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BLACKWOOD'S

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SISMONDI.[1]

Never was there a juster observation, than that, in ordinary times, in the same state, genius moves in a circle; originality is lost amidst imitation; we breathe thought not less than vital air. This is more especially the case in all those branches of opinion or philosophy which relate to internal economy, or the social concerns of men. There, it is not merely abstract principle, or disinterested reasoning, which have struck their roots into the human mind; interest, prejudice, passion, have moved it yet more deeply, and rendered the change from one set of opinions to another still more difficult. Universally it will be found, that in regard to the social concerns of men, which are so closely interwoven with our habits, interests, and affections, the transition from error to truth can rarely be accomplished by any intellect, how powerful soever, which has not imbibed, in part at least, the maxims of foreign states. New ideas, like lightning, are produced by the blending of two streams of thought, wafted from different ages or parts of the world. The French political revolution was brought about by the meeting of new-born French fervour with long-established English ideas: the Anglomania which immediately preceded that convulsion is the proof of it. The English social revolution has proceeded from the same cause: it is the junction of British practical habits with French speculative views which has produced the political economy of modern times: and the whole doctrines of free-trade which Adam Smith matured, and recent times have reduced to practice, are to be found in the *Physiocratie* of Dupont de Nemours, and the political pamphlets of Turgot.

It was in the year 1775 that these doctrines, imported from France, were first broached in this country by the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*; and it took half a century for them to pass from the solitary meditation of the recluse into the cabinets of statesmen and the hustings of the populace. Now, however, this transformation of thought is general, at least in a considerable part of the mercantile and manufacturing portions of the community. Few in the great cities of the empire think of doubting the doctrines of free-trade: fewer still, if they doubt them, venture to give publicity to their opinions. The reason of this general concurrence among commercial men, and of this, in social matters, rapid conversion of general thought, is to be found in the circumstance, that the new opinions fell in with the interests, or at least the immediate interests, of the leaders and influential men among the [Pg 530] mercantile classes. The remainder, not understanding the subject, yielded by degrees to what they were told, by their superiors in wealth and intelligence, were incontrovertible propositions. Manufacturers who enjoyed the advantages of coal, ironstone, canals, railroads, and harbours at their doors, very readily embraced the doctrine, that all restrictions on commercial intercourse were contrary to reason; and that all mankind, how destitute soever of these advantages themselves, could do nothing so wise as to admit all their goods without any protective duties whatever. Merchants widely engaged in mercantile speculations, who were buying and selling in all parts of the world, and whose interest it was to purchase as largely and as cheaply as possible, and to sell as extensively and as dearly as was consistent with that extent, had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion, that commerce should be left perfectly free, that all protective duties for the shelter of native industry should be abolished, and that the only charges on the transport of goods should be the cost of transit and their own profits. Every shilling taken from the import duties was so much put in their pockets, either directly by their gaining the remitted duty, or by their indirectly feeling the benefit of it, in the reduction of price and the widening of the market. Capitalists and bankers, who had vast sums to lend, found nothing so reasonable as that they should be permitted, without restraint, to exact any amount of usury they chose from the necessities, the folly, or the cupidity of their debtors. The opinion became general, that a nation could only be made rich by the same means as an individual manufacturer, and that the excess of the price obtained for the produce of national labour above the cost of production, was the measure of national wealth.

Under the influence of these opinions, prohibitions, restrictions, and import duties gave way on all sides. To the huge mass of the ignorant vulgar, the very sound of "*abolition of restrictions*" was delightful. Restraint was what they hated, exclusive privilege was their abomination, liberty of thought and action their supposed elysium. To abolish monopolies, incorporations, crafts, guildries, and statutes of apprenticeship, seemed a mighty step in the emancipation of the human race. Thus they cordially and universally joined in the cry for liberation from every sort of restriction, alike in thought, commerce, industry, and action, which had been first raised by the philosophers, and afterwards generally embraced by the capitalists and merchants. Amidst a chorus of congratulations, mutual applauses, and sanguine anticipations, with the cordial approbation of the political economists, the general concurrence of the merchants, and the loud shouts of the multitude, the doctrines of free-trade were progressively applied to every part of the social body. Taxes upon imports have been diminished, till, on all save a few articles, they are now entirely removed; native industry has been exposed, with a very slender protection, to the competition of foreign states; the restraints on the exportation of machinery has been removed, to allow foreign

nations every advantage in competing with us; punishment has been alleviated, till the penalty of death, save in cases of wilful murder, has become practically abolished; the liberty of the press pushed the length of allowing without control its utmost licentiousness; unbounded toleration permitted in matters of opinion, even so far as generally to proclaim impunity to the worst Chartist or Socialist doctrines; combinations among workmen to raise their wages declared legal, and carried into practice on the greatest scale in all the manufacturing districts; a great organic change introduced into the constitution, to render Government more thoroughly dependent on public opinion; taxes to the amount of above thirty millions sterling, on articles of consumption, repealed in less than thirty years; a vast monetary change, to lower prices by raising the value of money, introduced, and steadily enforced, in spite of unbounded consequent distress; and the principle of free competition introduced generally as the basis of the social union, the only sure guarantee of national prosperity.

"Experience," says Dr Johnson, "is the great test of truth, and is perpetually contradicting the theories of men." Never, since the beginning of the world, had the doctrines of philosophers been so generally embraced by Government, or measures really intended for the public good so extensively carried into effect by the Legislature. Unbounded were the anticipations of prosperity and happiness in which men generally indulged on the adoption of this system; inflexible has been the steadiness with which it has been adhered to, amidst an amount of suffering which would long ago have proved fatal to any set of measures among men, except those dictated by their own opinions. But amidst all these anticipations, and this steadiness in carrying out the doctrines of free-trade in every department of thought and action, various unpleasant indications began to manifest themselves in every part of society; and it became evident to all that the fruits of the tree of knowledge were not, in this generation at least, destined to be different from what they had proved to our First Parents. While wealth was increasing to an unparalleled extent among the commercial classes, suffering and distress as generally ensued among the rural inhabitants; and the multitude of ruined fortunes among them rendered it certain, that at no distant period the old race of landed proprietors would, with the exception of a few magnates, be all rooted out, and their place supplied by a new set of purchasers from the commercial towns. While population was advancing with unparalleled strides in the manufacturing districts, pauperism even more than kept pace with it in all; and the extraordinary fact has now been revealed by statistical researches, that, in an age of unparalleled wealth and general and long-continued peace, a *seventh* part of the whole inhabitants of the British islands are in a state of destitution, or painfully supported by legal relief.[2] [Pg 531]

While all attempts, even, to pay off the national debt have been abandoned by Government, and the principle openly proclaimed by the Prime Minister, that any surplus of revenue above expenditure must, to relieve the necessities of the country, be applied to the reduction of taxation, without a thought to the reduction of the debt; the Home Secretary has announced the not less alarming fact, that, since the peace, above two hundred millions sterling, or a fourth of the national debt, has been raised for the relief of the poor in England alone. While the returns of the income-tax have demonstrated that seventy thousand persons in Great Britain possess among them an annual revenue of two hundred millions a-year, or about L.2300 each on an average, the melancholy fact has been revealed, by the result of attempts to increase the national revenue by means of indirect taxation, that that source of income can no longer be relied on; and in a time of profound, and at the close of a period of long-continued peace, it has become indispensable to recur to an assessment on property and direct taxation, as it was in Rome in the decaying periods of the empire. The blue folios of the Houses of Parliament teem with authentic and decisive evidence of the vast increase, during the last thirty years, of crime and frequent destitution among the working classes in all parts of the empire; every four or five years, a brief feverish period of gambling, extravagance, and commercial prosperity, is succeeded by a long and dreary season of anxiety, distress, and depression; frightful strikes among the workmen, attended with boundless distress among, and hideous democratic tyranny over them, invariably succeed in the close of those periods of suffering, as pestilence stalks in the rear of famine; and popular insurrection has become so common, that it is a rare thing to see two years pass over without martial law being of necessity practically enforced in some part of the empire. Efforts unheard-of have been made to extend the religious establishments of the state, or augment the means of moral and intellectual instruction among the people; but hitherto with no perceptible effect in checking the habits of sensuality, improvidence, and intemperance, which prevail amongst them; and in an age and a country abounding, beyond any other that ever existed, with declamations in favour of the blessings of knowledge, and the elements of happiness and moral improvement, which free-trade and a general liberation from restraint were to procure for society, the scandal has been exhibited of serious crime having, during the last forty years, increased TEN TIMES as fast as the number of the people.[3] [Pg 532]

