the muleteer retreated from the window that no part of him might be seen, and strained his hearing to catch what passed.

He missed a sentence or two, and then again heard Colonel Villabuena's voice.

"Most disastrous intelligence, indeed!" he said, "and as unexpected as disastrous. I will proceed to the general's quarters and get the particulars."

The officers separated; Don Baltasar walking rapidly away, as Paco, who now ventured to look out, was able to ascertain. Satisfied that he had escaped the peril with which for a moment he had thought himself menaced, he left the window and returned to his bench. But Don Baltasar had sharper eyes and a better memory than the muleteer gave him credit for. He had fully recognized Paco, whom he had several times seen in attendance on the count, and, without troubling himself to reflect how he could have made his escape, he at once decided what measures to take to neutralize its evil consequences. Had Paco remained an instant longer at his post of observation, he would have seen the Colonel stop at a house near at hand, in which a number of soldiers were billeted, summon a corporal and three men, and retrace his steps to the tavern. Leaving two of the soldiers outside the house, with the others he burst into the room occupied by the muleteer.

At the moment of their entrance, Paco, who, although he had heard their footsteps in the passage, did not suspect the new-comers to be other than some of the usual customers to the tavern, had taken up the heavy earthen jug in which his wine had been brought, and was decanting from it into his glass a last mouthful that still remained at the bottom. No sooner did he behold Don Baltasar, closely followed by two soldiers with fixed bayonets, than with his usual bold decision, and with his utmost strength, he dashed the jug full at him. The missile struck the officer on the chest with such force that he staggered back, and, for a moment, impeded the advance of his followers. That moment saved Paco's liberty—probably his life. Springing to the window, he leaped out, and alighting upon one of the soldiers who had remained outside, knocked him over. The other man, taken by surprise, made a feeble thrust at the fugitive. Paco parried it with his arm, grappled the man, gave him a kick on the shin that knocked his leg from under him, rolled him on the ground by the side of his companion, and scudded down the street like a hunted fox, just as Baltasar and his men jumped out of the window.

"Fire!" shouted the Colonel.

Two bullets, and then two more, struck the walls of the narrow sloping street through which the muleteer ran, or buried themselves with a *thud* in the earth a short distance in front of him. Paco ran all the faster, cleared the houses, and turning to his right, scampered down in the direction of the town. The shouts and firing had spread an alarm in the Carlist camp, the soldiers were turning out on all sides, and the outposts on the alert. Paco approached the latter, and saw a sentinel in a straight line between him and the town. [Pg 286]

"*Quien vive?*" challenged the soldier, when the muleteer was still at a considerable distance from him.

"*Carlos Quinto*," replied Paco.

"Halt!" thundered the sentry, bringing his musket to his shoulder with a sharp quick rattle.

This command, although enforced by a menace, Paco was not disposed to obey. For the one musket before him, there were hundreds behind him, and he continued his onward course, merely inclining to his left, so as to present a less easy mark than when bearing straight down upon the sentry. Another "halt!" immediately followed by the report of the piece, was echoed by a laugh of derision from Paco. "Stop him! bayonet him!" shouted a score of voices in his rear. The sentinel rushed forward to obey the command; but Paco, unarmed and unencumbered, was too quick for him. Dashing past within a yard of the bayonet's point, he tore along to the town, amidst a rain of bullets, encouraged by the cheers of the Christinos, who had assembled in groups to watch the race; and, replying to their shouts and applause by a yell of "*Viva la Reyna!*" he in another minute stood safe and sheltered within the exterior fortifications of Bilboa.

Three weeks had elapsed since the death of Zumalacarregui, and that important event, which the partisans of the Spanish pretender had, as long as possible, kept secret from their opponents, was now universally known. Already did the operations of the Carlists begin to show symptoms of the great loss they had sustained in the person of a man who, during his brief but brilliant command, had nailed victory to his standard. Even during his last illness, he kept up, from his couch of suffering, a constant correspondence with General Eraso, his second in command, and in some degree directed his proceedings; but when he died, the system of warfare he had uniformly, and with such happy results, followed up, was exchanged by those who came after him, for another and a less judicious one. This, added to the immense moral weight of his loss, which filled the Christinos with the most buoyant anticipations, whilst it was a grievous discouragement to the Carlists, caused the tide of fortune to turn against the latter. Dejected and disheartened, they were beaten from before Bilboa, the town which, but for Zumalacarregui's over-strained deference to the wishes of Don Carlos, they would never have attacked. On the other hand, the Christinos were sanguine of victory, and of a speedy termination to the war. The baton of command, after passing through the hands of Rodil, Sarsfield, Mina, and other veterans whose experience had struggled in vain against the skill and prestige of the Carlist chief, had just been bestowed by the Queen's government on a young general in whose zeal and abilities great reliance was placed. On various occasions, since the death of Ferdinand, had this officer, at the head of his brigade or division, given proof not only of that intrepidity which, although the soldier's first virtue, should be the general's least merit, but, as was generally believed, of military talents of a high order.

Luis Fernandez de Cordova, the son of a poor but noble family of one of the southern provinces of Spain, was educated at a military school, whence he passed with an officer's commission into a regiment of the royal guard. Endowed with considerable natural ability and tact, he managed to win the favour of Ferdinand VII., and by that weak and fickle monarch was speedily raised to the rank of colonel. His then bias, however, was for diplomacy, for which, indeed, his subsequent life, and his turn for intrigue, showed him to be well qualified; and at his repeated instance he was sent to various courts in high diplomatic capacities. "We are sorry to have to say," remarks a Spanish military writer who fought in the opposite ranks, "that Cordova in part owed his elevation to the goodness of the very prince against whom he subsequently drew his sword." Be that as it may, at the death of Ferdinand, Cordova, although little more than thirty years of age, was already a general, and ambassador at Copenhagen. Ever keenly alive to his own interest, he no sooner learned the outbreak of the civil war, than he saw in it an opportunity of further advancement; and, without losing a moment, he posted to Madrid, threw himself at the feet of Christina, and implored her to give him a command, that he might have an opportunity of proving with his sword his devotion to her and to the daughter of his lamented sovereign. A command was given him; his talents were by no means contemptible; his self-confidence unbounded; intrigue and interest were not wanting to back such qualities, and at the period now referred to, Cordova, to the infinite vexation of many a greyhaired general who had earned his epaulets on the battle-fields of America and the Peninsula, was appointed commander-in-chief of the army of the north. [Pg 287]

Upon assuming the supreme command, Cordova marched his army, which had just compelled the Carlists to raise the siege of Bilboa, in the direction of the Ebro. Meanwhile the Carlists, foiled in Biscay, were concentrating their forces in central Navarre. As if to make up for their recent disappointment, they had resolved upon the attack of a town, less wealthy and important, it is true, than Bilboa, but which would still have been a most advantageous acquisition, giving them, so long as they could hold it, command of the communications between Pampeluna and the Upper Ebro. Against Puente de la Reyna, a fortified place upon the Arga, were their operations now directed, and there, upon the 13th of July, the bulk of the Carlist army arrived. Don Carlos himself accompanied it, but the command devolved upon Eraso, the military capabilities of

Charles the Fifth being limited to praying, amidst a circle of friars and shavelings, for the success of those who were shedding their heart's blood in his service. The neighbouring peasants were set to work to cut trenches; and preparations were making to carry on the siege in due form, when, on the 14th, the garrison, in a vigorous sortie, killed the commandant of the Carlist artillery, and captured a mortar that had been placed in position. The same day Cordova and his army started from Lerin, which they had reached upon the 13th, and arrived at nightfall at Larraga, a town also upon the Arga, and within a few miles of Pueute de la Reyna.

The next day was passed by the two considerable armies, which, it was easy to foresee, would soon come into hostile collision, in various movements and manœuvres, which diminished the distance between them, already not great. The Carlists, already discouraged by the successful sortie of the 14th, retired from before Puente de la Reyna, and, moving southwards, occupied the town and bridge of Mendigorria. On the other hand, two-thirds of the Christino forces crossed the Arga, and quartered themselves in and near the town of Artajona. The plain on the left bank of the river was evidently to be the scene of the approaching conflict. On few occasions during the war, had actions taken place upon such level ground as this, the superiority of the Christinos in cavalry and artillery having induced Zumalacarregui rather to seek battle in the mountains, where those arms were less available. But since the commencement of 1835, the Carlist horse had improved in numbers and discipline; several cavalry officers of rank and skill had joined it, and assisted in its organization; and although deprived of its gallant leader, Don Carlos O'Donnel, who had fallen victim to his own imprudent daring in an insignificant skirmish beneath the walls of Pampeluna, Eraso, and the other Carlist generals, had now sufficient confidence in its efficiency to risk a battle in a comparatively level country. Numerically, the Carlists were superior to their opponents, but in artillery, and especially in cavalry, the Christinos had the advantage. From various garrison towns, through which he had passed in his circuitous route from Bilboa to Larraga, the Christino commander had collected reinforcements, and an imposing number of squadrons, including several of lancers and dragoons of the royal guard, formed part of the force now assembled at Larraga and Artajona.

It was late on the evening of the 15th of July, and on a number of gently sloping fields, interspersed with vineyards and dotted with trees, a Christino brigade, including a regiment of cavalry, had established its bivouac. In such weather as it then was, it became a luxury to pass a night in the open air, with turf for a mattrass, a cloak for a pillow, and the branches for bed-curtains, instead of being cramped and crowded into smoky, vermin-haunted cottages; and the troops assembled seemed to feel this, and to enjoy the light and balmy breeze and refreshing coolness which had succeeded to the extreme heat of the day. Few troops, if any, are so picturesque in a bivouac as Spaniards; none, certainly, are greater adepts in rendering an out-door encampment not only endurable but agreeable, and nothing had been neglected by the Christinos that could contribute to the comfort of their *al-fresco* lodging. Large fires had been lighted, composed in great part of odoriferous shrubs and bushes abounding in the neighbourhood, which scented the air as they burned; and around these the soldiers were assembled cooking and eating their rations, smoking, jesting, discussing some previous fight, or anticipating the result of the one expected for the morrow, and which according to their sanguine calculations, could only be favourable to them. Here was a seemingly interminable row of muskets piled in sheaves, a perfect *chevaux-de-frise*, some hundred yards of burnished barrels and bayonets glancing in the fire-light. Further on, the horses of the cavalry were picketed, whilst their riders, who had finished grooming and feeding them, looked to their arms and saddlery, and saw that all was ready and as it should be if called on for sudden service. On one side, at a short distance from the bivouac, a party of men cut, with their sabres and foraging hatchet, brushwood to renew the fires; in another direction, a train of carts laden with straw, driven by unwilling peasants and escorted by a surly commissary and a few dusty dragoons, made their appearance, the patient oxen pushing and straining forwards in obedience to the goad that tormented their flanks, the clumsy wheels, solid circles of wood, creaking round their ungreased axles. In the distance were the enemy's watch-fires; nearer were those of the advanced posts; and, at more than one point of the surrounding country, a cottage or farmhouse, set on fire by careless or mischievous marauders, fiercely flamed without any attempt being made to extinguish the conflagration.

If the sights that met the eye were varied and numerous, the sounds which fell upon the ear were scarcely less so. The neighing of the picketed horses, the songs of the soldiery, the bugle-calls and signals of the outposts, occasionally a few dropping shots exchanged between patroles, and from time to time some favourite national melody, clanged forth by a regimental band—all combined to render the scene one of the most inspiriting and lively that could be imagined.

Beside a watch-fire whose smoke, curling and wavering upwards, seemed to cling about the foliage of the large old tree near which it was lighted, Luis Herrera had spread his cloak, and now reclined, his head supported on his arm, gazing into the flaming pile. Several officers belonging to the squadron he commanded were also grouped round the fire, and some of them, less watchful or more fatigued than their leader, had rolled themselves in their mantles, turned their feet to the flame, and with their heads supported on saddles and valises, were already asleep. Two or three subalterns came and went, as the exigencies of the service required, inspecting the arrangements of the men, ascertaining that the horses were properly cared for, giving orders to sergeants, or bringing reports to the captains of their troops. Herrera as yet felt no disposition to sleep. The stir and excitement of the scene around him had not failed of their effect on his martial nature, and he felt cheered and exhilarated by the prospect of action. It was only in moments like these, during the fight itself, or the hours immediately preceding it, that his

character seemed to lose the gloomy tinge imparted to it by the misfortunes which, so early in life, had darkened his path, and to recover something of the buoyancy natural to his age.

Whilst busied with anticipations of the next day's battle, Herrera's attention was suddenly attracted by hearing his name pronounced at a neighbouring fire, round which a number of his troopers had established themselves.

"Captain Herrera?" said a soldier, apparently replying to a question; "he is not far off—what do you want?"

"To see him instantly," answered a voice not unfamiliar to the ear of Luis. "I bring important intelligence."

"Come this way," was the reply; and then a non-commissioned officer approached Herrera, and respectfully saluting, informed him that a *paisano*, or civilian, wished to speak with him. Before Luis could order the person in question to be conducted to him, a man mounted on a rough but active mountain horse, rode out of the gloom into the fire-light, threw himself from his saddle, and stood within three paces of the Christino officer. By the blaze, Herrera recognized, with some surprise, one whom he believed to be then in the Carlist ranks.

"Paco!" he exclaimed; "you here? Whence do you come, and what are your tidings?"

The corporal, who had acted as master of the ceremonies to Paco, now returned to his fire, and Herrera and the muleteer remained alone. The latter had got rid of all vestiges of uniform, and appeared in the garb which he had been accustomed to wear, before his devotion to Count Villabuena, and the feeling of partisanship for Don Carlos, which he shared with the majority of Navarrese, had led him to enter the ranks.

"I have much to tell you, Don Luis," said he; "and my news is bad. Count Villabuena is dead."

Instead of manifesting astonishment or grief at this intelligence, Herrera replied calmly, and almost with a smile, "Is that all?"

"All!" repeated Paco, aghast at such unfeeling indifference; "and enough, too. I did not think, that because you had taken different sides, all kindness was at an end between you and the Conde. His señoria, heaven rest him!"—and here Paco crossed himself—"deserved better of you, Don Luis. But for him your bones would long ago have been picked by the crows. It was he who rescued you when you were a prisoner, and ordered for execution."

"I know it, Paco," replied Herrera, "and I am grateful for my deliverance both to you and him. But you are mistaken about his death. I saw and spoke to the Count not three days ago."

"To the Count! to Count Villabuena?" exclaimed Paco. "Then that damned gipsy lied. He told me he was killed, shot by some of your people. How did you see him? Is he a prisoner?"

"The Count is alive and in safety, and that must satisfy you for the moment. But you have doubtless more to tell me. What of Doña Rita? Why and when did you leave the Carlists, and where was she when you left?"

"Since the Count is well," returned Paco, "the worst part of my news is to come. Doña Rita's own handwriting will best answer your question."

Opening his knife, Paco ripped up a seam of his jacket, and extracted from the lining a soiled and crumpled paper. It was the letter written by Rita to Zumalacarregui. By the light of the fire Herrera devoured its contents. From them he learned all that Rita herself knew of the place and reasons of her captivity. She detailed the manner in which she had been decoyed from Segura, described what she conjectured to be the position of the convent, and implored Zumalacarregui to protect a defenceless orphan, and rescue her from the prison in which she was unjustifiably detained. After twice reading the letter, the handwriting of which recalled a thousand tender recollections, although the information it contained filled him with alarm and anxiety, Herrera again addressed Paco.

"How did you get this letter?" he asked.

In few words, Paco, who saw, by the stern and hurried manner of his interrogator, that it was no time to indulge in a lengthened narrative of his adventures, gave a concise outline of what had occurred, from the time of his leaving Segura with Rita, up to his desertion from the Carlists in front of Bilboa. Upon finding himself in safety from Don Baltasar, and released from the obligations of military service, he deliberated on the best means to employ for the release of Doña Rita. Amongst the Christinos the only person who occurred to him as proper to consult, or likely to aid him, was Herrera, and him he resolved to seek. After waiting a week at Bilboa, he procured a passage in a small vessel sailing for Santander, and thence set out for the Ebro, in the neighbourhood of which he had ascertained that he should find Herrera's regiment. The money he had found in the gipsy's sash enabled him to supply all his wants and purchase a horse, and without further delay he started for the interior. But on reaching Miranda on the Ebro, he learned that Herrera's squadron had marched into Biscay. Thither he pursued it. Meanwhile the siege of Bilboa had been raised, and, whilst he followed one road, Herrera returned towards Navarre by another. Paco lost much time; but, though often disappointed, the faithful fellow was never discouraged, nor did he for a moment think of desisting from the pilgrimage he had voluntarily undertaken for the deliverance of his dead master's daughter. He pressed onwards,

sparing neither himself nor his newly-acquired steed; but, in spite of his exertions, so rapid and continuous were the movements of the army, it was not till the evening now referred to that he at last caught it up.

Of all this, however, and of whatever merely concerned himself, Paco made little mention, limiting himself to what it was absolutely necessary that Herrera should know, clearly to understand Rita's position. In spite of this brevity, more than one sign of impatience escaped Luis during the muleteer's narrative. The tale told, he remained for a minute buried in thought.

"It is three weeks since you left the convent?" he then inquired of Paco.

"Nearly four," was the answer.

"Do you think Doña Rita is still there?"

"How can I tell?" replied Paco. "You know as much as I do of Don Baltasar's intentions. He could hardly find a better corner to hide her in; for it is in the very heart of the mountains, far from any town, and, well as I know Navarre, I never saw the place till this time. So I *should* think it likely she is still there, unless he has taken her to France, or forced her to marry him."

"Never!" cried Herrera, violently; "he would not dare; she would never consent. Listen, Paco—could you guide me to that convent?"

"Certainly I could," answered the muleteer, greatly surprised, "as far as knowing the road goes; but the country swarms with Carlist troops; and even if we could sneak round Eraso's army, we should be sure to fall in with some guerilla party."

"But there must be paths over the mountains," exclaimed Herrera, with the painful eagerness of a man catching at a last faint hope; "paths unfrequented, almost unknown, except to fellows like you, who have spent their lives amongst then. Over those you could—you must, conduct me."

"I will try it, Don Luis, willingly," replied Paco, moved by Herrera's evident agony of mind. "I will try it, if you choose; but I would not give a *peseta* for our lives. There are hundreds amongst the Carlists who know every mountain pass and ravine as well as I do. The chances will be all against us."

"We could lie concealed in the day," continued Herrera, pursuing the train of his own thoughts, and scarcely hearing the muleteer's observations. "A small party of infantry—twenty picked men will be enough—the convent surprised at nightfall, and before morning, by a forced march, we reach a Christino garrison. I will try it, by heaven! at all risks. Paco, wait my return."

And before the muleteer had time to reply, the impetuous young man snatched his horse's bridle from his hand, sprang into the saddle, and, spurring the tired beast into a gallop, rode off in the direction of Artajona. [Pg 291]

The motive of Herrera's abrupt departure was to prepare for the execution of a plan so wild and impracticable, that, in his cooler moments, it would never have suggested itself to him, although, in his present state of excitement, he fancied it perfectly feasible. He had determined to proceed at once to the general-in-chief, one of whose favourite officers he was, to acquaint him with what he had just learned, and entreat his permission to set out that very night with a few chosen men on an expedition into the heart of the Carlist country, the object of it being to rescue Rita from her captivity. For reasons which will hereafter appear, he had the worst possible opinion of Don Baltasar, and so shocked and startled was he at hearing that the woman to whom, in spite of their long separation, he was still devotedly and passionately attached, was in his power, that for the time he lost all coolness of judgment and overlooked the numerous obstacles to his scheme. The rapid pace at which he rode, contributed perhaps to keep up the whirl and confusion of his ideas, and he arrived at the door of Cordova's quarters, without the impropriety and positive absurdity of his application at such a moment having once occurred to him.

The Christino commander had taken up his quarters in the house of one of the principal inhabitants of Artajona. At the time of Herrera's arrival, although it was past ten o'clock, all was bustle and movement in and about the extensive range of building; the stables crammed with horses, the general's escort loitering in the vestibule, orderly officers and aides-de-camp hurrying in all directions, bringing reports and conveying orders to the different regiments and brigades; peasants, probably spies, conversing in low earnest tones with officers of rank: here a party of soldiers drinking, there another group gambling, in a third place a row of sleepers stretched upon the hard ground, but soundly slumbering in spite of its hardness and of the surrounding din. Pushing his way through the crowd, Herrera ascended the stairs, and meeting an orderly at the top, enquired for the general's apartments. Before the soldier could reply, a door opened, a young officer came out, and, perceiving Herrera, hurried towards him. The two officers shook hands. The aide-de-camp was Mariano Torres, who had recently been appointed to the general's staff, upon which Herrera would also have been placed had he not preferred remaining in command of his squadron.

"What brings you here, Luis?" said Torres.

"To see the general. I have a favour to ask of him—one which he *must* grant. Take me to him, Torres, immediately."

Struck by the wild and hurried manner of his friend, and by the discomposure manifest in his

features, Mariano took his arm, and walking with him down the long corridor, which was dimly lighted by lanterns suspended against the wall, led him into his own room. "The general is particularly engaged," said he, "and I cannot venture to disturb him; but in five minutes I will inform him of your arrival. Meanwhile, what is the matter, Luis? What has happened thus to agitate you?"

Although chafing at the delay, Herrera could not refuse to reply to this enquiry; and, in hurried and confused terms, he informed Torres of the news brought by Paco, and of the plan he had devised for the rescue of Rita. Thunderstruck at the temerity of the project, Torres undertook, but at first with small success, to convince Herrera of its impracticability, and induce him to abandon it, at least for the time.

"How can you possibly expect," he said, "ever to reach the convent you have described to me? In front is the Carlist army; on all sides you will meet bands of armed peasants, and you will throw away your own life without a chance of accomplishing your object."

"Don't speak to me of life!" exclaimed Herrera, impetuously interrupting him; "it is valueless. Spare yourself the trouble of argument; all that you can urge will be in vain. Come what may, and at any risk, I will make the attempt. Every hour is a year of torture to me whilst I know Rita in the power of that villain."

"And much good it will do her," replied Torres, "to have you killed in her service. As to accomplishing her rescue, it is out of the question in the way you propose. You will inevitably be shot or taken prisoner. If, on the contrary, you have a little patience, and wait a few days, something may be done. This Don Baltasar, there can scarcely be a doubt, is with the army in our front, and his prisoner must therefore be free from his persecutions. Besides, admitting that your project had a shadow of common sense, how can you suppose, that on the eve of a battle against superior numbers, the general will spare even a score of men from the ranks of his army?"

"He *will* spare them, for me," cried Herrera. "He has known me since the beginning of the war: I have fought by his side; and more than once he has thanked me for my services, and expressed his willingness to reward them. Let him grant me this request, and I will die for him to-morrow."

"You would be likely enough to die if he did grant it," replied Torres; "but luckily there is no chance of his doing so."

"We will see that," said Herrera, impatiently. "This is idle talk and waste of time. You are not my friend, Mariano, thus to detain me. The five minutes have twice elapsed. Take me at once to the general."

"I will take you to him, if you insist upon it," answered Torres. "Hear me but one minute longer. What will be said to-morrow, when we move forward to meet the enemy, and it is found that Luis Herrera is wanting at his post; when it is known that he has left the camp in the night-*time, on his own private business, only a few hours before a battle, which all agree will be a bloody and perhaps a decisive one? His advancement, although nobly deserved, has been rapid. There are many who envy him, and such will not fail to attribute his absence to causes by which his friends well know he is incapable of being influenced. It will be pleasant for those friends to hear slanderous tongues busy with his good name."

Mariano had at last touched the right chord, and this, his final argument, strongly impressed Herrera. What no consideration of personal danger could accomplish, the dread of an imputation upon his honour, although it might be uttered but by one or two enemies, and disbelieved by a thousand friends, went far to effect. Moreover, during the quarter of an hour passed with Torres, his thoughts had become in some degree collected, and the truth of the aide-de-camp's observations as to the Quixotism and utter madness of his scheme began to dawn upon him. He hesitated, and remained silent. Torres saw his advantage, and hastened to follow it up.

"Hear me, Luis," said he. "You have ever found me willing to be guided by your opinion, but at this moment you are not in a state of mind to judge for yourself. For once then, be guided by me, and return to your squadron. To-morrow's fight will make a mighty difference. If we gain the day, and we are sure of it, we shall advance to Pampeluna, and you will be at a comparatively short distance from the convent where your mistress is detained. Then, indeed, when the Carlists are scattered and dispirited after their defeat, the scheme you have in view may be executed, and then, but only then, are you likely to get permission to attempt it. I will accompany you if you wish it, and we will get some guerilla leader, skilled in such hazardous expeditions, to join us with his band."

By these and similar arguments, did Torres finally prevail with Herrera to abandon his project until after the approaching action. Even then, and even should the victory be complete and in favour of the Christinos, Mariano was doubtful whether it would be possible to attempt the dangerous excursion proposed by Herrera; but in the interim his friend would have time to reflect, and Torres hoped that he might be induced entirely to give up the plan. He, himself a light-hearted devil-may-care fellow, taking life as it came, and with a gentle spice of egotism in his character, was unsusceptible of such an attachment as that of Herrera for Rita, and, being unsusceptible, he could not understand it. The soldier's maxim of letting a new love drive out the old one, whenever a change of garrison or other cause renders it advisable, was what he practised, and would have wished his friend also to adopt. He was unable to comprehend Herrera's deeply-rooted and unselfish love, which had grown up with him from boyhood, had borne up against so many crosses and discouragements, and which time, although it might prove

its hopelessness, could never entirely obliterate.

"Time," thought Torres, as he returned to his room, after seeing Herrera mount his horse and ride away, "is a great healer of Cupid's wounds, particularly a busy time, like this. A fight one day and a carouse the next, have cured many an honest fellow of the heartache. Herrera is pretty sure of one half of the remedy, although it might be difficult to induce him to try the other. Well, *qui vivra verra*—I have brought him to his senses for the present, and there'd be small use in bothering about the future, when, by this time to-morrow, half of us may be food for ravens."

And with this philosophical reflection, the insouciant aide-de-camp threw himself upon his bed, to sleep as soundly as if the next day's sun had to shine upon a feast instead of a fray.

Midnight was approaching when Herrera reached the bivouac, which had now assumed a character of repose very different from the bustle reigning there when he had left it. The fires were blazing far less brightly, and some, neglected by the soldiers who lay sleeping around them, had dwindled into heaps of ashes, over which a puff of the night breeze would every now and then bring a red glow, driving at the same time a long train of sparks into the faces of the neighbouring sleepers. There was no more chattering or singing; the distant shots had ceased, the musicians had laid aside their instruments, and were sharing the general repose; the only sounds that broke the stillness were the distant challenging from the outpost, the tramp of the sentry faintly audible upon the turf, the rattling of the collar chain of some restless horse, or the snore of the sleeping soldiery. Restoring his horse to Paco, whom he found waiting beside the watch-fire, Herrera desired him to remain there till morning, and then wrapping himself in his cloak, he lay down upon the grass, to court a slumber, of which anxious and uneasy thoughts long debarred his eyelids.

MOSES AND SON.

A Didactic Tale.

Chapter I.

"It's no good your talking, Aby," said a diminutive gentleman, with a Roman nose and generally antique visage; "you must do the best you can for yourself, and get your living in a respectable sort of vay. I can't do no more for you, so help my ——"

"You're a nice father, aint you?" interrogatively replied the gentleman addressed—a youth of eighteen, very tall, very thin, very dressy, and very dirty. "I should like to know why you brought me into the world at all."

"To make a man of you, you ungrateful beast," answered the small father; "and that's vot you'll never be, as true as my name's Moses. You aint got it in you. You're as big a fool as any Christian in the parish."

"Thankee, old un," replied he of six feet. "'*Twas nature's fault that made me like my father*," he added immediately, throwing himself into a theatrical posture, and pointing irreverently to the individual referred to.

"There he goes again!" exclaimed Moses senior, with a heavy sigh. "That's another of his tricks that'll bring him to the gallows. Mark my words, Aby—that acting of yours will do your business. I vish the amytoors had been at the devil before you made their acquaintance!"

"In course you do, you illiterate old man. What do you know of literature? Aint all them gentlemen as I plays with chice sperits and writers? Isn't it a honour to jine 'em in the old English drammy, and to eat of the wittles and drink of the old ancient poets?"

"Aby, my dear," proceeded the other sarcastically, "I've only two vurds to say. You have skulked about this 'ere house for eighteen years of your precious life, vithout doing a ha'porth of work. It's all very fine while it lasts; but I am sorry to say it can't last much longer. To-morrow is Sabbath, make much of it, for it's the last blessed day of rest you'll see here. Sunday morning I'll trouble you to pack."

"Do you mean it?"

"Upon my soul—as true as I'm here."

"*Hear that, ye gods, and wonder how you made him!*" exclaimed Abraham, turning up his nose at his parent, and then looking to the ceiling with emotion—"You unnatural old Lear! you bloodless piece of earth!"

"Go 'long, go 'long!" said the prosaic Moses, senior; "don't talk rubbish!"

"Father!" cried the youth, with an attitude, "when I'm gone, you'll think of me, and want me back."

"Vait, my dear, till I send for you."

"When the woice is silent, you'll be glad to give a ten pun' note for an echo."

"No, my boy; I don't like the security."

"When you have lost sight of these precious featers, you'll be glad to give all you have got for a picter."

"Vot a lucky painter he'll be as draws you off!" said the stoic father.

Abraham Moses gazed upon the author of his being for one minute with intensest disgust. Then taking a chair in his hand, he first raised it in the air, and afterwards struck it with vehement indignation to the ground. That done, he seated himself with a mingled expression of injured innocence and lofty triumph.

"You old sinner," said he, "you've done for yourself."

"Sorry for it," replied the cool old gentleman.

"I've sounded you, have I? Oh! did I try to strike a chord in that hollow buzzum, and did I think to make it answer? Now listen, you disreputable father. I leave your house, not the day after to-morrow, but this very hour. I shall go to that high sphere which you knows nothing about, and is only fit for a gent of the present generation. I don't ask you for nothing. I'm settled and provided for. If you were to take out your cheque-book and say, 'Aby, fill it up,' I can't answer for a impulse of nater; but I do think I should scorn the act, and feel as though I had riz above it. You have told me, all my wretched life, that I should take my last snooze outside o' Newgate. I always felt very much obliged to you for the compliment; but you'll recollect that I've told you as often that I'd live to make you take your hat off to me. The time is come, sir! I've got an appointment! Such a one! I came to tell you of it; but I considered it my religious duty to inwestigate your paternal feelings concerning me aforehand. I have investigated 'em. I am sorry to say it; I have put you into the weighing machine, and found you short."

"The fool's mad!"

"Is he? Wait a minute. If your shocking eddication permits, I'll trouble you to read that there."

Mr Abraham Moses drew from his pocket a despatch, ornamented with a huge seal, and some official red tape. The elder gentleman took it into his hand, and gazed at his worthy son with unutterable surprise, as he read on the outside—"*Private and confidential, House of Lords, to Abraham Moses, Esq., &c. &c. &c.*"

"Vy, vot does it all mean, my dear?" enquired the agitated parent.

"Spare your '*my dears*,' venerable apostate, and open it," said Aby. "The seal's broke. It's private and confidential, but that means when you are not one of the family."

Mr Methusaleh Moses did as he was bid, and read as follows:—

> "Sir,—The Usher of the Blue Rod vacates his office on Wednesday next, when you will be required to appear before the woolsack to take the usual oaths. As soon as you have entered upon your duties, the customary presentation to her Majesty will take place. Lord Downy will be prepared to conclude the preliminaries at his hotel at twelve o'clock to-morrow.—I am, sir, with respect, your obedient humble servant,
>
> "Warren de Fitzalbert.
>
> "Abraham Moses, Esq.,
> &c. &c. &c."

As little Mr Moses read the last words with a tremulous utterance, tall Mr Moses rose to take his departure. "Vot's your hurry, Aby?" said the former, coaxingly.

"Come, I like that. What's my hurry? Didn't you want to kick me out just now?"

"My dear, give every dog his due. Stick to the truth, my boy, votever you does. I axed you to stay over the Sabbath—I vish I may die if I didn't."

Mr Abraham Moses directed towards his sire one of those decided and deadly glances which are in so much request at the theatres, and which undertake to express all the moral sentiments at one and the same moment. Having paid this tribute to his wounded nature, he advanced to the door, and said, determinedly—

"I shall go!"

"I'm blessed if you do, Aby!" exclaimed the father, with greater resolution, and seizing his offspring by the skirts of his coat. "I'm your father, and I knows my sitivation. You're sich a fellow! You can't take a vurd in fun. Do you think I meant to turn you out ven I said it? Can you stop nater, Aby? Isn't nater at vork vithin, and doesn't it tell me if I knocks you on the nose, I hits myself in the eye? Come, sit down my boy; tell me all about it, and let's have someting to eat."

Aby was proof against logical argument, but he could not stand up against the "someting to eat." He sank into the chair again like an infant. Mr Methusaleh took quick advantage of his success. Rushing wildly to a corner cupboard, he produced from it a plate of cold crisp fried fish, which he

placed with all imaginable speed exactly under the nose of the still vacillating Aby. He vacillated no longer. The spell was complete. The old gentleman, with a perfect reliance upon the charm, proceeded to prepare a cup of coffee at his leisure. [Pg 296]

"And now, Aby," said the father, stirring the grounds of his muddy beverage—"I'm dying to hear vot it all means. How did you manage to get amongst dese people? You're more clever as your father." A hearty meal of fish and coffee had considerably greased the external and internal man of Aby Moses. His views concerning filial obligations became more satisfactory and humane; his spirit was evidently chastened by repletion.

"Father," said he, meaning to be very tender—"You have always been such a fool about the company as I keep."

"Well, so I have, my dear; but don't rake up the past."

"It's owing to that very company, father, that you sees me in my proud position."

"No!"

"It is, though. *Lend me your ears.*"

"Don't be shtoopid, Aby—go on vith your story."

A slight curl might be seen playing around the dirty lip of Moses junior at this parental ignorance of the immortal Will: a stern sacrifice of filial reverence to poetry.

It passed away, and the youth proceeded.

"That Warren de Fitzalbert, father, as signed that dockyment, is a buzzum friend. He see'd me one night when I played Catesby, and, after the performance, requested the honour of an introduction, which I, in course, could not refuse. You know how it is—men gets intimate—tells one another their secrets—opens their hearts—and lives in one another's societies. I never knew who he was, but I was satisfied he was a superior gent, from the nateral course of his conversation. Everybody said it as beautiful to see us, we was so united and unseparated. Well, you may judge my surprise, when one day another gent, also a friend of mine, says to me, 'Moses, old boy, do you know who Fitzalbert is?' 'No,' says I, 'I don't.' 'Well, then,' says he, 'I'll tell you. He's a under secretary of state.' There was a go! Only think of me being hand and glove with a secretary of state! What does I do? Why, sir, the very next time he and I meet, I says to him, 'Fitzalbert, it's very hard a man of your rank can't do something for his friends.' I knew the right way was to put the thing to him point-blank. 'So it would be,' says he, 'if it was, but it isn't.' 'Oh, isn't it?' says I; 'then, if you are the man I take you to be, you'll do the thing as is handsome by me.' He said nothing then, but took hold of my hand, and shook it like a brother."

"Vell, go on, my boy; I tink they are making a fool of you."

"Are they? That's all you know. Well, a few days after this, Fitzalbert writes me a letter to call on him directly. I goes, of course. 'Moses,' says he, as soon as he sees me, 'you are provided for.' 'No!' says I. 'Yes,' says he. 'Lord Downy has overrun the constable; he can't stop in England no longer; he's going to resign the blue rod; he's willing to sell it for a song; you shall buy it, and make your fortune.'"

"But vere's your money, my dear?"

"Wait a minute. 'What's the salary?' said I. 'A thousand a-year,' says he. 'You don't mean it?' says I again. 'Upon my soul,' says he. 'And what will it cost?' says I. 'The first year's salary,' says he; 'and I'll advance it, because I know you are a gentleman, and will not forget to pay me back.' 'If I do,' says I, 'I wish I may die.' Now, father, that there letter, as you sees, is official, and that's why he doesn't say 'dear Moses;' but if you was to see us together, it would do your heart good. Not that you ever will, because your unfortinate lowness of character will compel me, as a gent, to cut your desirable acquaintance the moment I steps into Lord Downy's Wellingtons. Now, if you have got no more fish in that 'ere cupboard, I wish you good morning."

"Shtay, shtay, Aby, you're in such a devil of a hurry!" exclaimed Methusaleh, holding him by the wrist. "Now, my dear boy, if you're dead to natur, there's an end of the matter, and I've nothing more to say; but if you've any real blood left in you, you von't break my heart. Vy shouldn't your father have the pleasure of advancing the money? If it is a true bill, Aby, you sha'n't be under no obligation to nobody!"

"True bill! I like that! Why, I have seen Lord Downy's own hand-*writing; and, what's more, seen him in the House of Lords, talking quite as familiarly, as I converse with you, with the Lord Chancellor, and all the rest on 'em. I heard him make a speech—next morning I looks into the paper—no deceit, sir—there was Lord Downy's name. Now, to-morrow, when I'm introduced to him, don't you think I shall be able to diskiver whether he's the same man or not?" [Pg 297]

"Vere's the tousand pound?" inquired Mr Methusaleh.

"My friend goes with me to-morrow to hand it over. Three hundred is to be given up at Lord Downy's hotel in Oxford Street, and the balance at Mr Fitzalbert's chambers in Westminster, an hour afterwards, when I receive the appointment."

"My dear Aby, I von't beat about the bush with you. I'm quite sure, my child, ve should make it answer much better, if you'd let your father advance the money. Doesn't it go agin the grain to

vurk into the hands of Christians against your own flesh and blood? If this Mr Fitzalbert advances the money, depend upon it it's to make someting handsome by the pargain. Let me go vith you to his lordship, and perhaps, if he's very hard-up, he'll take seven hundred instead of the thousand. Ve'll divide the three hundred between us. Don't you believe that your friend is doing all this for love. Vot can he see, my darling, in your pretty face, to take all this trouble for nothing? I shouldn't be at all surprised if he's a blackguard, and means to take a cruel advantage of his lordship's sitivation—give him perhaps only five hundred for his tousand. Aby, let your ould father do an act of charity, and put two hundred pounds into this poor gentleman's pockets."

Before Aby could reply to this benevolent appeal, a stop was put to the interesting conversation, by a violent knocking at the door, on the part of no less a gentleman than Warren de Fitzalbert himself.

Chapter II.