We are so accustomed in this country to those things, that they have ceased to make any impression upon us. The great majority of men, actively engaged in the business of life, pay no attention to them whatever, but go on labouring to make money, or keep themselves afloat in the world, without bestowing even a passing thought of whither that world on which they are so intent is tending. Philosophers and political economists, confounded at beholding such results flowing from the adoption and practical application of their favourite principles, quietly pass by on the other side; and, without denying the facts, content themselves with disregarding them altogether, and continuing to prophesy unbounded

national prosperity and moral elevation from the ultimate effect of the further abolition of restraint on thought and action. The religious portion of the community—and they form a large and highly respectable body—consider these alarming symptoms as the judgment of Heaven upon us for our sins, and the natural and well-deserved consequence of our neglect of the means of salvation, which have been so mercifully put into our hands. The merchants and manufacturers, who are rapidly making fortunes under the new system, maintain that it is founded on pure and tried reason, and that in no other way can the national resources be fully developed. The landowners, who are as rapidly losing them, are, in part, so paralysed by their individual embarrassments, in part so perplexed with the intricacy of the subject, that they are incapable of making any efforts, except on particular occasions, in their own defence, but resign themselves quietly to the stroke of fate, as the Moslem does to the bowstring of the Sultaun. The working classes are quiet during the brief periods of prosperity; but nourish in their hearts at all times a profound jealousy and hatred of the monied interest. The opinion is almost universally diffused among them, that the gains of their employers are scandalously great, and wrung out of their heart's blood—that they and their masters are naturally at war with each other—and that whatever is gained by the one is lost by the other. Meanwhile Government, obeying the new, and, as matters stand, irresistible impulse let in upon the monarchy by the Reform Bill, quietly, slide into the principles and measures dictated to them by the dominant, most active, and most influential class in the state; and, shutting their eyes to the consequences in future times, content [Pg 533] themselves with getting through the present with as much practical support and as little obloquy as possible.

But although this is, generally speaking, the state of opinion on all social questions in the British islands, it may well be imagined that they are looked upon with very different eyes by men of intelligence out of the whirl of passing events, and beyond the reach of the passions or interests which mislead so many in this country. The civilization of Great Britain; the social questions at issue amongst us; the experiment making, on so extended a scale, of the effect of the new doctrines on the happiness of the people in the British islands; the prodigious wealth which has been accumulated in this country of late years; the magnitude and long duration of our political power; and the celebrity in arts, in arms, and in literature we have long enjoyed, have struck all surrounding nations with astonishment, which, so far from diminishing, is hourly on the increase. This effect appears variously, according to the temper and previous prepossessions of those among whom it has taken place. In the French, our ancient rivals, our persevering antagonists in the revolutionary war, it has produced no other effect, generally speaking, but envy, hatred, and malice. In the Americans, it has engendered a mingled feeling of respect, admiration, and jealousy, which appears in the strenuous efforts they are making to augment their wealth, power, and territory, by every possible means, and in every possible direction. But in reflecting minds on the Continent, on the really great in all countries, it has produced the effect of deep reflection, and anxious investigation. They have already begun to contemplate the astonishing and long-continued empire of Great Britain as we, and all subsequent ages, have so long done the corresponding, and only parallel, dominion reared by the arms of the Roman legions. In the causes of the greatness, and seeds of ruin, in both, there is a striking, and to us portentous, resemblance. The analogy has been already traced by more than one master-hand on the Continent. But none was better qualified to do justice to the subject, or has treated it in a more luminous or philosophic spirit, than Sismondi; and it is to his observations on the present social state of the British empire that we have now to direct our readers' attention.

As the views of this great philosopher and historian are almost entirely at variance with those which now generally prevail amongst us, and to which the liberal party in every part of the country have in an especial manner pinned their faith, and, at the same time, seem to be deserving of very great attention from their novelty and importance, and direct bearing on the dearest interests of the society with which we are surrounded—we hasten to premise that, in forming them, Sismondi has at least not been blinded by any *political* partiality for the side to which, in *social* questions, he inclines. He is, as all persons acquainted with foreign literature well know, a decided liberal, indeed republican, in his political opinions. Born and educated in the democratic canton of Geneva, a Protestant both by birth and connexion, the decided opponent of tyranny in all its forms, of Romish domination in all its guises, he first matured his powerful mind in writing the history of the Italian republics, and afterwards had his opinions confirmed by tracing the long annuals of the French monarchy. The brilliant episodes in the history of the former, contrasted with the hideous catalogue of persecutions and crimes which stain the latter, have confirmed in his mind, to a degree which, considering the extent of his information, and candour of his thoughts, appears surprising—the original prepossessions he had imbibed in favour of republican institutions. He even carries this so far as to advocate in his Essays, which form the immediate subject of this paper, an elective in preference to an hereditary monarchy. He is as ardent an enthusiast in the cause of civil and religious liberty as Russell or Sidney, though his views are modified as to time, by observation and experience. He yields to none of the optimist school of more recent times in sanguine expectations of the benefits which may be expected from training the people to the duties of self-government, and ultimately entrusting them with its powers. He is adverse to an hereditary aristocracy, and strongly advocates the [Pg 534] division of landed property, by adopting in all countries the law of equal succession, which has given its powers their deathblow both in France and America. His life has been spent in painting the bright efflorescence of freedom and genius in the modern Italian republics, and

their long blight under the combined powers of feudal power and Romish superstition in the French monarchy. The perfection of society, in his estimation, would be an aggregate of little republics, like those of Greece or southern Italy in ancient, or of Holland, Florence, Pisa, or Genoa, in modern times—in which supreme power was vested in the hands of magistrates, named by the heads of trades, who had been themselves elected by the general suffrage of their respective bodies. Many readers will probably be surprised at finding such political opinions entertained by a man of such acquirements, and class it with the numerous instances which history affords, of the inability of the greatest minds entirely to throw off the sway of early impressions and hereditary prepossessions. But we are not concerned, in this place, with Sismondi's political opinions; it is his views on social questions that appear peculiarly important, and which we are desirous of making known to our readers. And we mention his political opinions in order to show, that he at least cannot be accused of a prejudice in favour of the monarchical, or aristocratic, side of the question.