Whilst the domestic *tête-à-tête*, feebly described in the foregoing chapter, was in progress, the nobleman, more than once referred to, was passing miserable moments in his temporary lodgings at the Salisbury Hotel, in Oxford Street. A more unhappy gentleman than Baron Downy it would be impossible to find in or out of England. The inheritor of a cruelly-burdened title, he had spent a life in adding to its incumbrances, rather than in seeking to disentangle it from the meshes in which it had been transmitted to him. In the freest country on the globe, he had never known the bliss of liberty. He had moved about with a drag-chain upon his spiritual and physical energies, as long as he could remember his being. At school and at college, necessarily limited in his allowance, he contracted engagements which followed him for at least ten years after his entrance into life, and then only quitted him to leave him bound to others far more tremendous and inextricable. His most frequent visitors, his most constant friends, his most familiar acquaintance, were money-lenders. He had borrowed money upon all possible and unimaginable securities, from the life of his grandmother down to that last resource of the needy gentleman, the family repeater, chain, and appendages. His lordship, desperate as his position was, was a man of breeding, a nobleman in thought and feeling. But the more incapable of doing wrong, so much the more liable to deceit and fraud. He had been passed, so to speak, from hand to hand by all the representatives of the various money-lending classes that thrive in London on the folly and necessity of the reckless and the needy. All had now given him up. His name had an odour in the market, where his paper was a drug. His bills of a hundred found few purchasers at a paltry five pounds, and were positively rejected by all but wine-merchant-sheriff's officers, who took them at nothing, and contrived to make a handsome profit out of them into the bargain. Few had so little reason to be proud as the man whose name had become a by-word and a joke amongst the most detestable and degraded of their race; and yet, strange as it may seem, few had a keener sense of their position, or could be so readily stung by insult, let it but proceed from a quarter towards which punishment might be directed with credit or honour. A hundred times Lord Downy had cursed his fate, which had not made him an able-bodied porter, or an independent labourer in the fields, rather than that saddest of all sad contradictions, a nobleman without the means of sustaining nobility—a man of rank with no dignity—a superior without the shadow of pre-eminence; but for all the wealth of the kingdom, he would not have sullied the order to which he belonged, by what he conceived to be one act of meanness or sordid selfishness; as if there could be any thing foul or base in any act that seeks, by honourable industry, to repair the errors of a wayward fortune.

Upon the day of which we speak, there sat with Lord Downy a rude, ill-favoured man, brought into juxtaposition with the peer by the unfortunate relation that connected the latter with so many men of similar stamp and station. He seemed more at home in the apartment than the owner, and took some pains to over-act his part of vulgar independence. He had never been so intimate with a nobleman before—certainly no nobleman had ever been in his power until now. The low and abject mind holds its jubilee when it fancies that it reduces superiority to its own level, and can trample upon it for an hour without fear of rebuke or opposition.

"For the love of heaven! Mr Ireton, if for no kindness towards me," said Lord Downy, "give me one day longer to redeem those sacred pledges. They are heirlooms—gifts of my poor dear mother. I had no right to place them in your hands—they belong to my child."

"Then why did you? I never asked you; I could have turned my money twenty times over since you have had it. I dare say you think I have made a fortune out of you."

"I have always paid you liberally—and given you your terms."

"I thought so—it's always the way. The more you do for great people the more you may. I might have taken the bed from under your lordship many a time, if so I had been so disposed; but of course you have forgotten all about *that*."

"About these jewels, Mr Ireton. They are not of great value, and cannot be worth your selling. I shall receive two hundred and fifty pounds to-morrow—it shall be made three hundred, and you shall have the whole sum on account. Surely four-and-twenty hours are not to make you break your faith with me?"

"As for breaking faith, Lord Downy, I should like to know what you'd do if I were in your place and you in mine."

"I hope"—

"Oh, yes! it's easy enough to talk now, when you aint in my position; but I know very well how you all grind down the poor fellows that are in your power—how you make them slave on five shillings a-week, to keep you in luxury, and all the rest of it. Not that I blame you. I know it's human nature to get what one can out of every body, and I don't complain to see men try it on."

"I have nothing more to say, Mr Ireton. You must do with me as you think proper."

"I am to wait till to-morrow, you say?"

"Yes; only until to-morrow. I shall surely be in receipt of money then."

"Oh, sure of course!" said Mr Ireton. "You gentlemen are always sure till the time comes, and then you can't make it out how it is you are disappointed. No sort of experience conquers your spirits; but the more your hopes are defeated, the more sanguine you get. I'll wait till to-morrow then"—

"A thousand thanks."

"Wait a bit—on certain terms. You know as well as I do, that I could put you to no end of expense. I don't wish to do it; but I don't prefer to be out of pocket by the matter. I must have ten pounds for the accommodation."

"Ten!" exclaimed poor Lord Downy.

"Yes, only ten; and I'll give you twenty if you'll pay me at once;" added Mr Ireton—knowing very well that his victim could as easily have paid off the national debt.

Lord Downy sighed.

"There's a slip of paper before you. Give me your I O U for the trifle, and pay principal and interest to-morrow."

His lordship turned obediently to the table, wrote in silence the acknowledgment required, and with a hand that trembled from vexation and anxiety, presented the document to his tormentor. The latter vanished. He had scarcely departed before Lord Downy rang his bell with violence, and a servant entered.

"Are there any letters for me, Mason?" inquired his lordship eagerly.

"None, my lord," answered Mason with some condescension, and a great deal of sternness.

Lord Downy bit his lip, and paced the room uneasily.

"My lord," said Mason, "I beg your"——

"Nothing more, nothing more;" replied the master, interrupting him. "Should any letters arrive, let them be brought to me immediately."

"Beg your pardon, my lord," said Mason, taking no notice of the order, "the place doesn't suit me."

"How?"

"Nothing to complain of, my lord—only wish to get into a good family."

"Sirrah!"

"It isn't the kind of thing, my lord," continued Mason, growing bolder, "that I have been used to. I brought a character with me, and I want to take it away again. I'm talked about already."

"What does the fellow mean?"

"I don't wish to hurt your lordship's feelings, and I'd rather not be more particular. If it gets blown in the higher circles that I have been here, my character, my lord, is smashed."

"You may go, sir, when your month has expired."

"I'd rather go at once, my lord, if it's all the same to you. As for the salary, my lord, it's quite at your service—quite. I never was a grasping man; and in your lordship's unfortunate situation,"——Lord Downy walked to the window, flung it open, and commenced whistling a tune ——"I should know better than to take advantage," proceeded Mr Mason. "There is a young man, my lord, a friend of mine, just entering life, without any character at all, who would be happy, I have no doubt, to undertake"——

Lord Downy banged the window, and turned upon the flunky with an expression of rage that might have put a violent and ever-to-be-lamented stop to this true history, had not the door of his lordship's apartment opened, and *boots* presented himself with the announcement of "Mr Warren de Fitzalbert."

Chapter III.

Twice has Mr Warren de Fitzalbert closed a chapter for us, and put us under lasting obligation. Fain would we introduce that very important personage to the reader's more particular acquaintance; fain describe the fascinating form, the inimitable grace, that won all hearts, and

captivated, more particularly, every female eye. But, alas! intimacy is forbidden. A mystery has attached itself to his life, with which we are bound to invest his person at the present writing. We cannot promise one syllable from his eloquent lips, or even one glimpse at his dashing exterior. As for referring you, gentle reader, to the home of Mr de Fitzalbert, the thing's absurd upon the very face. Home he has none, unless Peele's coffeehouse; and all the *Bears* of Holborn, blue, black, and white, to which his letters are directed, assert the sacred designation. Let us hasten back to Messrs Moses. Mr Methusaleh had not been more successful in his attempt to catch a sight of the secretary of state than other people. When Aby heard the double knock, he darted like an arrow from his parent's arms, in order to prevent the entrance of his friend, and to remove him from all possible contact with the astute and too persuasive Moses, senior. In vain did the latter gentleman rush to the window, and, by every soft endearment, seek to call back the retreating forms of Aby and Fitzalbert, now arm-in-arm, making for the corner of the street, and about to turn it. One was unconscious of the voice—the other heard it, and defied it. What passed between father and son, when the latter returned at night, I cannot say; but they were up betimes the following morning, and much excited, whilst they partook together of their morning meal.

"It's no good trying," said the elder gentleman. "I can't eat, Aby, do vot I vill. I'm so delighted with your earthly prospects, and your dootiful behaviour, that my appetite's clean gone."

"Don't distress yourself on that account," said Aby, "I've appetite for two."

"You always had, my dear," replied the sire; "and vot a blessing it'll be to gratify it at your own expense. I never begrudged you, my boy, any victuals as I had in the house, and the thought of that ere vill be a great consolation to me on my death-bed."

"What's o'clock, father?"

"Nine, my dear."

"It's getting on. Only think that at twelve o'clock to-day I shall have entered into another sphere of existence."

"It's very vunderful," said Methusaleh.

"It's one of those dispensations, father, that comes like great actors, once in a thousand years."

Mr Moses, senior, drew from his pocket a dirty cotton handkerchief, and applied it to his eyes.

"Oh, Aby," said he, in a snivelling tone, "if your mother vos but alive to see it. But, tank God, my dear, she's out of this vicked vorld of sorrow and trouble. But let's talk of business," he added, in a livelier tone. "This is a serious affair, my boy. I hope you'll take care of your place, ven you gets it."

"Trust me for that, Septuagenarian," replied the son.

"Votever you does, do it cleverly, and don't be found out. Dere's a mint of money to be made in more vays than one. If your friends vant cash, bring 'em to me. I'll allow you handsome."

"Have you got the three hundred ready, father?"

"Here it is, Aby," replied Methusaleh, holding up three bank-notes of a hundred each. "Now you know, my dear, vot ve're to do exactly; ve may, after all, be done in this 'ere business, although I own it doesn't look like it. Still ve can't be too cautious in our proceedings. You remember, my boy, that ven you gives de nobleman his money, you takes his receipt. The cheque for the balance you'll keep in your pocket till you get the appintment. I goes vith you, and shtays outside the other side of the vay. If any thing goes wrong, you have only to come to the street door, and take off your hat, that vill be quite enough for me; I'll rush in directly, and do vot's necessary."

"Father," said Aby, in a tone of reproof, "your notions of gentlemen's conduct is so disgusting, that I can't help despising you, and giving the honour of my birth to some other individual. No son of your's could be elevated in his ideas. I defy him."

"Never mind, my boy, do as you are bid. You're very clever, I own, but you have a deal to larn yet."

In this and similar conversation, time passed until the clock struck eleven, and warned father and son of the approaching crisis. At half-past eleven precisely they quitted their common habitation, and were already on the road. The old gentleman had made no alteration in his primitive attire. Even on the day which was about to prove so eventful to the family history, he sallied forth with the same lofty contempt of conventionalities that had characterised his very long career. How different the elated and aspiring heir of Moses! No wonder he spurned with indignation the offer of his seedy parent's arm. No wonder he walked a few paces before him, and assumed that unconcerned and vacant air which should assure all passengers of his being quite alone in the public thoroughfare both in person and in thought. Aby had been intensely persevering at his morning toilet. The grease of a young bear had been expended on his woolly head; the jewellery of a Mosaic firm scattered over his lanky personality. He wore a tightly-fitting light blue coat with frogs; a yellow satin waistcoat with a stripe of blue beneath; a massive cravat of real cotton velvet, held down by gilt studs; military trousers, and shining leather boots; spurs were on the latter, and a whip was in his hand. Part of the face was very clean; but by some law of nature the dirt that had retreated from one spot had affectionately attached itself to another. The cheeks

were unexceptionable for Aby; but beneath the eyes and around the ears, and below the chin, the happy youth might still indulge his native love of grime. It is not the custom for historians to describe the inner clothing of their heroes. We are spared much pain in consequence.

At three minutes to twelve the worthies found themselves over against the Salisbury Hotel in Oxford Street. The agitation of the happy youth was visible; but the more experienced sire was admirably cool.

"There's the money, Aby," said he, handing over the three hundred pounds. "Be a man, and do the business cleverly. Don't be done out of the cash, and keep vide avake. If you've the slightest suspicion, rush to the door and pull off your hat. I shall look out for the signal. Don't think of me. I can take care of myself. Dere, listen, the clock's striking. Now go, my boy, and God bless you!"

True enough, the clock was sounding. Aby heard the last stroke of twelve, and then to leap across the road, and to bound into the house, was the work of an instant.

Now, although Mr Methusaleh Moses was, as we have said, admirably cool up to the moment of parting with his money, it by no means follows that he was equally at his ease after that painful operation had been performed. Avaricious and greedy, Methusaleh could risk a great deal upon the chance of great gains, and would have parted with ten times three hundred pounds to secure the profits which, as it seemed to him, were likely to result from the important business on hand. He could be extravagant in promising speculations, although he denied himself ordinary comforts at his hearth. Strange feelings possessed him, however, as his son tore from him, and disappeared in the hotel. The money was out of his pocket, and in an instant might find itself in the pocket of another without an adequate consideration. Dismal reflection! Mr Methusaleh looked up to one of the hotel windows to get rid of it. The boy was inexperienced, and might be in the hands of sharpers, who would rub their hands and chuckle again at having done the "knowing Jew." Excruciating thought! Mr Methusaleh visibly perspired as it came and went. The boy himself was hardly to be trusted. He had been the plague of Mr Methusaleh's life since the hour of his birth—was full of tricks, and might have schemes to defraud his natural parent of his hard-earned cash, like any stranger to his blood or tribe. As this suspicion crossed the old man's brain, he clenched his fist unconsciously, and gnashed his teeth, and knit his brow, and felt as murderers feel when the hot blood is rampant, and gives a tone of justice to the foulest crime. A quarter of an hour passed in this distressing emotion. Mr Methusaleh would have sworn it was an hour, if he had not looked at his watch. Not for one moment had he withdrawn his eager vision from that banging door, which opened and shut at every minute, admitting and sending forth many human shapes, but not the one he longed yet feared to see. The old man's eyes ached with the strain, and wearying anxiety. One good hour elapsed, and there stood Mr Moses. He was sure his boy was still in the house. He had watched every face closely that had entered and issued. Could he have mistaken Aby? Impossible! I would have given a great deal to read the history of the old man's mind during that agitated sixty minutes! I believe he could have called to recollection every form that had passed either into or out of the hotel, all the time that he had been on duty. How he watched and scanned some faces! One or two looked sweetly and satisfactorily ingenuous—the very men to spend money faster than they could get it, and to need the benevolent aid that Mr Moses was ready to afford them. Methusaleh's spirits and confidence rose tremendously at such appearances. One after the other was silently pronounced "the real Lord Downy." Then came two or three sinister visages—faces half muffled up, with educated features, small cunning eyes, and perhaps green spectacles—conspirators every one—villains who had evidently conspired to reduce Mr Moses's balance at his banker's, and to get fat at his expense. Down went the spirits faster than they had mounted. The head, as well as eyes of Mr Moses, now was aching.

His troubles grew complicated. Have we said that the general appearance of Mr Moses, senior, was such as not to inspire immediate confidence on the part of mankind in general, and police-officers in particular? It should have been mentioned. The extraordinary conduct of the agitated little gentleman had not failed to call forth the attention and subsequent remarks of those who have charge of the public peace. First, he was asked, "What business he had there?" Then he was requested "to move on." What a request to make at such a moment! *Move on!* Would that thoughtless policeman have given Mr Moses three hundred precious sovereigns to put himself in locomotion? Not he. Then came two or three mysterious individuals, travellers apparently from the east, with long beards, heavy bags on their backs, and sonorous voices, who had evidently letters of introduction to Methusaleh, for they deposited their burdens before him as they passed, and entered with him into friendly conversation, or rather sought to do so; for he was proof against temptation, and, for the first time in his life, not to be charmed by any eastern talk of "first-rate bargains," and victories obtained, by guile, over Christian butlers and such like serving-men. The more the strangers surrounded him, the more he bobbed his head, and fixed his piercing eye upon the door that wrought him so much agony.

An hour and a half! Exactly thirty minutes later than the time prescribed by Aby! Oh, foolish old man, to part with his money! He turned pale as death with inward grief, and resolved to wait no longer for the faithless child. Not faithless, old Methusaleh—for, look again! The old man rubs his eyes, and can't believe them. He has watched so long in vain for that form, that he believes his disordered vision now creates it. But he deceives himself. Aby indeed appears. His hands are a hundred miles away from his hat, and a smile sits on the surface of his countenance. "Oh, he has done the trick! Brave boy, good child!" A respectable gentleman is at his side. Methusaleh does not know him, but the reader recognises that much-to-be-pitied personage, Lord Downy. Oh, how greedily Methusaleh watches them both! "Capital boy, an out-and-outer." Mr Moses "vishes he

may die" if he isn't. But, suddenly, the arm and hand of the youth is raised. Old Moses' heart is in his mouth in no time. He prepares to run to his child's assistance; but the hand stops midway between the waistcoat and the hat, and—hails a cab. Lord Downy enters the vehicle; Aby follows, and away it drives. Methusaleh's cab is off the stand quite as quickly. "Follow dat cab to h—l, my man!" says he; jumps in, and never loses sight of number forty-five.

Number forty-five proceeded leisurely down Regent Street; along Charing Cross, and Parliament Street, until it arrived at a quiet street in Westminster, at the corner of which it stopped. Close behind it, pulled up the vehicle of old Methusaleh. Lord Downy and Aby entered a house within a few yards of it, and, immediately opposite, the indefatigable sire once more took up his position. Here, with a calm and happy spirit, the venerable Moses reflected on the past and future—made plans of retiring from business, and of living, with his fortunate Aby, in rural luxury and ease, and congratulated himself on the moral training he had given his son, and which had no doubt led to his present noble eminence. During this happy reverie there appeared at the door of the house in which the Moses family were at present interested, a man of fashionable exterior—a baronet at the very least. He had a martial air and bushy whiskers—his movements all the ease of nature added to the grace of art. The plebeian Moses felt an involuntary respect for the august presence, and, in the full gladness of his heart, took off his hat in humble reverence. We promised the reader one glimpse of the incomparable Warren de Fitzalbert. He has obtained it. That mysterious individual acknowledges the salutation of the Hebrew, and, smiling on him graciously, passes on. Methusaleh rubs his hands, and has a foretaste of his coming dignity.

Another ten minutes of unmingled joy, and Aby is at the door. His carefully combed hair is all dishevelled; his limbs are shaking; his cheeks bloodless; and, oh, worse than all, the fatal hat is wildly waving in the air! Methusaleh is struck with a thunderbolt; but he is stunned for an instant only. He dashes across the road, seizes his lawfully begotten by the throat, and drags him like a log into the passage.

"Shpeak, shpeak! you blackguard, you villain!" exclaimed the man. "My money, my money!"

"Oh, father!" answered the stripling, "they have robbed us—they have taken advantage of me. I aint to blame; oh Lor'! oh Lor'!"

The little man threw his boy from him with the strength of a giant and the anger of a fiend. The unhappy Aby spun like a top into the corner of the passage.

"Show me the man," cried Methusaleh, "as has got my money. Take me to him, you fool, you ass; let me have my revenge; or I'll be the death of you."

Aby crawled away from his father, rose, and then bade his father follow him. The father did as he was directed. He ascended a few stairs, and entered a room on the first floor. The only living object he saw there was Lord Downy. His lordship was very pale, and as agitated as any of the party; but his agitation did not save him from the assaults of the defrauded Israelite. The old man had scarcely caught sight of his prey before he pounced upon him like a panther.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed his lordship, in amazement.

"My money!"

"Who are you?" said Lord Downy.

"My money!" repeated Moses, furiously. "Give me my money! Three hundred pounds—bank notes! I have got the numbers; I've stopped the payment. Give me my money!"

"Is this your son, sir?" said Lord Downy, pointing to the wretched Aby, who stood in a corner of the apartment, looking like a member of the swell mob, very sea-sick.

"Never mind him!" cried the old man, energetically. "The money is mine, not his'n. I gave it him to take up a bill. If you have seduced him here, and robbed him of it, it's transportation. I knows the law. It's the penal shettlements!"

"Good heaven, sir! What language do you hold to me?"

"Never mind my language. It vill be vorse by and by. Dis matter shall be settled before the magistrate. Come along to Bow Street!"

And so saying, Mr Moses, who all this time had held his lordship fast by the collar of his coat, urged him forwards to the door.

"I tell you, sir," said the nobleman, "whoever you may be, you are labouring under a mistake. I am not the person that you take me for. I am a peer of the realm."

"If you vos the whole House of Commons," continued Methusaleh, without relaxing his grasp, "vith Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Vellington into the pargain, you should go to Bow Street. Innoshent men aint to be robbed like tieves."

"Oh, heaven! my position! What will the world say?"

"That you're a d—d rogue, sir, and shwindled a gentleman out of his money."

"Listen to me for one moment," said Lord Downy, earnestly, "and I will accompany you whithersoever you please. Believe me, you are mistaken. If you have suffered wrong through me,

I am, at least, innocent. Nevertheless, as far as I am able, justice shall be done you." Mr Moses set his prisoner at liberty. "There, sir," said he, "I am a man of peace. Give me the three hundred pounds, and I'll say no more about it." [Pg 304]

"We are evidently playing at cross purposes," said the nobleman. "Suffer me, Mr ——," His lordship stopped.

"Oh, you knows my name well enough. It's Mr Moses."

"Then, Mr Moses," continued Lord Downy, "suffer me to tell my story, and then favour me with yours."

"Go on, sir," said Methusaleh. "Mind, vot you says vill go as evidence agin you. I don't ask you to speak. I don't vant to compromise."

"I have nothing but truth to utter. Some days ago I saw an advertisement in the newspaper, offering to advance money to gentlemen on their personal security. I answered the advertisement, and the following day received a visit from Mr Fitzalbert, the advertiser. I required a thousand pounds. He had not the money, he said, at his command; but a young friend of his, for whom, indeed, he acted as agent, would advance the sum as soon as all preliminaries were arranged. We did arrange the preliminaries, as I believe, to Mr Fitzalbert's perfect satisfaction, and this morning was appointed for a meeting and a settlement."

"Yes; but didn't you promise to get me situation," interposed Aby from the corner, in a tremulous tone.

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" exclaimed Methusaleh. "Read that letter," he continued, turning to Lord Downy, and presenting him with the note addressed to Moses, junior, by Warren de Fitzalbert. Lord Downy read it with unfeigned surprise, and shook his head when he had finished.

"It is my usual fate" he said, with a sigh. "I have fallen again into the hands of a sharper. Mr Moses, we have been both deceived. I have nothing to do with rods, blue or black. I am not able to procure for your worthy son any appointment whatever. I never engaged to do so. The letter is a lie from beginning to end, and this Mr Fitzalbert is a clever rogue and an impostor."

Mr Moses, senior, turned towards his son one of those expressive looks which Aby, in his boyhood, had always translated—"a good thrashing, my fine fellow, at the first convenient opportunity." Aby, utterly beaten by disappointment, vexation, and fear, roared like a distressed bear.

"Come, come!" said Lord Downy; "matters may not be as bad as they seem. The lad has been cruelly dealt by. I will take care to set him right. I received of your three hundred pounds this morning, Mr Moses, two hundred and fifty; the remaining fifty were secured by Mr Fitzalbert as a bonus. That sum is here. I have the most pressing necessity for it; but I feel it is not for me to retain it for another instant. Take it. I have five-and-twenty pounds more at the Salisbury hotel, which, God knows, it is almost ruin to part with, but they are yours also, if you will return with me. I give you my word I have not, at the present moment, another sixpence in the world. I have a few little matters, however, worth ten times the amount, which I beg you will hold in security, until I discharge the remaining five-and-twenty pounds. I can do no more."

"Vell, as you say, we have been both deceived by a great blackguard, and by that 'ere jackass in the corner. You've shpoken like a gentleman, vich is alvays gratifying to the feelings. To show you that I am not to be outdone in generosity, I accept your terms."

Lord Downy was not moved to tears by this disinterested conduct on the part of Mr Moses, but he gladly availed himself of any offer which would save him from exposure. A few minutes saw them driving back to Oxford Street; Methusaleh and Lord Downy occupying the inside of a cab, whilst Aby was mounted on the box. The features of the interesting youth were not visible during the journey, by reason of the tears that he shed, and the pocket-handkerchief that was held up to receive them.

A little family plate, to the value of a hundred pounds, was, after much haggling from Methusaleh, received as a pledge for the small deficiency; which, by the way, had increased since the return of the party to the Salisbury Hotel, to thirty-four pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence; Mr Moses having first left it to Lord Downy's generosity to give him what he thought proper for his trouble in the business, and finally made out an account as follows— [Pg 305]

Commission,	L.5	0	0
Loss of time,	2	0	0
Do., Aby,	2	0	0
Hire of cab,	0	15	6
	L.9	15	6

"I hope you thinks," said Methusaleh, packing up the plate, "that I have taken no advantage. Five hundred pounds voudn't pay me for all as I have suffered in mind this blessed day, let alone the vear and tear of body."

Lord Downy made no reply. He was heartsick. He heard upon the stairs, footsteps which he knew to belong to Mr Ireton. That gentleman, put off from day to day with difficulty and fearful bribes,

was not the man to melt at the tale which his lordship had to offer instead of cash, or to put up with longer delay. His lordship threw himself into a chair, and awaited the arrival of his creditor with as much calmness as he could assume. The door opened, and Mr Mason entered. He held in his hand a letter, which had arrived by that morning's post. The writing was known. Lord Downy trembled from head to foot as he broke the seal, and read the glad tidings that met his eye. His uncle, the Earl of ——, had received his appeal, and had undertaken to discharge his debts, and to restore him to peace and happiness. The Earl of ——, a member of the government, had obtained for his erring nephew an appointment abroad, which he gave him, in the full reliance that his promise of amendment should be sacredly kept.

"It shall! it shall!" said his lordship, bursting into tears, and enjoying, for the first time in his life, the bliss of liberty. Need we say that Mr Ireton, to his great surprise, was fully satisfied, and Mr Moses in receipt of his thirty-four pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence, long before he cared to receive the money? These things need not be reported, nor need we mention how Lord Downy kept faith with his relative, and, once rid of his disreputable acquaintances, became himself a reputable and useful man.

Moses and Son dissolved their connexion upon the afternoon of that day which had risen so auspiciously for the junior member. When Methusaleh had completed the packing up of Lord Downy's family plate, he turned round and requested Aby not to sit there like a wretch, but to give his father a hand. He was not sitting there either as a wretch or in any other character. The youth had taken his opportunity to decamp. Leaving the hotel, he ran as fast as he could to the parental abode, and made himself master of such loose valuables as might be carried off, and turned at once into money. With the produce of this stolen property, Aby extravagantly purchased a passage to New South Wales. Landing at Sydney, he applied for and obtained a situation at the theatre. His face secured him all the "sentimental villains;" and his success fully entitles him, at the present moment, to be regarded as the "acknowledged hero" of "domestic (Sydney) melodrama."

[Pg 306]

VICHYANA.

No watering-place so popular in France as Vichy; in England few so little known! Our readers will therefore, we doubt not, be glad to learn something of the *sources* and *re*sources of Vichy; and this we hope to give them, in a general way, in our present Vichyana. What further we may have to say hereafter, will be chiefly interesting to our medical friends, to whom the *waters* of Vichy are almost as little known as they are to the public at large. The name of the town seems to admit, like its waters, of analysis; and certain grave antiquaries dismember it accordingly into two Druidical words, "Gurch" and "I;" corresponding, they tell us, to our own words, "Power" and "Water;" which, an' it be so, we see not how they can derive *Vichy* from this source. Others, with more plausibility, hold Vichy to be a corruption of *Vicus*. That these springs were known to the Romans is indisputable; and, as they are marked *Aquæ calidæ* in the Theodosian tables, they were, in all probability, frequented; and the word *Vicus*, Gallicised into Vichy, would then be the designation of the hamlet or watering-place raised in their neighbourhood. Two of the principal springs are close upon the river; ascertaining, with tolerable precision, not only the position of this *Vicus*, but also of the ancient bridge, which, in the time of Julius Cæsar, connected, as it now does, the town with the road on the opposite bank of the Allier, (Alduer fl.,) leading to Augusta Nemetum, or Clermont. The road on *this* side of the bridge was then, as now, the high one (*via regia*) to Lugdunum, or Lyons.

Vichy, if modern geology be correct, was not always *thus* a watering-place; but seems, for a long period, to have been a *place under water*. The very stones prate of Neptune's whereabouts in days of langsyne. No one who has seen what heaps of *rounded* pebbles are gleaned from the corn-fields, or become familiar with the copious remains of *fresh water* shells and insects, which are kneaded into the calcareous deposits a little below the surface of the soil, can help fetching back in thought an older and drearier dynasty. Vulcan here, as in the Phlegrian and Avernian plains, succeeded with great labour, and not without reiterated struggles, in wresting the region from his uncle, and proved himself the better earth-shaker of the two; first, by means of subterranean fires, he threw up a great many small islands, which, rising at his bidding, as thick as mushrooms after a thunder-storm, broke up the continuous expanse of water into lakes; and by continual perseverance in this plan, he at last rescued the *whole* plain from his antagonist, who, marshaling his remaining forces into a narrow file, was fain to retreat under the high banks of the Allier, and to evacuate a large tract of country, which had been his own for many centuries.

Natural History, &c.

The natural history of Vichy—that is, so much of it as those who are not naturalists will care to know—is given in a few sentences. Its Fauna contains but few kinds of quadrupeds, and no great variety of birds; amongst reptiles again, while snakes abound as to number, the variety of species is small. You see but few fish at market or at table; and a like deficiency of land and fresh water mollusks is observable; while, in compensation for all these deficiencies, and in consequence, no doubt, of some of them, insects abound. So great, indeed, is the superfœtation of these tribes,

that the most unwearying collector will find, all the summer through, abundant employment for his *two* nets. If the Fauna, immediately around Vichy, must be conceded to be small, her Flora, till recently, was much more copious and interesting; *was*—since an improved agriculture, here as every where, has rooted out, in its progress, many of the original occupants of the ground, and colonized it with others—training hollyhocks and formal sunflowers to supplant pretty Polygalas and soft Eufrasies; and instructing Ceres so to fill the open country with her standing armies, that Flora, *outbearded* in the plain, should retire for shelter to the hills, where she now holds her court. Spring sets in early at Vichy; sometimes in the midst of *February* the surface of the hills is already hoar with almond blossoms. Early in April, anemones and veronicas dapple the greensward; and the willows, deceived by the promise of warm weather, which is not to last, put forth their *blossoms* prematurely, and a month later put forth *their leaves* to weep over them. By the time May has arrived, the last rude easterly gale, so prevalent here during the winter months, has swept by, and there is to be no more cold weather; tepid showers vivify the ground, an exuberant botany begins and continues to make daily claims both on your notice and on your memory; and so on till the swallows are gone, till the solitary *tree aster* has announced October, and till the pale petals of the autumnal colchicum begin to appear; a month after Gouts and Rheumatisms, for which they grow, have left Vichy and are returned to Paris for the winter. We arrived long before this, in the midst of the butterfly month of July. It was warm enough then for a more southern summer, and both insect and vegetable life seemed at their acme. The flowers, even while the scythes were gleaming that were shortly to unfound their several pretensions in that leveller of all distinctions, *Hay*, made great muster, as if it had been for some horticultural show-day. Amongst then we particularly noticed the purple orchis and the honied daffodil, fly-swarming and bee-beset, and the stately thistle, burnished with many a *panting goldfinch*, resting momentarily from his butterfly hunt, and clinging timidly to the slender stem that bent under him. Close to the river were an immense number of *yellow* lilies, who had placed themselves there for the sake, as it seemed, of trying the effect of *hydropathy* in improving their *complexions*. But what was most striking to the eye was the appearance of the immense white flowers (whitened sepulchres) of the *Datura strammonium*, growing high out of the shingles of the river; and on this same Seriphus, outlawed from the more gentle haunts of their innocuous brethren, congregated his associates, the other prisoners, of whom, both from his size and bearing, he is here the chief!

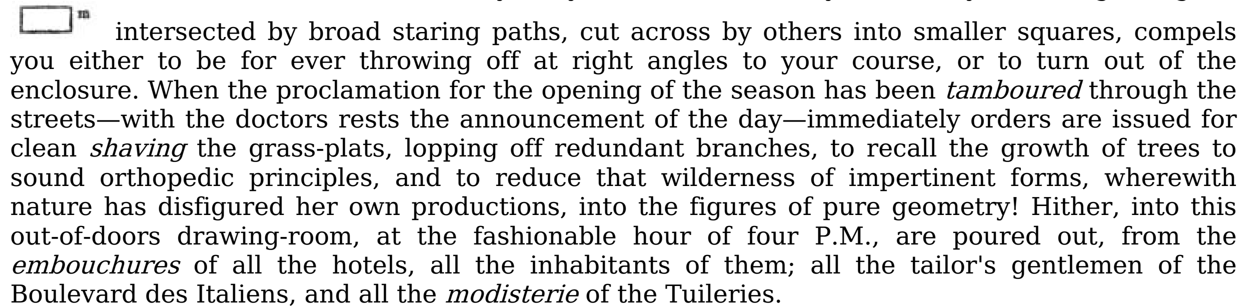
The Contrast.

What a change from the plains of Latium!-a change as imposing in its larger and more characteristic features, as it is curious in its minutest details; and who that has witnessed the return of six summers calling into life the rank verdure of the Colosseum, can fail to contrast these jocund revels of the advancing year in this gay region of France, with the blazing Italian summers, coming forth with no other herald or attendant than the gloomy green of the "*hated* cypress," and the unrelieved glare of the interminable Campagna? Bright, indeed, was that Italian heaven, and deep beyond all language was its blue; but the spirit of transitory and changeable creatures is quelled and overmastered by this permanent and immutable scene! It is like the contrast between the dappled sky of cheerful morning, when eye and ear are on the alert to catch any transitory gleam and to welcome each distant echo, and the awful immovable stillness of noon, when Pan is sleeping, and will be wroth if he is awakened, when the whole life of nature is still, and we look down shuddering into its unfathomable depth! Standing on the heights of Tusculum, or on the sacred pavement of the Latian Jupiter, every glance we send forth into the objects around us, returns laden with matter to cherish forebodings and despondencies. The ruins speak of an immovable past, the teeming growths which mantle them, the abundant source of future malaria, of a destructive future, and *activity*, the only spell by which we can evoke the cheerful spirit of the present—activity within us, or around us, there is *none*. What wonder if we now feel as though the weight of all those grim ruins had been heaved from off the mind, and left it buoyant and eager to greet the present as though we were but the creatures of it! Whatever denizen of the vegetable or the animal kingdom we were familiar with in Italy and miss hereabouts, is replaced by some more cheerful race. What a *variety* of trees! and how various their *shades* of green! Though not equal to thy pines, Pamfili, and to thy fair cypresses, Borghese, whose feet lie cushioned in crocuses and anemones, yet a fine tree is the poplar; and yonder, extending for a couple of miles, is an avenue of their stateliest masts. The leaves of those nearest to us are put into a tremulous movement by a breeze too feeble for our skins to feel it; and as the rustling foliage from above gently *purrs* as instinct with life from *within*, this peculiar sound comes back to us like a voice we have heard and forgotten. No "marble wilderness" or olive-darkened upland, no dilapidated "Osterie," famine within doors and fever without, here press desolation into the service of the picturesque. Neither here have we those huge masses of arched brickwork, consolidated with Roman cement, pierced by wild fig-trees, crowned with pink valerians or acanthus, and giving issue to companies of those gloomy funeral-paced insects of the *Melasome* family, (the Avis, the Pimelia, and the Blaps,) whose dress is *deep mourning*, and whose favoured haunt is the tomb! But in their place, a richly endowed, thickly inhabited plain, filled with cottages and their gardens, farms and their appurtenances, ponds screaming with dog-defying geese, and barnyards commingling all the mixed noises of their live stock together. Encampments of ants dressed out in uniforms quite unlike those worn by the *Formicary* legions in Italy; gossamer cradles nursing progenies of *our Cisalpine* caterpillars, and spiders with new arrangements of their *eight pairs of eyes*, forming new arrangements of meshes, and *hunting* new flies, are here. Here too, once again, we behold, not without emotion, (for, *small* as he is, this creature has conjured up to us former scenes and associations of eight years ago,) that tiny light-

blue butterfly, that hovers over our ripening corn, and is not known but as a stranger, in the south; also, that minute diamond beetle[1] who always plays at bo-peep with you from behind the leaves of his favourite hazel, and the burnished corslet and metallic elytra of the pungent unsavoury *gold beetle*;[2] while we miss the *grillus* that leaps from hedge to hedge; the thirsty dragon-fly, restless and rustling on his silver wings; the hoarse cicadæ, whose "time-honoured" noise you *durst* not find fault with, even if you would, and which you come insensibly to like; and that huge long-bodied hornet,[3] that angry and terrible disturber of the peace, borne on wings, as it were, of the wind, and darting through space like a meteor!

Miscellanea.

Though the "Flora" round about Vichy be, as we have said it is, very rich and various, it attracts no attention. The fat Bœotian cattle that feed upon it, look upon and *ruminate* with more complacency over it than the ordinary visitors of the place. The only flowers the ladies cultivate an acquaintance with, are those manufactured in Paris; *artificial* passion flowers, and false "forget-me-nots," which are about as true to nature as they that wear them. Of fruits every body is a judge; and those of a sub-acid kind—the only ones permitted by the doctors to the patients— [Pg 309] are in great request. Foremost amongst them, after the month of June, are to be reckoned the dainty fresh-dried fruits from Clermont; of which, again, the prepared pulp of the mealy wild apricot of the district is the best. This *pâté d'abricot* is justly considered by the French one of the best *friandises* they have, and is not only sold in every *department* there, but finds its way to England also. Eaten, as we ate it, fresh from Clermont twice a-week, it is soft and pulpy; but soon becoming candied, loses much of its fruity flavour, and is converted into a sweetmeat.

We should not, in speaking of Vichy to a friend, ever designate it as a *comfortable* resort for a family; which, according to our English notion of the thing, implies both privacy and detachment. Here you can have neither. You must consider yourself as so much public property, must do what others do—*i. e.* live in public, and make the best of it. No place can be better off for hotels, and few so ill off for lodgings—the latter are only to be had in small dingy houses opening upon the street. They are, of course, very noisy; nor are the let-ters of them at any pains to induce you by the modesty of their demands to drop a veil over this defect. Defect, quotha! say, rather misery, plague, torture. Can any word be an over-exaggeration for an incessant *tintamare*, of which dogs, ducks, and drums are the leading instruments, enough to try the most patient ears? The hotels begin to receive candidates for the waters in May; but the season is reputed not to commence till a month later, and ends with September. During this period, many thousand visitors, including some of the ministers of the day; a royal duke; half the Institute; poets, a few; *hommes des lettres*, many; *agents de change*, most of all; deputies, wits, and dandies; in fact, all the *élite*, both of Paris and of the provinces, pay the same sum of seven francs per man, per diem; and, with the exception of the duke, assemble, not to say fraternize, at the same table. But though the guests be not formal, the "Mall," where every body walks, is extremely so. A very broad right-angled  intersected by broad staring paths, cut across by others into smaller squares, compels you either to be for ever throwing off at right angles to your course, or to turn out of the enclosure. When the proclamation for the opening of the season has been *tamboured* through the streets—with the doctors rests the announcement of the day—immediately orders are issued for clean *shaving* the grass-plats, lopping off redundant branches, to recall the growth of trees to sound orthopedic principles, and to reduce that wilderness of impertinent forms, wherewith nature has disfigured her own productions, into the figures of pure geometry! Hither, into this out-of-doors drawing-room, at the fashionable hour of four P.M., are poured out, from the *embouchures* of all the hotels, all the inhabitants of them; all the tailor's gentlemen of the Boulevard des Italiens, and all the *modisterie* of the Tuileries.

Our Amusements.