It is from a leaning to, and sympathy with, the opposite class in society, that his strong and important views on the tendency of social change in Europe, and especially in Great Britain and France, are directed. He is decidedly of opinion, that this tendency is, to the last degree, disastrous; that it is it which is the cause of the continued depression of industry, degradation of character, and increase of depravity and crime, among the people; and that, so great and alarming are these causes of evil, that, unless they are arrested by a change of opinion among the influential classes of society, or the good providence of God, they will infallibly destroy the whole fabric of European civilization, as they did that of the ancient world. They are, in his own opinion, the more alarming, that they have sprung, not from the blighting, but the triumph, of what we call civilization; not from the retention of men in ignorance, but their advance in knowledge; not from the upholding of restraint, but its removal. All these, the former evils with which mankind had to contend, will, in his opinion, yield to the growth of industry and the progress of knowledge; but in their stead a new set of evils—more serious, more wide-spread, more irremediable—will rise up, which, to all appearance, must in the end destroy all the states of modern Europe. England and France he considers, and probably with reason, as the states most likely to be the first victims of those social evils, far more serious and irremediable than any of the political which attract so much attention, and are the objects of such vehement contention between parties into which society is divided. England and France are not alone exposed to the danger; all the other European states are advancing in the same career, and are threatened, in the end, with the same calamities. England and France have been the first to be reached, and are now most endangered, by them, only because they are in advance of the others in the career of knowledge, freedom, and civilization, and have attained more rapidly than their neighbours the power and energy by which modern society is distinguished, and the perils by which it is menaced. In the social evils, therefore, with which Great Britain is now environed, he sees the precursor of those which are certainly, at one period or another, to afflict all Europe; and in the overthrow of our empire, from the corroding effect of the calamities they will induce, the ultimate destiny of all the states of modern times.

That these views are melancholy, all will admit; that they are important if true, none will deny; that they are new, at least in this country, will be conceded by the best informed. They come, however, recommended to us, not merely by the powerful arguments and copious facts by which they are supported, but by the peculiar turn of mind, and varied qualifications, of the author by whom they are supported. We have long been of opinion, that [Pg 535] it is the separation of political economy from history which is the chief cause of the numerous errors into which, since the days of Adam Smith, its professors have been betrayed, and the general discredit into which the science itself has fallen with a large portion of the thinking men in the community. This effect has taken place, as it was very natural it should in the infancy of a science, from the habit into which philosophers and men of abstract thought were led, of reasoning on human affairs as if they were the movement of inanimate bodies, and considering only their own arguments, not the illustration of their truth or falsehood which experience has afforded. This habit is peculiarly conspicuous in the advocates of free-trade, the reciprocity system, and Mr Malthus's doctrines on pauperism and the poor-laws; they rest on abstract arguments, and are perfectly indifferent to the refutation of their principles which every day's experience is affording. Probably the whole present generation of political economists must go to their graves before this general error is eradicated from the human mind. It is an error, however, of the most fatal kind, and which, while it is persevered in, must render political economy one of the greatest of the many curses, which the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge has let loose upon mankind. It is like a system of medicine, formed, as such systems are in every age, not on experience or observation, but on the theories of certain physicians on the structure of the human body, and the proper way of developing its various functions.

Many a patient in every age has been killed, before the absurdity of such theories has been put down by the experience and common-sense of mankind. And many a nation, in Sismondi's opinion, will perish, before the nostrums of its state physicians have been expelled from the general opinion of man.

It is his profound and varied historical information, which has given Sismondi his deep distrust of nearly all the conclusions of modern political economy, and inspired him with the gloomy presentiments with which he is filled, in regard to the tendency of society under the practical application of its principles. He has fixed his eyes, not on abstract principles, but

actual nations, and traced the result, not of theoretical views on the best regulations for society, but of such as have actually been established, and had their tendency tested by the experience of centuries in different ages and countries of the world. He sees with dismay, in the state of society in modern Europe, under the combined influence of free-trade, increasing knowledge, popular institutions, vast wealth, and long-established civilization, a mere repetition, under different names, of those dreadful social evils which corroded the Roman empire, and in the end overturned the vast physical dominion of the legions. He sees in that state of rural society which is nearly extinct in the British islands, and fast wearing out in France, Belgium, and other parts of Europe, where civilization is most advanced, the only solid foundation for general happiness, the only durable bulwark of public morality, the only permanent security for national existence. This state of society is disappearing, and a new condition of men coming on, from causes which seem beyond the power of human control, but the fatal effect of which is as apparent as the sun at noonday. And thence the gloomy views with which he is inspired on the future prospects of Europe, and his profound hostility to the principles of political economy, from which he considers them as having mainly arisen.

Political economy, as a science, dates its origin, by the common consent of men, from the famous work "On the Nature and Causes of the *Wealth* of Nations." But a greater authority than Adam Smith has told us, that "he that HASTENETH TO BE RICH SHALL NOT BE INNOCENT." Sismondi's doctrines on political economy are a commentary on these words, applied to the management of nations and the social concerns of man. It is in the fatal thirst for wealth, and the application of all the powers of knowledge, and all the resources of art, to *that single object*, that he sees the all-powerful cause, both of the present degradation of so many [Pg 536] of the working classes, of the false direction of political philosophy, and of the spread of social evils, which will to all appearance, in the end prove fatal to the existence of the British empire, and of all the European communities. But it is not any general or vague declamation on the progress of corruption, and the growing evils of society, which he has brought forward; he has given a close and cogent chain of reasoning, supported by a formidable array of historical facts, and shown how it is that the evils have arisen—how they bear upon the condition of the great bulk of the people, how they degrade their character, how their habits corrupt their morals and destroy their happiness; and how irremediable, under the prevailing ideas of the influential classes in society, these evils have become. The social injustice and political delusions which, history has now clearly ascertained, were the causes of the ruin of the Roman empire, he sees re-appearing amidst us under different names, but in still more aggravated forms, and with more hopeless influences on society. All this he traces mainly to the ruinous pursuit of wealth, which has seized alike upon our philosophers, our statesmen, and our practical men; which has too fatally verified the saying of Scripture, that "the love of money is the root of all evil;" and converted the noble science of political economy, the end of which is "ut homines feliciter vivant," into the degrading handmaid of wealth.

So strongly is he impressed with this idea, and so convinced of the ruinous direction which the social sciences are taking, under the combined influence of philosophic error and monied ambition, that he thinks it indispensable, that language should mark the lasting and indelible crisis of distinction between the philosophy of general happiness and the means by which national wealth may be augmented. The first he calls "Economie Politique," or "Les Sciences Sociales;" the last "*Chrematistique*," or the art of accumulating riches in a state.[4] It is in the conversion of political economy, or the science of making men happy, which of course can only be done by rendering them orderly, moral, and religious, into Chrematistique, or the mere pursuit of the means by which we may augment the sum of national riches, that the unobserved source of by far the greatest social evils of the present day is to be found. These evils are greater than either the slavery of the Romans or the bondage of serfs in modern times; for they have induced the ruinous effects of both these degrading systems, without the alleviating and counteracting advantages with which either was attended. And the way in which this effect flows from the social doctrines of modern times, is this.

An augmentation of production is generally considered as an addition to national wealth; and it is on this ground that all nations, under the guidance of the *Chrematists*, are making such strenuous efforts to increase their agricultural and manufactured produce. Such an augmentation, however, says Sismondi, is not only by no means in every case an addition to national wealth, but it is often a useless and pernicious addition to national suffering. If the supply of any article exceeds what can be consumed in the early and simple ages of society, or disposed of to advantage in the later, it is not only no advantage, but a positive loss. What avails it that the yards of cotton cloth manufactured, or the quarters of wheat raised, are increased in a country from 50,000,000 to 100,000,000, if, in consequence of the increased supply, the price is lowered one-half? The producers get their trouble for their pains—they gain nothing—the consumers get more than they require—great part of the superfluity is wasted or sent abroad at a ruinous loss. Augmentation of production, therefore, is not in every case a sign of increased national wealth; it is the *maintenance of a due proportion between production and consumption* which is the real desideratum, and forms the only real basis of lasting national opulence.

According to the *Chrematists*, the wealth of a nation, as of an individual producer, is to be [Pg 537] measured by the excess of the value of production over its cost. This, says Sismondi, is the

most fatal of all errors, and the grand source of the misery of the working classes, and instability of society, in all the manufacturing states of Europe. It is true, the wealth of a master-manufacturer is to be measured by the excess of the price he obtains for his produce over the cost of its production; but a master-manufacturer is not a nation. A nation consists not only of masters but of workmen; not only of consumers but producers. The latter class is by far the most numerous, the most important, the most likely to increase. If they are reduced to misery in consequence of the reduction of their wages by the introduction of machinery, the employment of juvenile or female labour, the immigration of foreign labourers, or any other cause, it is a poor compensation to say, that the profits of their employers have been greatly augmented at their expense. If the excess of the value of production above its cost, were either the measure, or even an important element in national wealth, Ireland, where the wages of field labour are 6d. a-day, and Poland, where they are 3d., should be the richest nations in the world, whereas they are notoriously the poorest. The real measure of national wealth is to be found, not in the excess of production above the consumption employed in it, but in the means of comfortable livelihood which their industry affords to the *whole* classes of the community; and that is only to be attained where wealth is very generally distributed.

The mere increase of national wealth is far from being, in every instance, an addition either to national strength, national security, or national happiness. On the contrary, it is often the greatest possible diminution to the whole three. It is not the increase of wealth, but *its distribution*, which is the great thing to be desired. It is on that that the welfare and happiness of society depend. When wealth, whether in capital or revenue, runs into a few hands—when landed property accumulates in the persons of a knot of territorial magnates, and commerce centres in the warehouse of a limited number of merchant princes, and manufactures in the workshop of a small body of colossal companies or individual master-employers, it is *absolutely certain* that the great bulk of the people will be in a state of degradation and distress. The reason is, that these huge fortunes have been made by diminishing the cost of production—that is, the wages of labour—to such an extent, as to have enormously and unjustly increased the profits of the stock employed in conducting it. Society, in such circumstances, is in the unstable equilibrium: it rests on the colossal wealth, territorial or commercial, of a few; but it has no hold on the affections or interests of the great majority of the community. It is liable to be overturned by the first shock of adverse fortune. Any serious external disaster, any considerable internal suffering, may at once overturn the whole fabric of society, and expose the wealth of the magnates only as a tempting plunder to the cupidity and recklessness of the destitute classes of society. "There is as much true philosophy as poetry," says Sismondi, "in the well-known lines of Goldsmith —

> 'Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay!
> Princes and lords may flourish or may fade—
> A breath may make them as a breath has made;
> But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
> When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.'"

The *Chrematists* always represent an increase of national wealth as necessarily flowing from an augmentation of the riches of the individuals who compose it. But this is the greatest possible mistake. Great part of the riches obtained by individuals in a state, so far from being an addition to the national wealth, is an abstraction from it. The reason is, that it is made at the expense of others in the same community; it is a transference of riches from one hand to another, not an addition to their total amount. Every one sees that the gains of the [Pg 538] gamester, the opera-dancer, the lawyer, are of this description; what they take is taken from others in the same community. But the magnitude of the gains of merchants and manufacturers blinds the world to the real nature of their profits, which, in great part at least, are made at the expense of others in the state. If the importing merchant makes extravagant gains, he indeed is enriched; but how is he enriched? In part, at least, he is so, by impoverishing such of his countrymen as purchase his goods at the exorbitant price which constitute his profits. If the exporting merchant or manufacturer drives a gainful trade, it is in part, without doubt, derived from the industry of foreign nations to whom the export goods are sold; but it is too often earned at the expense also of the workmen he employs, who have been compelled by competition, or destitution, to sell their labour to him at a rate barely sufficient for the support of existence. We are not to flatter ourselves that the nation is becoming rich, because the exporters of Irish grain, Paisley shawls, or Manchester cotton goods, are making fortunes, when the labourers they employ are earning from sixpence to eightpence a-day only. On the contrary, the magnitude of the gains of the former is too often only a measure of the destitution and degradation of the latter.

It is usually considered that it is a sufficient answer to this to observe, that if riches are thus, from the direction which national industry has taken, drawn to a distressing extent from one class of the community to concentrate them in another, a corresponding benefit is conferred upon other classes, by the increased expenditure which takes place on the part of those, in whose hands the wealth has accumulated. There can be no doubt that a certain compensation does take place in this way; and it is the existence of that compensation, which alone renders society tolerable under such circumstances. But the benefit accruing is no adequate set-off, if society be viewed as a whole, to the evil incurred. If two millions of

Irish labourers are working at sixpence a-day each, and two millions more of human beings, in the Emerald Isle, are in a state of destitution, it is a poor compensation for such a dreadful state of things to observe, that some hundred Irish noblemen, or absentee proprietors, are spending ten or twenty thousand a-year each amidst the luxuries of London, Paris, or Naples; and that they sometimes extract five or six guineas an acre from their starving tenants. If weavers in Renfrewshire, and cotton operatives in Lancashire, are making cotton cloths at eightpence a-day of wages, we are not to be deluded into the belief that society is prosperous, because every year six or eight cotton lords buy estates for a hundred thousand pounds a-piece; and one-half of the railways in the kingdom are constructed with the wealth of Manchester and Glasgow. There are no two things more different than national riches and the wealth of the rich in a nation.

It is the fatal and ruinous effect of wealth, thus accumulated in the hands of a few, at the expense of the great bulk of the industrious classes in a state, that it tends to perpetuate and increase the diseased and perilous state of society from which it sprang. The common observations, that money makes money, and that poverty breeds poverty, show how universally the experience of mankind has felt that capital, in the long run, gives an overwhelming advantage in the race for riches to the rich, and that poverty as uniformly, erelong, gives the vast superiority in numbers to the poor. We often hear of an earl or a merchant-prince mourning the want of an heir, but scarcely ever of a Highland couple or an Irish hovel wanting their overflowing brood of little half-naked savages. We occasionally hear of a poor man raising himself by talent and industry to fortune; but in general he does so only by associating his skill with some existing capital, and giving its owner thus the extraordinary advantage of uniting old wealth with a new discovery. To get on in the world without capital is daily becoming more difficult to the great bulk of men: it is, in trade or commerce, at least, wholly impossible. Thus, as wealth accumulates in the capital and great [Pg 539] cities of the empire, destitution, poverty, and, of course, crime and immorality, multiply around the seats where that wealth was originally created. And this evil, so far from abating with the lapse of time, daily increases, and must increase till some dreadful convulsion takes place, and restores the subverted balance of society; because the power of capital, like that of a lever which is continually lengthened, is daily augmenting in the centres of wealth; and the power of numbers in the centres of destitution is hourly on the increase, from the reckless and improvident habits which that destitution has engendered.

The happiness of a nation, its morality, order, and security, are mainly, if not entirely, dependent on the extent to which *property* with its attendant blessings, and habits of reflection, regularity, and industry, are diffused among the people. But the doctrines of the *Chrematists*, and of nearly the whole school of modern political economists, go almost entirely to uproot this inestimable blessing. The principle being once fixed in men's minds, and acted upon by individual men and the legislature, that the great thing is to diminish the *cost of production*, it follows, as a very natural consequence, that the main thing is to diminish the *wages of the producers*. Every thing which can conduce to that object is vigorously pursued, without the slightest regard to the effect the changes must have on the fortunes, and ultimate fate in life, of whole classes in society. It is thus that, in agriculture, the engrossing of farms takes place—an evil so sorely felt in England during the seventeenth, and in Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—and that hundreds and thousands of happy families are dispossessed from their hereditary possessions, to make room for that "devourer of the human race," as the old writers called it, the sheep. It is thus that, in our own times, the small tenants and cotters have been so generally dispossessed in Scotland and Ireland, to make room for the large cultivator or store farmer. It is thus that the race of hand-loom weavers, who carry on their trade in their own houses, and with the advantages of rural residence, gardens, fields, and country air, is every where becoming extinct, or their wages have fallen so low as barely to support existence in the very humblest rank of life. In the room of these sturdy old children of the soil, has sprung up a race of puny operatives or labourers, living by wages, and having no durable connexion either with the land, or even with the capitalist who employs them. Employed at weekly wages, they are constantly on the verge of famine if turned out of their employment. Every thing now is concentrated in huge mills, manufacturing districts, and great towns, where the labour of men is too often supplanted by women, that of women by children, that of children almost entirely by machinery, on which they attend. The cost of production, indeed, is prodigiously diminished, by the substitute of these feeble or tiny labourers for that of full-grown men; and with it the profits of the masters, and the circle of the export sale, are proportionally augmented; but at what expense is this profit to a few gained? At the expense, in some degree, at least, it is to be feared, of the independence, the comfort, the morals, the lives, of whole classes of the labouring portions of the community.