Pair by pair, as you see them *costumés* in the fashions of the month; pinioned arm to arm, but looking different ways; leaning upon polished reeds as light and as expensive as themselves—behold the chivalry of the land! The hand of *Barde* is discernible in their *paletots*. The spirit of *Staub* hovers over those *flowery waistcoats*; who but *Sahoski* shall claim the curious felicity of *those heels*? and Hippolyte has come bodily from Paris on purpose to do their hair. "*Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire*," says Boileau, and here, in supply exactly equal to the demand, come forth, rustling and *bustling* to see them, bevies of long-tongued belles, who ever, as they walk and meet their acquaintance, are announcing themselves in swift alternation "*charmées*," with a blank face, and "*toutes desolées*," with the *best good-will*! Here you learn to value a red riband at its "juste prix," which is just what it will fetch per ell; specimens of it in button-holes being as frequent as poppies amidst the corn. Pretending to hide themselves from remark, which [Pg 310] they intend but to provoke, here public characters do private theatricals *a little à l'écart*. Actors gesticulate as they rehearse their parts under the trees. Poets

"Rave and recite, and madden as they stand;"

and honourable members read aloud from the *Débats* that has just arrived, the speech which they spoke yesterday "*en Deputés*." Our promenade here lacks but a few more Saxon faces amidst the crowd, and a greater latitude of extravagance in some of its costumes, to complete the illusion, and to make you imagine that this public garden, flanked as it is on one side by a street of hotels, and on the opposite by the bank of the Allier, is the Tuilleries with its Sunday population sifted.

Twenty-five francs secures you admission to the "Cercle" or club-house, a large expensive building, which, like most buildings raised to answer a variety of ends, leaves the main one of architectural propriety wholly out of account. But when it is considered how many interests and caprices the architect had to consult, it may be fairly questioned, whether, so hampered, Vitruvius could have done it better; for the *ground floor* was to be cut up into corridors and bathing cells; while the ladies requested a ball and anteroom; and the gentlemen two "billiards" and a reading-room, with detached snuggeries for smoking—*all* on the *first floor*.

Public places, excepting the above-mentioned "Cercle," exist not at Vichy, and as nobody thinks of paying visits save only to the doctor and the springs, "*on s'ennui très considerablement à Vichy*." If it be true, that, in some of the lighter annoyances of life, fellowship is decidedly preferable to solitude, *ennui* comes not within the number—every attempt to divide it with one's neighbours only makes it worse; as Charles Lamb has described the *concert* of silence at a Quakers' meeting, the intensity increases with the number, and every new accession raises the public stock of distress, which again redounds with a surplus to each individual, "*chacun en a son part, et tous l'ont tout entier*."[4] What a chorus of yawns is there; and mutual yawns, you know, are the dialogue of ennui. No wonder; for the physicians don't permit their patients to read any books but novels. They seek to array the "Understanding" against him who wrote so well concerning its laws; Bacon, as *intellectual food*, they consider difficult of digestion; and even for their own La Place there is no place at Vichy! Every unlucky headache contracted here, is placed to the account of *thinking* in the bath. If Dr P—— suspects any of his patients of thinking, he asks them, like Mrs Malaprop, "what business they have to think?" "*Vous êtes venu ici pour prendre les eaux, et pour vous desennuyer, non pas pour penser! Que le Diable emporte la Pensée!*" And so he *does* accordingly!

How *we* got through the twenty-four hours of each day, is still a problem to us; after making due deductions for the time consumed in eating, drinking, and sleeping. Occasionally we tried to "*beat time*" by *versifying* our own and our neighbours' "experiences" of Vichy. But soon finding the "*quicquid agunt homines*" of those who in fact did nothing, was beyond our powers of *description*, gave up, as abortive, the attempt to maintain our "suspended animation" on means so artificial and precarious. When little is to be told, few words will suffice. If the word fisherman be derived from *fishing*, and not from *fish*, we had a great many such fishermen at Vichy; who, though they could neither scour a worm, nor splice the rod that their clumsiness had broken, nor dub a fly, nor land a fish of a pound weight, if any such had had the mind to try them, were vain enough to beset the banks of the Allier at a very early hour in the morning. As they all fished with "flying lines," in order to escape the fine imposed on those that are *shotted*, and seemed to prefer standing in their own light—a rare fault in Frenchmen—with their backs to the sun; the reader will readily understand, if he be an angler, what sport they might expect. Against them and *their lines*, we quote a few *lines* of *our own* spinning:—

Now full of hopes, they loose the lengthing twine,
Bait harmless hooks, and launch a *leadless* line!
Their shadows on the stream, the sun behind—
Egregious anglers! are the fishes blind?
Gull'd by the sportings of the frisking bleak,
That now assemble, now disperse, in freak;
They see not *deeper*, where the quick-eyed trout,
Has chang'd his route, and turned him quick about;
See not those scudding shoals, that mend their pace,
Of frighten'd bream, and silvery darting dace!
Baffled at last, they quit the ungrateful shore,
Curse what they fail to catch—and fish no more!
Yet fish there be, though these unsporting wights
Affect to doubt what Rondolitier[5] writes;
Who tells, "how, moved by soft Cremona's string,
Along these banks he saw the *Allice* spring;
Whilst active hands, t' anticipate their fall,
Spread wide their nets, and draw an ample haul."

Our sportsmen do not confine themselves to the gentle art of angling—they *shoot* also; and some of them even acquire a sort of celebrity for the precision of their aim. This class of sportsmen may be divided into the *in*, and the *out*-door marksmen. *These*, innocuous, and confining their operations principally to small birds in trees; those, to the knocking the heads off small plaster figures from a stand. The following brief notice of *them* we transcribe from our Vichy note-book: —

Those of bad blood, and mischievously gay,
Haunt "*tirs au pistolets*," and kill—the day!
There, where the rafters tell the frequent crack,
To fire with steady hand, acquire the knack,
From rifle barrels, twenty feet apart,
On gypsum warriors exercise their art,
Till ripe proficients, and with skill elate,
Their aimless mischief turns to deadly hate.
Perverted spirits; reckless, and unblest;
Ye slaves to lust; ye duellists profess'd;

Vainer than woman; more unclean than hogs;
Your life the felon's; and your death the dog's!
Fight on! while honour disavow your brawl,
And outraged courage disapprove the call—
Till, steep'd in guilt, the devil sees his time,
And sudden death shall close a life of crime.

In front of some of the hotels you always observe a number of persons engaged successively in throwing a ring, with which each endeavours to encircle a knife handle, on a board, stuck all over with blades. If he succeeds, he may pocket the knife; if not he pays half a franc, and is free to throw again. It is amusing to observe how many half franc pieces a Frenchman's vanity will thus permit him to part with, before he gives over, consigning the ring to its owner, and the blades to his electrical anathema of "*mille tonnerres!*" A little farther on, just beyond the enclosure, is another knot of people. What are they about? They are congregated to see what passengers embark or disembark (their voyage accomplished) from the gay vessels, the whirligigs or merry-go-rounds (which is the classical expression, let *purists* decide *for themselves*) which, gaily painted as a Dutch humming-top, sail overhead, and go round with the rapidity of windmills.

In hopes to cheat their nation's fiend, "Ennui,"
These cheat themselves, and *seem* to go to sea!
Their galley launch'd, its rate of sailing fast,
Th' *Equator* soon, and soon the *Poles* they've past,
And here they come to anchorage at last!
These, tightly stirrupt on a wooden horse,
Ride at a ring—and spike it, as they course.
Thus with the aid that ships and horses give,
Life passes on; 'tis labour, but they live.—
And some lead "bouledogues" to the water's edge,
There hunt, *à l'Anglais*, rats amidst the sedge;
And some to "pedicures" present—their corns,
And some at open windows practise—horns!
In noisy trictrac, or in quiet whist,
These pass their time—and, to complete our list,
There are who flirt with milliners or books,
Or else with nature 'mid her meads and brooks.

But Gauthier's was our lounge, and therefore, in common gratitude, are we bound particularly to describe it. Had we been Dr Darwin we had done it better. As it is, the reader must content himself with *Scuola di Darwin*—

In Gauthier's shop, arranged in storied box
Of triple epoch, we survey the rocks,
A learned nomenclature! Behold in time
Strange forms imprison'd, forms of every clime!
The Sauras quaint, daguerrotyped on slate,
Obsolete birds and mammoths out of date;
Colossal bones, that, once before our flood,
Were clothed in flesh, and warm'd with living blood;
And tiny creatures, crumbling into dust,
All mix'd and kneaded in one common crust!
Here tempting shells exhibit mineral stores,
Of crystals bright and scintillating ores!
Of milky *mesotypes*, the various sorts,
The *blister'd silex* and the *smoke-stain'd quartz*;
Thy *phosphates lead!* bedeck'd with *needles green*,
Of *Elbas speculum* the *steely sheen*,
Of *copper ores*, the poison'd "*greens*" and "*blues*,"
Dark *Bismuth's cubes*, and Chromium's *changing* hues.

Here, too, (emblematical of our own position with respect to Ireland,) we see *silver alloyed with lead*. In the "repeal of such union," where the *silver* has every thing to *gain* and the *lead* every thing to *lose*, it is remarkable at what a *very dull heat* ('tis scarcely superior to that by which O'Connell manages to inflame Ireland) the *baser metal* melts, and would forsake the other, by its incorporation with which it derives so large a portion of its intrinsic value, whatever that may be!

Here, too, we pass in frequent review a vast series of casts from the antique; they come from Clermont, and are produced by the dripping of water, strongly impregnated with the carbonate of lime, on moulds placed under it with this view. Some of these impressions were coarse and rusty, owing to the presence of iron in the water; but where the necessary precautions had been taken to precipitate this, the casts came out with a highly polished surface, together with a sharpness of outline and a precision of detail, that left no room for competition to *Odellis*, else unrivalled Roman casts, which, confronted with these, look like impressions of impressions derived through a hundred successive stages; add, too, that these have the *solid* advantage over the others of being in marble in place of washed sulphur.

Thus much concerning *us* and *our* pastimes, from which it will have appeared that the *gentlemen* at Vichy pass half the day in *nothings*, the other half *in nothing*. As to the ladies, who lead the

same kind of out doors life with us, and only don't smoke or play billiards, we see and note as much of their occupations or listlessness as we list.

In unzoned robes, and loosest dishabille,
They show the world they've nothing to conceal!
But sit abstracted in their own *George Sand*,
And dote on Vice in sentiment so bland!
To necklaced Pug appropriate a chair,
Or sit alone, *knit*, *shepherdise*, and *stare!*
These seek *for fashion* in a *mourning dress*,
(*Becoming* mourning makes affliction less.)
With mincing manner, both of ton and town,
Some lead their *Brigand* children up and down;
Invite attention to small girls and boys,
Dress'd up like dolls, a silly mother's toys;
Or follow'd by their *Bonne, in Norman cap*,
Affect to take their first-born to their lap—
To gaze enraptured, think you, on a face,
In which a husband's lineaments they trace?
Smiling, to win the notice of their elf?
No! but to draw the gaze of crowds on *Self*.

Sunday, which is always in France a *jour de fête*, and a *jour de bal* into the bargain, is kept at Vichy, and in its neighbourhood, with great apparent gaiety and enjoyment by the lower orders, who unite their several *arrondissements*, and congregate here together.

Comes Sunday, long'd for by each smart coquette,
Of Randan, Moulins, Ganat, and Cusset.
In Janus hats,[6] with beaks that point both ways,
Then lively rustics dance their gay *Bourrées*;[7]
With painted sabots strike the noisy ground,
While bagpipes squeal, and hurdy-gurdies sound.
Till sinks the sun—then stop—the poor man's fête
Begins not early, and must end not late.
Whilst Paris belle in costliest silk array'd,
Runs up, and walks in stateliest parade;
Each comely damsel insolently kens;
(So silver pheasants strut 'midst modest hens!)
And marvels much what men *can* find t' admire,
In such coarse hoydens, clad in such attire!

And now 'tis night; beneath the bright saloon,
All eyes are raised to see the fire balloon,
Till swells the silk 'midst acclamations loud,
And the light lanthorn shoots above the crowd!
Here, 'neath the lines, Hygeia's fount that shade,
Smart booths allure the lounger on parade.
Bohemia's glass, and *Nevers' beaded wares*,
Millecour's fine lace, and *Moulins' polish'd shears*;
And crates of painted wicker without flaw,
And fine mesh'd products of *Germania's* straw,
Books of dull trifling, misnamed "reading light,"
And foxy maps, and prints in damaged plight,
Whilst up and down to rattling *castanettes*,
The active hawker sells his "*oubliettes!*"

We have our shows at Vichy, and many an itinerant tent incloses something worth giving half a franc to see; most of them we had already seen over and over again. What then? one can't invent new monsters every year, nor perform new feats; and so we pay our respects to the *walrus* woman, and to the "anatomie *vivante*." We look *up* to the Swiss giantess, and down upon the French dwarf; we inspect the feats of the village Milos, and of those equestrians, familiar to "every circus" at home and abroad, who

Ride four horses galloping; then stoop,
Vault from their backs, and spring thro' narrow hoop;
Once more alight upon their coursers' backs,
Then follow, scampering round the oft trod tracks.
And that far travell'd pig—*that* pig of parts,
Whose eye aye glistens on *that* Queen of hearts;
While wondering visitors the feat regard,
And tell by *looks* that that's the very card!

Behold, too, another curiosity in natural history, well deserving of "notice" and of "note," which we append accordingly—

From Auvergne's heights, their mother lately slain,
Six surly wolf cubs by their owner ta'en;

Her own pups drown'd, a foster bitch supplies,
And licks the churlish brood with fond maternal eyes![8]

Finally, and to wind up—

Who dance on ropes, who rouged and roaring stand,
Who cheat the eyes by wondrous sleight of hand,
From whose wide mouth the ready riband falls,
Who swallow swords, or urge the flying balls,
Here with French poodles vie, and harness'd fleas,
Nor strive in vain our easy tastes to please.
Whilst rival pupils of the great Daguerre,
In rival shops, display their rivals fair!

Our first Table d'Hòte Dinner at Vichy.

We arrived at Vichy from Roanne just in time to dress for dinner. As every body dines *en table d'hôte*., we were not wrong in supposing that this would be a good opportunity for studying the habits, "usages de société" and what not, of a tolerably large party (fifty was to be the number) of the better class of French propriètaires. On entering the room, we found the guests already assembled; and everybody in full talk already, before the bell had done ringing, or the tureens been uncovered. The habit of general sufferance and free communion of tongue amongst guests at dinner, forms an agreeable episode in the life of him whom education and English reserve have *inured*, without ever reconciling, to a different state of things at home. The difference of the English and French character peeps out amusingly at this critical time of the day; when, oh! commend *us* to a Frenchman's vanity, however grotesque it may sometimes be, rather than to our own reserve, shyness, formality, or under whatever other name we please to designate, and seek to hide its unamiable synonym, pride. Vanity, always a free, is not seldom an agreeable talker; but pride is ever laconic; while the few words he utters are generally so constrained and dull, that you would gladly absolve him altogether from so painful an effort as that of opening his mouth, or forcing it to articulate. Self-love may be a large ingredient in both pride and vanity; but the difference of comfort, according as you have to sit down with one or the other at table, is indeed great. For whilst pride sits stiff, guarded, and ungenial, *radiating coldness around him*, which requires at least a bottle of champagne and an arch coquette to disperse; vanity, on the other hand, being a *female*, (a sort of Mrs Pride,) has her *conquests to make*, and loves making them; and accordingly must study the ways and means of pleasing; which makes *her* an agreeable *voisine* at table. As she never doubts either her own powers to persuade, or yours to appreciate them, her language is at once self-complacent, and full of good-will to her neighbour; whilst the vanity of a Frenchman thus leads him to seek popularity, it seems enough to an Englishman that he is one entitled to justify himself, in his own eyes, for being as disagreeable as he pleases.

On the present occasion, not to have joined in a conversation which was general, at whatever disadvantage we might have to enter into it, would, we felt, have been to subject ourselves to remark after dinner; so putting off restraint, and putting on the best face we could, we began at once to address some remarks to our neighbours. We were not aware at the moment how far the *Anglomania*, which *began* to prevail some seven years ago in Paris, had spread since we left the French capital. There it began, we remember, with certain members of the medical profession, who had learned to give calomel in *English* doses. The public next lauded Warren's blacking —*Cirage national de Warren*—and then proceeded to eat raw crumpets as an English article of luncheon. But things had gone farther since that time than we were prepared to expect. At the *table d'hôte* of to-day, we found every body had something civil to say about English products; frequently for no other reason than that they were English, it being obvious that they themselves had never seen the articles, whose excellence they all durst swear for, though not a man of them knew wherefore. We had not sat five minutes at table (the stringy *bouilli* was still going round) when a count, a gentleman used to good breeding and *feeding*, opened upon us with a compliment which we knew neither how to disclaim nor to appropriate, in declaring in presence of the table that he was a decided partisan for English "Rosbiff;" confirming his perfect sincerity to us, by a "*c'est vrai*," on perceiving some slight demur to the announcement at *mine host's* end of the table. We had scarce time to recover from this unexpected sally of the count, when a young *notabilité*, a poet of the romantic school of France, whose face was very pale, who wore a Circassian profusion of *black* hair over his shoulders, a satin waistcoat over his breast, and Byron-tie (*nœud Byron*) round his neck—permitted his muse to say something flattering to us across the table about Shakspeare. Again we had not what to say, nor knew how to return thanks for our "immortal bard;" and this, our shyness, we had the mortification to see was put down to *English coldness*; for how *could* we else have seemed so insensible to a compliment so personal? nor were we relieved from our embarrassment till a dark-whiskered man, in sporting costume, (who had brought every thing appertaining thereto to table except his gun, which was in a corner,) gave out, in a somewhat oracular manner, his opinion, that there were no sporting dogs *out of* England; whistling, as he spoke to Foxe, and to Miss Dashe, to rise and show their noses above the table! The countess next spoke tenderly of *English soap*, and almost sighed over the soft whiteness of her hands, which she indulgently attributed to the constant use of soap prepared by "*Mr Brown de Vindsor*." This provoked a man of cultivated beard to declare, that he found it impossible to shave with any razors but *English* "*ones*;" concluding with this general remark on French and English manufactures, that the French *invented* things, but that the

English improved them. (*Les Français inventent, mais les Anglais perfectionnent.*) Even English medicine found its advocates—here were we sitting in the midst of Dr Morison's patients! A lady, who had herself derived great advantage from their use, was desirous of knowing whether our Queen took them, or Prince Albert! It was also asked of us, whether Dr Morison (whom they supposed to be the court physician) was *Sir* Dr Morison, (Bart.,) or *tout simplement* doctor! and they spoke favourably of some other English inventions—as of Rogers' teeth, Rowland's macassar, &c.; and were continuing to do so, when a fierce-looking demagogue, seeing how things were going, and what concessions were being made, roused himself angrily; and, to show us that *he* at least was no Anglo-maniac, shot at us a look fierce as any bonassus; while he asked, abruptly, what we thought in England of one whom he styled the "Demosthenes of Ireland"—looked at us for an answer. As it would have been unsafe to have answered *him* in the downright, offhand manner, in which we like both to deal and to be dealt by, we professed that we knew but one Demosthenes, and he not an Irishman, but a Greek; which, by securing us his contempt, kept us safe from the danger of something worse; but, our Demosthenic friend excepted, it was a pleasant, unceremonious dinner; and we acquitted ourselves just sufficiently well not to make any one feel we were in the way. A lady now asked, in a whisper, whom *we* look upon as the first poet, Shakspeare, Dumas, or Lord Byron; and whether the *two* English poets were *both* dead. A reply from a more knowing friend saved our good breeding at this pinch. As a proof of our having made our own way amongst the guests at table, we may mention that one sallow gentleman, who had been surveying us once or twice already, at length invited us to tell him, across the table, what case is ours, and who our physician? To be thus obliged to confess our weak organ in public is not pleasant; but *every* body here does it, and what every body does must be right. A gentleman who speaks broken English favours the table with a conundrum. Another (the young poet) presents us with a brace of dramas, bearing the auspicious titles of "La Mort de Socrate," and "Catilina Romantique"—*of which anon*. But, before we rise from our dessert, here is the conundrum as it was proposed to us:—"What gentleman always follow what lady?" Do you give it up? *Sur-Prise* always follow *Misse-Take!!*

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So much for our amusements at Vichy; but our Vichyana would be incomplete, unless we added a few words touching those far-famed sources for which, and not for its amusements, so many thousands flock hither every year. The following, then, may be considered as a brief and desultory selection of such remarks only as are likely to interest the general reader, from a body of notes of a more professional character, of which the destination is different:—Few springs have been so celebrated as those at Vichy, and no mineral waters, perhaps, have performed so many real "Hohenlohes," or better deserved the reputation they have earned and maintained, now for so many centuries! Gentle, indeed, is their surgery; they will penetrate to parts that no *steel* may reach, and do good, irrespective of persons, alike to Jew or Gentile; but then they should be "drunk on the premises"—exported to a distance (and they are exported every where) they are found to have lost—their chemical constitution remaining unchanged—a good deal of their efficacy. Little, however, can Hygeia have to do with chemistry; for the chemical analysis of *all* these springs is the same while the *modus operandi* of each, in particular, is so distinct, that if gout ails you, you must go to the "Grande grille;" if dyspepsia, to the "Hôpital;" or, if yours be a kidney case, to the "Celestius," to be cured—facts which should long ago have convinced the man of retorts and crucibles at home (who affirms that 'tis but taking soda after all), that he speaks *beyond* his warrant. Did ever lady patroness, desirous of filling her rooms on a route night, invite to that end so many as Hygeia invites to come and benefit by these springs? And what though she reserve the right of patent in their preparation to herself, does she not generously yield the products of her discovery in the restoration of health and comfort to thousands, whom neither nostrum nor prescription, the recipe nor the fiat, could restore? In cases, too, beyond her control, does she not mitigate many sufferings that may not be removed? To all that are galled with gall-stones, to those whom the *Chameleon litmus paper* of "coming events casts their shadows before;" to Indian *livers* condemned, else hopelessly, to the fate of Prometheus, preyed upon by that vulture *Hepatitis*, in its *gnawing* and chronic forms; and to the melancholy hypochondriac, steeped at once both in sadness and in pains—she calls, and calls loudly, that all these should come and see what great and good things are in store for them at Vichy. And finally, difficult though gouty gentlemen be to manage, Hygeia, nothing daunted on that score, shrinks not from inviting that large army of *involuntary* martyrs to repair thither at once. Yes! even gout, that has so long laughed out at all pharmacopoeias, and tortured us from the time "when our wine and our oil increased"—Gout, that colchicum would vainly attempt to baffle, that no nepenthe soothes, no opium can send to sleep—Gout, that makes as light of the medical practitioner as of his patient; that murdered *Musgrave*, and seized her very own historian by the hip[9]—this, our most formidable foe, is to be conquered at Vichy! Here, in a brief time, the iron gyves of *Podagra* are struck *off*, and *Cheiragra's manacles* are unbound; enabling old friends, who had hitherto shaken their *heads* in despondency, once more to shake *hands*.

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But Vichy, be it understood, neither cures, nor undertakes to cure, every body; her waters have nothing to do with your head, your heart, or your lungs; their empire begins and ends below the *diaphragm*; it is here, and here alone, that her mild control quells dangerous internal commotions, establishes quiet in irritated organs, and restores health on the firm basis of *constitutional principles*. The real *doctors* at Vichy are the *waters*; and much is it to be regretted that they should not find that co-operation and assistance in those who administer them, which Hippocrates declares of such paramount importance in the management of all disease; for here (alas! for the inconsistency of man) the two physicians *prescribed* to us by the government, while they gravely tell their patients that no good can happen to such as will think, fret, or excite themselves, while they formally interdict all *sour* things at table, (shuddering at a cornichon if

they detect one on the plate of a rebellious water-drinker, and denouncing honest fruiterers as poisoners,) yet foment sour discord, and keep their patients in perpetual hot water, alike *in the bath* and *out of the bath*; more tender in their regard for *another* generation, they recommend all nurses to undergo a slight course of the springs to *keep their milk* from turning sour, yet will curdle the *milk of human kindness* in our lacteals by instilling therein the sour asperity which they entertain towards each other, and which, notwithstanding the efforts of the ladies to keep peace between them, by christening one their "*beau médecin*," and the other their "*bon médecin*," has arrived at such a pitch that they refuse to speak French, or issue one "*fiat*" in common.[10]

A remarkable fact connected with the natural history of the Vichy waters is the following:—Whenever the electrical condition of the atmosphere undergoes a change, in consequence of the coming on of a storm, they disengage a large quantity of carbonic acid, while a current of electricity passes off from the surface. At such times baths are borne with difficulty, the patients complaining of præcordial distress, which amounts sometimes to a feeling of suffocation; the like unpleasant sensations being also communicated, though to a less extent, to those who are drinking the waters.[11]

IT'S ALL FOR THE BEST.

PART THE LAST.

Chapter VI.

It was a lovely morning, notwithstanding it was November—the rain had wholly ceased, and the clear and almost cloudless sky showed every indication of a fine day; so that Frank had an excellent opportunity of witnessing the view of the sea to which the squire had alluded, and with which he was very much gratified. But, for all this, our little hero was looking forward to a far more interesting sight, in the persons of the fair ladies he had fully made up his mind to meet that morning at breakfast; though the altered tones of their voices still exceedingly puzzled him. Wishing, however, to appear to the greatest possible advantage, he no sooner got back to the house, than, under the pretext of just seeing Vernon for a minute, he took the opportunity of brushing up his hair, and all that sort of thing. Having so done, and being by no means dissatisfied with the result, he again descended the stairs, and, with a throbbing heart, entered the breakfast room. Here he found the master of the house, with his amiable little wife, and three young ladies, already seated around the table—yes, three young ladies—actually one more in number than he had anticipated; but, alas! how different from those he had hoped to see. Instead of the lovely forms he and Vernon had been so forcibly struck with the day before, he perceived three very indifferent-looking young women—one, a thin little crooked creature, with sharp contracted features, which put him in mind of the head of a skinned rabbit—another with an immense flat unmeaning face; and the third, though better-looking than her two companions, was a silly little flippant miss in her teens, rejoicing in a crop of luxuriant curls which swept over her shoulders as she returned Frank's polite bow—when the squire introduced him to the assembled company—as much as to say, "I'm not for you, sir, at any price; so, pray don't for a moment fancy such a thing." The other two spinsters returned his salutation less rudely; but he set down the whole trio as the most uninteresting specimens of womankind he had ever met.

"Come," said the squire addressing himself to Frank, who, surprised as well as disappointed, was looking a little as if he couldn't help it, "Come, come Mr Trevelyan, here we are all assembled at last; so make the best use of your time, and then for waging war against the partridges."

Frank did make the best use of his time, and a most excellent breakfast, though he puzzled his brains exceedingly during the whole time he was so occupied with turning it over in his mind, how it was possible that such a delightful couple as the founders of the feast, could have produced so unprepossessing a progeny; whilst Timothy—who, though it was no part of his duty to wait at table, which was performed by a well-dressed man-servant out of livery—managed, on some pretext or other, to be continually coming in and out of the room, and every time contrived to catch Frank's eye, and, by a knowing grin, to let him know that he both understood the cause, and was exceedingly amused at his perplexity.

No sooner had Frank eaten and drank to his heart's content, than he declared his readiness to attend the squire to the field. Here they fell in with several coveys of partridges, and the squire, being an excellent shot, brought down his birds in fine style; added to which he knocked over a woodcock and several snipes; but it was otherwise with Frank, whose shooting experience being rather limited, after missing several easy shots, terminated the day by wounding a cow slightly, and killing a guinea-hen that flew out of a hedge adjoining a farm-yard the sportsmen were passing, which, mistaking for some wild gallinaceous animal or other, he blazed away at, without inquiring as to the particular species to which it might possibly belong. But so far from being cast down with his ill success, or the laughter his more effective shots had raised at his expense, he enjoyed the day amazingly, fully resolved to have another bout at it on the morrow; and so he and the worthy squire returned homewards together in the best possible humour with each other; the latter delighted with Frank, and Frank equally well pleased with the squire.

But Frank felt very sheepish about what his friend Vernon Wycherley would say as to the result of the predictions he had that morning made, and how he should manage to put a bold front upon the matter, so as to have the laugh all on his own side; a sort of thing he couldn't arrange any how; but still he would not pass so near his friend's bedroom, without looking in to ask him how he was getting on, when, to his great surprise, he found not only the bed, but even the apartment unoccupied.

"Ah, well!" said Frank, "I'm rejoiced, poor fellow, he's so much better than I expected; and *it's all for the best* that I find the bird flown, which spares me the vexation of confessing to him the blunder I made in my calculations this morning, which he must have found out long before this."

Having relieved his mind by these observations, he repaired to his own room, and having shifted his attire, and made the best of himself his limited wardrobe would admit, was again in the act of descending the stairs, when he encountered Timothy, who, with a grin that distended his mouth wellnigh from ear to ear, begged to direct him to the drawing-room, which was on the same floor with the bed chambers, where, he informed him, "the gen'lman was a-laying up top o' the sofer, and a-telkin' away brave with the young ladies—I say," observed Timothy, winking his eye to give greater expression to his words—"I say—he's a ben there for hours, bless'ee; for no sooner did mun[12] hear their sweet voices a-passing long the passage, than ha ups a-ringing away to the bell, which I takes care to answer; so ha tips me yef-a-crown to help mun on we us cloaz, which I did ready and wullin'; and then, guessing what mun 'ud like to be yefter, I ups with my gen'lman pick-a-back, and puts[13] mun with ma right into drawing-room, an drops mun flump down all vittey[14] amongst the ladies a-top of the sofer; and if you wants to see a body look plazed, just step in yer"—added he, laying his hand on the lock of the door, which they had then reached —"only just step in yer, and look to mun."

"Then most heartily do I pity his taste," thought Frank; but he didn't say so, and passed through the door Timothy had opened for him, who duly announced him to the party within. But how shall we attempt to describe Frank's amazement, when he discovered of whom the party consisted? He had indeed been surprised at meeting persons so totally different from what he had expected that morning at breakfast, but he was now perfectly thunderstruck at the sight which burst upon his astonished vision.

There was Mr Vernon Wycherley reclining at his ease on an elegant sofa, his head comfortably propped up with pillows, and as far, at any rate, as face was concerned, appearing not a bit the worse for his late accident, and making himself quite at home; and there, too, seated near him, were those lovely creatures who had excited the admiration of our two young heroes on the preceding day: there they were, both of them, dressed most becomingly, and looking most bewitchingly lady-like, employed about some of those little matters of needlework, which afford no impediment to conversation, chatting away with their new acquaintance in the most friendly and agreeable manner possible.

Chapter VII.

Frank Trevelyan was so much taken aback by a sight so totally unexpected, that his confident assurance for the moment forsook him, and with a countenance suffused with blushes, and a perfect consciousness all the time that he was looking like a fool, he stood stock-still within a few paces from the door, as if uncertain whether to pluck up sufficient courage to advance, or to turn tail and make a run of it; his comfort all this time in nowise enhanced, by detecting the air of triumphant satisfaction with which Mr Vernon Wycherley was witnessing and enjoying his confusion. Fortunately, however, for Frank, the ladies had more compassion, and by their pleasing affability of manner, speedily relieved him from his embarrassment—so speedily indeed, that in the course of five minutes he had not only conquered every bashful feeling, but had acquired so great a degree of easy self-possession, that Vernon Wycherley actually began to wonder at what he was pleased in his own mind to style, "the little rascal's cool impudence"—— But he only thought so whilst Frank was devoting his sole attentions to the darker beauty, with whom the young poet had already chosen to fancy himself in love; for when, at the expiration of this five minutes, his friend transferred his civilities to her fair sister, Mr Wycherley returned to his original opinion, formed upon a close intimacy of several years, which was, that friend Frank was one of the best-hearted, good-humoured, and entertaining little fellows that ever existed.

And now, how shall we attempt to describe these lovely young creatures, whose charms were, by this time, playing sad havoc with the hearts of Mr Vernon Wycherley, and his friend Mr Francis Trevelyan. First, then, the elder sister, Miss Mary.—Her features were regular, with the true Madonna cast of countenance, beautiful when in a state of repose, but still more lovely when lighted up by animation. Her cheek, though pale, indicated no symptom of ill health, and her complexion was remarkably clear, which was beautifully contrasted with her raven hair, dark eyes, and long silken eyelashes. Her sister, who was but a year younger, owed more of her beauty to a certain sweetness of expression it is impossible to describe, than to perfect regularity of feature. Her eyes were dark-blue, and her hair of a dark-golden brown; her complexion fair and clear, and her mouth and lips the most perfect that can be conceived. Both sisters had excellent teeth, but in other respects their features were totally dissimilar. They were about the middle height—and their figures faultless, which, added to a lady-like carriage and engaging manners, untainted with affectation, rendered them perfectly fascinating. Such was, at any rate, the opinion each of our two heroes had formed of *her* to whom he had been pleased to devote his

thoughts—Frank of the gentle Bessie, and Vernon of the lovely Mary—for none but the squire before her face, and Timothy behind her back, ever dared to call her Miss Molly; so that before Squire Potts, or his good lady, joined the young folks, which they did ere one delightful half hour had passed away, both our young men were deeply in for it—the poet resigned to pine away the rest of his days in solitary grief, and to write sonnets on his sorrows; and Frank resolved to try all he could do to win the lady over to be of the same mind with himself, and then to do every thing in his power, with the respective governors on both sides, to bring things to a happy conclusion as speedily as possible.

Oh! they were nice people were the Potts's—father, mother, and daughters; and how delighted Frank was when he sate down to the dinner-table with them—never were such nice people, thought Frank—and he wasn't far wide of the mark either. And how disconsolate poor Vernon felt in being compelled to rough it all alone, for that day at least, upon water-gruel above stairs! But the ladies, taking compassion upon his forlorn condition, and sympathizing with him for the dangers he had past, left the table very early, and favoured him with their company, leaving the squire below to amuse friend Frank.

But the squire and Frank were not left long alone together, for the village doctor dropped in just as the ladies had departed to inquire how Vernon was getting on, and was easily prevailed upon to help the squire and his guest out with their wine; and then came the clergyman of the parish, and his three or four private pupils, who had come to finish letting off the fireworks, which they had favoured the squire with partially exhibiting on the previous evening; but which the news of Vernon's misadventure had prematurely cut short—and so the remainder of the exhibition was postponed to the following evening—and that time having then arrived, all the rest of the combustibles went off, one after another, with very great *eclat*.

But where are those three uninteresting young damsels all this time?—What has become of them? some of our readers may be inclined to ask. For their satisfaction we beg to inform them, that these three unprepossessing personages were merely acquaintances, who had dropped in unexpectedly the evening before, and made use of the squire's residence as a kind of inn or half-way house, on the way to visit some friends some ten miles further on, to which place they had betaken themselves soon after breakfast. And by way of clearing up as we go—The Misses Potts, (for Potts they were called, there's no disguising that fact,) the Misses Potts, we say, were at the time our two heroes first met them returning homewards from a long ride; shortly after which, being overtaken by a heavy shower, they betook themselves to a friend's house not very far distant, where, owing to the unfavourable appearance of the weather, they were induced to remain for the night, and Timothy was accordingly sent home with a message to that effect.

They were very nice people indeed were the Potts's; and not only did their two guests think so, but the whole country, far and wide around, entertained precisely the same opinion. It is not, therefore, surprising that two young men like Frank and Vernon should be well pleased with their quarters, or that, having so early gotten into the slough of love, they should daily continue to sink deeper into the mire. The young poet's lame leg, though not a very serious affair, was still sufficient to keep him for several days a close prisoner to the house; but if any one had asked him —no, we don't go so far as to say that, for if any one had so asked him he would not have answered truly; but if he had seriously proposed the question to himself, his heart would have told him, that notwithstanding all the pain and inconvenience attendant on his then crippled state, he wouldn't have changed with his friend Frank, to have been compelled to ramble abroad with the father, instead of remaining at home to enjoy the society of his daughters.

As for Frank, he was equally well pleased to let matters be as they were; he shot with the squire, accompanied him on his walks about his farm; and occasionally, when the weather permitted, attended the young ladies in their rides; and then, and then only, did Vernon envy him, or repine at his own lame and helpless condition. But whatever the opinion of the latter might have been, never in all his born days did Mr Frank Trevelyan spend his time so much to his satisfaction.

Now we must not suppose that Squire Potts had, like an old blockhead, admitted these two young men into such close terms of intimacy with his family, upon no further acquaintance than was furnished him by his having helped the one out of a lead shaft, and the other to a dry rig-out after the duckings he had encountered in seeking the necessary aid—quite the contrary; for though the nature of the accident, and the forlorn condition of our pedestrians, would have insured them both food and shelter till the patient could have been safely removed elsewhere; yet the squire would never have admitted any one to the society of the female part of his family, whose respectability and station in society he was at all doubtful about. He had therefore, during supper-time on the night of his arrival, but in polite manner, put several pumping questions to Frank, who very readily answered them; from which he discovered that Frank's father, though personally unacquainted with, he knew by reputation to be a highly respectable person and a county magistrate; nor was even Frank's name wholly unknown to him, and the little he had heard was highly in his favour. He, therefore, passed muster very well; and, during the course of the shooting expedition on the following morning, the squire had also contrived to elicit from his young companion, that Vernon Wycherley's father, who had died some years before, had been both an intimate and valued friend of his own early years.

By this means a great portion of the reserve, often attendant upon an acquaintance recently formed, wore off; so that our two heroes felt themselves, in the course of a few days, as much at home with their newly-made friends, as if they had been on terms of intimacy with them from their childhood. There was, however, one serious drawback to the poet's felicity. The comedy

upon which he had designed to establish his future fame, was nowhere to be found; and there was every reason to believe, that it was reposing in the shaft from which its author had been so providentially rescued, where no one would venture down to seek it on account of the foul air that was known to prevail near the bottom.

"Well, never mind," said Vernon, who, when informed of his probable loss, was reclining very comfortably on the drawing-room sofa, taking tea with his kind entertainers,—"Well, never mind," he said, "I must be thankful to Heaven for my own preservation, and, practising a little of friend Frank's philosophy, try to believe that what has happened *is all for the best*."

"And so I've no doubt it is," interposed Frank; "for you must either have been doomed to disappointment by your failure, or, if you had succeeded in being the fortunate competitor out of the hundred candidates who are striving for the prize, you would, as a matter of course, have incurred the everlasting enmity of the disappointed ninety-nine, to say nothing of their numerous friends and allies; why, you would be cut up to minced meat amongst them all; and nine-tenths of the reviews and newspapers would be ringing their changes of abuse upon your name, as one of the most blundering blockheads that ever spoilt paper."

"Enough, Frank, enough—I give in," interrupted Mr Wycherley; "quite enough said on the subject, and perhaps you may be right too in this instance; but I verily believe, that if the direst misfortune were to happen to one, you would strive to convince him, or at any rate set it down in our own mind, that it was *all for the best*."

"And if he did so," said the squire, "he might be less distant from the truth than you imagine. I myself indeed could mention an instance, where a man at last happily discovered that a circumstance he had set down in his own mind as the ruling cause of every subsequent misfortune, eventually proved the instrument of producing him a greater degree of happiness than often falls to the lot of the most fortunate of mankind."

Frank and Vernon both expressed a wish to hear the tale, which the squire, who was a rare hand at telling a story, proceeded forthwith to recount; but as, for reasons we forbear mentioning at present, he glossed over some important parts, and touched but lightly on others equally material, we purpose, instead of recording the tale in his own words, to state the facts precisely as they occurred, the subject of which will form the contents of the two next following chapters.