The application of knowledge to the arts, of science to manufactures, so far from diminishing, has, hitherto at least, had the most ruinous possible effect in increasing this fatal tendency of great capital and extensive manufactured industry upon mankind. Watt, Arkwright, Crompton—those giants of intellectual power, whose discoveries have augmented tenfold, often an hundredfold, the productive powers of manufacturing labour—have been the worst enemies that the happiness and morals of the working manufacturers ever knew. For what is it that, by means of great capital, working with the powers which their immortal discoveries have conferred, manufacturing industry has become? Why, it has all, or nearly all, run into huge mills, or other establishments, in which machinery, at a cost of thirty, forty, or fifty thousand pounds, is erected, and a crown of needy women and

children are employed, in ordinary times, at the lowest wages which can support existence, [Pg 540] with a few men at a guinea or twenty-five shillings a-week, to direct and superintend their labours. It need not be told what the habits of such a crowd of young women, most of them from fourteen to twenty, must in general be. These evils in manufacturing districts are universally felt and complained of; but it is not equally generally admitted, that they arise invariably, and, as matters at present stand, inevitably, from that very extension of science and mechanical power to the arts, which is, in the view of the increase of national wealth, so just a subject of exultation, and which it is so much the object, both of legislative enactment and of individual ingenuity, to augment and extend. Yet, is not the crushing effect of these great discoveries on the welfare of the labouring classes, as manifest as their elevating influence on the fortunes of their employers, and the sum total of the produce of national manufactured industry? On no other principle is it possible to explain the prodigious accumulation of wealth in one class of the British empire, and of degradation, misery, crime and destitution in the other, and far more numerous classes.

The division of labour and the confining of each workman, or workchild, to one limited sphere of employment, while it is productive of a very great increase in the skill which each exerts in his own department, and in consequence augments, in a similar proportion, the net produce of manufactured industry, is still more fatal to the morals, habits, and independence of the manufacturing classes. Variety of occupation is indispensable to vigour of mind or independence of character. The exclusive chaining of the human mind to one employment, even though that employment is of the most intellectual kind, as the duties of the lawyer, the statesman, the physician, or the divine, speedily contracts the understanding, narrows the interest, circumscribes the field of enjoyment, and often hardens the heart. If this is the case, as undoubtedly it is, with those who are exclusively immersed even in the learned professions, which require an exercise of thought, and can be founded only on a long and cultivated education, how much more must it be the case with those whose occupation is purely mechanical, and so trivial that it may be learned in a few days—as twirling a film, twisting a cotton, dabbing a plate, or drawing a cloth out of a vat? Such operatives are exposed, at every period of their lives, to the greatest evils which can debase humanity—uncertainty of subsistence and monotony of occupation. Their work is so simple, that any one can learn it in a few days—therefore they are exposed to competition with the whole labouring classes of the community;—it is so uniform, that it neither requires, nor is compatible with, intellectual elevation—therefore it is speedily made, by the effect of competition for such simple employment, to engross their whole time. Mental improvement, moral or religious cultivation, are scarcely possible to any but the strongest minds united to the strongest bodies, in the circumstances to which the working classes, under such a system, are speedily reduced. If any one doubts this, let him dig, or hoe, or walk along the road, or trundle a hoop, or bear a fowling-piece for twelve hours a-day without intermission, save at breakfast and dinner, and then see with what appetite he can take to moral or intellectual improvement when he comes in at night.

It is the deplorable effect of such a state of things, that it tends not merely to perpetuate, but increase, the very evils from which it has arisen, and reduce the working classes to that state, wherein extrication from them is next to impossible. Under the pressure of the ceaseless desire to cheapen production and diminish the cost of manufacture, young persons of both sexes are huddled together into mills and factories, at so early a period of life that they are scarcely fit to leave the nursery. It has recently been found necessary to introduce a special statute to prohibit children being employed in print-fields in England under *eight* years of age. They are so because they can at once earn sixpence or eightpence a-day by standing beside a wheel, or watching a film of cotton which is discharged out of a machine; and this cheap and infantine labour is equally attractive to the parents, who thus discover in [Pg 541] their offspring a source of income instead of a burden—and the manufacturer, who finds his work done by little docile labourers, too weak to engage in a strike, and yet strong enough to do the work. No exertion of strength is required, at least none at any one moment, in many of these occupations—though the work, when long continued, is to the last degree exhausting; the steam-engine lifts all the weights and furnishes all the power. Thus there is, from the necessities and interests of all concerned, a constant demand for juvenile labour; and this demand speedily produces its own supply, by promoting early marriages, or fostering a swarm of bastards among persons thus thrown together, at the period of life when the passions are the strongest, with a total separation at all times, save bed-time, from that only school of virtue, the parental home.

Moral and intellectual cultivation is, God be praised, not rendered impossible in the more superior and industrious of the manufacturing operatives; but it may be doubted whether the species of literature which is in general presented to them, and unhappily proves most attractive, either strengthens their minds, or improves their happiness. Exciting novels, such as those of Victor Hugo, Janin, Sue, and others of the class; highly wrought pictures of the manners and vices of high life; horrible stories of seduction, murder, and suicide, such as compose so large a part of the modern romance school of France;—are most sure of circulation among the working classes of great towns, because they at once interest and excite the imagination. They are read to the extent, and for the reason, that novels are so generally devoured by the young, the imaginative, and the indolent of both sexes in the higher ranks. The poor operatives, however, have an excuse for the exclusive reading of such exciting inanities, which does not belong to their higher fellow-citizens; they are so worn out by long-continued toil, that they are unable to *bear the fatigue* of any kind of

reading which requires application or reflection. Some, no doubt, are improved by works of a more elevated class, which they contrive to purchase out of their savings, and to devour during the brief period allowed them between labour and repose. But their number is very small in comparison of the whole, as is decisively proved by the limited number of booksellers' shops in the manufacturing towns, compared to those which supply the means of sensual enjoyment. It is seldom in such cities you will find one bookseller's shop for an hundred where beer or spirits are retailed. Many even of those who read are rather injured than improved, both in their habits and their happiness, by the mental cultivation they receive. They contract exaggerated ideas of the enjoyment of riches, and the avenues to distinction, which may be opened by intellectual effort; they become dissatisfied with the station in the world which Providence has assigned them; they strive to exchange bodily for intellectual toil; and in the vain attempt to exchange their lot for a better one, numbers are precipitated into difficulties, crimes, and ruin.

The social organization of trades in all the European cities during the middle ages, was eminently favourable to the working classes; and it was perhaps the greatest calamity that ever befell them, that, in the madness of democratic ambition, they united with the master employers to pull down these institutions. When each craft was organized in a little republic of its own, with its office-bearers, stated meetings, funds for the indigent, and exclusive privileges, a gradation of ranks was created amidst the poor—a little aristocracy of industry, which often proved itself capable of contending with the proudest aristocracy of land or riches. The poor were not left alone; the wrongs of individuals were taken up by their craft; joint measures for the common behoof were pursued; the dreadful feeling of isolation in the midst of a crowd was unknown; all were enrolled under some banner, or entered with some craft. Thus every one felt himself in a fixed and definite place in society; he had privileges and advantages of a tangible kind to forfeit by losing it. But when exclusive privileges, crafts, and incorporations, were abolished, amidst cries of joy and shouts of triumph from [Pg 542] the whole popular party all over the world, these inestimable blessings were lost. The poor became a mixed indiscriminate multitude, having no more coherence or power of resistance than a rope of sand. They degenerated into a huge assembly of private soldiers without officers, incapable either of organizing any thing for their own durable benefit, or of resisting the progressive encroachments of capital, machinery, and competition, on the sole domain left them—the wages of their labour. Universally it has been found, that, upon the abolition of incorporations and crafts, the condition of the working classes has rapidly and fearfully changed for the worse. The principle of free competition—of breaking down all barriers—allowing every one to elbow his neighbour out of employment, and bringing every thing down to the lowest and cheapest level—has tended only to lower the wages of labour, and aggravate the insecurity of the poor. No one has a fixed or permanent station; every thing is done for days' or weeks' wages; and the penalty of dismissal is destitution, famine, and a lingering death. Hence the constant complaint now on the part of the poor, that they cannot get work; and the prodigious multitude of the lowest class who are constantly moving about, seeking in one situation that employment they have lost in another. This, however, is of all things the most fatal to their habits, character, and prospects; they get among people to whom they are total strangers, who regard them with aversion as intruders, and are neither inclined to relieve their distresses, nor to facilitate their advance in the world. The most powerful check, next to religion, on human conduct—*the opinion of friends*—is lost on the very class who stand most in need of its control. Obscurity screens immorality from detection; numbers shelter crime from punishment. The temptations to vice multiply, while the barriers against it are cut away. The really good poor are invariably stationary; moving about is as fatal to their habits as it is to those of children. The *free circulation of labour*, of which we hear so much from master employers and the Chrematists, is often an advantage with a view to the creation of wealth, or the sudden completion of great undertakings: considered with reference to national morals, happiness, and ultimate safety, it is one of the greatest curses which can befall a people.

It is a sense of the evils arising from this feeling of isolation amidst multitudes, and the experienced inability of the poor, all struggling against each other for subsistence, to resist the progressive decline of their wages till they reach the lowest point consistent with the support of existence, which has made the working classes in France and England of late years so generally embrace, and make such incredible efforts to support, trades'-unions. They have endeavoured, in so doing, to regain that organization of crafts in separate classes and bodies, which was overturned amidst the shouts of triumph consequent on the French Revolution. But this attempt, so far from palliating the existing evils, has had the greatest possible tendency to aggravate them; for it has too often vested irresponsible power in hands wholly unfit to wield it. Perhaps the greatest, the most wide-spread, the most acute suffering endured by the labouring poor in Great Britain during the last thirty years, has arisen from strikes. Nothing has tended so strongly to shake society to its centre; to array the working classes against their employers; to spread habits of recklessness, violence, and improvidence among them, and alienate their natural supporters from them by the frightful crimes to which they have given rise. Foresight, industry, regularity of conduct, frugality, saving habits—those prime guardians of humble virtue—are out of the question when men are subjected to the tyranny of these dreadful, popularly elected despots. The last and only possession left to the poor—their own labour—is liable to be reft from them by the imperious commands of an unknown and irresponsible committee; which, elevated to importance by the public distress, uses every means to prolong it, by preventing a return to habits of

regular industry. The suffering produced by the compulsory cessation from labour which these committees command, often for an incredibly long period, never could be borne but by men inflamed by the spirit of party, and contending for what they ignorantly deem their best interests. It equals all that we read of in heroic besieged towns, enduring the extremities of famine before they submit to the besiegers. The Committee of Public Salvation was often shaken by a scarcity of provisions in the capital, and never failed to tremble at the forests of pikes which, when want became severe, issued from the Faubourg St Antoine; but a trades'-union committee succeeds in compelling men, by threats of the torch and the dagger, to remain in idleness for months together, and surrender their birthright and inheritance, the support of themselves, the food of their children, to the commands of an unknown power, which retains them in the agonies of want till suffering nature can no longer endure. The actual suffering resulting from this unparalleled tyranny, while it continues, is the least of its evils. A far greater, because more durable and irremediable calamity, is to be found in the demoralizing of the poor, by depriving them of occupation, and dividing society, by arraying whole classes against each other. [Pg 543]

Industry, during the feudal ages, was often exposed to the most ruthless violence from the hand of power, and men possessed scarce any security against the occasional oppression of arbitrary monarchs, or the savage devastation of martial incursions. But great as these political evils were, it may be doubted whether they occasioned, in the long run, so serious an invasion on human happiness and the springs of human virtue, as the *social evils*, which, on the cessation of these political disorders, have, unobserved, insinuated themselves through society. The annals of the middle ages are filled with the most heart-rending accounts of the outbreaks of savage violence to which the people were subjected; and it appears impossible that society could ever have recovered the dreadful devastation to which it was frequently exposed. Yet it invariably did recover, and that, too, in an incredibly short space of time. The Crusades were the overflow of the full nations of Europe, after two centuries of that apparently withering hostility. We read of no such resurrection of national strength in Rome under the emperors after the devastations of the barbarians began; nor do we hear of any such after the oppression of the pachas and ages in Turkey and Persia at this time. Superficial writers explain this by saying, these nations are in their decline, and the Gothic nations, during the feudal ages, were in their youth. But the human race is, in all ages, equally young; there are an equal number of young men in proportion to the population in every country and in every age. The reason of the difference is, that social evils have arisen in the one case which were unknown in the other—they have spread and diffused their baneful influence.

The feudal institutions, amidst all their want of protection against political violence or external oppression, had one admirable quality, which enabled society to bear up and advance under all these accumulated evils. They conferred power and influence at home on those only who were *interested* in the welfare of the people. The feudal baron, at the head of his armed followers, was doubtless always ready, at the summons of his sovereign, to perform his fifty days' military service, or, at the call of an injured clansman, to make an inroad into the territories of a neighbouring but hostile feudatory; but when he did so, he had nothing to depend upon but his own retainers, serfs, or followers. If they were depressed, starving, alienated, or lukewarm, he was lost; he was defeated in the field, and speedily besieged in his last stronghold. Thus, the most valuable element was universally diffused over society; viz. a sense of mutual dependence, and of the benefit each derived from the prosperity of his neighbours. If the baron was weak or unsupported, his vassals were liable to be plundered, his serfs found themselves without bread. If the vassals were oppressed, the baron was undone: instead of a formidable array of stout men-at-arms, sturdy archers, and gallant spearmen, to defend his domains, he found himself followed only by a weak and feeble array, giving awful evidence, in the decisive moment, of the ruinous effects of his disorderly or tyrannical government. Even the serfs were bound up with the prosperity of the little community. If they were weakened by bad usage, or driven from the domain by cruelty, the fields were untilled, the swine unherded, the baron and vassals without bread. Thus it was the interest of all to stand by, protect, and spare each other. Each felt the consequences of the neglect of these social duties, in immediate, and often irreparable injury to himself. It was this experienced necessity of mutual forbearance and support, which was the mainspring of social improvement during the feudal ages, and enabled society so quickly to repair the chasm produced by the dreadful political evils to which it was occasionally exposed. Its spring of improvement and happiness was within—its evils were without. We often read, in the annals of those times, of the unbounded plunder and devastation exercised by armed violence upon pacific industry, and the great fortunes sometimes amassed by the robber chivalry, by such predatory incursions.—That is the most decisive proof of the presence of political, and the absence of social evils. The people must have been previously protected and prosperous, or they could not have been worth plundering. The annals of these times will transmit no account of fortunes made by pillaging or taxing the cotters of Ireland, the weavers of Paisley, or the cotton-piecers of Manchester. [Pg 544]