CHAPTER VIII.—THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

In a town that shall be nameless, but which was situate somewhere or other in the West of England, there lived some years since—no matter how many—a young man, called Job Vivian, who practised as a surgeon, apothecary, and so forth. He was about two or three and twenty years of age when he first commenced his professional career in this place, and very shortly afterwards he married the girl of his affections, to whom he had been sincerely attached from his very boyhood; and as they were both exceedingly good-looking—in fact, she was beautiful—they of course made what the world terms an imprudent marriage. But Job himself thought very differently, and amidst all the cares and vicissitudes that attended several years of his wedded life, he never passed a day without breathing a prayer of thankfulness to Heaven for having blessed him with so excellent a helpmate. But though rich in domestic comforts, all the rest of Job's affairs, for a long time, went on unprosperously. He certainly acquired sufficient practice in the course of a few years to occupy a great portion of his time, by night as well as by day, but then it was not what is termed a paying practice. In fact, nearly the whole of his business was either amongst the poorer classes, who couldn't pay, the dishonest, who wouldn't, or the thoughtless and dilatory, who, if they did so, took a very long time about it. In spite, therefore, of all his labour and assiduity, the actual amount he received from his practice fell short of his yearly expenditure, which obliged him to dip into his small independent property, consisting of a few houses in an obscure part of the town; which, as he became every year more heavily involved, he was erelong compelled to mortgage so deeply, that what between some of his tenants running away without paying their rent, the costs of repairs, and money to be paid for interest, a very small portion of the annual proceeds ever reached Job's pockets; and at last, to complete the whole, a virulent fever broke out in the very midst of this precious property, of so obstinate and dangerous a kind, as for some months to defy the skill of all the medical men of the place, nearly depopulating the whole neighbourhood, which in consequence became all but deserted.

Just at this critical time poor Job Vivian received a notice from his mortgagee—a rich old timber merchant, who lived and carried on his business in the same town with him—to pay off his mortgage; which he being unable to do, or to obtain any body to advance the required amount on the security of property which had then become so depreciated in value, the sordid worshipper of mammon, though rolling in wealth, and not spending one-tenth part of his income, and with neither wife nor children to provide for, nor a soul on earth he cared a straw for, was resolved, as he was technically pleased to term it, to sell up the doctor forthwith; to accomplish which he commenced an action of ejectment to recover the possession of the premises, though Job had voluntarily offered to give them up to him, and also an action of covenant for non-payment of the mortgage money, whilst at the same time he filed his bill in Chancery to foreclose the mortgage; which combined forces, legal and equitable, proved so awful a floorer to a sinking man, that, in order to get clear of them, he was glad at the very outset, not only to give up all claim to the property, but even to consent to pay £100 out of his own pocket for the costs said to have been

incurred in thus depriving him of his possessions.

These costs proved an unceasing millstone about the unfortunate doctor's neck. In order to pay them, he had been obliged to leave more just demands undischarged; and thus he became involved in difficulties he strove in vain to extricate himself from. Yet in spite of all this, Job and his good little wife were a far happier couple than most of their richer neighbours. The constant hope that things would soon begin to take a more prosperous turn, reconciled them to their present perplexities; there was but one drawback they considered to render their bliss complete; and Job used to say, that he had never met with an instance of a man who hadn't a drawback to perfect happiness in some shape or other and that, take it for all in all, they had, thank God, a pretty fair allowance of the world's comforts.

"So we have, my dear Job," said his pretty little wife Jessie, in reply to a remark of this kind he had been just then making—"and only think how far happier we are than most of the people around us. Only think of Mr Belasco, who, with all his money and fine estates, is so unhappy, that his family are in constant dread of his destroying himself."

"And poor Sir Charles Deacon," interposed Job, "a man so devotedly fond of good eating and drinking as he is, and yet to be compelled to live on less than even workhouse allowance for fear of the gout—and then that silly Lord Muddeford, who's fretting himself to death because ministers wouldn't make him an earl—Mrs Bundy, with her two thousand a-year, making herself miserable because the Grandisons, and my Lord and Lady Muddeford, and one or two others of the grand folks, every one of whom she dislikes, won't visit her. Then the squire at Mortland is troubled with a son that no gentleman will be seen speaking to; and the rich rector of"——Job nodded his head, but didn't say where—"has a tipsy-getting wife—and poor Squire Taylor's wife stark mad—Mr Gribbs also, with his fine unencumbered property, has two idiot children, and another deaf and dumb, and the other—the only sane child he has, is little better than a fool. Then the Hoblers are rendered miserable by the disobedience and misconduct of their worthless children; and the Dobsons are making themselves wretched because they've no such creatures to trouble themselves about. The only man of property I can name in the whole country round who seems free from care, is our fox-hunting squire at Abbot's Beacon, who really does enter into the life of the sport, has plenty of money to carry it on with, and has besides one of the nicest places I think I ever saw."

"But then," interposed Job's better half, "his wife, every body says, doesn't care a fig for him."

"Then a fig for all his happiness," said Job; "I wouldn't change places with him for ten thousand times ten thousand his wealth and possessions, and a dukedom thrown into the bargain;" and Job told the truth too, and kissed his wife by way of confirmation; for he couldn't help it for the very life of him, Job couldn't.

"And then only to consider," said Mrs Job Vivian, as she smilingly adjusted her hair—and very nice hair she had, and kept it very nicely too, though her goodman had just then tumbled it pretty considerably—"only think what two lovely children we have; every one who sees them is struck with their remarkable beauty." This was perfectly true, by the way, notwithstanding the observation proceeded from a mother's lips.

"And so good, too, my dear Jessie," continued Job; "I wonder," he proudly said, "if any father in the land, besides myself, can truly boast of children who have had the use of their tongues so long, and who yet, amidst all their chattering and prattling, have never told a falsehood—so that, amidst all the cares that Providence has been pleased to allot us, we never can be thankful enough for the actual blessings we enjoy."

"We never can, indeed," said Jessie. And thus, in thankfulness for the actual comforts they possessed, they forgot all the troubles that surrounded them, and, happily, were ignorant of how heavily they would soon begin to press upon them.

And now, we must state here, that, although generally unfortunate in his worldly undertakings, a young colt, which the young doctor had himself reared, seemed to form an exception to the almost general rule, for he turned out a most splendid horse; and as his owner's patients were distributed far and wide over a country in which an excellent pack of hounds was kept; and Job himself, not only fond of the sport, but also a good rider, who could get with skill and judgment across a country, his colt, even at four years' old, became the first-rate hunter of the neighbourhood; so much so, indeed, that a rich country squire one day—and that at the very close of the hunting season—witnessing his gallant exploits in the field, was so pleased with the horse, that he offered Job £150 for him.

Now, Job thought his limited circumstances would never justify his riding a horse worth £150; yet he was so much attached to the animal he had reared, that, greatly as he then wanted money, he felt grieved at the idea of parting with him, and, at the instant of the offer, he could not in fact make up his mind to do. Promising, therefore, to give an answer in the course of a day or two, he returned home, by no means a happier man in the consciousness of the increased value of his steed; nor could he muster sufficient courage to tell his wife, who was almost as fond of the horse as he himself was, of the liberal price that had been offered for him. But the comfortable way in which Jessie had gotten every thing ready for him against his return, dispelled a great portion of his sadness; and her cheerful looks and conversation, added to the pleasing pranks of his little children, had all but chased away the remainder, when he received a summons to attend a sick patient, living at least three miles away, in the country.

"This really is very provoking," said Job; "and the worst part of the business is, that I can do no good whatever—the poor creature is too far gone in consumption for the skill of the whole faculty put together to save her life; and, bless me, my poor Selim has not only carried me miles and miles over the road to-day, but, like an inconsiderate blockhead, I must gallop him after the hounds, across the country. But there, I suppose, I must go; I ought not to stay away from doing an act of charity, because I am certain not to be paid, or perhaps even thanked for my pains. Had it been a rich patient, I should have started readily enough, and so I will now for my poor one. But as Selim has had something more than a fair day's work of it, I must even make a walk of it, and be thankful I've such a good pair of legs to carry me." [Pg 326]

Job had a very good pair of legs, and the consciousness of this gave him very great satisfaction; and so, having talked himself into a good humour, and into the mind for his work, and fearing lest pondering too long over the matter might induce him to change his resolution, he caught up his hat, and at once prepared to make a start of it; but, in his haste, he tripped over two or three steps of the stair, and falling down the remainder, sprained his ankle so badly, as to render his walking impracticable. Determined, however, not to abandon a duty he had made up his mind to perform, and having no other horse at his command, Selim was again saddled, who, even with only an hour's rest and grooming, looked nearly as fresh as if he had not been out of his stable for the day. Never was a man more pleased with a horse than Job was with the noble animal he then bestrode, and deeply did he regret the urgent necessity which compelled him to part with him. "Had it not been for that old miserly fellow in there, I might still have kept my poor Selim," said Job to himself, as he rode by a large mansion at the verge of the town; "that £100," continued Job, "he obliged me to pay him or his attorney, for taking away the remnant of my little property, is the cause of those very embarrassments which compel me to sell this dear good horse of mine."

Just as he had so said, an incident occurred which stopped his further remarks; but, before we mention what this incident was, we must state what was occurring within this said house at the time Job was in the act of riding past it.

The proprietor and occupant of this mansion—one of the best in the place—was, as our readers may have already suspected, the selfsame old timber merchant who had dealt so hardly with our friend Job, by taking advantage of a temporary depreciation in the value of his mortgaged property to acquire the absolute ownership—well knowing, that, in a very short time, the premises would fetch at least three times the amount of what he had advanced upon them; in fact, he sold them for more than four times that sum in less than six months afterwards: but that is not the matter we have now to deal with. We must therefore introduce our readers into one of the front rooms of this mansion, in which its master, (an elderly person, with the love of money—Satan's sure mark—deeply stamped upon his ungainly countenance,) was closeted with his attorney; the latter of whom was in the act of taking the necessary instructions for making the rich man's will—a kind of job the intended testator by no means relished, and which no power on earth, save the intense hatred he bore to the persons upon whom his property would otherwise devolve, could have forced him to take in hand.

"'Tis a bitter thing, Mr Grapple," said the monied man, addressing himself to the attorney, "a bitter thing to give away what one's been the best part of one's life trying to get together; and not only to receive nothing in return, but even to have to pay a lawyer for taking it away."

"But I'm sure, my good friend, you'll hardly begrudge my two guineas for this," observed the lawyer—"only think what a capital business I made in getting you into all Job Vivian's property."

"Well, but you got a hundred pounds for your trouble, didn't you?" observed the timber-merchant impatiently.

"Yes, my dear sir; but none of that came out of your own pocket," interposed the attorney.

"And didn't you promise nothing ever should?" rejoined the old man; "but never mind—business is business—and, when upon business, stick to the business you're on, that's my rule; so now to proceed—but mind, I say, them two guineas includes the paper." [Pg 327]

"Oh yes, paper of course!" replied the man of law, "and nothing to pay for stamps; and this will enable you to dispose of every penny of your money; and, my dear sir, consider—only for one moment consider your charities—how they'll make all the folks stare some day or other!"

"Ay, ay, you're right," said the client, a faint smile for the first time that day enlivening his iron features. "Folks will stare indeed; and, besides, 'tis well know'd—indeed the Scripturs says, that charity do cover a multitude of sins."

"To be sure they do; and then only think of the name you'll leave behind to be handed down to posterity. Such munificent bequests nobody hereabouts ever heard of before."

"There's a satisfaction in all you say, I confess," observed the intended donor of all these good gifts; "and who can then say I wasn't the man to consider the wants of the poor? I always did consider the poor." So he did, an old scoundrel, and much misery the unhappy creatures endured in consequence.

"And then," resumed Mr Grapple, "only consider again the tablets in which all your pious bequests will be stuck up in letters of gold, just under the church organ, where they will be read and wondered at, not only by all the townsfolk for hundreds of years to come, but also by all the strangers that pass through and come to look at the church."

"Very satisfactory that—very!" said the intended testator; "but are you still sure I can't give my land as well as my money in charities?"

"Only by deed indented, and enrolled within six months after execution, and to take effect immediately," replied the attorney.

"By which you mean, I suppose, that I must give it out and out, slap bang all at once, and pass it right away in the same way as if I sold it outright?"

Lawyer Grapple replied in the affirmative; at which information his client got very red in the face, and exclaimed, with considerable warmth—"Before I do that, I'd see all the charities in ——" he didn't say where; and, checking himself suddenly, continued, in a milder tone—"That is, I could hardly be expected to make so great a sacrifice as that in my lifetime; so, as I can't dispose of my lands in the way I wish, I'll tie 'em up from being made away with as long as I can: for having neither wife, chick, nor child, nor any one living soul as I care a single farthing about, it's no pleasure to me to leave it to any body; but howsomever, as relations is in some shape, as the saying is, after a manner a part of one's own self, I suppose I'd better leave it to one of they."

"Your nephew who resides in Mortimer Street, is, I believe, your heir-at-law?" suggested Mr Grapple.

"He be blowed!" retorted the timber-merchant, petulantly; "he gave me the cut t'other day in Lunnun streets, for which I cuts he off with a shilling. Me make he my heir!—see he doubly hanged first, and wouldn't do it then."

The attorney next mentioned another nephew, who had been a major in the East India Company's service, and was then resident at Southampton.

"He!" vociferated the uncle, "a proud blockhead; I heerd of his goings on. He, the son of a hack writer in a lawyer's office! he to be the one, of all others, to be proposing that all the lawyers and doctors should be excluded from the public balls! I've a-heerd of his goings on. He have my property! Why, he'd blush to own who gid it to him. He have it! No; I'd rather an earthquake swallowed up every acre of it, before a shovel-full should come to his share."

"Then your other nephew at Exeter?" observed the attorney.

"Dead and buried, and so purvided for," said the timber-merchant.

"I beg your pardon, sir—I had for the moment forgotten that circumstance; but there's his brother, Mr Montague Potts Beverley, of Burton Crescent?"

"Wuss and wuss," interrupted the testy old man. "Me give any thing to an ungrateful dog like that? Why, I actelly lent he money on nothing but personal security, to set him up in business; and the devil of a ha-penny could I ever screw out of him beyond principal and legal interest at five per cent; and, now he's made his forten, he's ashamed of the name that made it for him—a mean-spirited, henpecked booby, that cast his name to the dogs to please a silly wife's vanity. He have my property! I rather calculate not! And so, having disposed of all they, I think I'll leave my estates to some of brother Thomas's sons. Now, Grapple, mind me; this is how I'll have it go. In the first place, intail it on my nephew Thomas, that's the tailor in Regent Street, who, they says, is worth some thousands already; so what I intends to give him, will come in nicely;—failing he and his issue, then intail it on Bill—you knows Bill—he comes here sometimes—travels for a house in the button line;—failing he and his issue, then upon Bob the letenant in the navy; he's at sea now, though I be hanged if I know the name of the ship he belongs to."

Mr Grapple observed that this was unimportant, and then asked if he should insert the names of any other persons.

"I don't know, really, or very much care whether you does or not," replied the timber-merchant. "My late brother Charles," he continued, "left three sons; but what's become of they all, or whether they be dead or alive, any of them, I can hardly tell, nor does it very much signify; for they were a set of extravagant, low-lived, drunken fellows, every one of them, and not very likely to mend either."

"Then, perhaps you'd rather your heirs at-law should take?" remarked the attorney.

"No, I'll be hanged if I should!" answered the vender of deals and mahogany; "so put in all brother Charles's sons, one after t'other, in the same manner as they before—let me see, what's their names? Oh, George first, then Robert, and then Richard, and that's the whole of they."

"I believe, sir," said the attorney, "before I can do so, I must beg the favour of a candle, for it's growing so dark I am unable to see what I write."

"Then come nigher to the winder," said the testator, pushing forward the table in that direction —"Hallo!" he exclaimed, "what can all this yer row and bustle be about outside?"—and, looking into the street, he discovered poor Selim lying prostrate in the middle of the road, from whence some persons were raising up Job himself, who was stunned and bleeding from the violence of his fall. A young lad had accidentally driven his hoop between the horse's legs, which threw the unlucky animal with such violence to the ground as to fracture one of its fore-legs, and inflict several other dreadful injuries, far beyond all power or hope of cure. But the man of wealth contemplated the passing scene with that species of complacent satisfaction, with which men like-minded with himself are ever found to regard the misfortunes of others, when they

themselves can by no possibility be prejudiced thereby. This selfish old villain, therefore, instead of evincing any sympathy, was highly amused at what was going on, and every now and then passed some remark or other indicative of those feelings, of which the following, amongst others, afford a pretty fair specimen:—

"Well," he said, "pride they say must have a fall, and a fine fall we've had here to be sure. Well, who'd a-thought it? But what I say is, that for a man that can't pay his way as he goes—and his twenty shillings in the pound whenever he's called upon for it—what I mean to say is, if a fellow like he will ride so fine a horse, why, it serves him parfectly right if he gets his neck broke. Oh, then, I see your neck ar'n't broke this time, after all! Getting better, b'aint you?—pity, isn't it? Oh dear! what can the matter be? I'll be hanged if he isn't a-crying like a babbey that's broke his pretty toy. Ay, my master, cry your eyes out, stamp and whop your head—'twont mend matters, I promise ye. Clear case of total loss, and no insurance to look to, eh! And that's the chap as had the himpudence but t'other day to call me a hard-hearted old blackguard, and that before our whole board of guardians, too—just because I proposed doctoring the paupers by tender, and that the lowest tender should carry the day—a plan that would hactelly have saved the parish pounds and pounds; and he—that blubbering fellow there—hactelly, as I was a-saying, called me a hard-hearted old blackguard for proposing it. Oh! I see; here comes Timson the butcher, what next then? Oh! just as I expected—it's a done job with my nag, I see. Steady, John Donnithorne, and hold down his head. Come, Timson, my good man—come, bear a hand, and whip the knife into the throat of un—skilfully done, wasn't it, doctor? Oh dear! can't bear the sight; too much for the doctor's nerves. Ay—well, that's a good one—that's right; turn away your head and pipe your eye, my dear, I dare say it will do ye good. It does me, I know—he! he! he! Hallo! what have we here—is it a horse or is it a jackass? Well, I'm sure here's a come-down with a vengeance—a broken-knee'd, spavined jade of a pony, that's hardly fit for carrion. Oh! it's yours, Master Sweep, I s'pose. Ay, that's the kind of nag the doctor ought to ride; clap on the saddle, my boys—that's your sort; just as it should be. No, you can't look that way, can't ye? Well, then, mount and be off with ye—that's right; off you goes, and if you gets back again without a shy-off, it's a pity." And the hard-hearted old sinner laughed to that degree, that the tears ran down in streams over his deeply-furrowed countenance.

Chapter IX.

The two years that followed Job's untoward accident, instead of mending his fortunes, had only added to his embarrassments—all owing to his being just a hundred pounds behind the mark, which, as he often said, the price he could have obtained for poor Selim would have effectually prevented. His circumstances daily grew worse and worse, and at last became so desperate, that this patient and amiable couple were almost driven to their wits' end. Creditors, becoming impatient, at last resorted to legal remedies to recover their demands, until all his furniture was taken possession of under judicial process, which, being insufficient to discharge one half the debts for which judgments had been signed against him, he had no better prospect before his eyes than exchanging the bare walls of his present abode for the still more gloomy confines of a debtor's prison.

He had striven hard, but in vain, to bear all these trials with fortitude; and even poor Jessie—she who had hitherto never repined at the hardness of her lot, and who, to cheer her husband's drooping spirits, had worn a cheerful smile upon her countenance, whilst a load of sorrow pressed heavily upon her heart—even she now looked pale and sad, as with an anxious eye she stood by and watched poor Job, leaning with his back against the wall in an up-stairs room, now devoid of every article of furniture. And there he had been for hours, completely overcome by the accumulation of woes he saw no loophole to escape from; whilst his two little girls, terrified at the desolate appearance of every thing around them, and at the unusual agitation of their parents, were crouched together in a corner, fast grasped together, as if for mutual protection, in each other's arms.

Not a morsel of food had that day passed the lips of any member of that unhappy family, and every moveable belonging to the house had been taken away at an early hour in the morning; so that nothing but the bare walls were left for shelter, and hard boards for them to lie upon. Often had poor Jessie essayed to speak some words of comfort to her husband's ear; but even these, which had never before failed, were no longer at her command; for when some cheering thought suggested itself, a choking sensation in her throat deprived her of the power of uttering it. At length a loud single rap at the street door caused Job to start, whilst a hectic flush passed over his pale cheek, and a violent tremor shook his frame, as the dread thought of a prison occurred to him.

"Don't be alarmed, my dearest," said his wife, "it's only some people with something or other to sell; I dare say they'll go away again when they find that no one answers the door."

"It's a beggar," said one of the children, who, hearing the sound, had looked out of the window; "poor man, he looks miserably cold! I wish we'd something to give him."

"Beggar, did the child say?" demanded Job, gazing wildly round the room. "Beggar!" he repeated. "And what are we all but beggars? Are we not stripped of every thing? Are we not actually starving for want of the daily bread that I have toiled so hard for, and prayed unceasingly to heaven to afford us; whilst those who never use their Maker's name except in terms of blasphemy, have loads of affluence heaped into their laps. Oh! it's enough to make one doubt"——

"Oh, no, no, no! don't, for the love you bear me—don't utter those awful words!" cried out Jessie, rushing upon her husband, and throwing her arms around his neck. "As you love me, don't repine at the will of heaven, however hard our trials may seem now to bear on us. I can endure all but this. Let us hope still. We have all of us health and strength; and we have many friends who, if they were only aware of the extent of our distress, would be sure to relieve us. There's your good friend Mr Smith, he most probably will return from London to-morrow; and you know, in his letter, he told you to keep up your spirits, for that there was yet good-luck in store for you; and I am sure you must have thought so then, or you never would have returned him the money he so kindly remitted us. So, don't be cast down in almost your first hour of trial; we shall be happy yet—I know we shall; let us then still put our trust in God. Don't answer me, my dear Job—don't answer me; I know how much you are excited, and that you are not now yourself; for my sake, for our dear children's sake, try to be tranquil but for to-night; and let us yet hope that there is some comfort yet in store for us on the morrow."

"I will strive to, my dearest Jessie," he replied. "I'll not add another drop of bitterness to your cup of sorrow, because I am unable to relieve you from it.—But hark! what's this coming, and stopping here too?—what can be the meaning of this?"

Just as he uttered these last words the sound of carriage-wheels was heard rapidly approaching, and a post-chaise drew up in front of the house. Job trembled violently, and leant upon his wife for support, whilst a thundering rap was heard at the door; the children both rushed to the window; and one of them, to the great relief of their parents, exclaimed, "Oh! my dear papa! Mr Smith's come, and he's looking up here smiling so good-naturedly; he looks as if he was just come off a journey, and he's beckoning me to come down and let him in."

"God be praised!" exclaimed Jessie; "I told you, my dear Job, that relief was near at hand, and here it comes in the person of your excellent friend;" and she darted out of the room, and hurried down the stairs to admit the welcome visitor. Jessie soon returned with Mr Smith, a handsome gentlemanly-looking man, who ran forward with extended hands to his disconsolate friend, whom he greeted in so kind a manner, and with a countenance so merry and happy, that the very look of it seemed enough to impart some spirit of consolation even to a breaking heart—at any rate it did to Job's. "My dear fellow!" exclaimed the welcome visitor, "how on earth did you allow things to come to this pass without even hinting any thing of the kind to me? I never heard it till the day I left town. How could you return me the remittance I sent you, which should have been ten times as much had I known the full extent of your wants? But enough of this now; we won't waste time in regrets for the past, and as for the future, leave that to me. I'll soon set things all straight and smooth again for you. And now, my dear Mrs Vivian," added he, addressing himself to Jessie, "do you go and do as you promised."

Jessie smiled assent, and, looking quite happy again, she took her two daughters by the hand and led them out of the room.

"But, my dear Smith," said Job, as soon as the two friends were alone, "you can have no idea how deeply I am involved. I can tax your generosity no further—even what you have already done for me, I can never repay."

"Nor do I intend you ever shall," rejoined the worthy attorney—for such was Mr Smith—"particularly," he added, "as there's a certain debt I owe you, which I neither can nor will repay, and that I candidly tell you."

"Indeed! what do you mean?" asked Job, looking very puzzled; "I'm rather dull of apprehension to-day." And verily he was so, for his troubles had wellnigh driven him mad.

"My life, Job, that's all," replied the attorney; "*that* I owe to you, and can't repay you—and won't either, that's more. Had it not been for your skill," he added in a graver tone, "and the firmness you displayed in resolutely opposing the treatment those two blackguards, Dunderhead and Quackem, wished to adopt in my case, I must have died a most distressing and painful death, and my poor wife and children would have been left perfectly destitute."

The consciousness of the truth of this grateful remark infused a cheering glow to Job's broken spirit, and even raised a faint smile upon his care-worn countenance; which his visitor perceiving, went on to say, "And now, my good doctor, owing you so deep a debt of gratitude as I do, make your mind easy about the past; what you've had from me is a mere trifle. Why, my good fellow, I'm not the poor unhappy dog I was when you told me never to mind when I paid you. I'm now getting on in the world, and shall fancy by and by that I'm getting rich; and, what's more, I expect soon to see my friend Job Vivian in circumstances so much more thriving than my own, that if I didn't know him to be one of the sincerest fellows in the world, and one whom no prosperity could spoil, I should begin to fear he might be ashamed to acknowledge his old acquaintance."

The good-natured attorney had proved more of a Job's comforter in the literal sense of the term, than he had intended; in fact he had overdone it—the picture was too highly coloured to appear natural, and at once threw back poor Job upon a full view of all his troubles, which Mr Smith perceiving, mildly resumed, "I'm not surprised, my good fellow, at your being excited, from the violent shock your feelings must have sustained; but you may rest assured—mind I speak confidently, and will vouch for the truth of what I'm going to say—when I tell you that the worst of your troubles are past, and that, before the week is out, you will be going on all right again; but really you are so much depressed now, that I'm afraid to encourage you too much; for I believe you doctors consider that too sudden a transition from grief to joy often produces

dangerous, and sometimes even fatal, consequences?"

"It's a death I stand in no dread of dying," said Job with a melancholy smile.

"You don't know your danger perhaps," interposed the attorney; "but at the same time you sha'n't die through my means; so, if I had even a berth in store for you that I thought might better your condition, I wouldn't now venture to name it to you."

"It might be almost dangerous," said Job; "any thing that would procure the humblest fare, clothing, and shelter, for myself and family, would confer a degree of happiness far beyond my expectation."

"Why, if you are so easily satisfied," rejoined the attorney, "I think I can venture to say, that these, at least, may be obtained for you forthwith; but come, here's the chaise returned again, which has just taken your good little wife and children to my house, where they're all now expecting us. In fact, I haven't yet crossed my own threshold, for I picked up my old woman as I came along, and she has taken your folks back with her; so come along, Job, we'll talk matters over after dinner—come along, my dear fellow—come along, come along."

Job suffered himself to be led away, hardly knowing what he was about, or what was going on, until he found himself seated in the post-chaise; which, almost before he had time to collect his scattered ideas, drew up at the attorney's door. Here he met his Jessie, her handsome and expressive countenance again radiant with smiles; for in that short interval she had heard enough to satisfy her mind that better times were approaching, and her only remaining anxiety was on poor Job's account, who seemed so stunned by the heavy blow of misfortune, as to appear more like one wandering in a dream than a man in his right senses. But a change of scene, and that the pleasing one of a comfortable family dinner, with sincere friends, effected a wonderful alteration; and the ladies withdrawing early, in order that the gentlemen might talk over their business together, Mr Smith at once entered into the subject, by telling Job that he thought he could, as he had before hinted, put him into a way of bettering his condition.

"I trust you may be able to do so," replied Job; "I'm sure there's no labour I would shrink from, could I attain so desirable an object."

"But you mistake me there," interrupted the attorney; "I don't mean to better your condition by making you work yourself to death—far from it; your labours shall be but light, and your time pretty much at your command; but you'll want, perhaps, a little money to begin with."

"And where, in the world, am I to procure it?" asked Job.

"You might raise it upon the interest you take in the landed property under the old timber-merchant's will," observed the attorney.

"You can hardly be serious, my dear Smith," replied Job; "why, the old fellow—God forgive him as freely as I do—merely put in my name with a bequest of a shilling, to bring me better luck, as a poor insult upon my misfortunes. And as to his mentioning my name in connexion with his landed property, which I was to take after the failure of issue of at least half a dozen other people—you yourself told me was only put in to show his nearest heirs, that rather than his property should descend upon them, they should go to the person—Heaven help the man!—he was pleased to call his greatest enemy, and that my chance of ever succeeding to the property wasn't worth twopence."

"Whatever his motive was is immaterial now," interposed Mr Smith; "and since I expressed the opinion you allude to, so many of the previous takers have died off, that I have no hesitation in saying that your interest is worth money now, and that, if you wished it, I could insure you a purchaser."

"Oh, then, sell it by all means!" exclaimed Job.

"Not quite so fast, my friend," answered the attorney; "before you think of selling, would it not be prudent to ascertain the value, which depends in a great measure on the number of preceding estates that have determined since the testator's decease."

"Of course it must," rejoined Job; "but any thing I could obtain from that quarter I should esteem a gain. I've lost enough from it in all conscience; in fact, the old man's harsh proceedings towards me were the foundation of all my subsequent difficulties. The old fellow did, indeed, boast to the clergyman who visited him in his last illness, that he had made me ample amends in his will for any injustice he might have done me in his lifetime, and that his mind was quite easy upon that score; and I'm sure mine will be, when I find that I actually can gain something by him."

"Then listen to me patiently, and I'll tell you just what you'll gain; but first help yourself, and pass me the wine. You'll gain a larger amount than you would guess at, if you were to try for a week. Much more than sufficient to pay every one of your creditors their full twenty shillings in the pound."

"Will it indeed?" exclaimed Job; "then may God forgive me as one of the most ungrateful of sinners, who had almost begun to think that the Almighty had deserted him."

"Forgive you, to be sure," said the kind-hearted lawyer; "why, even your holy namesake, the very pattern of patient resignation, would grumble a bit now and then, when his troubles pinched him in a particularly sore place. So take another glass whilst I proceed with our subject: and so you

see, doctor, your debts are paid—that's settled. Hold your tongue, Job; don't interrupt me, and drink your wine; that's good port, isn't it? the best thing in the world for your complaint. Well, then, all this may be done without selling your chance outright; and in case you should want to do so, lest you should part with it too cheaply, we'll just see how many of the preceding estates have already determined. First, the testator himself must be disposed of; he died, as we all know, and nobody sorry, within six weeks after he had made his will. Then the tailor in Regent Street, he had scarcely succeeded to the property when he suddenly dropped down dead in his own shop. His son and heir, and only child, before he had enjoyed the property six months, wishing to acquire some fashionable notoriety, purposely got into a quarrel with a profligate young nobleman well known about town, who killed him in a duel the next morning. The traveller in the button line, on whom the property next devolved, was in a bad state of health when he succeeded to it, and died a bachelor about three months since; and his brother, the lieutenant, who was also unmarried, had died of a fever on the coast of Africa some time before; so that you see your chance seems to be bettered at least one half, in the course of little more than a couple of twelvemonths."

"So it has, indeed," said Job; "but who, with the other three remainder men, as you call them, and their issue in the way, would give any thing for my poor chance?"

"But suppose," resumed Mr Smith, "the other three should happen to die, and leave no issue."

"That's a species of luck not very likely to fall to my lot," replied Job.

"Then I must at once convince you of your error," rejoined Mr Smith; "and, so to cut short what I've been making a very long story of—the remaining three of the testator's nephews, upon whom the property was settled, not one of whom was ever married, got drunk together at a white-bait dinner at Greenwich, which their elder brother gave to celebrate his accession to the property, and, returning towards town in that state in a wherry, they managed between them to upset the boat, and were all drowned. That I've ascertained—such, in fact, being my sole business in town; and now, my dear Job, let me congratulate you on being the proprietor of at least five thousand a-year."

And so he was!

"And thus you see," said the squire, in whose own words we conclude the tale—"the being dispossessed of his houses, and the loss of his valuable horse, to which he attributed all his misfortunes, in the end proved the source of his greatest gain; and now, throughout the whole length and breadth of the land, I don't think you'll find two persons better satisfied with their lot than Job and his little wife Jessie, notwithstanding the timber-merchant made it a condition, that if Job Vivian should ever succeed to his property, he should take the testator's surname of Potts—not a pretty one, I confess—and thus Job Vivian, surgeon, apothecary, &c., has become metamorphosed into the Job Vivian Potts, Esquire, who has now the honour to address you. His worthy friend, Smith—now, alas! no more—who, like my self, was induced to change his name, was Mr Vernon Wycherley's father. I told you, my dear sir, before, how valued a friend your late father was of mine, and how much I stood indebted to him; but this is the first time I have made you acquainted with any of the particulars, and now I fear I've tired you with my tedious narration."

"Indeed you have not!" exclaimed both the young men, whilst Vernon added, that he only regretted not knowing who the parties were during the progress of the tale, which, had he done, he should have listened to it with redoubled interest; for who amongst the thousands of Smiths dispersed about the land, though he had once a father of the name, could be expected to recognise him as part hero of a tale he had never heard him allude to; "but pray tell me," he added, "about the poor girl you went to see at the time the accident occurred to your horse? Did she ever recover?"

"No," replied the squire, "she died within a few days afterwards. In fact, as I believe I before stated, I knew she was past all hope of recovery at the time I set off to visit her."

"And the little broken-knee'd and spavined pony you were compelled to borrow—do pray tell us how he carried you?" interposed Frank, looking as demure and innocent as possible.

"Badly, very badly, indeed!" replied the squire; "for the sorry brute stumbled at nearly every third step, and at last tumbling down in real earnest, threw me sprawling headlong into the mud; and then favoured me with a sight of his heels, with the prospect of a couple of miles before me to hobble home through the rain."

Chapter X.

Frank Trevelyan, one morning on opening his eyes, was surprised to discover his friend, Mr Vernon Wycherley, (whose lameness was by this time sufficiently amended to permit him to move about with the aid of a stick,) sitting half dressed by his bedside—a very cool attire for so chill a morning, and looking very cold and miserable.

"Hallo! old fellow, what on earth brought you here at this time of day?" asked Frank. "The first morning visit, I believe, you've honoured me with since we took up our quarters in this neighbourhood."

"I'm very wretched," said the poet in a faltering tone—"very unhappy."

"Unhappy!" reiterated Frank; "why, what on earth have you to make you so, unless it be the apprehension that you may jump out of your skin for joy at your splendid prospects! Unhappy indeed!—the notion's too absurd to obtain a moment's credit."

"Can a man suffering under a hopeless attachment for an object too pure almost to tread the earth—can a man, whose affections are set upon an unattainable object, be otherwise than unhappy?" asked Vernon in a solemn tone, no bad imitation of Macready; indeed the speaker, whilst uttering these sentiments, thought it sounded very like it; for he had often seen that eminent tragedian, and greatly admired his style of acting.

"But how have you ascertained that the object is so unattainable?" demanded Frank. "Come now—have you ever yet asked the young lady the question?"

"Asked her!" repeated Vernon, perfectly amazed that his friend could have supposed such a thing possible—"How could I presume that so angelic a creature would love such a fellow as me—or, even supposing such a thing were possible, what would our good friend the squire say to my ingratitude for his great kindness; and to my presumption—a mere younger son without a profession, and scarcely a hundred pounds a-year to call his own, to think of proposing to one of his daughters, who would be an honour to the noblest and richest peer of the realm?"

"Well, well, Vernon—one thing first—and you shall have my answers to all. First, then, as to the fair lady liking you—that I must say, judging from your looks, is what no one would have thought a very probable circumstance; but then your poetical talents must be taken into calculation."

"Oh, don't mention them!" said Vernon. "Worse than good-for-nothing. *She* esteems such talents very lightly, and I shall even lose the small solace to my sorrows I had hoped they would have afforded me. Even this sad consolation is denied me. My Mary is indifferent to poetry—she holds sonnets upon hopeless love in utter contempt—entertains no higher opinion of the writers of them—and considers publishing any thing of the kind as a downright ungentlemanly act; bringing, as she says it does, a lady's name before the public in the most indelicate and unwarrantable manner."

"But is she really serious in these sentiments?" asked Frank. Oh, Frank, Frank, you're a sad fellow to pump and roast your friend in this way!

"Serious," repeated Vernon, and looking very so himself, "serious—ah! indeed she is—and expressed herself with more warmth upon the subject than I could have supposed a being so mild and amiable was capable of."

"But how came all this?" asked Frank—"what were you talking about that could have caused her to make these remarks?" and this he said in a very grave and quiet tone of voice, trying to entrap his poetic friend into telling him much more than the latter was inclined to do, who, therefore, declined entering more fully into the subject.

"Then, if you won't tell me, I have still the privilege of guessing," rejoined Frank; "and now I've found you out, Master Vernon; you've been attempting acrostics after the Petrarch style[15]—a style in which she didn't approve of being held forth to the admiring notice of the present and future generations. Vernon blushed to the very tips of his fingers, and averted his head that his friend might not perceive how very foolish he was looking, whilst the latter continued—"Very pretty stanzas, I've no doubt. How nice they would have come out in a neat little 12mo, price 2s. 6d., boards. Let me see—M—O—L, Mol—that's three; L—Y, ly—two more, makes Molly; and three and two make five. P—O double T—S, Potts—that's five more, and five and five make ten. But then that's a couple of letters too many. Petrarch's Lauretta, you know, only made eight. Yet, after all, if you liked it, you might leave out the Y and the S at the end of each name, without at all exceeding the usual poetical license. Let me see, M—O double L, Moll; P—O double T, Pott—Moll Pott; or you might retain the Y and leave out the last T—S—or you might"—

Vernon could bear no more; and having risen abruptly with the intention of making a bolt of it, was in the act of hobbling out of the room as fast as his lameness would allow him, when Frank entreated him to stay but one minute; promising to spare his jokes, for that he really wished to speak seriously with him; and, having succeeded in pacifying the enraged poet, proceeded to ask him what he actually intended doing.

"To leave this either to-day or to-morrow," replied Vernon in a tremulous voice, and with a quivering lip.

"But not without breaking your mind to your lady love?"

"Why, alas! should I do so—why pain her by confessing to her my unhappy attachment, which I know it is hopeless to expect her to return."

"I'll be hanged," said Frank, "if I think you know any thing at all about the matter."

"Not know, indeed! How, alas! could any one suppose that an angelic creature like her could love me?"

"Not many, I grant; but then, as old Captain Growler used to say—never be astonished at any thing a woman does in that way—

'Pan may win where Phœbus woos in vain.'

And so the lovely Miss Moll—I beg your pardon, Mary, I mean—may in like manner, do so differently from what any one could have suspected, as to be induced at last to listen to her Vernon's tale of love."

The lover here alluded to hardly knew whether to treat the matter as a joke or to get very angry; and so he did neither, whilst Frank went on—"I'm sure you needn't despair either, as far as looks go. There's pretty, smiling, little Bessie—in my opinion the prettiest girl of the two"—Vernon shook his head with mournful impatience—"Well, you think yours prettiest, and I'll think mine," continued Frank; "that's just as it should be; and as I was about to say, if the lovely Bessie can smile upon your humble servant when he talked of love, I don't see why her sister might not be induced to smile upon his companion if he did the like."

"How! what? Why, you surely don't mean to say that you've told Miss Bessie that you love her?"

"Yes, I do," replied Frank. "I told her so yesterday afternoon as we walked home from church, behind the rest of the party, across the fields. Thought I wouldn't do it then either, as there were so many people about—never said a word about the matter over two fields—helped her over the stiles, too, and talked—no, I be hanged if I think we said a word, either of us—till as I was helping her to jump down the third, out it bounced, all of a sudden."

"And what did you say?" asked Wycherley.

"Catch a weasel asleep, Mr Vernon," was Frank's reply.

"But the squire, how will you manage with him, do you suppose?"