What rendered the feudal system in the end insupportable, was the change of manners, strengthening of government, and cessation of private wars, which left its evils, and took away its blessings. When the baron lived in rude plenty on his estate, surrounded by his followers, respected by his vassals, feared by his neighbours, his presence was a benefit, his protection a blessing. But when the central government had acquired such strength as to have stopped private warfare; when standing armies had come to supersede the tumultuary

feudal array, and the thirst for luxury or office had attracted the nobles to the capital, these blessings were at an end. The advantages of the feudal system had ceased with the removal of the evils it went so far to alleviate; its burdens and restrictions remained, and were felt as an insupportable restraint, without any corresponding benefit on the rising industry of the people. The seigneur no longer was seen either at the chateau or in the village. In his stead the bailiff made half-yearly visits to exact the rent or feudal services from vassals, whose prosperity had ceased to be any object either of interest or solicitude to their lord. Whether they were rich or poor, happy or miserable, contented or repining, was immaterial to him after he had ceased to reside in his castle, and to be protected by his armed vassals. The one thing needful was to pay their rents, or perform their services, to maintain his extravagances; and these were accordingly exacted with merciless severity. Thence the general oppression of the poor, and universal outcry against the system, which produced the French Revolution.

The powerful central government, regular taxation, and large standing armies of modern Europe, have removed the chief *political* evils which were at times felt with such dreadful severity during the middle ages; but have they not introduced *social* evils of a still more pernicious and irretrievable character? Private wars have disappeared; we no longer hear of chateaux burnt, fields ravaged, or serfs massacred, in pursuance of the deadly feuds of hostile barons. War has become a separate profession; military service is no longer required from the rural tenants; the undivided attention of industry is permitted to be directed to pacific pursuits. The ravages of hostility, and the destruction of conquest, have been diminished in amount, and greatly alleviated in severity. Taxes levied on the whole community, have superseded the necessity, save in extreme cases, of ruinous exactions from individuals; war is often felt rather as a stimulus to industry by its expenditure, than a blight to it from its contributions. It is the influence of these circumstances, joined to the protection of a regular government, and the unbounded stimulus of general freedom, which have given so marvellous an impulse to the prosperity of modern Europe and rendered the [Pg 545] British Empire in particular, where their fostering tendency has been most strongly felt, the admiration, the terror, and the envy of the world.

But in lieu of the political oppression and military exactions which, in former days, were felt as so disastrous, a host of *social* evils have sprung up, and are rapidly spreading their baneful influence through every class of society, to such an extent as to render it doubtful whether their effect will not ultimately be to uproot society, and destroy the whole states of modern Europe. These effects have taken place amidst general peace and apparent general prosperity; at a time when wealth was accumulating with unheard-of rapidity, and knowledge was diffused to an unprecedented extent. Law was regularly administered; illegal acts generally checked; foreign hostility averted; domestic oppression removed, or softened. The Chrematists were in exultation; production was every day becoming cheaper; exports and imports in consequence increasing; and all the external symptoms of the highest prosperity, according to the doctrine of the *wealth* of nations, in the most flourishing state. But all these blessings have been neutralized, and a large portion of the community precipitated into the most woful degradation, by the operation of the very causes which have produced this vast increase of wealth, and its astonishing accumulation in the hands of the commercial community. The incessant efforts to lessen the cost of production have beat down the wages of labour, in many departments, to the lowest point; the strenuous exertions made to facilitate cheaper importation, have reduced the remuneration of domestic industry to the lowest point consistent with its existence. Incredible have been the efforts made by all classes to counterbalance by additional industry this disastrous progress; but the only effect of these efforts has been to augment the evil complained of, by increasing the necessity for exertion, and augmenting the mass of productions with which society is flooded. Production in every line has come, in ordinary times, to outstrip consumption. Machinery has quadrupled its power; gorged markets are constantly complained of as depriving industry of its just, and often of any reward at all. Society has become a great gambling-house, in which colossal fortunes are made by a few, and the great majority are turned adrift penniless, friendless, to destitution, ruin, or suicide. The condition of a considerable portion of the working-classes has, in this terrible strife, generally been wofully changed for the worse. Brief periods of high prices, which induce habits of extravagance among them, are succeeded by long seasons of distress, which spread the reality of woe. In the desperate effort made to extend the foreign market, by cheapening production, nearly all the kindly relations of life have been snapped asunder. The operative is unknown to the master-employer; he is turned off at a moment's warning into a cold world, in which he can find no other employment. The tenant is too often unknown to the landlord; or, at least, strangers are constantly brought on the land. The labourer, even, is unknown to the farmer; his place can always be supplied by a stranger, ready, probably, to work for less wages, because in greater distress. Every thing is put up to auction, and sold to the highest bidder. Labour only is awarded to the lowest.

A nation which has surrendered its government to the commercial classes, and at the same time has a large population and considerable territorial possessions, cannot fail to incur ruin if their rule is long continued. The reason is, that their interest is adverse to that of the most numerous, important, and valuable classes of society; and they never cease to prosecute that interest till they have destroyed them. To import largely is for their interest; therefore, they promote all measures tending to favour the introduction of foreign productions, though their effect must be to depress, and in the end extinguish, native industry. They would have the

people pay for these imports by enlarged exports; in other words, they would convert society into a mere appendage of the trading classes. To enlarge these exports, they make the most strenuous effort in every possible way to cheapen production—that is, to lower the wages of [Pg 546] labour. Their idea of a perfect society is one in which the labouring classes are reduced to the rank of mere attendants on machines, because that is the cheapest form of production. They would have them attend on these machines at sixpence or ninepence a-day, live chiefly on potatoes, and eat no bread but what is imported in foreign vessels, and from foreign countries, because they are cheaper than their own. In this way both exports and imports would be elevated to the highest pitch; for the main part of the national food would figure in the imports, and the main part of national labour in the exports. Mercantile business would come to supersede every other—it alone would be attended with any profit. Meanwhile, domestic industry would languish and decline—the home market would be destroyed—the rural population, the main stay of a nation, gradually withered away and wasted. Poverty and misery would weaken and alienate the working classes; and, amidst a constant increase of exports and imports, and growth of commercial wealth, the nation would be destroyed.

This is no imaginary picture. The ruin of the Roman empire in ancient, the desolation of the Campagna of Rome in modern times, are permanent proofs of its reality.