"Managed with him already," replied Frank; "settled every thing last night over a glass of port, after you'd bundled your lazy carcass off to bed. That is, one glass didn't quite complete the business, for it took two or three to get my courage up to concert pitch. Then another or two to discuss the matter—and then a bumper to drink success—and then another glass"—

"Another!" interrupted Vernon; "why, you little drunken rascal, what pretext could you have for that?"

"I've a great mind not to tell you for your rude question," resumed Frank laughing; "but never mind, old fellow, you've borne a great deal from me before now, and there's probably more in store for you yet; so without further preamble I'll at once answer your question, by informing you that the pretext for my last glass was to wet a dry discourse about the affairs of one Mr Vernon Wycherley. Now, hold your tongue, and don't interrupt me, or swallow me either, which you appear to be meditating. And so the squire asked me if I had known him long, and about his principles, religious and moral; his worldly prospects, and so forth. To all of which I replied by stating, that, with the exception of being addicted to flirting a little with the Muses, which old women might consider as only one step removed from absolute profligacy, he was a well-disposed young man, and would doubtless grow wiser as he increased in years; but that his fortune was very limited, and that all his expectations in that way wouldn't fill a nutshell."

"Ah, there's the rub!" interposed Vernon; "how can a poor fellow with my small pittance pretend to aspire to the hand of one with such splendid expectations? My poverty, as I've long foreseen, must mar my every hope, even if every other obstacle could be removed."

"I don't see that exactly," rejoined Frank; "for, when I told the squire what your circumstances actually were, and that you had managed to live creditably upon your small income without getting into debt, he said, if your head wasn't crammed so confoundedly full of poetical nonsense, which set you always hunting after shadows, instead of grasping substances, he should be exceedingly rejoiced to have you for a son-in-law. So, if you could make up your mind to relinquish your love for writing poetry"—

"The poetry be hanged!" interrupted Vernon with considerable vehemence. "I'll cast it to the dogs—the winds—send it to Halifax, Jericho, any where. Oh! my dear Frank, what a happy fellow you've made me!"

"Which just finished the bottle," continued Frank; "and I find that somehow or other I've got a precious headach this morning. I wonder how the squire feels to-day. Will you Vernon, that's a good fellow, give me a glass of water?"

"There's nothing on earth I wouldn't give you now, my dear Frank, except my dear Mary; but do you think she will ever consent?"

"Yes, to be sure she will," answered Frank. "I know she will, and that she is by no means best pleased at your hanging fire so long. I know this to be the fact, though I mustn't tell you how, why, or wherefore; but if you don't propose soon she'll consider you are acting neither fairly nor honourably to her."

"I'll do the deed to-day," said Vernon resolutely.

And so he did.

A very few months more had passed away, before our two heroes were on the same day united to

the fair objects of their choice; and the generous old squire settled a handsome sum upon them both, sufficient to supply them with all the essential comforts of life.

"And now, friend Frank," said Vernon Wycherley, "I believe, after all, you will make a convert of me; for I find that the attachment I had indulged in, until despair of obtaining the loved object made me fancy myself the most miserable wretch alive, and that I had incurred the worst evil that could have befallen me, has made me the happiest of mankind, and has indeed turned out to be ALL FOR THE BEST; nor can I think of my blundering fall into the lead shaft in any other light; as, but for that accident, I should probably never have formed the acquaintance to which I owe all my good fortune."

"Then, for the future," said the worthy squire, "let us put all our trust in Heaven, and rest assured that whatever may be the will of Providence, IT'S ALL FOR THE BEST."

THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA.

There is no district in Europe which is more remarkable, or has more strongly impressed the minds of men in modern times, than the Roman Campagna. Independent of the indelible associations with which it is connected, and the glorious deeds of which it has been the theatre, its appearance produces an extraordinary impression on the mind of the beholder. All is silent; the earth seems struck with sterility—desolation reigns in every direction. A space extending from Otricoli to Terracina, above sixty miles in length, and on an average twenty in breadth, between the Apennines and the sea, containing nearly four thousand square miles, in the finest part of Italy, does not maintain a single peasant.[16] A few tombs lining the great roads which issued from the forum of Rome to penetrate to the remotest parts of their immense empire; the gigantic remains of aqueducts striding across the plain, which once brought, and some of which still bring, the pellucid fountains of the Apennines to the Eternal City, alone attest the former presence of man. Nothing bespeaks his present existence. Not a field is ploughed, not a blade of corn grows, hardly a house is to be seen, in this immense and dreary expanse. On entering it, you feel as if you were suddenly transported from the garden of Europe to the wilds of Tartary. Shepherds armed with long lances, as on the steppes of the Don, and mounted on small and hardy horses, alone are occasionally seen following, or searching in the wilds for the herds of savage buffaloes and cattle which pasture the district. The few living beings to be met with at the post-houses, have the squalid melancholy look which attests permanent wretchedness, and the ravages of an unhealthy atmosphere.

But though the curse of Providence seems to have fallen on the land, so far as the human race is concerned, it is otherwise with the power of physical nature. Vegetation yearly springs up with undiminished vigour. It is undecayed since the days of Cincinnatus and the Sabine farm. Every spring the expanse is covered with a carpet of flowers, which enamel the turf and conceal the earth with a profusion of varied beauty. So rich is the herbage which springs up with the alternate heats and rains of summer, that it becomes in most places rank, and the enormous herds which wander over the expanse are unable to keep it down. In autumn this rich grass becomes russet-brown, and a melancholy hue clothes the slopes which environ the Eternal City. The Alban Mount, when seen from a distance, clothed as it is with forests, vineyards, and villas, resembles a green island rising out of a sombre waste of waters. In the Pontine marshes, where the air is so poisonous in the warm months that it is dangerous, and felt as oppressive even by the passing traveller, the prolific powers of nature are still more remarkable. Vegetation there springs up with the rapidity, and flourishes with the luxuriance, of tropical climates. Tall reeds, in which the buffaloes are hid, in which a rhinoceros might lie concealed, spring up in the numerous pools or deep ditches with which the dreary flat surface is sprinkled. Wild grapes of extraordinary fecundity grow in the woods, and ascend in luxuriant clusters to the tops of the tallest trees. Nearer the sea, a band of noble chestnuts and evergreen oaks attests the riches of the soil, which is capable of producing such magnificent specimens of vegetable life; and over the whole plain the extraordinary richness of the herbage, and luxuriance of the aquatic plants, bespeaks a region which, if subjected to a proper culture and improvement, would, like the Delta of Egypt, reward eighty and an hundred fold the labours of the husbandman.

It was not thus in former times. The Campagna now so desolate, the Pontine marshes now so lonely, were then covered with inhabitants. Veiæ, long the rival of Rome, and which was only taken after a siege as protracted as that of Troy by Camillus at the head of fifty thousand men, stood only ten miles from the Capitol. The Pontine marshes were inhabited by thirty nations. The freehold of Cincinnatus, the Sabine farm, stood in the now desolate plain at the foot of the Alban Mount. So rich were the harvests, so great the agricultural booty to be gathered in the plains around Rome, that for two hundred years after the foundation of the city, it was the great object of their foreign wars to gain possession of it, and on that account they were generally begun in autumn. Montesquieu has observed, that it was the long and desperate wars which the Romans carried on for three centuries with the Sabines, Latines, Veientes, and other people in their neighbourhood, which by slow degrees gave them the hardihood and discipline which enabled them afterwards to subdue the world. The East was an easy conquest, the Gauls themselves could be repelled, Hannibal in the end overcome, after the tribes of Latium had been vanquished. But the district in which the hardy races dwelt, who so long repelled, and maintained a doubtful conflict with the future masters of the world, is now a desert. It could not in its whole extent

furnish men to fill a Roman cohort. Rome has emerged from its long decay after the fall of the Western Empire; the terrors of the Vatican, the shrine of St Peter, have again attracted the world to the Eternal City; and the most august edifice ever raised by the hands of man to the purposes of religion, has been reared within its walls. But the desolate Campagna is still unchanged.

Novelists and romance-writers have for centuries exhausted their imaginative and descriptive powers in developing the feelings which this extraordinary phenomenon, in the midst of the classic land of Italy, awakens. They have spoken of desolation as the fitting shroud of departed greatness; of the mournful feelings which arise on approaching the seat of lost empire; of the shades of the dead alone tenanting the scene of so much glory. Such reflections arise unbidden in the mind; the most unlettered traveller is struck with the melancholy impression. An eloquent Italian has described this striking spectacle:—"A vast solitude, stretching for miles, as far as the eye can reach. No shelter, no resting-place, no defence for the wearied traveller; a dead silence, interrupted only by the sound of the wind which sweeps over the plain, or the trickling of a natural fountain by the wayside; not a cottage nor the curling of smoke to be seen; only here and there a cross on a projecting eminence to mark the spot of a murder; and all this in gentle slopes, dry and fertile plains, and up to the gates of great city."[17] The sight of the long lines of ruined aqueducts traversing the deserted Campagna, of the tombs scattered along the lines of the ancient *chaussées* across its dreary expanse, of the dome of St Peter's alone rising in solitary majesty over its lonely hills, forcibly impress the mind, and produce an impression which no subsequent events or lapse of time are able to efface. At this moment the features of the scene, the impression it produces, are as present to the mind of the writer as when they were first seen thirty years ago.

But striking as these impressions are, the Roman Campagna is fraught with instruction of a more valuable kind. It stands there, not only a monument of the past, but a beacon for the future. It is fraught with instruction, not only to the ancient but the modern world. The most valuable lessons of political wisdom which antiquity has bequeathed to modern times, are to be gathered amidst its solitary ruins.

In investigating the causes of this extraordinary desolation of a district, in ancient times the theatre of such busy industry, and which, for centuries, maintained so great and flourishing a rural population, there are several observations to be made on the principle, as logicians call it, of *exclusion*, in order to clear the ground before the real cause is arrived at.

The first of these is, that the causes, whatever they are, which produced the desolation of the Campagna, had begun to operate, and their blasting effect was felt, in *ancient* times, and long before a single squadron of the barbarians had crossed the Alps. In fact, the Campagna was a scene of active agricultural industry only so long as Rome was contending with its redoubtable Italian neighbours—the Latins, the Etruscans, the Samnites, and the Cisalpine Gauls. From the time that, by the conquest of Carthage, they obtained the mastery of the shore of the Mediterranean, *agriculture* in the neighbourhood of Rome began to decline. Pasturage was found to be a more profitable employment of estates; and the vast supplies of grain, required for the support of the citizens of Rome, were obtained by importation from Lybia and Egypt, where they could be raised at a less expense. "At, Hercule," says Tacitus, "olim ex Italia legionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabantur; *nec nunc infecunditate laboratur: sed Africam potius et Egyptum exercemus, navibusque et casibus vita populi Romani permissa est*."[18] The expense of cultivating grain in a district where provisions and wages were high because money was plentiful, speedily led to the abandonment of tillage in the central parts of Italy, when the unrestrained importation of grain from Egypt and Lybia, where it could be raised at less expense in consequence of the extension of the Roman dominions over those regions, took place. "More lately," says Sismondi, "the gratuitous distributions of grain made to the Roman people, rendered the cultivation of grain in Italy still more unprofitable: it then became absolutely impossible for the little proprietors to maintain themselves in the neighbourhood of Rome; they became insolvent, and their patrimonies were sold to the rich. Gradually the abandonment of agriculture extended from one district to another. The true country of the Romans—central Italy—*had scarcely achieved the conquest of the globe, when it found itself without an agricultural population*. In the provinces peasants were no longer to be found to recruit the legions; as few corn-fields to nourish them. Vast tracts of pasturage, where a few slave shepherds conducted herds of thousands of horned cattle, had supplanted the nations who had brought their greatest triumphs to the Roman people."[19] These great herds of cattle were then, as now, in the hands of a few great proprietors. This was loudly complained of, and signalized as the cancer which would ruin the Roman empire, even so early as the time of Pliny. "Verumque confitentibus," says he, "*latifunda perdidêre Italiam; imo ac provincias*."[20]

All the historians of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, have concurred in ascribing to these two causes—viz. the decay of agriculture and ruin of the agricultural population in Italy, and consequent engrossing of estates in the hands of the rich—the ruin of its mighty dominion. But it is not generally known how wide-spread had been the desolation thus produced; how deep and incurable the wounds inflicted on the vitals of the state—by the simple consequences of its extension, which enabled the grain growers of the distant provinces of the empire to supplant the cultivators of its heart by the unrestricted admission of foreign corn, before the invasion of the northern nations commenced. In fact, however, the evil was done before they appeared on the passes of the Alps; it was the weakness thus brought on the central provinces which rendered them unable to contend with enemies whom they had often, in former times, repelled and subdued. A few quotations from historians of authority, will at once establish this important

proposition.

"*Since the age of Tiberius*," says Gibbon, "the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy; and it was a just subject of complaint, that the laws of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and the waves. In the division and decline of the empire, *the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa* were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished with the means of subsistence; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, pestilence and famine. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer, and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in Emilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated."[21] Again the same accurate author observes in another place—"Under the emperors the agriculture of the Roman provinces was *insensibly ruined*; and the government was obliged to make a merit of remitting tributes which *their subjects were utterly unable to pay*. Within sixty years of the death of Constantine, and on the evidence of an actual survey, an exemption was granted in favour of three hundred and thirty thousand English acres of desert and uncultivated land *in the fertile and happy Campania*, which amounted to an eighth of the whole province. As the footsteps of the barbarians had not yet been seen in Italy, the cause of *this amazing desolation, which is recorded in the laws*,[22] can be ascribed only to the administration of the Roman emperors."[23]

The two things which, beyond all question, occasioned this extraordinary decline of domestic agriculture in Italy before the invasion of the barbarians commenced, were the weight of *direct taxation*, and the *decreasing value of agricultural produce*, owing to the constant importation of grain from Egypt and Lybia, where, owing to the cheapness of labour and the fertility of the soil in those remote provinces, so burdensome did the first become, that Gibbon tells us that, in the time of Constantine, in Gaul it amounted to *nine pounds sterling of gold* on every freeman.[24] The periodical distribution of grain to the populace of Rome, all of which, from its greater cheapness, was brought by the government from Egypt and Africa, utterly extinguished the market for corn to the Italian farmers, though Rome, at its capture by Alaric, still contained 1,200,000 inhabitants. "All the efforts of the Christian emperors," says Michelet, "to arrest the depopulation of the country, were as nugatory as those of their heathen predecessors had been. Sometimes alarmed at the depopulation, they tried to mitigate the lot of the farmer, to shield him against the landlord; upon this the proprietor exclaimed, *he could no longer pay the taxes*. At other times they strove to chain the cultivators to the soil; but they became bankrupts or fled, and the land became deserted. Pertinax granted an immunity of taxes to such *cultivators from distant provinces* as would occupy the deserted lands of Italy. Aurelian did the same. Probus, Maximian, and Constantine, were obliged to transport men and oxen from Germany to cultivate Gaul. But all was in vain. *The desert extended daily.* The people in the fields surrendered themselves in despair, as a beast of burden lies down beneath his load and refuses to rise."[25]

Gibbon has told us what it was which occasioned this constant depopulation of the country, and ruin of agriculture in the Italian provinces. "The Campagna of Rome," says he, "about the close of the sixth century, was reduced to a state of *dreary wilderness*, in which the air was infectious, the land barren, and the waters impure. Yet the number of citizens still exceeded the measure of subsistence; *their precarious food was supplied from the harvests of Lybia and Egypt*; and the frequent recurrence of famine, betrayed the inattention of the emperor at Constantinople to the wants of a distant province."[26] Nor was Italy the only province in the heart of the empire which was ruined by those foreign importations. Greece suffered not less severely under it. "In the latter stages of the empire," says Michelet, "*Greece was supported almost entirely by corn raised in the plains of Poland*."[27]

These passages, to which, did our limits permit, innumerable others to the same purpose might be added, explain the causes of the decay and ultimate ruin of agriculture in the central provinces of the Roman empire, as clearly as if one had arisen from the dead to unfold it. It was the weight of *direct taxation*, and the want of remunerating prices to the *grain cultivators*, which occasioned the evil. The first arose from the experienced impossibility of raising additional taxes on industry by indirect taxation: the unavoidable consequence of the contraction of the currency, owing to the habits of hoarding which the frequent incursions of the barbarians produced; and of the free importation of African grain, which the extension of the empire over its northern provinces, and the clamours of the Roman populace for cheap bread, occasioned. The second arose directly from that importation itself. The Italian cultivator, oppressed with direct taxes, and tilling a comparatively churlish soil, found himself utterly unable to compete with the African cultivators, with whom the process of production was so much cheaper owing to the superior fertility of the soil under the sun of Lybia, or the fertilizing floods of the Nile. Thence the increasing weight of direct taxation, the augmented importation of foreign grain, the disappearance of free cultivators in the central provinces, the impossibility of recruiting the legions with freemen, and the ruin of the empire.

And that it was something pressing upon the cultivation of *grain*, not of agriculture generally, which occasioned these disastrous results, is decisively proved by the fact, that, down to the fall of the empire, the cultivation of land *in pasturage* continued to be a *highly profitable* employment in Italy. It is recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus, that when Rome was taken by Alaric, it was inhabited by 1,200,000 persons, who were maintained almost entirely by the expenditure of 1780 patrician families holding estates in Italy and Africa, many of whom had above £160,000 yearly of rent from land. Their estates were almost entirely managed in pasturage, and conducted by slaves.[28] Here, then, is decisive evidence, that down to the very close of the empire, the

managing of estates *in pasturage* was not only profitable, but eminently so in Italy—though all attempts at raising grain were hopeless. It is not an unprofitable cultivation which can yield £160,000 a-year, equivalent to above £300,000 annually of our money, to a single proprietor, and maintain 1700 of them in such affluence that they maintained, in ease and luxury, a city not then the capital of the empire, containing 1,200,000 inhabitants, or considerably more than Paris at this time. It was not slavery, therefore, which ruined Italian cultivation; for the whole pasture cultivation which yielded such immense profits was conducted by slaves. It was the Lybian and Egyptian harvests, freely imported into the Tiber, which occasioned the ruin of agriculture in the Latian plains; and, with the consequent destruction of the race of rural freemen, brought on the ruin of the empire. But this importation could not injure pasturage; for cattle Africa had none, and therefore estates in grass still continued to yield great returns.

The second circumstance worthy of notice in this inquiry is, that the cause of the present desolation of the Campagna, whatever it is, is something which is *peculiar to that district*, and has continued to act with as great force in *modern* as in ancient times. It is historically known, [Pg 342] indeed, that the sanguinary contests of the rival houses of Orsini and Colonna, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, produced the most dreadful ravages in the Campagna, and extinguished, for the time at least, any attempts to reclaim or restore to cultivation this desolate region. But many centuries have elapsed since this desolating warfare has entirely ceased; and under the shelter of peace and tranquillity, agricultural industry in other parts of Italy has flourished to such a degree as to render it the garden of the world: witness the rich plain of Lombardy, the incomparable terrace cultivation of the Tuscan hills, the triple harvests of the Terra di Lavoro, near Naples. The desolation of the Campagna, therefore, must have been owing to some causes peculiar to the Roman States, or rather to that part of those states which adjoins the city of Rome; for in other parts of the ecclesiastical territories, particularly in the vicinity of Ancona, and the slope of the Apennines towards Bologna, agriculture is in the most flourishing state. The hills and declivities are there cut out into terraces, and cultivated with garden husbandry in as perfect style as in the mountains of Tuscany. The marches of Ancona contain 426,222 inhabitants, spread over 2111 square miles, which is about 200 to the square mile; but, considering how large a part of the territory is barren rock, the proportion on the fertile parts is about 300 to the square mile, while the average of England is only 260. The soil is cultivated to the depth of two and three feet.[29] It is in vain, therefore, to say, that it is the oppression of the Papal government, the indolence of the cardinals, and the evils of an elective monarchy, which have been the causes of the ruin of agricultural industry in the vicinity of Rome. These causes operate just as strongly in the other parts of the Papal States, where cultivation, instead of being in a languishing, is in the most flourishing condition. In truth, so far from having neglected agriculture in this blasted district, the Papal government, for the last two centuries, has made greater efforts to encourage it than all the other powers of Italy put together. Every successive Pope has laboured at the Pontine marshes, but in vain. Nothing can be more clear, than that the causes which have destroyed agriculture in the Campagna, are some which were known in the days of the Roman Republic; gradually came into operation with the extension of the empire; and have continued in modern times to press upon this particular district of the Papal States, in a much greater degree than among other provinces of a similar extent in Italy.

The last circumstance which forces itself upon the mind, in the outset of this inquiry, is, that the desolation of the Campagna is owing to moral or political, not physical causes. Naturalists and physicians have exhausted all their energies for centuries in investigating the causes of the *malaria*, which is now felt with such severity in Rome in the autumnal months, and renders health so precarious there at that period; and the soil has been analyzed by the most skillful chemists, to see whether there is any peculiarity in the earth, from its volcanic character, which either induces sterility in the crops, or proves fatal to the cultivators. But nothing has been discovered that in the slightest degree explains the phenomena. There is no doubt that the Campagna is extremely unhealthy in the autumnal months, and the Pontine marshes still more so; but that is no more than is the case with every low plain on the shores of the Mediterranean: it obtains in Lombardy, Greece, Sicily, Asia Minor, and Spain, as well as in the Agro Romano. If any one doubt it, let him lie down to sleep in his cloak in any of these places in a night of September, and see what state he is in in the morning. Clarke relates, that intermittent fevers are universal in the Grecian plains in the autumnal months: in Estremadura, in September 1811, on the banks of the Guadiana, nine thousand men fell sick in Wellington's army in three days. The savannas of America, where "death bestrides the evening gale," when first ploughed up, produce intermittent [Pg 343] fevers far more deadly than the malaria of the Roman Campagna. But the energy of man overcomes the difficulty, and, ere a few years have passed away, health and salubrity prevail in the regions of former pestilence. It was the same with the Roman Campagna in the early days of the Republic; it is the same now with the Campagna of Naples, and the marshy plains around Parma and Lodi, to the full as unhealthy in a desert state as the environs of Rome. It would be the same with the Agro Romano, if moral causes did not step in to prevent the efforts and industry of man, from here, as elsewhere, correcting the insalubrity of uncultivated nature.

And for decisive evidence that this desolation of the Campagna is owing to moral or political, not physical causes, and that, under a different system of administration, it might be rendered as salubrious and populous as it was in the early days of the Roman Republic, reference may be made to the fact, that in many parts of Italy, equally unhealthy and in this desert state, cultivation has taken place, a dense population has arisen, and the dangerous qualities of the atmosphere have disappeared. Within the last twenty years, the district called Grosseté has been reclaimed, in the most pestilential part of the Maremma of Tuscany, by an industrious population, which has

succeeded in introducing agriculture and banishing the malaria; and the ruins of the Roman villas on the banks of the Tiber, near the sea, prove that the Romans went to seek salubrity and the healthful breezes of the sea, where now they could meet with nothing but pestilence and death. The rocky and dry slopes of the Campagna are admirably adapted for raising olives and vines; while the difference of the soil and exposure in different places, promises a similar variety in their wines. The Pontine marshes themselves, and the vast plain which extends from them to the foot of the cluster of hills called the Alban Mount, are not more oppressed by water, or lower in point of level, than the plains of Pisa; and yet there the earth yields magnificent crops of grain and succulent herbs, while the poplars, by which the fields are intersected, support to their very summits the most luxuriant vines. The Campagna of Naples is more volcanic and level than that of Rome; the hills and valleys of Baiæ are nothing but the cones and craters of extinguished volcanoes; and if we would see what such a district becomes when left in a desert state, we have only to go to the Maremma of Pestum, now as desolate and unhealthy as the Pontine marshes themselves. But in the Campagna of Naples an industrious population has overcome all these obstacles, and rendered the land, tenanted only by wild boars and buffaloes in the fourth century, the garden of Europe, known over all the world, from its riches, by the name of the Campagna Felice.

Nay, the Agro Romano itself affords equally decisive proof, that where circumstances will permit the work of cultivation to be commenced so as to be carried on at a profit, the malaria and desolation speedily disappear before the persevering efforts of human industry. In many parts of the district, the custom of granting perpetual leases at a fixed rate prevails, the *Emphyteutis* of the Roman law, the sources of the prosperity of the cultivators in Upper and Lower Austria, and well known in Scotland under the name of feus. Sismondi has given the following account of the effect of the establishment of a permanent interest in the soil in arresting the effects of the malaria, and spreading cultivation over the land:—"The Emphyteutic cultivator has a permanent interest in the soil: he labours, therefore, unceasingly for the good of his family. He cuts out his slope into terraces, covers it with trees, fruits, and garden-stuffs: he takes advantage of every leisure moment, either in himself, his wife, or children, to advance the common cultivation. Industry and abundance reign around. Whenever you ascend the volcanic hills of Latium, or visit those ravishing slopes which so many painters have illustrated, around the lakes of Castel Gandolfo or Nemi, at L'Aricia, Rocca di Papa, Marino, and Frescati; whenever you meet with a smiling cultivation, healthy air, and the marks of general abundance, you may rest assured the cultivator is proprietor of the fruits of the soil. The bare right of property, or superiority, as the lawyers term it, belongs to some neighbouring lord; but the real property, "il miglioramento," belongs to the cultivator. In this way, in these happy districts, the great estates, the *latifundia* of Pliny, have been practically distributed among the peasantry; and, whenever this is the case, you hear no more of the malaria. Agriculture has caused to arise in those localities a numerous population, which multiplies with singular rapidity, and for ages has furnished cultivators not only for the mountains where it has arisen, but bands of adventurers, who in every age have filled the ranks of the Italian armies."[30]

But while those examples, to which, did our limits permit, many others might be added, decisively demonstrate that human industry can effectually overcome the physical difficulties or dangers of the Roman Campagna; yet it is clear that some great and overwhelming cause is at work, which prevents agriculture flourishing, by means of tenants or *métayers*, in the plains of the Campagna. The plains, it is true, are in the hands of a few great proprietors, but their tenants are extremely rich, often more so, Sismondi tells us, than their landlords. What is it, then, which for so long a period has chained the Campagna to pasturage, and rendered all attempts to restore it to the plough abortive? The answer is plain: It is the same cause now which binds it to pasturage, which did so under the Romans from the time of Tiberius—*it is more profitable to devote the land to grass than to raise grain.* And it is so, not because the land will not bear grain crops, for it would do now even better than it did in the days of the Etruscans and the Sabines; since so many centuries of intervening pasturage have added so much to its fertility. It is so, because the weakness of the Papal government, yielding, like the Imperial in ancient days, to the cry for cheap bread among the Roman populace, has fed the people, from time immemorial, with foreign grain, instead of that of its own territory. The evidence on this subject is as clear and more detailed in modern, than it was in ancient times; and both throw a broad and steady light on the final results of that system of policy, which purchases the present support of the inhabitants of cities, by sacrificing the only lasting and perennial sources of strength derived from the industry and population of the country.

During the confusion and disasters consequent on the fall of the Empire, after the capture of Rome by the Goths, the Campagna remained entirely a desert; but it continued in the hands of the successors of the great senatorial families who held it in the last days of the Empire. "The Agro Romano," says Sismondi, "almost a desert, had been long exposed to the ravages of the barbarians, who in 846 pillaged the Vatican, which led Pope Leo IV., in the following year, to enclose that building within the walls of Rome. For an hundred years almost all the hills which border the horizon from Rome were crowned with forts; the ancient walls of the Etruscans were restored, or rebuilt from their ruins; the old hill strengths, where the Sabines, the Hernici, the Volscians, the Coriolani, had formerly defended their independence, again offered asylums to the inhabitants of the plains. But the great estates, the bequest of ancient Rome, remained undivided. With the first dawn of history in the middle ages, we see the great house of the Colonna master of the towns of Palestrina, Genazzano, Zagorole; that of Orsini, of the territories of the republics of Veiæ and Ceres, and holding the fortresses of Bracciano, Anguetta, and Ceri.

The Monte-Savili, near Albano, still indicates the possessions of the Savili, which comprehended the whole ancient kingdom of Turnus; the Frangipani were masters of Antium, Astura, and the sea-coast; the Gaetani, the Annibaldeschi of the Castles which overlook the Pontine marshes; while Latium was in the hands of a smaller number of feudal families than it had formerly numbered republics within its bounds."[31] [Pg 345]

But while divided among these great proprietors, the Roman Campagna was still visited, as in the days of the emperor, with the curse of cheap grain, imported from the other states bordering on the Mediterranean, and was in consequence exclusively devoted to the purposes of pasturage. An authentic document proves that this was the case so far down as the fifteenth century. In the year 1471, Pope Sextus IV. issued a bull, which was again enforced by Clement VII. in 1523, and which bore these remarkable words:—"Considering the frequent famines to which Rome has been exposed in late years, *arising chiefly from the small amount of lands which have been sown or laid down in tillage*, and that their owners *prefer allowing them to remain uncultivated, and pastured only by cattle*, than to cultivate for the use of men, on the ground *that the latter mode of management is more profitable than the former*."[32] The decree ordered the cultivation of a large portion of the Campagna in grain under heavy penalties.

And that this superior profit of pasturage to tillage has continued to the present time, and is the real cause of the long-continued and otherwise inexplicable desolation of this noble region, has been clearly demonstrated by a series of important and highly interesting official decrees and investigations, which, within this half century, have taken place by order of the Papal government. Struck with the continued desolation of so large and important a portion of their territory, the popes have both issued innumerable edicts to enforce tillage, and set on foot the most minute inquiries to ascertain the causes of their failure. It is only necessary to mention one. Pius VI., in 1783, took a new and most accurate survey or *cadastre* of the Agro Romano, and ordained the proprietors to sow annually 17,000 *rubbi* (85,000 acres) with grain.[33] This decree, however, like those which had preceded it, was not carried into execution. "The proprietors and farmers," says Nicolai, "equally opposed themselves to its execution; the former declaring that they must have a higher rent for the land if laid down in tillage, than the latter professed themselves able to pay."[34]

To ascertain the cause of this universal and insurmountable resistance of all concerned to the cultivation of the Campagna, the Papal government in 1790 issued a commission to inquire into the matter, and the proprietors prescribe to two memoirs on the subject, which at once explained the whole difficulty. The one set forth the cost and returns of 100 rubbi (500 acres) in grain tillage in the Roman Campagna; the other, the cost and returns of a flock of 2500 sheep in the same circumstances. The result of the whole was, that while the grain cultivation would with difficulty, on an expenditure of 8000 crowns (£2000,) bring in a clear profit *of thirty crowns* (£7, 10s.) to the farmer, and nothing at all to the landlord, the other would yield between them a profit *of 1972 crowns*, (£496.)[35] Well may Sismondi exclaim:—"These two reports are of the very highest importance. They explain the constant invincible resistance which the proprietors and farmers of the Roman Campagna have opposed to the extension of grain cultivation; they put in a clear light the opposite interest of great capitalists and the interest of the state; they give in authentic details, which I have personally verified, and found to be still entirely applicable and correct, on the causes which have reduced the noble district of the Roman Campagna to its desolate state, and still retain it in that condition. Incredible as the statements may appear, they are amply borne out by everyday experience. In effect, all the farmers whom I have consulted, [Pg 346] affirm, that they invariably lose by grain cultivation, and that they never resort to it, but to prevent the land from being overgrown by brushwood or forests, and rendered unfit for profitable pasturage."[36]

Extraordinary as these facts are, as to the difference between the profits of pasturage and tillage in the Agro Romano, it is only by the most rigid economy, and reducing the shepherds to the lowest amount of subsistence consistent with the support of life, that the former yields any profits at all. The wages of the shepherds are only fifty-three francs (£2) for the winter season, and as much for the summer; the proprietors, in addition, furnishing them with twenty ounces of bread a-day, a half-pound of salt meat, a little oil and salt a-week. As to wine, vinegar, or fermented liquors, they never taste any of them from one year's end to another. Such as it is, their food is all brought to them from Rome; for in the whole Campagna there is not an oven, a kitchen, or a kitchen-garden, to furnish an ounce of vegetables or fruits. The clothing of these shepherds is as wretched as their fare. It consists of sheep-skin, with the wool outside; a few rags on their legs and thighs, complete their vesture. Lodging or houses they have none; they sleep in the open air, or nestle into some sheltered nook among the ruined tombs or aqueducts which are to be met with in the wilderness, in some of the caverns, which are so common in that volcanic region, or beneath the arches of the ancient catacombs. A few spoons and coarse jars form their whole furniture; the cost of that belonging to twenty-nine shepherds, required for the 2500 sheep, is only 159 francs (£7.) The sum total of the expense of the whole twenty-nine persons, including wages, food, and every thing, is only 1038 crowns, or £250 a-year; being about £8, 10s. a-head annually. The produce of the flock is estimated at 7122 crowns (£1780) annually, and the annual profit 1972 crowns, or £493.[37]

The other table given by Nicolai, exhibits, on a similar expenditure of capital, the profit of tillage; and it is so inconsiderable, as rarely, and that only in the most favourable situations, to cover the expense of cultivation. The labourers, who almost all come from the neighbouring hills, above the

level of the malaria, are obliged to be brought from a distance at high wages for the time of their employment; sometimes in harvest wages are as high as five francs, or four shillings a-day. The wages paid to the labourers on a grain farm on which £2000 has been expended on 500 acres, amount to no less than 4320 crowns, or £1080 sterling, annually; being above four times the cost of the shepherds for a similar expenditure of capital, though they wander over ten times the surface of ground. The labourers never remain in the fields; they set off to the hills when their grain is sown, and only return in autumn to cut it down. They do not work above twenty or thirty days in the year; and therefore, though their wages for that period are so high, they are in misery all the rest of the season. But though so little is done for the land, the price received for the produce is so low, that cultivation in grain brings no profit, and is usually carried on at a loss. The peasants who conduct it never go to Rome—have often never seen it; they make no purchases there; and *the most profitable of all trades in a nation, that between the town and the country, is unknown in the Roman States*.[38]

Here, then, the real cause of the desolation of the Campagna stands revealed in the clearest light, and on the most irrefragable evidence. It is not cultivated for grain crops, because remunerating prices for that species of produce cannot be obtained. It is exclusively kept in pasturage, because it is in that way only that a profit can be obtained from the land. And that it is this cause, and not any deficiency of capital or skill on the part of the tenantry, which occasions the phenomenon, is further rendered apparent by the wealth, enterprize, and information on agricultural subjects, of the great farmers in whose lands the land is vested. "The conductors," says Sismondi, "of rural labour in the Roman States, called *Mercanti di Tenute* or *di Campagne*, are men possessed of great capital, and who have received the very best education. Such, indeed, is their opulence, that it is probable they will, erelong, acquire the property of the land of which at present they are tenants. Their number, however, does not exceed eighty. They are acquainted with the most approved methods of agriculture in Italy and other countries; they have at their disposal all the resources of science, art, and immense capital; have availed themselves of all the boasted advantages of centralization, of a thorough division of labour, of a most accurate system of accounts, and checking of inferior functionaries. The system of great farms has been carried to perfection in their hands. But, with all these advantages, they cannot in the Agro Romano, *once so populous, still so fertile, raise grain to a profit*. The labourers cost more than they are worth, more than their produce is worth; while on a soil not richer, and under the same climate and government, in the marches of Ancona, agriculture maintains two hundred souls the square mile, in comfort and opulence."[39]

What, then, is the explanation which is to be given of this extraordinary impossibility of raising grain with a profit in the Roman Campagna; while in a similar climate, and under greater physical disadvantages, it is in the neighbouring plains of Pisa, and the Campagna Felice of Naples, the most profitable of all species of cultivation, and therefore universally resorted to? The answer is obvious—It is the cry for cheap bread in Rome, the fatal bequest of the strength of the Imperial, to the weakness of the Papal government, which is the cause. It is the necessity under which the ecclesiastical government felt itself, of yielding every thing to *the clamour for a constant supply of cheap bread for the people of the town* which has done the whole. It is the ceaseless importation of foreign grain into the Tiber by government, to provide cheap food for the people, which has reduced the Campagna to a wilderness, and rendered Rome in modern, not less than Tadmor in ancient times, a city in the desert.

It has been already noticed, that in the middle of the fifteenth century Sextus IV. issued a decree, ordaining the proprietors of lands in the Campana to lay down a third of their estates yearly in tillage. But the Papal government, not resting on the proprietors of the soil, but mainly, in so far as temporal power went, on the populace of Rome, was under the necessity of making at the same time extraordinary efforts to obtain supplies of foreign grain. A free trade in grain was permitted to the Tiber, or rather the government purchased foreign grain wherever they could find it cheapest, as the emperors had from a similar apprehension done in ancient times, and retailed it at a moderate price to the people. They became themselves the great corn-merchant. This system, of course, prevented the cultivation of the Campagna, and rendered the decree of Sextus IV. nugatory; for no human laws can make men continue a course of labour at a loss to themselves. Thence the citizens of Rome came to depend entirely on foreign supplies of grain for their daily food; and the consumption of the capital had no more influence on the agriculture of the adjoining provinces, than it had on that of Hindostan or China. Again, as in the days of Tacitus, the lives of the Roman people were exposed to the chances of the winds and the waves. As this proved a fluctuating and precarious source of supply, a special board, styled the *Casa Annonaria*, was constituted by government for the regular importation of foreign grain, and retailing of it at a fixed and low price to the people. This board has been in operation for nearly two hundred and fifty years; and it is the system it has pursued which has prevented all attempts to cultivate the Campagna, by rendering it impossible to do so at a profit. The details of the proceedings of this board—this "*chamber of commerce*" of Rome, are so extremely curious and instructive, that we must give them in the authentic words of Sismondi.

"Having failed in all their attempts to bring about the cultivation of the Campagna, the popes of the 17th and 18th centuries endeavoured to secure abundance in the markets by other means. The motive was legitimate and praiseworthy; but the means taken failed in producing the desired effect, because they sacrificed the future to the present, and, *in the anxiety to secure the subsistence of the people, compromised those who raised food for them*. Pope Pius VI., who reigned from 1600 to 1621, instituted the *Casa Annonaria* of the apostolic chamber, which was charged with the duty of providing subsistence for the inhabitants of Rome. This board being

desirous, above all things, of avoiding seditions and discontent, established it as a principle, that whatever the cost of production was, or the price in a particular year, bread should be sold at certain public bake-houses at a certain price. This price was fixed at a Roman baiocco, a tenth more than the sous of France, (1/2 d. English,) for eight ounces of bread. *This price has now been maintained constantly the same for two hundred years*; and it is still kept at the same level, with the difference only of a slight diminution in the weight of the bread sold for the *baiocco* in years of scarcity.

"As a necessary consequence of this regulation, the apostolic chamber soon found itself under the necessity of taking entire possession of the commerce of grain. It not only bought up the whole which was to be obtained in the country, but provided for the public wants *by large importation*. Regulations for the import and export of grain were made by it; sometimes, it was said, through the influence of those who solicited exemptions. Whether this was the case or not is uncertain, and not very material. What is certain is, that the rule by which the chamber was invariably regulated, viz. *that of consulting no other interest but that of the poor consumer*, is as vicious and ruinous as the one so much approved of now-a-days, of attending only to the interest of the proprietors and producers. Government, doubtless, should attend to the vital matter of the subsistence of the people; but it should do so with a view to the interest of all, not a single section of society.

"At what price soever bread was bought by them, the *Casa Annonaria* sold it to the bakers at seven Roman crowns (30 f.) the *rubbio*, which weighs 640 kilograms, (1540 lbs.) That price was not much different from the average one; and the apostolic chamber sustained no great loss till 1763, by its extensive operations in the purchase and sale of grain. But at that period the price of wheat began to rise, and it went on continually advancing to the end of the century. Notwithstanding its annual losses, however, the apostolic chamber was too much afraid of public clamour to raise the price of bread. It went on constantly retailing it at the same price to the people; and the consequence was, that its losses in 1797, when the pontifical government was overturned, had accumulated to no less than 17,457,485 francs, or £685,000."[40]

It might naturally have been imagined, that after so long an experience of the effects of a forcible reduction of the price of grain below the level at which it could be raised at a profit by home cultivators, the ecclesiastical government would have seen what was the root of the evil, and applied themselves to remedy it, by giving some protection to native industry. But though the evil of the desolation of the Campagna was felt in its full extent by government in subsequent times; yet as the first step in the right course, viz. protecting native industry by stopping the sales of bread by government at lower prices than it could be raised at home, was likely to occasion great discontent, it was never attempted. Such a step, dangerous in the firmest and best established, was impossible in an elective monarchy of old Popes, feeble cardinals, and a despicable soldiery. They went on deploring the evil, but never once ventured to face the remedy. In 1802, Pius VII., a most public-spirited and active pontiff, issued an edict, in which he declared, "We are firmly persuaded that if we cannot succeed in applying a remedy the abandonment and depopulation of the Campagna will go on increasing, till the country becomes a fearful desert. *Fatal experience leaves no doubt on that point.* We see around us, above all in the Campagna, a number of estates entirely depopulated and abandoned to grass, which, in the memory of man, were rich in agricultural productions, and crowded with inhabitants, as is clearly established by the seignorial rights attached to them. Population had been introduced into these domains by agriculture, which employed a multitude of hands, being in a flourishing state. But now the obstacles opposed to the interior commerce of grain, *and the forced prices fixed by government, have caused agriculture to perish*. Pasturage has come every where to supplant it; and the great proprietors and farmers living in Rome, have abandoned all thought of dividing their possessions among cultivators, and sought only to diminish the cost of the flocks to which they have devoted their estates. But if that system has proved profitable to them, it has been fatal to the state, which it has deprived of its true riches, the produce of agriculture, and of the industry of the rural population."[41] But it was all in vain. The measures adopted by Pius VII. to resuscitate agriculture in the Campagna, have proved all nugatory like those of all his predecessors; the importation of foreign grain into the Tiber, the forced prices at which it was sold by the government at Rome, rendered it impossible to prosecute agriculture to a profit; and the Campagna has become, and still continues, a desert.[42]

Here, then, the real cause of the long-continued desolation of the Agro Romano, both in ancient and modern times, becomes perfectly apparent. It is the cry for cheap bread in Rome which has done the whole. To stifle this cry in the dreaded populace of the Eternal City, the emperors imported grain largely from Egypt and Lybia, and distributed it at an elusory price, or gratuitously, to the people. The unrestricted importation of foreign grain, in consequence of those provinces becoming parts of the empire, enabled the cultivators and merchants of Africa to deluge the Italian harbours with corn at a far cheaper rate than it could be raised in Italy itself, where labour bore a much higher price, in consequence of money being more plentiful in the centre than the extremities of the empire. Thus the market of its towns was lost to the Italian cultivators, and gained to those of Egypt and Lybia, where a vertical sun, or the floods of the Nile, almost superseded the expense of cultivation. Pasturage became the only way in which land could be managed to advantage in the Italian fields; because live animals and dairy produce do not admit of being transported from a distance by sea, with a profit to the importer, and the sunburnt shores of Africa yielded no herbage for their support. Agriculture disappeared in Italy, and with it the free and robust arms which conducted it; pasturage succeeded, and yielded large

rentals to the great proprietors, into whose hands, on the ruin of the little freeholders by foreign importation, the land had fallen. But pasturage could not nourish a bold peasantry to defend the state; it could only produce the riches which might attract its enemies. Hence the constant complaint, that Italy had ceased to be able to furnish soldiers to the legionary armies; hence the entrusting the defence of the frontier to mercenary barbarians, and the ruin of the empire.

In modern times the same ruinous system has been continued, and hence the continued desolation of the Campagna, so pregnant with weakness and evil to the Roman states. The people never forgot the distribution of grain by government in the time of the emperors; the Papal authorities never had strength sufficient to withstand the menacing cry for cheap bread. Anxious to keep the peace in Rome, and depending little on the barons of the country, the ecclesiastical government saw no resource but to import grain themselves from any countries where they could get it cheapest, and sell it at a fixed price to the people. This price, down to 1763, was just the price at which *it could be imported with a fair profit*; as is proved by the fact, that down to that period the *Casa Annonaria* sustained no loss. But it was lower than the rate at which it could be raised even in the fertile plains of the Campagna, where labour was dearer and taxes heavier than in Egypt and the Ukraine, from whence the grain was imported by government; and consequently cultivation could not be carried on in the Agro Romano but at a loss. It of course ceased altogether; and the land, as in ancient times, has been entirely devoted to pasturage, to the extinction of the rural population, and the infinite injury of the state.

And this explains how it has happened, that in other parts of the Papal states, particularly in the marches on the other side of the Apennines, between Bologna and Ancona, agriculture is not only noways depressed, but flourishing; and the same is the case with the slopes of the Alban Mount, even in the Agro Romano. In the first situation, the necessity of bending to the cry for cheap bread in the urban population was not felt, as the marches contained no great towns, and the weight of influence was in the rural inhabitants. There was no *Casa Annonaria*, or fixed price of bread there; and therefore agriculture flourished as it did in Lombardy, the Campagna Felice of Naples, the plain of Pisa, or any other prosperous part of Italy. In the latter, it was in *garden cultivation* that the little proprietors, as in nearly the whole slopes of the Apennines, were engaged. The enchanting shores of the lakes of Gandolfo and Nemi, the hills around L'Aricia and Marino, are all laid out in the cultivation of grapes, olives, fruits, vegetables, and chestnuts. No competition from without was to be dreaded by them, as at least, until the introduction of steam, it was impossible to bring such productions by distant sea voyages, so as to compete with those raised in equally favourable situations within a few miles of the market at home. In these places, therefore, the peculiar evil which blasted all attempts at grain cultivation in the Campagna was not felt; and hence, though in the Roman states, and subject, in other respects, to precisely the same government as the Agro Romano, they exhibit not merely a good, but the most admirable cultivation.

If any doubt could exist on the subject, it would be removed by two other facts connected with agriculture on the shores of the Mediterranean; one in ancient and one in modern times.

The first of these is that while agriculture declined *in Italy*, as has been shown from the time of Tiberius, until at length nearly the whole plains of that peninsula were turned into grass, it, from the same date, took an extraordinary start in Spain and Lybia. And to such a length had the improvement of Africa, under the fostering influence of the market of Rome and Italy gone, that it contained, at the time of its invasion by the Vandals under Genseric, in the year 430 of the Christian era, twenty millions of inhabitants, and had come to be regarded with reason as the garden of the human race. "The long and narrow tract," says Gibbon, "of the African coast was filled, when the Vandals approached its shores, with frequent monuments of Roman art and magnificence; and the respective degrees of improvement might be accurately measured by the distance from Carthage and the Mediterranean. A simple reflection will impress every thinking mind with the clearest idea of its fertility and cultivation. The country was extremely populous; the inhabitants reserved a liberal supply for their own use; *and the annual exportation*, PARTICULARLY OF WHEAT, *was so regular and plentiful, that Africa deserved the name of the* *common granary of Rome and of mankind*."[43] Nor had Spain flourished less during the long tranquillity and protection of the legions. In the year 409 after Christ, when it was first invaded by the barbarians, its situation is thus described by the great historian of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. "The situation of Spain, separated on all sides from the enemies of Rome by the sea, by the mountains, and by intermediate provinces, had secured the long tranquillity of that remote and sequestered country; and we may observe, as a sure symptom of *domestic happiness*, that in a period of 400 years, Spain furnished very few materials to the history of the Roman empire. The cities of Merida, Cordova, Seville, and Tarragona, were numbered with the most illustrious of the Roman world. The various plenty of the animal, *vegetable*, and mineral kingdoms was improved and manufactured by the skill of an industrious people, and the peculiar advantages of naval stores contributed to support an extensive and profitable trade." And he adds, in a note, many particulars relative to the *fertility* and trade of Spain, may be found in Huet's *Commerce des Anciens*, c. 40, p. 228.[44]

These facts are very remarkable, and worthy of the most profound attention; for they point in a decisive manner, they afford the *experimentum crucis* as to the real cause of the long-continued and frightful decay of Italian agriculture during the reign of the emperors. For here, it appears, that during the four hundred years that the Western Empire endured, while the cultivation of grain in Italy was constantly declining, and at last wholly ceased, insomuch that the country relapsed entirely into a state of nature, or was devoted to the mere raising of grass for sheep and

cattle, *agriculture was flourishing in the highest degree in the remoter provinces of the Empire*; and the exportation of grain from Africa had become so great and regular, that it had come to be regarded as the granaries of Rome and of the world! The government was the same, the slavery was the same, in Africa as in Italy. Yet in the one country agriculture rose, during four centuries, to the highest point of elevation; while in the other, during the same period, it sunk to the lowest depression, until it became wellnigh extinct, so far as the raising of grain was concerned. How did this come to pass? It could not have been that the labour of slaves was too costly to raise grain; for it was raised at a great profit, and to a prodigious extent, *almost entirely by slaves*, in Egypt and Lybia. What was it, then, which destroyed agriculture in Italy and Greece, while, under circumstances precisely similar in all respects *but one*, it was, at the very same time, rising to the very highest prosperity in Egypt, Lybia, and Spain? Evidently *that one circumstance*, and that was—that Italy and Greece were the heart of the empire, the theatre of long-established civilization, the abode of opulence, the seat of wealth, the centre to which riches flowed from the extremities of the empire. Pounds were plentiful there, and, consequently, labour was dear; in the provinces pence were few, and, therefore, it was cheap. It was impossible, under a free trade in grain, for the one to compete with the other. It is for the same reason that agricultural labour is now sixpence a-day in Poland, tenpence in Ireland, and two shillings in Great Britain.

The peculiar conformation of the Roman empire, while it facilitated in many respects its growth and final settlement under the dominion of the Capitol, led by a process not less certain, and still more rapid, to its ruin, when that empire was fully extended. If any one will look at the map, he will see that the Roman empire spread outwards from the shores of the Mediterranean. It embraced all the monarchies and republics which, in the preceding ages of the world, had grown up around that inland sea. Water, therefore, afforded the regular, certain, and cheap means of conveying goods and troops from one part of the empire to the other. Nature had spread out a vast system of internal navigation, which brought foreign trade in a manner to every man's door. [Pg 352] The legions combated alternately on the plains of Germany, in the Caledonian woods, on the banks of the Euphrates, and at the foot of Mount Atlas. But much as this singular and apparently providential circumstance aided the growth, and for a season increased the strength of the empire, it secretly but certainly undermined its resources, and in the end proved its ruin. The free trade in grain which it necessarily brought with it, when the same dominion stretched over all Spain and Africa, and long-continued peace had brought their crops to compete with the Italian in the supply of the Roman, or the Grecian in that of the Constantinopolitan markets, destroyed the fabric the legions had reared. Italy could not compete with Lybia, Greece with Poland. Rome was supplied by the former, Constantinople by the latter. If the Mediterranean wafted the legions out in the rise of the empire, *it wafted foreign grain in* in its later stages, and the last undid all that the former had done. The race of *agricultural freemen* in Italy, the bone and muscle of the legions which had conquered the world, became extinct; the rabble of towns were unfit for the labours, and averse to the dangers of war; mercenaries became the only resource.

The fact in modern times, which illustrates and confirms the same view of the chief cause of the ruin of the Roman empire, is, that a similar effect has taken place, and is at this moment in full operation in Romelia, and all the environs of Constantinople. Every traveller in the East knows that desolation as complete as that of the Campagna of Rome pervades the whole environs of Constantinople; that the moment you emerge from the gates of that noble city, you find yourself in a wilderness, and that the grass comes up to our horse's girths all the way to Adrianople. "Romelia," says Slade, "if cultivated, would become the granary of the East;" *whereas Constantinople depends on Odessa for daily bread*. The burial-grounds, choked with weeds and underwood, constantly occurring in every traveller's route, far remote from habitations, are eloquent testimonials of continued depopulation. The living, too, are far apart; a town about every fifty miles; *a village every ten miles*, is deemed close; and horsemen meeting on the highway regard each other as objects of curiosity.[45] This is the Agro Romano over again. Nor will it do to say, that it is the oppression of the Turkish government which occasions this desolation and destruction of the rural population; for many parts of Turkey are not only well cultivated but most densely peopled; as, for example, the broad tract of Mount Hœmus, where agriculture is in as admirable a state as in the mountains of Tuscany or Switzerland. "No peasantry in the world," says Slade, "are so well off as those of Bulgaria; the lowest of them has abundance of every thing—meat, poultry, eggs, milk, rice, cheese, wine, bread, good clothing, a warm dwelling, and a horse to ride; where is the tyranny under which the Christian subjects of the Porte are generally supposed to dwell? Among the Bulgarians certainly. I wish that, in every country, a traveller could pass from one end to the other, and find a good supper and warm fire in every cottage, as he can in this part of European Turkey."[46] Clarke gives the same account of the peasantry of Parnassus and Olympia; and it is true generally of almost all the *mountain* districts of Turkey. How, then, does it happen that the rich and level plains of Romelia, at the gates of Constantinople, and thence over a breadth of an hundred and twenty miles to Adrianople, is a desert? Slade has explained it in a word. "*Constantinople depends on Odessa for its daily bread.*" The cry for cheap bread in Constantinople, its noble harbour, and ready communication by water with Egypt on the one hand, and the Ukraine on the other, have done the whole. Romelia, like the Campagna of Rome, is a desert, because the market of Constantinople is lost to the Turkish cultivators; because grain can be brought cheaper from the [Pg 353] Nile and the Wolga than raised at home, in consequence of the cheapness of labour in those remote provinces; and because the Turkish government, dreading an insurrection in the capital, have done nothing to protect native industry.

There are many countries to whom the most unlimited freedom in the importation of corn can do no injury. There are, in the first place, the great grain countries, such as Poland and the Ukraine: they have no more reason to dread the importation of grain than Newcastle that of coals, or the Scotch Highlands that of moor-game. In the next place, countries which *are poor* need never fear the importation of corn from abroad; for they have no money to pay for it; and, if they had, it would not be brought in at a profit, because currency being scarce, of course the price will be low. Lastly, Countries which have vast inland tracts, like Russia, Austria, France, and America, especially if no extensive system of water communication exists in their interior, have little reason to apprehend injury from the most unrestricted commerce in grain; because the cost of inland carriage on so bulky and heavy an article as corn is so considerable, that the produce of foreign harvests can never penetrate far into the interior, or come to supply a large portion of the population with food.

The countries which have reason to apprehend injury, and in the end destruction, to their native agriculture, from the unrestricted admission of foreign corn, are those which, though they may possess a territory in many places well adapted for the raising of grain crops, are yet rich, far advanced in civilization, with a narrow territory, and their principal towns on the sea-coast. They have every thing to dread from foreign importation; because both the plenty of currency, which opulence brings in its train, and the heavy public burdens with which it is invariably attended, render labour dear at home, by lowering the value of money, and raising the weight of taxation. If long continued, an unrestricted foreign importation cannot fail to ruin agriculture, and destroy domestic strength in such a state. Italy and Greece stood eminently in such a situation; for all their great towns were upon the sea-coast, their territory was narrow, and being successively the seats of empire, and the centres of long-continued opulence, money was more plentiful, and therefore production dearer than in those remote and poorer states from which grain might be brought to their great towns by sea carriage. In the present circumstances of this country, we would do well to bear in mind the following reflections of Sismondi, "It is not to no purpose that we have entered into the foregoing details concerning the state of agriculture in the neighbourhood of Rome; for we are persuaded that a universal tendency in Europe *menaces us with the same calamities*, even in those countries which at present seem to adopt an entirely opposite system; *only the Romans have gone through the career, while we are only entering upon it*."[47]

The times are past, indeed, when gratuitous distributions of grain will be made to an idle population, as under the Roman emperors, or bread be sold for centuries by government at a fixed and low price, as under their papal successors. But the same causes which produced these effects are still in full operation. The cry for cheap bread in a popular state, is as menacing as it was to the emperors or popes of Rome. The only difference is, the sacrifice of domestic industry is now more disguised. The thing is done, but it is done not openly by public deliveries of the foreign grain at low prices, but indirectly under the specious guise of free trade. Government does not say, "We will import Polish grain, and sell it permanently at thirty-six or forty shillings a quarter;" but it says, "we will open our harbours to the Polish farmers who can do so. We will admit grain duty free from a country where wages are sixpence a-day, and rents half-a-crown an acre." They thus force down the price of grain to the foreign level, augmented only by the cost and profit of importations, as effectually as ever did the emperors or *Casa Annonaria*of Rome.

And what has Rome—the urban population of Rome—for whose supposed interests, and in obedience to whose menacing cry, the Roman market has for eighteen centuries been supplied with foreign bread—what have they gained by this long continuation of government to their wishes? Sismondi has told us in one word—"In Rome there *is no commerce between the town and the country*." They would have foreign grain with its consequences, and *they have had foreign grain with its consequences*. And what have been these consequences? Why, that the Eternal City, which, even when taken by the Goths, had 1,200,000 inhabitants within its walls, can now scarcely number 170,000, and they almost entirely in poverty, and mainly supported by the influx and expenditure of foreigners. The Campagna, once so fruitful and so peopled, has become a desert. No inhabitant of the Roman states buys any thing in Rome. Their glory is departed—it has gone to other people and other lands. And what would have been the result if this wretched concession to the blind and unforeseeing popular clamour had not taken place? Why, that Rome would have been what Naples—where domestic industry is protected—has become; it would have numbered 400,000 busy and active citizens within its walls. The Campagna would have been what the marches of Ancona now are. Between Rome and the Campagna, a million of happy and industrious human beings would have existed in the Agro Romano, independent of all the world, mutually nourishing and supporting each other; instead of an hundred and seventy thousand indolent and inactive citizens of a town, painfully dependent on foreign supplies for bread, and on foreign gold for the means of purchasing it.

Disastrous as have been the consequences of a free trade in grain to the Roman States, alike in ancient and modern times, it was introduced by its rulers in antiquity under the influence of noble and enlightened principles. The whole civilized world was then one state; the banks of the Nile and the plains of Lybia acknowledged the sway of the emperors, as much as the shores of the Tiber or the fields of the Campagna. When the Roman government, ruling so mighty a dominion, permitted the harvests of Africa and the Ukraine to supplant those of Italy and Greece, they did no more than justice to their varied subjects. Magnanimously overlooking local interests and desires, they extended their vision over the whole civilized world, and

"View'd with equal eyes, as lords of all,"

their subjects, whether in Italy, Spain, Egypt, or Lybia. Though the seat of government was locally on the Tiber, they administered for the interest of the whole civilized world, alike far and near. If the Campagna was ruined, the Delta of Egypt flourished! If the plains of Umbria were desolate, those of Lybia and Spain, equally parts of the empire, were waving with grain. But can the same be said of England, now proclaiming a free trade in grain, not merely with her colonies or distant provinces, but with her rivals or her enemies? Not merely with Canada and Hindostan, but with Russia and America? With countries jealous of her power, envious of her fame, covetous of her riches. What should we have said of the wisdom of the Romans, if they had sacrificed Italian to African agriculture in the days of Hannibal? If they had put it into the power of the Carthaginian Senate to have said, "We will not arm our galleys; we will not levy armies; we will prohibit the importation of African grain, and starve you into submission?" How is England to maintain her independence, if the autocrat of Russia, by issuing his orders from St Petersburg, can at any moment stop the importation of ten millions of quarters of foreign grain, that is, a sixth of our whole annual consumption? And are we to render penniless our home customers, not in order to promote the interest of the distant parts of our empire, but in order to enrich and vivify our enemies?

It is said public opinion runs in favour of such a change; that the manufacturing has become the dominant interest in the state; that wages must at all hazards be beat down to the continental level; and that, right or wrong, the thing must be done. Whether this is the case or not, time, and possibly a general election, will show. Sometimes those who are the most noisy, are not the most numerous. Certain it is, that in 1841 a vast majority both of the electors and the people were unanimous in favour of protection. But, be the present opinion of the majority what it may, that will not alter the nature of things—It will not render that wise which is unwise. Public opinion in Athens, in the time of Demosthenes, was nearly unanimous to apply the public funds to the support of the theatres instead of the army, and they got the battle of Chæronea, and subjection by Philip, for their reward. Public opinion in Europe was unanimous in favour of the Crusades, and millions of brave men left their bones in Asia in consequence. The Senate of Carthage, yielding to the wishes of the majority of their democratic community, refused to send succours to Hannibal in Italy; and they brought, in consequence, the legions of Scipio Africanus round their walls. Public opinion in France was unanimous in favour of the expedition to Moscow. "They regarded it," says Segur, "as a mere hunting party of six months;" but that did not hinder it from bringing the Cossacks to Paris. The old Romans were unanimous in their cry for cheap bread, and they brought the Gothic trumpet to their gates from its effects. A vast majority of the electors of Great Britain in 1831, were in favour of Reform: out of 101, 98 county members were returned in the liberal interest; and now they have got their reward, in seeing the Reformed Parliament preparing to abolish all protection to native industry. All the greatest and most destructive calamities recorded in history have been brought about, not only with the concurrence, but in obedience to the fierce demand of the majority. Protection to domestic industry, at home or colonial, is the unseen but strongly felt bond which unites together the far distant provinces of the British empire by the firm bond of mutual interest.

MR BROOKE OF BORNEO.

[48]On the 19th of August last, some twenty boats belonging to her Majesty's ships, *Agincourt*, *Vestal*, *Dædalus*, *Wolverine*, *Cruiser*, and *Vixen*, and containing about five hundred men, attacked and destroyed in the *Malladu*, a river of the Eastern Archipelago, the forts of Seriff Housman, a notorious and daring pirate, whose crimes had paralysed the commerce of the seas of Borneo, and finally rendered British interference absolutely necessary for the security of British life and property. The action was one of the many that the suppression of piracy in these regions has demanded—was gallantly fought, and full reported in the journals of the time;—a narrow river, with two forts mounting eleven or twelve heavy guns, (and defended by from five hundred to one thousand fighting men,) protected by a strong and well-contrived boom, was the position of the enemy. The English boats took the bull by the horns—cut away part of the boom under a heavy fire; advanced and carried the place in a fight protracted for fifty minutes. The enemy fought well, and stood manfully to their guns. The mate of the *Wolverine* fell mortally wounded whilst working at the boom, axe in hand; but his death was avenged by a wholesale slaughter of the pirates. At two minutes to nine, those who had remained on board the *Vixen* heard the report of the first heavy gun, and the first column of black smoke proclaimed that the village was fired. On the evening of the 19th, a detachment of ten boats, with fresh men and officers, quitted the *Vixen*, and arrived at the forts shortly after daylight. The work of destruction was complete. The boom, above spoken of, was ingeniously fastened with the chain-cable of a vessel of three hundred or four hundred tons; other chains, for darker purposes, were discovered in the town; a ship's long-boat; two ship's bells, one ornamented with grapes and vine leaves, and marked "*Wilhelm Ludwig, Bremen*," and every other description of ship's furniture. Some piratical boats were burned, twenty-four brass guns captured; the other guns spiked or otherwise destroyed. Malladu ceased to exist; the power of Seriff Housman was extinguished in a day.

Small wars, as well as great, have their episodes of touching tenderness. Twenty-four hours after the action, a poor woman, with her child of two years of age, was discovered in a small canoe; her arm was shattered at the elbow by a grape-shot, and the poor creature lay dying for want of water, in an agony of pain, with her child playing around her, and endeavouring to derive the

sustenance which the mother could no longer give. The unfortunate woman was taken on board the *Vixen*, and in the evening her arm was amputated. On board the *Vixen* she met with one who offered to convey her to the Borneon town of *Sarāwak*, where she would find protection. To have left her where she was, would have been to leave her to die. To the stranger's kind offers she had but one answer to give. "If you please to take me, I shall go. I am a woman, and not a man; I am a slave, and not a free woman—do as you like." The woman recovered, was grateful for the kindness shown her, and was deposited faithfully and well in the town already named, by the stranger already introduced.

Let us state at once that the object of this article is to bring to public notice, as shortly as we may, the history of this stranger, and to demand for it the reader's warmest sympathy. Full accounts of the doings of her Majesty's ship Dido will no doubt be reported elsewhere, with the several engagements which Mr Keppel's book so graphically describes. Let them receive the attention that they merit. We cannot afford to meddle with them now. "Metal more attractive" lies in the adventures of a man who has devoted his fortune and energies to the cause of humanity, and has purchased with both the amelioration of a large portion of his suffering fellow-creatures.

We know not when, since our boyhood, we have met with an adventurer more ardent and daring, a companion more fascinating and agreeable, than Mr Brooke, the Rajah or Governor of Sarāwak. Essentially British, in as much as he practises our national virtues when circumstances call them into action, he reminds us at all times of those Eastern men, famous in their generation, who delighted us many years ago, and secured our wonder by their devoted love of enterprise, and the moral ascendency that waited on their efforts. In truth, Mr Brooke belongs not to the present generation. His energy, his perseverance, which nothing can subdue, his courage which no dangers can appal, his simplicity which no possession of power and authority can taint, his integrity and honest mind, all belong to a more masculine and primitive age, and constitute a rare exception for our respect and gratitude in this. We take the earliest opportunity afforded us to pay our humble tribute to worth that cannot be questioned, to heroic virtue that cannot be surpassed.

Whatsoever humanity and civilisation may gain in the extermination of odious crimes upon the shores of Borneo, whatsoever advantages England may hereafter obtain from British settlements in the island, and from a peaceful trade carried on around it, to Mr Brooke, and to that gentleman alone, will belong the glory and the honour of such acquisitions. Inspired by his vigorous nature, but more by the dictates of true benevolence, unaided and unprotected, save by his own active spirit and the blessing of Providence, he undertook a mission on behalf of mankind, with perils before him which the stoutest could not but feel, and achieved a success which the most sanguine could hardly have anticipated.

Mr Brooke was born on the 29th of April 1803, and is therefore now in his 43d year. He is the second son of the late Thomas Brooke, Esq., who held an appointment in the civil service of the East India Company. At an early age he went out to India as a cadet, served with distinction in the Burmese war, was wounded, and returned to England for the recovery of his health. In the year 1830, Mr Brooke relinquished the service altogether, and quitted Calcutta for China, again in search of health. During his voyage, he saw, for the first time, the islands of the Asiatic Archipelago; almost unknown, even at that recent period, to Europeans generally. Such information as was before the world he obtained, and carefully considered; and the result of his reflections was a determination to carry to Borneo, an island of some magnitude, and terribly afflicted in more respects than one, such knowledge and instruction as might help to elevate its people from the depravity in which they lived, and the horrors to which they were hourly subjected. This was in 1830. In the year 1838, he quitted England to fulfil his purpose. For eight years he had patiently and steadily worked towards his object, and gathered about him all that was necessary for its accomplishment. Nothing had been omitted to insure success. A man of fortune, he had been prodigal of his wealth; free from professional and other ties, he had given up his time wholly to the cause. One year was passed in the Mediterranean, that his vessel, *The Royalist*, might be put to the severest tests. Three years were spent in educating a crew worthy of an undertaking that promised so little sudden prosperity, that exacted so much immediate self-denial, threatened so many hardships. The men were happy and contented, cheerful and willing. The vessel belonged to the royal yacht squadron, was a fast sailer, armed with six six-pounders, a number of swivels and small arms, carried four boats, and provisions for as many months. On the 27th of October 1838, the adventurous company left the river. A fortunate passage carried them in safety to Rio Janeiro, and on the 29th of March 1839, they were sailing from the Cape of Good Hope. A six weeks' passage brought them to Java Head, and on the 1st of June they reached that "pivot of the liberal system in the Archipelago," the island of Singapore. It was not until the 27th of July that Mr Brooke quitted Singapore. Five days afterwards, the *Royalist* was anchored off the coast of Borneo!

At the period of Mr Brooke's arrival, Borneo Proper,[49] once the seat of piracy, which few vessels could approach with safety, was under the government of the rajah Muda Hassim. Report spoke favourably of this rajah's character. A vessel had been wrecked on his coast, and the crew, who had been saved with difficulty, had taken shelter in the jungle. Muda Hassim, hearing of their fate, caused them to be brought to his town of Sarāwak, collected as much as could be saved from the wreck, clothed the sufferers, fed them, and sent then free of expense to Singapore. Moreover, for reasons known to himself, the rajah was well disposed towards the English. These important circumstances were borne in mind by Mr Brooke. The rajah was now at Sarāwak, and

the adventurer determined to enter the river of that name, and to proceed as far as the town. He was well supplied with presents; gaudy silks of Surat, scarlet cloth, stamped velvet, gunpowder, confectionery, sweets, ginger, jams, dates, and syrups for the governor, and a huge box of China toys for the governor's children. From Mr Brooke's own diary, we extract the following account of his position and feelings at this interesting moment of his still doubtful undertaking:—

> "*August 1st.*—I am, then, at length, anchored off the coast of Borneo! not under very pleasant circumstances, for the night is pitchy dark, with thunder, lightning, rain, and squalls of wind.
>
> "*2d.*—Squally bad night. This morning, the clouds clearing away, was delightful, and offered for our view the majestic scenery of Borneo. At nine got under weigh, and ran in on an east-by-south course four and a half or five miles towards Tanjong Api. Came to an anchor about five miles from the land, and dispatched the boat to take sights ashore, in order to form a base line for triangulation. The scenery may really be called majestic. The low and wooded coast about Tanjong Api is backed by a mountain called Gunong Palo, some 2000 feet in height, which slopes down behind the point, and terminates in a number of hummocks, showing from a distance like islands.
>
> "The coast, unknown, and represented to abound in shoals and reefs, is the harbour for pirates of every description. Here every man's hand is raised against his brother man; and here sometimes the climate wars upon the excitable European, and lays many a white face and gallant heart low on the distant strand.
>
> "*3d.*—Beating between Points Api and Datu. The bay, as far as we have seen, is free from danger; the beach is lined by a feathery row of beautiful casuarinas, and behind is a tangled jungle, without fine timber; game is plentiful, from the traces we saw on the sand; hogs in great numbers; troops of monkeys, and the print of an animal with cleft hoofs, either a large deer, tapir, or cow. We saw no game save a tribe of monkeys, one of which, a female, I shot, and another quite young, which we managed to capture alive. The captive, though the young of the black monkey, is greyish, with the exception of the extremities, and a stripe of black down his back and tail.
>
> "We witnessed, at the same time, an extraordinary and fatal leap made by one of these monkeys. Alarmed by our approach, he sprang from the summit of a high tree at the branch of one lower, and at some distance. He leaped short, and came clattering down sixty or seventy feet amid the jungle. We were unable to penetrate to the spot, on account of a deep swamp, to ascertain his fate.
>
> "A river flows into the sea not far from where we landed—the water is sweet, and of that clear brown colour so common in Ireland. This coast is evidently the haunt of native *prahns*, whether piratical or other. Print of men's feet were numerous and fresh, and traces of huts, fires, and parts of boots, some of them ornamented after their rude fashion. A long pull of five miles closed the day.

> "*Sunday, 4th.*—Performed divine service myself! manfully overcoming that horror which I have to the sound of my own voice before an audience. In the evening landed again more to the westward. Shore skirted by rocks; timber noble, and the forest clear of brushwood, enabling us to penetrate with ease as far as caution permitted. Traces of wild beasts numerous and recent, but none discovered. Fresh-water streams coloured as yesterday, and the trail of an alligator from one of them to the sea. This dark forest, where the trees shoot up straight and tall, and are succeeded by generation after generation varying in stature, but struggling upward, strikes the imagination with pictures trite yet true. It was thus I meditated in my walk. The foot of European, I said, has never touched where my foot now presses—seldom the native wanders here. Here, I, indeed, behold nature fresh from the bosom of creation, unchanged by man, and stamped with the same impress she originally bore! Here I behold God's design when He formed this tropical land, and left its culture and improvement to the agency of man! The Creator's gift as yet neglected by the creature; and yet the time may be confidently looked for when the axe shall level the forest, and the plough turn the ground."

Upon the 5th of August, a boat was sent to the island of Tulang-Talang, where some Malays were seen; they were civil, and offered their assistance. On the following morning the *bandar* (or chief steward) of the place came off in his canoe, and welcomed the new-comers. He assured them of a happy reception from the Rajah, and took his leave, after having been sumptuously entertained with sweetmeats and syrups, and handsomely provided with three yards of red cloth, some tea, and a little gunpowder. The great man himself, Muda Hassim, was, visited in his town of Sarāwak on the morning of the 15th. He received his visitors in state, seated in his hall of audience, a large shed, erected on piles. Sarāwak is only the occasional residence of the Rajah, and at the time of the ship's arrival he was detained there by a rebellion in the interior. The town was found to be a mere collection of mud-huts, containing about 1500 persons, and inhabited for the most part by the Rajah, his family, and their attendants. The remaining population were poor and squalid. "We sat," says Mr Brooke, "in easy and unreserved converse, out of hearing of the rest of the circle. He expressed great kindness to the English nation; and begged me to tell him *really*, which was the most powerful nation, England or Holland; or, as he significantly expressed, which

is the 'cat and which is the rat?' I assured him that England was the mouser, though in this country Holland had most territory. We took our leave after he had intimated his intention of visiting us to-morrow morning."

The visit was duly paid, and as duly returned. Tea, cigars, scissors, knives, and biscuits, were distributed amongst the rajah and his suite, and the friendliest understanding was maintained. Mr Brooke, however, had come to Borneo for more serious business. Ceremonies being over, he dispatched his interpreter, an Englishman, (Mr. Williamson by name,) to the rajah, intimating his desire to travel to some of the Malay towns, and especially into the country of the *Dyaks*. The request, it was fully believed, would be refused; but, to the surprise of the asker, leave was given, with the accompanying assurance, however, that the Rajah was powerless amongst many Dyak tribes, and could not answer for the adventurer's safety. Mr Brooke availed himself of the license, and undertook to provide in other respects for himself. The *Dyaks* are the aborigines of Borneo, and share the country with the Malays and Chinese who have made their homes in it. "There be land rats, and there be water rats." There be also land Dyaks and water Dyaks; or, to use the language of the country, *Dyak Darrat* and *Dyak Laut*. Those of the sea vary in their character and prospects, but, for the most part, they are powerful communities, and desperate pirates, ravaging the coasts in immense fleets, and robbing and murdering without discrimination. Their language is similar to the Malay. The name of God amongst them is Battara (the Avatara of the Hindoos.) They bury their dead, and in the graves deposit a large portion of the property of the deceased, consisting of gold ornaments, brass guns, jars, and arms. "Their marriage ceremony consists in two fowls being killed, and the forehead and breast of the young couple being touched with the blood; after which the chief, or an old man, knocks their heads together several times, and the ceremony is completed with mirth and feasting." The Dyak Darrats inhabit an inconsiderable portion of the island, and are composed of numerous tribes, all agreeing in their customs, and speaking the same dialect. They are regarded as slaves by the Malays, and treated and disposed of like beasts of burden. "We do not live," said one, "like men; we are like monkeys; we are hunted from place to place; we have no houses; and when we light a fire, we fear the smoke will draw our enemies upon us." The appearance of these Dyaks, we are told, is very prepossessing. They are of middle height, active, and good-natured in their expression; the women not so good-looking, but as cheerful tempered. "The dress of the men consists of a piece of cloth, about fifteen feet long, passed between the legs, and fastened round the loins, with the ends hanging before and behind; the head-dress is composed of bark cloth, dyed bright yellow, and stuck up in front, so as to resemble a tuft of feathers. The arms and legs are often ornamented with rings of silver, brass, or shell; and necklaces are worn, made of human teeth, or those of bears or dogs, or of white beads, in such numberless strings as to conceal the throat. A sword on one side, a knife and small betel-basket on the other, completes the ordinary equipment of the males; but when they travel, they carry a basket slung from the forehead, on which is a palm mat, to protect the owner and his property from the weather. The women wear a short and scanty petticoat, reaching from the loins to the knees, and a pair of black bamboo stays, which are never removed except the wearer be *enceinte*. They have rings of brass and red bamboo about the loins, and sometimes ornaments on the arms; the hair is worn long; the ears of both sexes are pierced, and ear-rings of brass inserted occasionally; the teeth of the young people are sometimes filed to a point and discoloured, as they say that 'dogs have white teeth.' They frequently dye their feet and hands of a bright red or yellow colour; and the young people, like those of other countries, affect a degree of finery and foppishness, whilst the elders invariably lay aside all ornaments as unfit for a wise person, or one advanced in years." The character given of these Dyaks is highly favourable. They are pronounced grateful for kindness, industrious, honest, simple, mild, tractable and hospitable, when well used. The word of one may be taken before the oath of half a dozen Borneons. Their ideas are limited enough; they reckon with their fingers and toes, and few are arithmeticians beyond counting up to twenty. They can repeat the operation, but they must record each twenty by making a knot in a string.

It was to these people that Mr Brooke made more than one excursion during his first visit to Sarāwak. He met with no disaster, but he stored up useful information for future conduct. Great morality and the practice of many virtues distinguished the tribes he encountered, although degraded as low as oppression and utter ignorance could bring them. The men, he found, married but one wife, and concubinage was unknown in their societies; cases of seduction and adultery were very rare, and the chastity of the Dyak women was proverbial even amongst their Malay rulers. Miserable as was the lot of these people, Mr Brooke gathered from their morality and simplicity, hopes of their future elevation. They have no forms of worship, no idea of future responsibility; but they are likewise free from prejudice of every kind, and therefore open, under skilful hands and tender applications, to the conviction of truth, and to religious impressions. One tribe, the Sibnowans, particularly struck Mr Brooke by their gentleness and sweetness of disposition. But,

"Like the rest of the Dyaks," he informs us, "the Sibnowans *adorn* their houses with the heads of their enemies; yet with them this custom exists in a modified form. Some thirty skulls," he adds, "were hanging from the roof of one apartment; and I was informed that they had many more in their possession; all however, the heads of enemies, chiefly of the tribe of Sazebus. On enquiring, I was told that it is indispensably necessary a young man should procure a skull before he gets married. On my urging that the custom would be more honoured in the breach than in the observance, they replied, that it was established from time immemorial, and could not be dispensed with. Subsequently, however, Sejugali allowed that heads were very difficult to obtain now, and a young man might sometimes get married by giving presents to his ladye-love's parents; at all times they denied warmly ever obtaining any heads but those of their enemies;

adding, they were bad people, and deserved to die.

"I asked a young unmarried man whether he would be obliged to get a head before he could obtain a wife. He replied, 'Yes.' 'When would he get one?' 'Soon.' 'Where would he go to get one?' 'To the Sazebus river.' I mention these particulars in detail, as I think, had their practice extended to taking the head of any defenceless traveller, or any Malay surprised in his dwelling or boat, I should have wormed the secret out of them."

The Dyaks, generally, are celebrated for the manufacture of iron. Their forge is the simplest possible, and is formed by two hollow trees, each about seven feet high, placed upright, side by side, in the ground. From the lower extremity of these, two pipes of bamboo are conducted through a clay bank three inches thick, into a charcoal fire; a man is perched at the top of the trees, and pumps with two pistons, the suckers of which are made with cocks' feathers, which, being raised and depressed alternately, blow a regular stream of air into the fire. The soil cultivated by these people was found to be excellent. In the course of his wanderings, Mr Brooke lighted upon a Chinese colony, who, as is customary with our new allies, were making the most of their advantages. The settlement consisted of thirty men, genuine Chinese, and five women of the mixed breed of Sambas. They had been but four or five months in the country, and many acres were already cleared and under cultivation. The head of the settlement, a Chinese of Canton, spoke of gold mines which were abundant in the Sarāwak mountains, and of antimony ore and diamonds; the former, he said, might be had in any quantities.

Upon his return to Sarāwak, Mr Brooke opened to the rajah the business which had chiefly conducted him to his shores. He informed his highness that, being a private gentleman, he had no interest in the communication he was about to make; and that, being in no way connected with government, his words came with no authority. At the same time, he was, anxious for the interests of mankind, and more especially for the wellbeing of the inhabitants of Borneo, which was the last Malay state possessing any power, that the resources of a country so favoured by Providence should be brought into the fullest play. To this end, he suggested the opening of a trade with individual European merchants. Sarāwak was rich, and the territory around it produced many articles well adapted for commercial intercourse—such as bees' wax, birds' nests, rattans, antimony ore, and sago, which constituted the staple produce of the country. And, in return for such commodities, merchants of Singapore would gladly send from Europe such articles as would be highly serviceable to the people of Borneo—gunpowder, muskets, and cloths. Both parties would be benefited, and the comfort and happiness of the Borneons greatly enhanced. There was much discussion on the proposal, timidity and apprehension characterizing the questions and answers of the Rajah.

The important interview at an end, Mr Brooke prepares for a return to Singapore. "Never," says that gentleman, "was such a blazing as when we left Sarāwak; twenty-one guns I fired to the Rajah, and he fired forty-two to me—at least we counted twenty-four, and they went on firing afterwards, as long as ever we were in sight. The last words the Rajah, Muda Hassim, said, as I took my leave, were—'Tuan Brooke, do not forget me.'"

In August 1840, Mr Brooke arrived in Sarāwak for the second time. He had passed many months in cruising about the Archipelago, obtaining valuable information respecting the language, habits, and history of the race for whom he was concerned, and in collecting specimens of natural history, which are said to be interesting in the highest degree. The position of the Rajah had altered during his absence. The civil war or rebellion which had, in the first instance, forced the governor to reside in Sarāwak, was not yet quelled. The rebels, indeed, were within thirty miles of the rajah, and threatening an immediate attack. Nothing could be more opportune than the return of Mr Brooke at this critical moment. Muda Hassim begged his ancient friend not to desert him in his extremity, and appealed to his honour, as a gentleman from England, whether it would be fair to suffer him to be vanquished by the traitorous revolt of his people. Mr Brooke felt that it would not, and resolved to stand by the governor.

"A grand council of war," writes Mr Brooke in his journal, "was held, at which were present Macota, Subtu, Abong Mia, and Datu Naraja, two Chinese leaders, and myself—certainly a most incongruous mixture, and one rarely to be met with. After much discussion, a move close to the enemy was determined on for to-morrow; and on the following day to take up a position near the defences. To judge by the sample of the council, I should form very unfavourable expectations of their conduct in action. Macota is lively and active; but, whether from indecision or want of authority, undecided. The Capitan China is lazy and silent; Subtu indolent and self-indulgent; Abong Mia and Datu Maraja stupid."

The army set off, and Mr Brooke availed himself of a friendly hill to obtain a view of the country, and of the enemy's forts. The fort of Balidah was the strongest of their defences, and a moment's observation convinced him that a company of military might put an end to the war in a few hours. This fort was situated at the water edge, on a slight eminence on the right bank of a river; a few swivels and a gun or two were in it, and around it a breast-work of wood, six or seven feet high. The remaining defences were even more insignificant; and the enemy's artillery was reported to consist of three six-pounders, and numerous swivels. The number of fighting men amounted to about five hundred, about half of whom were armed with muskets, while the rest carried swords and spears. *Ranjows* were stuck in every direction. "These ranjows are made of bamboo, pointed fine, and stuck in the ground; and there are, besides, holes of about three feet deep filled with these spikes, and afterwards lightly covered, which are called patobong." The army of the rajah was scarcely more formidable than that of the enemy. It consisted of two hundred Chinese,

excellent workmen and bad soldiers, two hundred and fifty Malays, and some two hundred friendly Dyaks; a few brass guns composed the artillery; and the boats were furnished with swivels. Mr Brooke suggested an attack of the detached defences—a proposition that was treated as that of a madman, the Rajah's army having no notion of fighting except from behind a wall. A council of war decided that advances should be made from the hill behind the rajah's fort to Balidah by a chain of posts, the distance being a short mile, in which space the enemy would probably erect four or five forts; "and then," says Mr Brooke, "would come a bombardment, noisy, but harmless."

Insignificant as the account may read, the difficulties of Mr Brooke, as commander-in-chief, were formidable enough, surrounded as he was by perils threatening not only from the enemy, but from the rank cowardice of his supporters, and the envy, spite, hatred, and machinations of his allies, the Rajah's ministers. The operations are admirably described in Mr Brooke's journal. Let it suffice to say, that the energy and bravery of the English leader brought them to a satisfactory issue, and, finally, the war to a happy close. At his intercession the lives of many of the offenders were spared, and the rebels suffered to deliver up their arms, and to return in peace to Sarāwak. [Pg 363]

It is now necessary to state, that at the commencement of the war, Muda Hassim, unsolicited by Mr Brooke, had undertaken to confer upon the latter the governorship of Sarāwak, in the event of success crowning the efforts of his "friend from England." Mr Brooke had not demanded from the unfortunate Rajah a written agreement to this effect; nor at the time even desired a recompense, which was likely to bring with it much more of difficulty and vexation than profit and power. He respectfully declined an honour which he informed the Rajah it did not become him to accept whilst his highness was in his hands. The war being over, and Muda Hassim reinstated, the negotiation recommenced. No sooner was it discussed, however, than Mr Brooke informed the rajah that Malay institutions were so faulty, the high being allowed by them so much license, and the poor so oppressed, that any attempt to govern without a removal of abuses, was, on his part at least, impossible; and as a condition of his acceptance, he insisted that the Rajah should use all his exertions to establish the principle, that one man must not take from another, and that all men were free to enjoy the produce of their labour, save and except when they were working for the revenue. This revenue, too, he submitted, it was necessary to fix at a certain amount for three years, as well as the salaries of the government officers. The same rights should be conceded to the Dyak and Malay, and the property of the former must be protected, their taxes fixed, and labour free. The rajah acquiesced in the propriety of these measures, and bargained only for the maintenance of the national faith and customs. Mr Brooke remained in Sarāwak, but the office which had been offered with so much eagerness and pressing love, was after all slow in being conferred. Bad advisers, envious ministers, and weakness in Muda Hassim himself, all prevented the conclusion of a business upon which Mr Brooke had never entered of his own accord; but which, having entered upon it, had rendered him liable for many engagements which his anticipated new position had made essential.

"I found myself," writes Mr Brooke, "clipped like Samson, while delay was heaped upon delay, excuse piled upon excuse. It was provoking beyond sufferance. I remonstrated firmly but mildly on the waste of my money, and on the impossibility of any good to the country whilst the rajah conducted himself as he had done. I might as well have whistled to the winds, or have talked reason to stones. I had trusted—my eyes gradually opened—I feared I was betrayed and robbed, and had at length determined to be observant and watchful." Upon the faith of the Rajah, Mr Brooke had purchased in Singapore a schooner of ninety tons, called *The Swift*, which he had laden with a suitable cargo. Upon its arrival at Sarāwak, the rajah petitioned to have the cargo ashore, assuring Mr Brooke of a good and quick return: part of such return being immediately promised in the shape of antimony ore. Three months elapsed, and the rajah's share in this mercantile transaction had yet to be fulfilled. Disgusted with his treatment, and hopeless of justice, Mr Brooke dispatched the *Swift* to Singapore; and hearing that the crew of a shipwrecked vessel were detained in Borneo Proper, sent his only remaining vessel, the *Royalist*, to the city of Borneo, in order to obtain such information as might lead to the rescue of his countrymen. "I resolved," the journal informs us, "to remain here, to endeavour, if I could, to obtain *my own*. Each vessel was to return as quickly as possible from her place of destination; and I then determined to give two additional months to the rajah, and to urge him in every way in my power to do what he was bound to do as an act of common honesty. Should these means fail, after making the strongest representations, and giving amplest time, I considered myself free to extort by force what I could not gain by fair means." [Pg 364]

"I need hardly remark," writes Captain Keppel, "on the singular courage and disregard of personal safety, and life itself, evinced by my friend on this occasion. At issue with the rajah on points of great temptation to him, beset by intrigues, and surrounded by a fierce and lawless people, Mr Brooke did not hesitate to dispatch his vessels and protectors,—the one on a mission of pure humanity, and the other in calm pursuance of the objects he had proposed to himself to accomplish; and, with three companions, place himself at the mercy of such circumstances, regardless of the danger, and relying on the overruling Providence in which he trusted, to bring him safely through all his difficulties and perils."

On the 16th of August 1841, the Royalist returned, and three days afterwards it was followed by the Swift. The former reported that the prisoners had been heard of in Borneo, but, unfortunately, not released. The Swift was accompanied by the Diana steamer. The formidable squadron alarmed the rajah and his ministers. Mr Brooke learned that the difficulties of the rajah's situation were increased, and his conduct towards himself, in a manner, excused, by the

intrigues and evil doings of the latter. Macota, of whom mention has been made, was the most vindictive and unscrupulous amongst them. He had attempted to poison the interpreter of Mr Brooke, and had been discovered as the abettor of even more fearful crimes. Mr Brooke, strengthened by his late arrivals, resolved to bring matters to a crisis, and to test at once the strength of the respective parties. He landed a party of men fully armed, and loaded the ship's guns with grape and canister; he then proceeded to Muda Hassim, protested that he was well disposed towards the rajah, but assured him, at the same time, that neither he nor himself was safe against the practices of the artful and desperate Macota. Muda Hassim was frightened. One of the Dyak tribes took part with Mr Brooke, two hundred of them, with their chiefs, placing themselves unreservedly at his disposal, whilst Macota was deserted by all but his immediate slaves. The Chinese and the rest of the inhabitants looked on. The upshot may be anticipated. The rajah became suddenly active and eager for an arrangement. The old agreement was drawn out, sealed, and signed; guns fired, flags waved, and on the 24th of September 1841 Mr Brooke became Rajah of Sarāwak.

The first acts of Mr Brooke, after his accession to power, were suggested by humanity, and a tender consideration for the savage people whom he so singularly and unexpectedly had been called upon to govern. He inquired into the state of the Dyaks, endeavoured to gain their confidence, and to protect them from the brutal onslaught of the Malays and of each other, and at once relieved them of the burdens of taxation which weighed so cruelly upon them. He opened a court for the administration of justice, at which he presided with the late rajah's brothers, and maintained strict equity amongst the highest and lowest of his people. He decreed that murder, robbery, and other heinous crimes, should, for the future, be punished according to the written law of Borneo; that all men, irrespectively of race, should be permitted to trade and labour according to their pleasure, and to enjoy their gains; that all roads should be open, and that all boats coming to the river should be free to enter and depart without let or hindrance; that trade should be free; that the Dyaks should be suffered to live unmolested; together with other salutary measures for the general welfare. Difficulty and vexation met the governor at every step; but he persevered in his schemes of amelioration, and with a success which is not yet complete, and for years cannot be fairly estimated.

Muda Hassim, the former rajah of Sarāwak, was also presumptive heir to the throne of Borneo; but, unfortunately for him, under the displeasure of his nephew, the reigning sultan. The confirmation of Mr Brooke's appointment, it was absolutely necessary to receive from the latter; and Mr Brooke accordingly resolved to pay a visit to the prince, in the first place, to obtain a reconciliation, if possible, with the offending Muda, and secondly, to consolidate his own infant government. There was another object, too. The sultan had power to release the prisoners who had been spared in the wreck already mentioned; and this power Mr Brooke hoped, by discretion, to prevail upon his majesty to exercise. The picture of this potentate is thus drawn by Mr Brooke:

> "The sultan is a man past fifty years of age, short and puffy in person, with a countenance which expresses, very obviously, the imbecility of his mind. His right hand is garnished with an extra diminutive thumb—the natural member being crooked and distorted. His mind, indeed, by his face, seems to be a chaos of confusion—without acuteness, without dignity, and without good sense. He can neither read nor write; is guided by the last speaker; and his advisers, as might be expected, are of the lower order, and mischievous from their ignorance and greediness. He is always talking, and generally joking; and the most serious subjects never meet with five minutes' consecutive attention. The favourable side of his character is, that he is good-tempered and good-natured—by no means cruel—and, in a certain way, generous, though rapacious to as high a degree. His rapacity, indeed, is carried to such an excess as to astonish a European, and is evinced in a thousand mean ways. The presents I made him were unquestionably handsome; but he was not content without begging from me the share I had reserved for the other Pangerans; and afterwards, through Mr Williamson, solicited more trifles—such as sugar, penknives, and the like. I may note one other feature that marks the man. He requested as the greatest favour—he urged with the earnestness of a child—that I would send back the schooner before the month Ramban, (Ramadan of the Turks,) remarking, 'What shall I do during the fast without soft sugar and dates?'"

The delivery of the prisoners, and the forgiveness of Muda Hassim, were quickly obtained; the more personal matter found opposition with the advisers of the Crown, but was ultimately conceded. On the 1st of August 1842, the letters to Muda Hassim were sealed and signed; and at the same council the contract, which gave Mr Brooke the government of Sarāwak, was fully discussed; and by ten o'clock at night was signed, sealed and witnessed. Mr Brooke returned to his government and people on the following day.

On the 1st of January 1843, the following entry appears in the diary so often quoted:—"Another year passed and gone!—a year with all its anxieties, its troubles, its dangers, upon which I can look back with satisfaction—a year in which I have been usefully employed in doing good to others. Since I last wrote, the Dyaks have been quiet, settled, and improving; the Chinese advancing towards prosperity; and the Sarāwak people wonderfully contented and industrious, relieved from oppression, and fields of labour allowed them. Justice I have executed with an unflinching hand."

It was in the month of March 1843, at the conclusion of the Chinese war, that Captain Keppel

was ordered in the Dido to the Malacca Straits and the island of Borneo. Daring acts of piracy had been committed, and were still committing, on the Borneon coast; and, becoming engaged in the suppression of these crimes, he fell in with the English rajah of Sarāwak, and obtained from him the information which he has recently given to the world, and enabled us to place succinctly before our readers.

The piracy of the Eastern Archipelago is very different to that of the western world. The former obtains an importance unknown to the latter. The hordes who conduct it issue from their islands and coasts in fleets, rove from place to place, intercept the native trade, enslave whole towns at the entrance of rivers, and attack ill-armed or stranded European vessels. The native governments, if they are not participators in the crime, are made its victims, and in many cases, we are told, they are both—purchasing from one set of pirates, and plundered and enslaved by another. Captain Keppel has well related more than one engagement in which he was concerned with the ferocious marauders of these eastern seas—scenes of blood and horror, justified only by the enormity of the offence, and the ultimate advantages likely to be obtained from an extirpation of the deeply-rooted evil. As we have hinted at the commencement of this article, our present object is not so much to draw attention to the battle-scenes described by Mr Keppel, and which may be read with peculiar though painful interest in his book, as to obtain for Mr Brooke, the peaceful and unselfish disposer of so many blessings amongst a benighted and neglected people, that admiration and regard which he has so nobly earned. He has done much, but our government may enable him to do more. He has shown the capabilities of his distant home, and called upon his mother-country to improve them to the uttermost. We hear that her Majesty's government have not been deaf to his appeal, and that aid will be given for the development of his plans, equal to his warmest expectations. We trust it may be so. Nothing is wanting but the assistance which a government alone can afford, to render Borneo a friendly and valuable ally, and to constitute Mr Brooke one of the most useful benefactors of modern times; a benefactor in the best sense of the term—an improver of his species—an intelligent messenger and expounder of God's purpose to man.

THE SMUGGLER'S LEAP.

A Passage in the Pyrenees.

"Oh! there's not in this wide world," I exclaimed, quite unintentionally quoting Tom Moore; "there never has been, nor can ever be again, so charming a creature. No nymph, or sylph, or winged Ariel, or syren with song and mirror, was ever so fascinating—no daughter of Eve so pretty and provoking!"

This apostrophe, which certainly appears, now that in cooler moments I recall it, rather rhapsodical, was not uttered *viva voce*, nor even *sotto voce*, seeing that its object, Miss Dora M'Dermot, was riding along only three paces in front of me, whilst her brother walked by my side. It was a mere mental ejaculation, elicited by the surpassing perfections of the aforesaid Dora, who assuredly was the most charming girl I had ever beheld. But for the Pyrenean scenery around us, and the rough ill-conditioned mule, with its clumsy side-saddle of discoloured leather, on which she was mounted, instead of the Spanish jennet or well-bred English palfrey that would best have suited so fair an equestrian, I could, without any great exertion of fancy, have dreamed myself back to the days of the M'Gregor, and fancied that it was Die Vernon riding up the mountain side, gaily chatting as she went with the handsome cavalier who walked by her stirrup, and who might have been Frank Osbaldistone, only that he was too manly-looking for Scott's somewhat effeminate hero. How beautifully moulded was the form which her dark-green habit set off to such advantage; how fairy-like the foot that pressed the clumsy stirrup; how slender the fingers that grasped the rein! She had discarded the heavy riding-hat and senseless bonnet, those graceless inventions of some cunning milliner, and had adopted a head-dress not unusual in the country in which she then was. This was a *beret* or flat cap, woven of snow-white wool, and surmounted by a crimson tassel spread out over the top. From beneath this elegant *coiffure* her dark eyes flashed and sparkled, whilst her luxuriant chestnut curls fell down over her neck, the alabaster fairness of which made her white head-dress look almost tawny. Either because the air, although we were still in the month of September, was fresh on the mountains, or else because she was pretty and a woman, and therefore not sorry to show herself to the best advantage, she had twisted round her waist a very long cashmere scarf, previously passing it over one shoulder in the manner of a sword-belt, the ends hanging down nearly to her stirrup; and this gave something peculiarly picturesque, almost fantastical, to her whole appearance.

Upon the second day of my arrival at the baths of St Sauveur, in the Pyrenees, I had fallen in with my old friend and college chum, Jack M'Dermot, who was taking his sister the round of the French watering-places. Dora's health had been delicate, the faculty had recommended the excursion; and Jack, who doated upon his only sister, had dragged her away from the gaieties of London and brought her off to the Pyrenees. M'Dermot was an excellent fellow, neither a wit nor a Solomon; but a good-hearted dog who had been much liked at Trin. Coll., Dublin, where he had thought very little of his studies, and a good deal of his horses and dogs. An Irishman, to be sure, occasionally a slight touch of the brogue was perceptible in his talk; but from this his sister, who had been brought up in England, was entirely free. Jack had a snug estate of three thousand a-

year; Miss Dora had twenty thousand pounds from her mother. She had passed two seasons in London; and if she was not already married, it was because not one of the fifty aspirants to her hand had found favour in her bright eyes. Lively and high-spirited, with a slight turn for the satirical, she loved her independence, and was difficult to please.

I had been absent from England for nearly two years, on a continental tour; and although I had heard much of Miss M'Dermot, I had never seen her till her brother introduced me to her at St Sauveur. I had not known her an hour, before I found myself in a fair way to add another to the list of the poor moths who had singed their wings at the perilous light of her beauty. When M'Dermot, learning that, like themselves, I was on a desultory sort of ramble, and had not marked out any particular route, offered me a seat in their carriage, and urged me to accompany them, instead of prudently flying from the danger, I foolishly exposed myself to it, and lo! what might have been anticipated came to pass. Before I had been two days in Dora's society, my doom was sealed; I had ceased to belong to myself; I was her slave, the slave of her sunny smile and bright eyes—talisman more potent than any lamp or ring that djinn or fairy ever obeyed.

A fortnight had passed, and we were at B——. During that time, the spell that bound me had been each day gaining strength. As an intimate friend of her brother, I was already, with Dora, on the footing of an old acquaintance; she seemed well enough pleased with my society, and chatted with me willingly and familiarly; but in vain did I watch for some slight indication, a glance or an intonation, whence to derive hope. None such were perceptible; nor could the most egregious coxcomb have fancied that they were. We once or twice fell in with other acquaintances of her's and her brother's, and with them she had just the same frank friendly manner, as with me. I had not sufficient vanity, however, to expect a woman, especially one so much admired as Miss M'Dermot, to fall in love at first sight with my humble personality, and I patiently waited, trusting to time and assiduity to advance my cause.

Things were in this state, when one morning, whilst taking an early walk to the springs, I ran up against an English friend, by name Walter Ashley. He was the son of a country gentleman of moderate fortune, at whose house I had more than once passed a week in the shooting season. Walter was an excellent fellow, and a perfect model of the class to which he belonged. By no means unpolished in his manners, he had yet a sort of plain frankness and *bonhomie*, which was peculiarly agreeable and prepossessing. He was not a university man, nor had he received an education of the highest order; spoke no language but his own with any degree of correctness; neither played the fiddle, painted pictures, nor wrote poetry. On the other hand, in all manly exercises he was a proficient; shot, rode, walked, and danced to perfection; and the fresh originality, and pleasant tone of his conversation, redeemed any deficiency of reading or accomplishment. In personal appearance he was a splendid fellow, nearly six feet in his boots, strongly, but, at the same time, symmetrically built; although his size of limb and width of shoulder rendered him, at six-and-twenty, rather what is called a fine man, than a slender or elegant one. He had the true Anglo-Saxon physiognomy, blue eyes, and light brown hair that waved, rather than curled, round his broad handsome forehead. And, then, what a mustache the fellow had! (He was officer in a crack yeomanry corps.) Not one of the composite order, made up of pomatum and lamp-black, such as may be seen sauntering down St James's Street on a spring afternoon, with incipient guardsmen behind them—but worthy of an Italian painter or Hungarian hussar; full, well-grown, and glossy. Who was the idiot who first set afloat the notion—now become an established prejudice in England—that mustaches were unseemly? To nine faces out of ten, they are a most becoming addition, increasing physiognomical character, almost giving it where there is none; relieving the monotony of broad flat cheeks, and abridging the abomination of a long upper-lip. Uncleanly, say you? Not a bit of it, if judiciously trimmed and trained. What, Sir! are they not at least as proper looking as those foxy thickets extending from jawbone to temple, which you yourself, each morning of your life, take such pains to comb and curl into shape?

Delighted to meet Ashley, I dragged him off to the hotel, to introduce him to M'Dermot and his sister. As a friend of mine they gave him a cordial welcome, and we passed that day and the following ones together. I soon, however, I must confess, began to repent a little having brought my handsome friend into the society of Dora. She seemed better pleased with him than I altogether liked, nor could I wonder at it. Walter Ashley was exactly the man to please a woman of Dora's character. She was of rather a romantic turn, and about him there was a dash of the chivalrous, well calculated to captivate her imagination. Although perfectly feminine, she was an excellent horsewoman, and an ardent admirer of feats of address and courage, and she had heard me tell her brother of Ashley's perfection in such matters. On his part, Ashley, like every one else who saw her, was evidently greatly struck with her beauty and fascination of manner. I cannot say that I was jealous; I had no right to be so, for Dora had never given me encouragement; but I certainly more than once regretted having introduced a third person into what—honest Jack M'Dermot counting, of course, for nothing—had previously been a sort of *tête-à-tête* society. I began to fear that, thanks to myself, my occupation was gone, and Ashley had got it.

It was the fifth day after our meeting with Walter, and we had started early in the morning upon an excursion to a neighbouring lake, the scenery around which, we were told, was particularly wild and beautiful. It was situated on a piece of table-land on the top of a mountain, which we could see from the hotel window. The distance was barely ten miles, and the road being rough and precipitous, M'Dermot, Ashley, and myself, had chosen to walk rather than to risk our necks by riding the broken-knee'd ponies that were offered to us. A sure-footed mule, and indifferent side-saddle, had been procured for Miss M'Dermot, and was attended by a wild-looking Bearnese

boy, or gossoon, as her brother called him, a creature like a grasshopper, all legs and arms, with a scared countenance, and long lank black hair hanging in irregular shreds about his face.

There is no season more agreeable in the Pyrenees than the month of September. People are very apt to expatiate on the delights of autumn, its mellow beauty, pensive charms, and suchlike. I confess that in a general way I like the youth of the year better than its decline, and prefer the bright green tints of spring, with the summer in prospective, to the melancholy autumn, its russet hues and falling leaves; its regrets for fine weather past, and anticipations of bad to come. But if there be any place where I should be tempted to reverse my judgment, it would be in Southern France, and especially its western and central portion. The clear cloudless sky, the moderate heat succeeding to the sultriness, often overpowering, of the summer months, the magnificent vineyards and merry vintage time, the noble groves of chestnut, clothing the lower slopes of the mountains, the bright streams and flower-spangled meadows of Bearn and Languedoc, render no part of the year more delightful in those countries than the months of September and October.

As before mentioned, Dora rode a little in front, with Ashley beside her, pointing out the beauties of the wild scenery through which we passed, and occasionally laying a hand upon her bridle to guide the mule over some unusually rugged portion of the almost trackless mountain. M'Dermot and I were walking behind, a little puffed by the steepness of the ascent; our guide, whose name was Cadet, a name answered to by every second man one meets in that part of France, strode along beside us, like a pair of compasses with leathern lungs. Presently the last-named individual turned to me—

"*Ces messieurs veulent-ils voir le Saut de lou Contrabandiste?*" said he, in the barbarous dialect of the district, half French, half patois, with a small dash of Spanish.

"*Le Saut du Contrebandier*, the Smuggler's Leap—What is that?" asked Dora, who had overheard the question, turning round her graceful head, and dazzling us—me at least—by a sudden view of her lovely face, now glowing with exercise and the mountain air.

The smuggler's leap, so Cadet informed us, was a narrow cleft in the rock, of vast depth, and extending for a considerable distance across a flank of the mountain. It owed its name to the following incident:—Some five years previously, a smuggler, known by the name of Juan le Negre, or Black Juan, had, for a considerable period, set the custom-house officers at defiance, and brought great discredit on them by his success in passing contraband goods from Spain. In vain did they lie in ambush and set snares for him; they could never come near him, or if they did it was when he was backed by such a force of the hardy desperadoes carrying on the same lawless traffic, that the douaniers were either forced to beat a retreat or got fearfully mauled in the contest that ensued. One day, however, three of these green-coated guardians of the French revenue caught a sight of Juan alone and unarmed. They pursued him, and a rare race he led them, over cliff and crag, across rock and ravine, until at last they saw with exultation that he made right for the chasm in question, and there they made sure of securing him. It seemed as if he had forgotten the position of the cleft, and only remembered it when he got within a hundred yards or thereabouts, for then he slackened his pace. The douaniers gained on him, and expected him to desist from his flight, and surrender. What was their surprise and consternation when they saw him, on reaching the edge of the chasm, spring from the ground with lizardlike agility, and by one bold leap clear the yawning abyss. The douaniers uttered a shout of rage and disappointment, and two of them ceased running; but the third, a man of great activity and courage, and who had frequently sworn to earn the reward set on the head of Juan, dared the perilous jump. He fell short; his head was dashed against the opposite rock, and his horror-struck companions, gazing down into the dark depth beneath, saw his body strike against the crags on its way to the bottom of the abyss. The smuggler escaped, and the spot where the tragical incident occurred was thenceforward known as "*Le Saut du Contrebandier*."

Before our guide had finished his narrative, we were unanimous in our wish to visit its scene, which we reached by the time he had brought the tale to a conclusion. It was certainly a most remarkable chasm, whose existence was only to be accounted for by reference to the volcanic agency of which abundant traces exist in Southern France. The whole side of the mountain was cracked and rent asunder, forming a narrow ravine of vast depth, in the manner of the famous Mexican *barrancas*. In some places might be traced a sort of correspondence on the opposite sides; a recess on one side into which a projection on the other would have nearly fitted, could some Antæus have closed the fissure. This, however, was only here and there; generally speaking, the rocky brink was worn by the action of time and water, and the rock composing it sloped slightly downwards. The chasm was of various width, but was narrowest at the spot at which we reached it, and really did not appear so very terrible a leap as Cadet made it out to be. On looking down, a confusion of bush-covered crags was visible; and now that the sun was high, a narrow stream was to be seen, flowing, like a line of silver, at the bottom; the ripple and rush of the water, repeated by the echoes of the ravine, ascending to our ears with noise like that of a cataract. On large fragment of rock, a few yards from the brink, was rudely carved a date, and below it two letters. They were the initials, so our guide informed us, of the unfortunate douanier who had there met his death.

We had remained for half a minute or so gazing down into the ravine, when Ashley, who was on the right of the party, broke silence.

"Pshaw!" said he, stepping back from the edge, "that's no leap. Why, I'll jump across it myself."

"For heaven's sake!" cried Dora.

"Ashey!" I exclaimed, "don't be a fool!"

But it was too late. What mad impulse possessed him I cannot say; but certain I am, from my knowledge of his character, that it was no foolish bravado or schoolboy desire to show off, that seduced him to so wild a freak. The fact was, but for the depth below, the leap did not look at all formidable; not above four or five feet, but in reality it was a deal wider. It was probably this deceitful appearance, and perhaps the feeling which Englishmen are apt to entertain, that for feats of strength and agility no men surpass them, that convinced Walter of the ease With which he could jump across. Before we could stop him, he took a short run, and jumped.

A scream from Dora was echoed by an exclamation of horror from M'Dermot and myself. Ashley had cleared the chasm and alighted on the opposite edge, but it was shelving and slippery, and his feet slid from under him. For one moment it appeared as if he would instantly be dashed to pieces, but in falling he managed to catch the edge of the rock, which at that place formed an angle. There he hung by his hands, his whole body in the air, without a possibility of raising himself; for below the edge the rock was smooth and receding, and even could he have reached it, he would have found no foot-hold. One desperate effort he made to grasp a stunted and leafless sapling that grew in a crevice at not more than a foot from the edge, but it failed, and nearly caused his instant destruction. Desisting from further effort, he hung motionless, his hands convulsively cramped to the ledge of rock, which afforded so slippery and difficult a hold, that his sustaining himself by it at all seemed a miracle, and could only be the result of uncommon muscular power. It was evident that no human strength could possibly maintain him for more than a minute or two in that position; below was an abyss, a hundred or more feet deep—to all appearance his last hour was come.

M'Dermot and I stood aghast and helpless, gazing with open mouths and strained eyeballs at our unhappy friend. What could we do? Were we to dare the leap, which one far more active and vigorous than ourselves had unsuccessfully attempted? It would have been courting destruction, without a chance of saving Ashley. But Dora put us to shame. One scream, and only one, she uttered, and then, gathering up her habit, she sprang unaided from her mule. Her cheek was pale as the whitest marble, but her presence of mind was unimpaired, and she seemed to gain courage and decision in the moment of peril.

"Your cravats, your handkerchiefs!" cried she, unfastening, as she spoke, her long cashmere scarf. Mechanically M'Dermot and myself obeyed. With the speed of light and a woman's dexterity, she knotted together her scarf, a long silk cravat which I gave her, M'Dermot's handkerchief and mine, and securing—how, I know not—a stone at either extremity of the rope thus formed, she threw one end of it, with sure aim and steady hand, across the ravine and round the sapling already referred to. Then leaning forward till I feared she would fall into the chasm, and sprang forward to hold her back, she let go of the other end. Ashley's hold was already growing feeble, his fingers were torn by the rock, the blood started from under his nails, and he turned his face towards us with a mute prayer for succour. At that moment the two ends of the shawl fell against him, and he instinctively grasped them. It was a moment of fearful suspense. Would the knots so hastily made resist the tension of his weight? They did so; he raised himself by strength of wrist. The sapling bent and bowed, but his hand was now close to it. He grasped it; another powerful effort, the last effort of despair, and he lay exhausted and almost senseless upon the rocky brink. At the same moment, with a cry of joy, Dora fell fainting into her brother's arms.

Of that day's adventures little remains to tell. A walk of a mile brought Ashley to a place where a bridge, thrown over the ravine, enabled him to cross it. I omit his thanks to Dora, his apologies for the alarm he had caused her, and his admiring eulogy of her presence of mind. Her manner of receiving them, and the look she gave him when, on rejoining us, he took her hand, and with a natural and grateful courtesy that prevented the action from appearing theatrical or unusual, pressed it to his lips, were any thing but gratifying to me, whatever they may have been to him. She seemed no way displeased at the freedom. I was most confoundedly, but that Walter did not seem to observe.

The incident that had occurred, and Dora's request, brought our excursion to an abrupt termination, and we returned homewards. It appeared as if this were doomed to be a day of disagreeables. On reaching the inn, I found a letter which, thanks to my frequent change of place, and to the dilatoriness of continental post-offices, had been chasing me from town to town during the previous three weeks. It was from a lawyer, informing me of the death of a relative, and compelling me instantly to return to England to arrange some important business concerning a disputed will. The sum at stake was too considerable for me to neglect the summons, and with the worst possible grace I prepared to depart. I made some violent attempts to induce Ashley to accompany me, talked myself hoarse about fox-hunting and pheasant-shooting, and other delights of the approaching season; but all in vain. His passion for field-sports seemed entirely cooled; he sneered at foxes, treated pheasants with contempt, and professed to be as much in love with the Pyrenees as I began to fear he was with Dora. There was nothing for it but to set out alone, which I accordingly did, having previously obtained from M'Dermot the plan of their route, and the name of the place where he and his sister thought of wintering. I was determined, so soon as I had settled my affairs, to return to the continent and propose for Dora.

Man proposes and God disposes, says the proverb. In my case, I am prepared to prove that the former part of the proverb lied abominably. Instead of a fortnight in London being, as I had too sanguinely hoped, sufficient for the settlement of the business that took me thither, I was

detained several months, and compelled to make sundry journeys to the north of England. I wrote several times to M'Dermot, and had one letter from him, but no more. Jack was a notoriously bad correspondent, and I scarcely wondered at his silence.

Summer came—my lawsuit was decided, and sick to death of briefs and barristers, parchments and attorneys, I once more found myself my own master. An application to M'Dermot's London banker procured me his address. He was then in Switzerland, but was expected down the Rhine, and letters to Wiesbaden would find him. That was enough for me; my head and heart were still full of Dora M'Dermot; and two days after I had obtained information, the "Antwerpen" steamer deposited me on Belgian ground. [Pg 372]

"Mr M'Dermot is stopping here?" I enquired of, or rather affirmed to, the head waiter at the Four Seasons hotel at Wiesbaden. If the fellow had told me he was not, I believe I should have knocked him down.

"He is, sir. You will find him in the Cursaal gardens with madame *sa sœur*."

Off I started to the gardens. They were in full bloom and beauty, crowded with flowers and *fraüleins* and foreigners of all nations. The little lake sparkled in the sunshine, and the waterfowl skimmed over it in all directions. But it's little I cared for such matters. I was looking for Dora, sweet Dora—Dora M'Dermot.

At the corner of a walk I met her brother.

"Jack!" I exclaimed, grasping his hand with the most vehement affection, "I'm delighted to see you."

"And I'm glad to see you, my boy," was the rejoinder. "I was wondering you did not answer my last letter, but I suppose you thought to join us sooner."

"Your last letter!" I exclaimed. "I have written three times since I heard from you."

"The devil you have!" cried Jack. "Do you mean to say you did not get the letter I wrote you from Paris a month ago, announcing"——

I did not hear another word, for just then, round a corner of the shrubbery, came Dora herself, more charming than ever, all grace and smiles and beauty. But I saw neither beauty nor smiles nor grace; all I saw was, that she was leaning on the arm of that provokingly handsome dog Walter Ashley. For a moment I stood petrified, and then extending my hand,

"Miss M'Dermot!"——I exclaimed.

She drew back a little, with a smile and a blush. Her companion stepped forward.

"My dear fellow," said he, "there is no such person. Allow me to introduce you to Mrs Ashley."

If any of my friends wish to be presented to pretty girls with twenty thousand pounds, they had better apply elsewhere than to me. Since that day I have forsworn the practice. [Pg 373]

MINISTERIAL MEASURES.

Not enviable, in our apprehension, at the present crisis, is the position of a young man whose political education has been framed upon Conservative principles, and whose personal experience and recollections go little further back than the triumph of those principles over others which he has been early taught to condemn. His range of facts may be limited, but at the same time it is very significant. He has seen his party—for a season excluded from power—again re-assume the reigns of government at the call of a vast majority of the nation. He remembers that that call was founded upon the general desire that a period of tranquil stability should succeed to an interval of harassing vacillation; and that the only general pledge demanded from the representatives of the people was an adherence to certain principles of industrial protection, well understood in the main, if not thoroughly and accurately defined. We shall suppose a young man of this stamp introduced into the House of Commons, deeply impressed with the full import and extent of his responsibilities—fortified in his own opinions by the coinciding votes and arguments of older statesmen, on whose experience he is fairly entitled to rely—regarding the leader of his party with feelings of pride and exultation, because he is the champion of a cause identified with the welfare of the nation—and unsuspicious of any change in those around him, and above. Such was, we firmly believe, the position of many members of the present Parliament, shortly before the opening of this session, when, on a sudden, rumours of some intended change began to spread themselves abroad. An era of conversion had commenced. In one and the same night, some portentous dream descended upon the pillows of the Whig leaders, and whispered that the hour was come. By miraculous coincidence—co-operation being studiously disclaimed—Lord John Russell, Lord Morpeth,

> "And other worthy fellows that were *out*,"

gave in their adhesion, nearly on the same day, to the League—thereby, as we are told, anticipating the unanimous wish of their followers. Then came, on the part of Ministers, a

mysterious resignation—an episodical and futile attempt to re-construct a Whig government—and the return of Sir Robert Peel to power. Still there was no explanation. Men were left to guess, as they best might, at the Eleusinian drama performing behind the veil of Isis—to speculate for themselves, or announce to others at random the causes of this huge mystification. "The oracles were dumb." This only was certain, that Lord Stanley was no longer in the Cabinet.

Let us pass over the prologue of the Queen's speech, and come at once to the announcement of his financial measures by the Minister. What need to follow him through the circumlocutions of that speech—through the ostentatiously paraded details of the measure that was to give satisfaction to all or to none? What need to revert to the manner in which he paced around his subject, pausing ever and anon to exhibit some alteration in the manufacturing tariff? The catalogue was protracted, but, like every thing else, it had an end; and the result, in so far as the agricultural interest is concerned, was the proposed abolition of all protective duties upon the importation of foreign grain.

Our opinion upon that important point has been repeatedly expressed. For many years, and influenced by no other motive than our sincere belief in the abstract justice of the cause, this Magazine has defended the protective principle from the assaults which its enemies have made. Our views were no doubt fortified by their coincidence with those entertained and professed by statesmen, whose general policy has been productive of good to the country; but they were based upon higher considerations than the mere approbation of a party. Therefore, as we did not adopt these views loosely, we shall not lightly abandon then. On the contrary, we take leave to state here, in *limine*, that, after giving our fullest consideration to the argument of those who were formerly, like us, the opponents, but are now the advisers of the change, we can see no substantial reason for departing from our deliberate views, and assenting to the abandonment of a system which truth and justice have alike compelled us to uphold.

We can, however, afford to look upon these things philosophically, and to content ourselves with protesting against the change. Very different is the situation of those Conservative members of Parliament who are now told that their eyes must be couched for cataract, in order that they may become immediate recipients of the new and culminating light. CONVERSION is no doubt an excellent thing; but, as we have hitherto understood it, the quality of CONVICTION has been deemed an indispensable preliminary. Conversion without conviction is hypocrisy, and a proselyte so obtained is coerced and not won. We are not insensible to the nature of the ties which bind a partisan to his leader. Their relative strength or weakness are the tests of the personal excellence of the latter—of the regard which his talents inspire—of the veneration which his sagacity commands. Strong indeed must be the necessity which on any occasion can unloose them; nor can it, in the ordinary case, arise except from the fault of the leader. For the leader and the follower, if we consider the matter rightly, are alike bound to common allegiance: some principle must have been laid down as terms of their compact, which both are sworn to observe; and the violation of this principle on either side is a true annulment of the contract. No mercy is shown to the follower when he deserts or repudiates the common ground of action;—is the leader, who is presumed to have the maturer mind, and more prophetic eye, entitled to a larger indulgence?

Whilst perusing the late debates, we have repeatedly thought of a pregnant passage in Schiller. It is that scene in "The Piccolomini," where Wallenstein, after compromising himself privately with the enemy, attempts to win over the ardent and enthusiastic Max, the nursling of his house, to the revolt. It is so apposite to the present situation of affairs, that we cannot forbear from quoting it.

WALLENSTEIN.

Yes, Max! *I have delay'd to open it to thee,*
Even till the hour of acting 'gins to strike.
Youth's fortunate feeling doth seize easily
The absolute right; yea, and a joy it is
To exercise the single apprehension
Where the sums square in proof;—
But where it happens, that *of two sure evils*
One must be taken, where the heart not wholly
Brings itself back from out the strife of duties,
There 'tis a blessing to have no election,
And blank necessity is grace and favour.
—This is now present: do not look behind thee,—
It can no more avail thee. Look thou forwards!
Think not! judge not! prepare thyself to act!
The Court—it hath determined on my ruin,
Therefore will I to be beforehand with them.
We'll join THE SWEDES—right gallant fellows are they,
And our good friends.

For "the Swedes" substitute "the League," and there is not one word of the foregoing passage that might not have been uttered by Sir Robert Peel. For, most assuredly, until "the hour of acting" struck, was the important communication delayed; and no higher or more comprehensive argument was given to the unfortunate follower than this, "that of two sure evils one must be

taken." But is it, therefor, such a blessing "to have no election," and is "blank necessity," therefore, such a special "grace and favour?"—say, *is* it necessity, when a clear, and consistent, and honourable course remains open? The evil on one side is clear: it is the loss of self-respect—the breach of pledges—the forfeiture of confidence—the abandonment of a national cause. On the other it is doubtful; it rests but on personal feeling, which may be painful to overcome, but which ought not to stand for a moment in the way of public duty. [Pg 375]

Far be it from us to say, that amongst those who have cast their lot on the opposite side, there are not many who have done so from the best and the purest motives. The public career of some, and the private virtues of others, would belie us if we dared to assert the contrary. With them it may be conviction, or it may be an overruling sense of expediency—and with either motive we do not quarrel—but surely it is not for them, the new converts, to insinuate taunts of interested motives and partial construction against those who maintain the deserted principle. "For whom are you counsel now?" interrupted Sir Robert Peel, in the midst of the able, nay chivalrous speech of Mr Francis Scott, the honourable member for Roxburghshire. Admitting that the question was jocularly put and good-humouredly meant, we yet admire the spirit of the reply. "I am asked for whom I am the counsel. I am the counsel for my opinions. I am no delegate in this assembly. I will yield to no man in sincerity. I am counsel for no man, no party, no sect. I belong to no party. I followed, and was proud to follow, that party which was led so gloriously—the party of the constitution, which was led by the Right Honourable Baronet. I followed under his banner, and was glad to serve under it. I would have continued to serve under his banner if he had hoisted and maintained the same flag!" Can it be that the Premier, who talks so largely about his own wounded feelings, can make no allowance for the sorrow, or even the indignation of those who are now restrained by a sense of paramount duty from following him any further? Can he believe that such a man as Mr Stafford O'Brien would have used such language as this, had he not been stung by the injustice of the course pursued towards him and his party:—"We will not envy you your triumph—we will not participate in your victory. Small in numbers, and, it may be, uninfluential in debate, we will yet stand forward to protest against your measures. You will triumph; yes, and you will triumph over men whose moderation in prosperity, and whose patience under adversity has commanded admiration—but whose fatal fault was, that they trusted you. You will triumph over them in strange coalition with men, who, true to their principles, can neither welcome you as a friend, nor respect you as an opponent; and of whom I must say, that the best and most patriotic of them all will the least rejoice in the downfall of the great constitutional party you have ruined, and will the most deplore the loss of public confidence in public men!"

We may ask, are such men, speaking under such absolute conviction of the truth, to be lightly valued or underrated? Are their opinions, because consistent, to be treated with contempt, and consistency itself to be sneered at as the prerogative of obstinacy and dotage? Was there no truth, then, in the opinions which, on this point of protection, the Premier has maintained for so many years; or, if not, is their fallacy so very glaring, that he can expect all the world at once to detect the error, which until now has been concealed even from his sagacious eye? Surely there must be something very specious in doctrines to which he has subscribed for a lifetime, and without which he never would have been enabled to occupy his present place. We blame him not if, on mature reflection, he is now convince of his error. It is for him to reconcile that error with his reputation as a statesman. But we protest against that blinding and coercing system which of late years has been unhappily the vogue, and which, if persevered in, appears to us of all things the most likely to sap the foundations of public confidence, in the integrity as well as the skill of those who are at the helm of the government.

We have given the speech of Wallenstein-let us now subjoin the reply of Piccolomini. Mark how appropriate it is, with but the change of a single word— [Pg 376]

Max.

My General; this day thou makest me
Of age to speak in my own right and person.
For till this day I have been spared the trouble
To find out my own road. *Thee have I follow'd*
With most implicit, unconditional faith,
Sure of the right path if I follow'd thee.
To-day, for the first time, dost thou refer
Me to myself, and forcest me to make
Election between thee and my own heart—
Is that a good war, which against the Empire
Thou wagest with the Empire's own array?
O God of heaven! what a change is this!
Beseems it me to offer such persuasion
To thee, who like the fix'd star of the pole
Wert all I gazed at on life's trackless ocean;
Oh, what a rent thou makest in my heart!
The engrain'd instinct of old reverence,
The holy habit of obediency,
Must I pluck live asunder from thy name?
Oh, do it not!—I pray thee do it not!—

Thou wilt not—
Thou canst not end in this! It would reduce
All human creatures to disloyalty
Against the nobleness of their own nature.
'Twill justify the vulgar misbelief
Which holdeth nothing noble in free-will,
And trusts itself to impotence alone,
Made powerful only in an unknown power!

These quotations may look strangely in such an article as this; but there are many within the walls of St Stephens's who must acknowledge the force of the allusion, and the truth of the sentiments they convey. The language we intend to use is less that of reproach than sorrow: for whatever may be the practical result of this measure—however it may affect the great industrial interest of the country, it is impossible not to see that, from the mere manner of its proposal, it has disorganized the great Conservative party, and substituted mistrust and confusion for the feeling of entire confidence which formerly was reposed in its leaders.

The change, however has been proposed, and we shall not shrink from considering it. The scheme of Sir Robert Peel is reducible to a few points, which we shall now proceed to review *seriatim*. First—let us regard it with a view to its *nature*; secondly, as to its *necessity* under existing circumstances.

The Premier states, that this is a great *change*. We admit that fully. A measure which contains within itself a provision, that at the end of three years agricultural industry within this country shall be left without any protection at all, and that, in the interim, the mode of protection shall not only be altered but reduced, is necessarily a prodigious *change*. It is one which is calculated to affect agriculture directly, and home consumption of manufactures indirectly; to reduce the price of bread in this country—otherwise it is a useless change—by the introduction of foreign grain, and therefore to lower the profits of one at least of three classes, the landlord, the tenant, or the labourer, which classes consume the greater part of our manufactures. So far it is distinctly adverse to the agricultural interest, for we cannot exactly understand how a measure can be at once favourable and unfavourable to a particular party—how the producer of corn can be benefited by the depreciation of the article which he raises, unless, indeed, the reduction of the price of the food which he consumes himself be taken as an equivalent. Very likely this is what is meant. If so, it partakes of the nature of a principle, and must hold good in other instances. Apply it to the manufacturer; tell him that, by reducing the cost of his cottons one-half, he will be amply compensated, because in that event his shirts will cost him only a half of the present prices, and his wife and children can be sumptuously clothed for a moiety. His immediate answer would be this: "By no means. I an manufacturing not for myself but for others. I deal on a large scale. I supply a thousand customers; and the profit I derive from that is infinitely greater than the saving I could effect by the reduced price of the articles which I must consume at home." The first view is clearly untenable. We may, therefore, conclude at all events that some direct loss must, under the operation of the new scheme, fall upon the agricultural classes; and it is of some moment to know how this loss is to be supplied. For we take the opening statement of Sir Robert Peel as we find it; and he tells us that *both* classes, the agriculturists and the manufacturers, are "to make sacrifices." Now, in these three words lies the germ of a most important—nay paramount—consideration, which we would fain have explained to us before we go any further. For, according to our ideas of words, a sacrifice means a loss, which, except in the case of deliberate destruction, implies a corresponding gain to a third party. Let us, then, try to discover who is to be the gainer. Is it the state—that is, the British public revenue? No—most distinctly not; for while, on the one side, the corn duties are abolished, on the other the tariff is relaxed. Is the sacrifice to be a mutual one—that is, is the agriculturist to be compensated by cheaper *home* manufactures, and the manufacturer to be compensated by cheaper *home-grown bread*? No—the benefit to either class springs from no such source. *The duties on the one side are to be abolished, and on the other side relaxed, in order that the agriculturist may get cheap foreign manufactures, and the manufacturer cheap foreign grain.* If there is to be a sacrifice upon both sides, as was most clearly enunciated, it must just amount to this, that the interchange between the classes at home is to be closed, and the foreign markets opened as the great sources of supply.

Having brought the case of the "mutual sacrifices" thus far, is there one of our readers who does not see a rank absurdity in the attempt to insinuate that a compensation is given to the labourer? This measure, if it has meaning at all, is framed with the view of benefiting the manufacturing interest, of course at the expense of the other. Total abolition of protective duties in this country must lower the price of corn, and that is the smallest of the evils we anticipate;—for an evil it is, if the effect of it be to reduce the labourer's wages—and it must also tend to throw land out of cultivation. *But what will the relaxation of the tariff do?* Will it lower the price of manufactured goods in this country to the agricultural labourer?—that is, after the diminished duty is paid, can foreign manufactures be imported here *at a price which shall compete with the home manufactures*? If so, the home consumption of our manufactures, which is by far the most important branch of them, is ruined. "Not so!" we hear the modern economist exclaim; "the effect of the foreign influx of goods will merely be a stimulant to the national industry, and a consequent lowering of our prices." Here we have him between the horns of a plain and palpable dilemma. If the manufacturer for the home market will be compelled, as you say he must be, to lower his prices at home, in order to meet the competition of foreign imported manufactured goods, which are still liable in a duty, WHAT BECOMES OF YOUR FOREIGN MARKET AFTER

YOU HAVE ANNIHILATED OR EQUALIZED THE HOME ONE? If the foreigner can afford to pay the freight and the duties, and still to undersell you at home, how can you possibly contrive to do the same by him? If his goods are cheaper than yours in this country, when all the costs are included, how can you compete with him in his market? The thing is a dream—a delusion—a palpable absurdity. The fact is either this—that not only the foreign agriculturist but the foreign manufacturer can supply us with either produce cheaper than we can raise it at home—in which case we have not a foreign manufacturing market—or that the idea of "mutual sacrifices" is a mere colour and pretext, and that to all practical intents and purposes the agriculturist is to be the only sufferer.

A great change, however, does not necessarily imply a great measure. This proposal of Sir Robert Peel does not, as far as we can see, embody any principle; it merely surrenders the interests of one class for the apparent aggrandizement of another. We use the word "apparent" advisedly; for, looking to the nature and the extent of home consumption, we believe that the effects of the measure would ultimately be felt most severely by the manufacturers themselves. The agriculturist of Great Britain is placed in a peculiarly bad position. In the first place, he has to rear his produce in a more variable climate, and a soil less naturally productive, than many which exist abroad. In the second place, he has to bear his proportion of the enormous taxation of the country, for the interest of the national debt, and the expense of the executive government—now amounting to nearly fifty millions per annum. It is on these grounds, especially the last, that he requires some protection against the cheap-grown grain of the Continent, with which he cannot otherwise compete; and this was most equitably afforded by the sliding scale, which, in our view, ought to have been adhered to as a satisfactory settlement of the matter. In a late paper upon this subject, we rested our vindication of protection upon the highest possible ground—namely, that it was indispensable for the stability and independence of the country, that it should depend upon its own resources for the daily food of its inhabitants. There is a vast degree of misconception on this point, and the statistics are but little understood. Some men argue as if this country were incapable, at the present time, of producing food for its inhabitants, whilst others assert that it cannot long continue to do so. To the first class we reply with the pregnant fact, that at this moment there is not more foreign grain consumed in Great Britain, than the quantity which is required for production of the malt liquors which we export. To the second we say—if your hypothesis is correct, the present law is calculated to operate both as an index and a remedy; but we broadly dispute your assertions. Agriculture has hitherto kept steady pace with the increase of the population; new land has been taken into tillage, and vast quantities remain which are still improveable. The railways, by making distance a thing of no moment, and by lowering land-carriage, will, if fair play be given to the enterprise of the agriculturist, render any apprehension of scarcity at home ridiculous. As to famine, there is no chance whatever of that occurring, provided the agriculturists are let alone. But, on the contrary, there is a chance not of one future famine, but of many, if the protective duties are removed, and the land at present under tillage permitted to fall back. You talk of the present distress and low wages of the agricultural laborer. It is a favourite theme with a certain section of philanthropists, whose hatred to the aristocracy of this country is only equalled by their ignorance and consummate assurance. Is that, or can that be made—supposing that it generally exists—an argument for a repeal of the corn-laws? If the condition of the labouring man be now indifferent, what will it become if you deprive him of that employment from which he now derives his subsistence? Agriculture is subject to the operation of the laws which govern every branch of industrial labour. It must either progress or fall back—it cannot by possibility stand still. It will progress if you give it fair play; if you check it, it will inevitably decline. What provision do you propose to make for the multitude of labourers who will thus be thrown out of employment? They—the poor—are by far more deeply interested in this question than the rich. Every corn field converted into pasture, will throw some of these men loose upon society. What do you propose do with them? Have you poor's-houses—new Bastilles—large enough to contain them? are they to be desired to leave their homes, desert their families, and seek employment in the construction of railways—a roving and a houseless gang? These are very serious considerations, and they require something more than a theoretical answer. You are not dealing here with a fractional or insignificant interest, but with one which, numerically speaking, is the most important of any in the empire. The number of persons in the United Kingdom immediately supported by agriculture, is infinitely greater than that dependent in like manner upon manufactures. It is a class which you do not count by thousands, but by millions; so that the experiment must be made upon the broadest scale, and the danger of its failure is commensurate. Rely upon it, this is not a subject with which legislators may venture to trifle. If the land of this country is once allowed to recede—as it must do if the power of foreign competition in grain should prove too much for native industry—the consequences may be more ruinous than any of us can yet foresee.

We need hardly say that a period of agricultural depression is of all things that which the manufacturer has most reason to dread. Exportation never can be carried to such a height, that the home consumption shall be a matter of indifference. At present, from eight to nine-tenths of the manufacturing population are dependent for support upon articles consumed at home. Any depression, therefore, of agriculture—any measure which has tendency to throw the other class of labourers out of employment—must be to them productive of infinite mischief. If the customer has no means of buying, the dealer cannot get quit of his goods. This surely is a self-evident proposition; and yet it is now coolly proposed, that for the benefit of the dealer, the resources of the principal customer must be so far crippled that even the employment is rendered precarious.

The abolition of the protective duties upon corn, is unquestionably the leading feature of the scheme which the Premier has brought forward. There are, however, other parts of it with which

the agriculturist has little or nothing to do, but which may appear equally objectionable to isolated interests. Such is the proposal to allow foreign manufactured papers to be admitted at a nominal duty, in the teeth of the present excise regulations, which, of themselves, have been a grievous burden upon this branch of home industry—the reduction of the duties upon manufactured silks, linens, shoes, &c.—all of which are now to be brought into direct competition with our home productions. Brandy, likewise, is to supersede home-made spirits, whilst the excise is not removed from the latter. For these and other alterations, it is difficult to find out any thing like a principle, unless indeed some of them are to be considered as baits thrown out to foreign states for the purpose of tempting them to reciprocity. We should, however, have preferred some distinct negotiation on this subject before the reductions were actually made; for we have no confidence in the scheme of tacit subsidies, without a clear understanding or promise of repayment. Indeed the whole success of this measure, if its effects are prospectively traced, must ultimately depend upon its reception by the foreign powers. No doubt, our abandonment of protection upon grain will be considered by them as a valuable boon; for either their agriculture will increase in a ratio corresponding to the decline of our own, which would clearly be their wisest policy, or they will transfer the system of protective duties to the other side of the seas, and establish a sliding scale on exports, which may actually prevent us from getting their grain any cheaper than at present, whilst our public revenue will thereby be materially diminished. Looking to the commercial jealousy of our neighbours—to the Zollverein, the various independent tariffs, and the care and anxiety with which they are shielding their rising manufactures from our competition—we are inclined to think the last hypothesis the more probable of the two. The vast success of English manufacture, and the strenuous efforts which she has latterly made to command the markets of the world, have not been lost upon the European or the American sates. They are now far less solicitous about the improvement of their agriculture, than for the increase of their manufactures; and some of them—Belgium for example—are already beginning in certain branches to rival us. This scheme of concession which is now agitating us will not, as some suppose, resolve itself into a matter of simple barter, as if Britain with the one hand were demanding corn, and with the other were proffering the equivalent of a cotton bale. We are indeed about to demand corn, but the answer of the foreigner will be this,—"You want grain, for your population is increasing, your land has gone out of cultivation, and you cannot support yourselves. Well, we have a superfluity of grain which we can give you—in fact we have grown it for you—but then it is for us to select the equivalent. We shall not take those goods which you offer in exchange. Twelve years ago we set up cotton manufactories. We had not the same advantages which you possessed in coal and iron, and machinery; but labour was cheaper with us, and we have prospered. Our manufactures are now sufficient to supply ourselves—nay, we have begun to export. Your cotton goods, therefore, are worthless to us, and we must have something else for our corn." Gold, therefore, the common equivalent, will be demanded; and the price of corn in this country will, like every other article, be regulated by the amount and the exigency of the demand. The regulating power, however, will not then be with us, but with the parties who furnish the supply.

But, supposing that no protective duties upon the exportation of grain shall be levied abroad—which certainly is the view of the free-traders, and, we presume, also of the Ministry—and, supposing that corn is imported from abroad at no very great rise of price, then the evil will come upon us in all its naked deformity. It is very well for certain politicians to say, that it is an utter absurdity to maintain that cheap bread can affect the interests of the country; but the men who can argue thus, have not advanced a step beyond the threshold of social economy. Let them take the converse of the proposition. If there existed abroad a manufacturing state which could supply the people of this country with clothing and every article of manufactured luxury, at a ratio thirty per cent cheaper than these could be produced in this country, would it be a measure of wise policy to abandon a system of protective duties? Would it be wise in the agriculturist to insist upon such an abandonment, in order that he might wear a cheaper dress, whilst the practical effect of the measure must be to annihilate the capital now invested in manufactures, to starve the workman, and of course to narrow within the lowest limits his capability of purchasing food? In like manner we say, that it is not wise in the manufacturer to co-operate in this scheme; for sooner or later the evil effects of it must fall upon his own head. Cheap bread may be an evil, and a great one. Mr Hudson, no mean authority in the absence of all official information upon the point, but a man who has personally dealt in grain, informs us that the probable price of wheat will be from 35s. to 40s. a quarter. We shall adopt his calculation, and the more readily because we firmly believe that foreign grain will at first be imported at some such price, although the spirit of avarice may combine with the necessity of expending capital in improvement, to raise it considerably afterwards. But let us assume that as the probable starting price. No man who knows any thing at all upon the subject, will venture to say that, at such a price, the agriculture of the country can be maintained. It *must* go back. The immediate consequence is not a prophecy, but a statement of natural effect. Much land will go out of cultivation. Pauperism will increase in the country on account of agricultural distress, and the home market for manufactures will suffer accordingly.

Is cheap bread a blessing to the labourer, let his labour be what it may? Let us consider that point a little. And, first, what is meant by cheap bread? Cheapness is a relative term, and we cannot disconnect it as a matter of *price*, from the counter element of *wages*. If a labourer earns but a shilling a-day, and the loaf costs seven-pence, he will no doubt be materially benefited by a reduction of twopence upon its price. But if he only earns tenpence, and the loaf is reduced to fivepence, it is clear to the meanest capacity that he is nothing the gainer. Nay, he may be a loser. For the grower of the loaf is more likely, on account of his extra price, to be a purchaser of

such commodities as the other labourer is producing, than if he were ground down to the lowest possible margin. But, setting that aside, the consideration comes to be, does price regulate labour, or labour regulate price? In such a country as this, we apprehend there can be no doubt that price is the regulating power. At the present moment, peculiar and extraordinary causes are at work, which, in some degree, render this question of less momentary consequence. Undoubtedly there is a stimulus within the country, caused by new improvement, which alters ordinary calculations, but which cannot be expected to last. We never yet had so great a demand for labour. But let a period of distress come—such as we had four years ago—and the political problem revives. We are undoubtedly an overgrown country. Periods of distress constantly occur. The slightest check in our machinery, sometimes in parts apparently trivial, is sufficient to derange the whole of our industrial system, and to throw the labourer entirely at the mercy of the capitalist. It is *then* that the relative value of wages and prices is developed. The standard which is invariably fixed upon to regulate the rate of the former, is the price of bread. No class understand this better than the master-manufacturers, who have the command of capital, and are not only the council, but the absolute incarnation of the League. It is in these circumstances that the labouring artisan is driven to the lowest possible rate of wages, which is calculated simply upon the price of the quartern loaf. In order to work he must live. That is a fact which the tyrants of the spinneries do not overlook, but they take care that the livelihood shall be as scant as possible. The labourer is desired to work for his daily bread, to which the wages are made to correspond, and, of course, the cheaper bread is, the greater are the profits of the master.

Where the different industrial classes of a nation purchase from each other, there is a mutual benefit—when either deserts the home market, and has recourse to a foreign one, the benefit is totally neutralized. There is no greater fallacy than the proposition, that it is best to buy in the cheapest and to sell in the dearest market. There is a preliminary consideration to this—which is your best, your steadiest, and your most unfailing customer? None knows better than the manufacturer, that he depends, *ante omnia*, upon the home market. Is not this the very interest which is now assailed and threatened with ruin? There is not a man in this country, whatever be his condition, who would escape without scaith a period of agricultural depression; and how infinitely more dangerous is the prospect, when the period appears to be without a limit! The longer we reflect upon this measure, the more are we convinced of its wantonness, and of the dangerous nature of the experiment upon every industrial class in this great and prospering country.

There is one objection to the Ministerial scheme which, strange to say, is open to both Protectionist and the Free-trader. The landowner has reason to object to it both as an active and a passive measure—it professes to leave him to his own resources, but it does not remove his restrictions. Surely if the foreigner and the colonists are to be permitted to compete on equal terms with him in the production of the great necessary of life, his ingenuity ought to have free scope in other things, more especially as he labours under the disadvantage of an inferior soil and climate. Why may he not be allowed, if he pleases, to attempt the culture of tobacco? The coarser kinds can be grown and manufactured in many parts of England and Scotland, and if we are to have free trade, why not carry out the principle to its fullest extent? Why not allow us to grow hops duty free? Why not relieve us of the malt-tax and of many other burdens? The answer is one familiar to us—the revenue would suffer in consequence. No doubt it would, and so it suffers from every commercial change. But these changes have now gone so far, that—especially if you abolish this protective duty upon corn—we are entitled to demand a return from the present cumbrous, perplexing, and expensive mode of taxation, to the natural cheap and simple one of poll or property-tax. At present no man knows what he is paying towards the expense of government. He is reached in every way indirectly through the articles he consumes. The customs furnish occupation for one most expensive staff; the excise for another; nowhere is the machinery of collection attempted to be simplified. Then comes the assessed-taxes, the income-tax, land-tax—and what not—all collected by different staffs—the cost of the preventive guard is no trifle—in fact, there are as many parasites living upon the taxation of this country as there are insects on a plot of unhealthy rose-trees. If we are to have free trade, let it be free and unconditional, and rid us of these swarms of unnecessary vermin. Open the ports by all means, but open them to every thing. Let the quays be as free for traffic as the Queen's highway; let us grow what we like, consume what we please, and tax us in one round sum according to each man's means and substance, and then at all events there can be no clashing of interests. This is the true principle of free trade, carried to its utmost extent, and we recommend it now to the serious consideration of Ministers.

We have not in these pages ventured to touch upon the interests which the national churches have in this important measure, because hitherto we have been dealing with commercial matters exclusively. May we hope they will be better cared for elsewhere than in our jarring House of Commons.

As to the necessity of the measure, more especially at the present time, we can find no shadow of a reason. We can understand conversions under very special circumstances. Had it been shown that the agriculturists, notwithstanding their protection, were remiss in their duties—that they had neglected improvement—that thereby the people of this country, who looked to them for their daily supply of bread, were stinted or forced pay a most exorbitant price, then there might have been some shadow of an argument for the change at the present moment. We say a shadow, for in reality there is no argument at all. The sliding-scale was constructed, we presume, for the purpose of preventing exorbitant prices, by admitting foreign grain duty free after our averages reached a certain point, *and that point they have never yet reached*. Was, then, the probability of

such prices never in the mind of the framers, and was the sliding-scale merely a temporary delusion and not a settlement? So it would seem. The agriculturists are chargeable with no neglect. The attempt some three or four months ago to get up a cry of famine on account of the failure of the crops, has turned out a gross delusion. Every misrepresentation on this head was met by overwhelming facts; and the consequence is, that the Premier did not venture, in his first speech, to found upon a scarcity as a reason for proposing his measure. Something, indeed, was said about the possibility of a pressure occurring before the arrival of the next harvest—it was perhaps necessary to say so; but no man who has studied the agricultural statistics of last harvest, can give the slightest weight to that assertion. His second speech has just been put into our hands. Here certainly he is more explicit. With deep gravity, and a tone of the greatest deliberation, he tells the House of Commons, that before the month of May shall arrive, the pressure will be upon us. We read that announcement, so confidently uttered, with no slight amount of misgiving as to the opinions we have already chronicled, but the next half column put us right. There is, after all, no considerable deficiency in the grain crop. It may be that the country has raised that amount of corn which is necessary for its ordinary consumption, but the potato crop in Ireland has failed! This, then—the failure of the potato crop in Ireland—is the immediate cause, the necessity, of abolishing the protections to agriculture in Great Britain! Was there ever such logic? What has the murrain in potatoes to do with the question of foreign competition, as applied to English, Scottish, nay, Irish corn? We are old enough to recollect something like a famine in the Highlands, when the poor were driven to such shifts as humanity shudders to recall; but we never heard that distress attributed to the fact of English protection. If millions of the Irish will not work, and will not grow corn—if they prefer trusting to the potato, and the potato happens to fail—are *we* to be punished for that defect, be it one of carelessness, of improvidence, or of misgovernment? Better that we had no reason at all than one so obviously flimsy. If we turn to the petitions which, about the end of autumn, were forwarded from different towns, praying for that favourite measure of the League, the opening of the ports, it will be seen that one and all of them were founded on the assumed fact, that the grain crop was a deficient one. That has proved to be fallacy, and is of course no longer tenable; but now we are asked to take, as a supplementary argument, the state of the potatoes in Ireland, and to apply it not to the opening of the ports for an exigency, but to the total abolition of the protective duties upon grain!

Of the improvidence of the peasantry of Ireland we never entertained a doubt. To such a scourge as this they have been yearly exposed; but how their condition is to be benefited by the repeal of the Corn-laws, is a matter which even Sir Robert Peel has not condescended to explain. For it is a notorious and incontrovertible fact, that if foreign corn were at this moment exposed at their doors duty free, they could not purchase it. We shall give full credit to the government for its intention to introduce the flour of Indian corn to meet, if possible, the exigency. It was a wise and a kind thought, objectionable on no principle whatever; and, had an Order in Council been issued to that effect, we believe there is not one man in the country who would not have applauded it. But why was this not done, more especially when the crisis is so near? If the Irish famine is to begin in May, or even earlier, surely it was not a very prudent or paternal act to mix up the question with another, which obviously could not be settled so easily and so soon. It is rather too much to turn now upon the agriculturists, and say—"You see, gentlemen, what is the impending condition of Ireland. You have it in your power to save the people from the consequences of their own neglect. Adopt our scheme—admit Indian corn free of duty—and you will rescue thousands from starvation." The appeal, we own, would be irresistible, *were it made singly*. But if—mixed up as it were and smothered with maize-flour—the English agriculturist is asked at the same time to pass another measure which he believes to be suicidal to his interest, and detrimental to that of the country, he may well be excused if he pauses before taking so enthusiastic a step. Let us have this maize by all means; feed the Irish as you best can; do it liberally; but recollect that there is also a population in this country to be cared for, and that we cannot in common justice be asked to surrender a permanent interest, merely because a temporary exigency, caused by no fault of ours, has arisen elsewhere.

Apart from this, where was the necessity for the change at the present moment? We ask that question, not because we are opposed to change when a proper cause has been established, but because we have been taught—it would seem somewhat foolishly—to respect consistency, and because we see ground for suspicion in the authenticity of all these sudden and unaccountable conversions. This is the first time, so far as we can recollect, that Ministers, carried into power expressly for their adherence to certain tangible principles, have repudiated these without any intelligible cause, or any public emergency which they might seize as a colourable pretext. The sagacity of some, the high character and stainless honour of others—for we cannot but look upon the whole Cabinet as participators in this measure—render the supposition of any thing like deliberate treachery impossible. It is quite clear from what has already transpired, that the private opinions of some of them remain unchanged. They have no love for this measure—they would avoid it if they could—they cannot look upon its results without serious apprehension. Some of them, we know, care nothing for power—they would surrender, not sacrifice it, at any time cheerfully—most of all at a crisis when its retention might subject them to the reproach of a broken pledge. Neither do we believe that this is a faint-hearted Cabinet, or that its members are capable of yielding their opinions to the *brutum fulmen* of the League. That body is by no means popular. The great bulk of the manufacturing artisans are totally indifferent to its proceedings; for they know well that self-interest, and not philanthropy, is the motive which has regulated that movement, and that the immediate effect of cheap bread would be a reduction of the workman's wages. We cannot, therefore, admit that any pressure from without has wrought this change of opinion, about which there seems to be a mystery which may never be properly explained.

Perhaps it is best that it should remain so. Enough are already implicated in this question, on one side or the other. The facts and the arguments are before us, and we have but to judge between them.

Of the probable fate of this measure we shall venture no opinion. The enormous amount of private business which of late years has been brought before the Houses of Parliament—the importance and the number of the internal improvements which depend upon their sanction, and in which almost every man of moderate means has a stake, are strong probabilities against any immediate dissolution of Parliament, or an appeal to the judgment of the country. But there is no policy equal to truth, no line of conduct at all comparable to consistency. We have not hesitated to express our extreme regret that this measure should have been so conceived and ushered in; both because we think these changes of opinion on the part of public men, when unaccompanied by sufficient outward motives, and in the teeth of their own recorded words and actions, are unseemly in themselves, and calculated to unsettle the faith of the country in the political morality of our statesmen—and because we fear that a grievous, if not an irreparable division has been thereby caused amongst the ranks of the Conservative party. Neither have we hesitated—after giving all due weight to the arguments adduced in its favour—to condemn that measure, as, in our humble judgment, uncalled for and attended with the greatest risk of disastrous consequences to the nation. If this departure from the protective principle should produce the effect of lessening the tillage of our land, converting corn-fields into pasture, depriving the labourer of his employment, and permanently throwing us upon the mercy of foreign nations for our daily supply of corn, it is impossible to over-estimate the evil. If, on the contrary, nothing of this should take place—if it should be demonstrated by experience that the one party has been grasping at a chimera, and the other battling for the retention of an imaginary bulwark, then—though we may rejoice that the delusion has been dispelled—we may well be pardoned some regret that the experiment was not left to other hands. Our proposition is simply this, that if we cannot gain cheap bread without resorting to other countries for it, we ought to continue as we are. Further, we say, that were we to be supplied with cheap bread on that condition, not only our agricultural but our manufacturing interest would be deeply and permanently injured; and that no commercial benefit whatever could recompense us for the sacrifice of our own independence, and the loss of our native resources.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Polydrusus sericea.

[2] Carabus auratus.

[3] Scholia flavicomis.

[4] Victor Hugo's beautiful line on *maternal affection*.

[5] Rondolitier was a celebrated ichthyologist and sportsman of the old school; and those desirous of further information respecting the capture of fish by "fiddling to them," may be referred to his work on fishes, *ad locum*.

[6] These hats are very peculiar; they are highly ornamented with ribands, and have acquired, from their peculiarity in having a double front—"chapeaux a deux bonjours."

[7] For a lively description of this dance *vide* Madame de Sevigne's *Letters to her Daughter*. That ecstatic lady, who always wrote more or less under the influence of St Vitus, was in her time an *habituée* at Vichy.

[8] These wolves were six weeks old, in fine condition, and clung to the teats of their foster parent with wolf-like pertinacity. As long as she lay licking their little black bodies and dark chestnut heads, or permitted them to hide their sulky faces and ugly bare tails under her body, they lay quiet enough, but when she raised her emaciated form to stretch her legs, or to take an airing, at first they hung to her dugs by their teeth; but gradually falling off, barked as she proceeded, and would snap at your fingers if you went to lay hold of them. Out of the six, one was gentle and affectionate, would lick your hand, slept with the owner, and played with his ears in the morning, without biting; if his own ears were pulled, he took it as a dog would have done, and seemed to deprecate all unkindness by extreme gentleness of manner, for which he was finely bullied by his brother wolves accordingly. The bitch seemed equally attached to all the litter; for *instinctive*, unlike *rational* affection, has no favourites. At first the wolves boarded in the same house with us, which afforded abundant opportunity for our visiting them, *a l'improvisto*, whenever we pleased. On one of these occasions we saw two rabbits, lately introduced into their society, crunching carrots, *demissis auribus*, and quite at their ease, while two little "wolves" were curiously snuffing about; at first looking at the rabbits, and then *imitating* them, by taking up some of their *prog*, which tasting and not approving, they spat out—then, as if suspecting the rabbits to have been playing them a trick, one of them comes up stealthily, and brings his own nose in close proximity to that of one of the rabbits, who, quite unmoved at this act of familiarity, continues to munch on. The wolf contemplates him for a short time in astonishment, and seeing that the carrots actually disappear down his "œsophagus," returns to the other wolf to tell him so. His next step is to paw his friend a little, by way of encouraging him to advance. So encouraged he goes up, and straight lays hold of the rabbit's ear, and a pretty plaything it would have made had the rabbit been in the humour! In place of which he *thumps* the ground with his hind legs, rises almost perpendicularly, and the next moment is down like lightning upon the head of the audacious wolf, who on thus unexpectedly receiving a double "colaphus" retreats, yelping! The other wolf is more successful; having crept up

stealthily to the remaining rabbit, he seizes him by his furry rump—off bounds he in a fright, while the other plants himself down like a *sphinx*, erects his ears, and seems highly pleased at what he has been doing! We used sometimes to visit the wolves while they slept; on these occasions a slight whistle was at first sufficient to make them start upon their legs; at last, like most sounds with which the ear becomes familiar, they heard it passively. All our attempts to frighten the rabbits by noises *while they were engaged in munching*, proved unsuccessful.

[9] Sydenham.

[10] So notorious and violent has this hydromachia become, that it has at length called forth a poem, styled the *Vichyade*, of which the two resident physicians are the Achilles and Hector. The poem, which is as coarse and personal as the *Bath Guide*, is not so clever, but is much read here, *non obstant*.

[11] An ingenious physician assures us, that he has for years past been in the habit of consulting his patients in place of his barometer, and has thus been enabled to foretell vicissitudes of weather before they had manifested themselves, by attending to the accounts they gave of their sensations in the bath. There are seven springs, whose united volumes of water, in twenty-four hours, fill a chamber of twenty feet dimensions, in every direction.

[12] *Cornice*—"him."

[13] "Put"—*Cornice*—to take or carry.

[14] Cleverly.

[15] Commencing each line with a letter of the loved one's name.

[16] The Agro Romano, the Sabina, the Campagna Maritima, and the Patrimonio di San Pietro, which make up the Campagna of Rome, contain 3881 square miles, or about 3,000,000 acres.—Sismondi's *Essais*, ii, 10.

[17] Barbieri à Sismondi.—Sismondi's *Essais*, li. 11.

[18] Tacitus, *Annal*. xii. 43. But, by Hercules, formerly provisions were sent for the legions from Italy into distant provinces; nor even now is it afflicted by sterility: but we prefer purchasing it from Africa and Egypt, and the lives of the Roman people have been committed to ships and the chances of the waves.

[19] Sismondi, *Essais*, ii. 25.

[20] To confess the truth, the great estates have ruined Italy; ay, and the provinces too.—*Plin*. 1. xviii. c. 6.

[21] Gibbon, vi. c. 36.

[22] "Quingena viginti millia quadringenti duo jugera quæ Campania provincia, juxta inspectorum relationem, in desertis et squalidis locis habere dignoscitur, eisdem provinciabilibus concessum."—*Cod. Theod.* ix. c. 38, c. 2.

[23] Gibbon, iii. c. 18.

[24] *Ibid.* iii. 88. c. 17.

[25] Michelet, *Histoire de France*, i. 104-108.

[26] Gibbon, VIII. c. xiv.

[27] Michelet's *Histoire de France*, i. 277.

[28] Ammianus Marcellinus, c. xvi; see also Gibbon, vi. 264.

[29] Sismondi's *Essais*, ii. 57.

[30] Sismondi's *Essais*, ii. 33.

[31] Sismondi's *Essais*, ii. 29, 30.

[32] Nicolai, *dell' Agro Romano*, ii. 30, 31.

[33] The rubbi is equal to two French hectares, or five English acres.

[34] Nicolai, iii 133.

[35] *Ibid.*, c. in. 167. *Et subseq*.

[36] Sismondi's *Essais*, ii, 46, 47.

[37] Nicolai, *dell' Agro Romano*, iii. 167, 175.

[38] Nicolai, iii. 174, 178.

[39] Sismondi's *Essais*, ii, 56, 57.

[40] Nicolai, *del' Agro Romano*, iii. 153. Sismondi's *Essais*, ii. 44.

[41] Motu proprio de Pius VII.—Nicolai, ii. 163, 185.

[42] Sismondi's *Essais*, ii. 71.

[43] Gibbon, chap. 33, Vol. vi. p. 20.

[44] Gibbon, c. 31, Vol. v. p. 351.

[45] Slade's *Travels in the East*, ii 15.

[46] Slade, ii. 97.

[47] Sismondi's *Essais*, ii. 71.

[48] *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido, for the Suppression of Piracy, &c. &c.*. By Capt. the Hon. Henry Keppel, R.N. London, 1846.

[49] *Borneo Proper* is the northern and north-western part of the island, and an independent Malay state.

Edinburgh: Printed by Ballantyne and Hughes, Paul's Work.

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