It is generally said that slavery was the devouring cancer which destroyed the Roman Empire, and thence it is concluded by the Chrematists that, as we have no slaves, we can never be ruined like them. They forget that the reality of slavery may exist, and its evils remain, although its name has been expunged from the statute book. It is always to be recollected that slavery existed to just as great an extent in the most flourishing as in the decaying periods of the Roman dominion—in the days of Scipio and Cæsar, as in those of Constantine or Honorius. Cato was a great dealer in slaves. He was especially careful to sell his slaves when they *became old*, lest, when worn out, they should become chargeable. The republic was brought to the brink of ruin an hundred years before the birth of Christ by the Servile War; yet, with that devouring cancer in its intestines, it afterwards conquered the world. It was not slavery, but the combination of slavery with free-trade and vast patrician and commercial wealth, which really brought ruin on the ancient world. "Verumque confitentibus," says Pliny, "*latifundia* perdidere Italiam: jam vero et provincias." It was the accumulation of patrician revenue and commercial wealth in the capital, when the provinces were cultivated only by slaves, and the gradual extinction of Italian agriculture by the introduction of Egyptian and Lybian grain, where it could be raised cheaper than in the Italian fields, because money was less plentiful in the impoverished extremities than in the gorged centre of the Empire, which was the real cause of its ruin. The free race of Italian cultivators, the strength of the legions, disappeared before the fleets which wafted cheap grain from the banks of the Nile and the shores of Africa to the Tiber. Thence the impoverishing of the small freeholders—the buying up of all small freeholds by the great families—the extinction of grain culture in Italy—the managing of the huge estates into which the country was parcelled, in pasture cultivation, by means of slaves—the disappearance of Italian free-husbandmen—and the ruin of the Empire. So rich was the capital when it fell, that Ammianus Marcellinus has recorded, that when Alaric appeared before Rome, it contained within its walls seventeen hundred and fifty great families, many of whom had estates, almost entirely in pasturage, which yielded them what was equivalent, in English money, to one hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling of yearly rent.

To the same cause is to be ascribed the continued desolation of the Campagna of Rome in modern times. Slavery has disappeared; but the curse of an unlimited and extraordinary supply of foreign grain to the Tiber still continues, and chains the proprietors of the *Agro Romano* to pasturage as the only means of profitable cultivation. Travellers are never weary of expressing their astonishment at the desolation which comes up to the very gates of Rome, as of Constantinople; but a very simple cause explains it in both. It is more profitable [Pg 547] to keep the land in pasturage than to lay it out in grain cultivation, by reason of the deluge of foreign grain raised in semi-barbarous countries, with which the capital is flooded. From official documents laid before the Papal Government, which made the most anxious and minute enquiries into this subject, it appears that 8000 crowns laid out in agriculture in the Campagna of Rome, at the prices of Rome, would bring in a profit of only 30 crowns a-year; while the same sum laid out on pasturage of sheep on the same land, would bring in 1972 crowns. It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that the Campagna remains in grass.[5]

The cause of this extraordinary state of things is to be found, not in any peculiar adaptation of the Campagna to grass cultivation; for the land is, generally, of the most extraordinary fertility, and in former times, in the infancy of Rome, literally speaking "every rood had its man." The cause, and the sole cause, is to be found in the constant low price of grain in the capital, and the purchase of the *whole of its supply* from foreign states. The Papal Government inherited from its Imperial predecessor the habit, and the necessity, of making periodical distributions of grain, at a cheap rate, to the people. The people inherited, from the lazy successors of the conquerors of the world, the habit of looking to the public stores for cheap distributions of food, as those of Paris did during the Revolution. Government, elective, weak, without any armed force, and in the hands of priests, had not courage to incur the present hazard consequent on a departure from this ruinous system; and they bought their grain, of course, where they could get it cheapest—in Egypt, Odessa, and the Levant. The banks of the Volga are to modern, what those of the Nile were to ancient Rome. The Campagna has been chained to sterility and desolation by the same cause in modern as

in ancient times—under the Popes as the Emperors. So far has this evil gone, that in 1797, when the Papal Government was overturned by the French, the *Casa Annonaria* of the Apostolic Chamber, or Board of Public Subsistence, exhibited a deficit of 3,293,000 crowns, (£645,000,) incurred in retailing bread to the people cheaper than they could purchase it even in the cheapest foreign markets.[6]

The Campagna of Rome is the great type of the state to which the doctrine of the Chrematists would reduce the states of modern Europe. Agriculture, ruined by the perpetual curse of foreign importation; urban industry alone flourishing by the stimulus of foreign export; vast fortunes accumulated in the hands of a few merchants and great proprietors; constant distress among the labouring poor; all the symptoms of prosperity in the cities—all the marks of decay in the country; luxury the most unbounded, side by side with penury the most pinching; an overflow of wealth which cannot find employment, in one class of society; a mass of destitution that seeks in vain for work, in another; a middle class daily diminishing in number and declining in importance, between the two extremes; and government, under the influence of popular institutions, yielding to all the demands of the opulent class, because it gives money: and deaf to all the cries of the impoverished, because they can only ask for bread. The name of slavery is indeed abolished in Western Europe, but is its reality, are its evils, not present? Have we not retained its fetters, its restraints, its degradations, without its obligation to support? Are not the English factory children often practically in a worse servitude than in the Eastern harem? If the men are not "ascripti glebæ," are they not "*ascripti molinis ac carbonariis*?" What trade can a factory girl or coal-mine child take to, if thrown out of employment? The master cannot flog them, or bring then back by force to his [Pg 548] workshop. Mighty difference! He can starve them if they leave it: he chains them to their mills by the invincible bond of necessity. They have the evils of slavery without its advantages. Can, or ought, such a state of things long continue? Whether this is descriptive of the state of society in France and England, let those determine who are familiar with the people of either of these countries.

Such are Sismondi's political views, which are enforced in the volumes before us by a vast array of historical and statistical facts, which, as well as the deservedly acknowledged talent and character of the writer, entitle them to the highest respect, and render then of the deepest interest. That they are "important if true," as the Americans say, no one will deny: that they are of immediate and pressing application to the state of society in the British islands, none acquainted with it, especially in the manufacturing districts, will be so bold as to dispute. We have deemed it best to give an abstract of his opinions and principles in a condensed form, in preference to quoting individual passages, because he expands his ideas so much, that the latter course would have enabled us to give only a limited number of his views. Those who will take the trouble to turn to the original volumes, will find every sentence in the preceding abstract enforced and illustrated at least a dozen times in this most able and original work. That we consider his ideas as in the main just, and his anticipations too likely to prove well-founded, may be inferred from the pains we have taken to form a digest of them in the preceding pages. We only hope that, though he possibly has not much exaggerated the social evils which now threaten society, he has not given their due weight to the many alleviating or corrective causes which, in a free, religious, and moral community, are constantly called into activity when society has come to require their operation. Sismondi says, though he has been enforcing these principles for twenty years, he has found few converts to his opinion in France; and that he does not think he would have found one, if the English Parliamentary Reports had not afforded decisive evidence of the existence of many of these social evils amidst unbounded commercial prosperity and the highest political power in Great Britain. The social evils which destroyed Rome, he reminds us, were in full activity during the eighty years of the splendid, pacific, and wise rule of the Antonines; the most happy, to external appearance, which the world ever knew. Their baneful influence appeared at once, when political dangers commenced with the accession of Commodus. These doctrines are not the less likely to be true that they are contrary to general opinion, that they run counter to many important interests, that they are incapable of present application, that they are adverse to the policy of the rulers of the state. Government rules men, but Providence rules government, and will in the end assert its supremacy, and right the moral evils of mankind, or punish the sins of nations.

MY FIRST SPEC IN THE BIGGLESWADES. [Pg 549]

My uncle, Scipio Dodger, was one of the most extraordinary men of the age. Figure to yourself a short, stout, and rather pot-bellied individual, with keen eyes moving in a perpetual twinkle, a mouth marked at the corners with innumerable tiny wrinkles, hair of the shortest and most furzy white, scant at the front, but gathered behind into a pig-tail about the size of a cigar; and you have a fair full-length portrait of my avuncular relative. My father, in early years, had married an American lady—I must own it—a Pennsylvanian, and uncle Scipio was her brother. I was the only fruit of that union, and at an early age was left

an orphan in circumstances of sufficient embarrassment. A mere accident saved me from being shipped off to America like a parcel of cotton goods. Uncle Scip, who was left my guardian, had some transaction which required his personal attendance at Liverpool. He set foot for the first time on the old country—calculated that it was an almighty fine location—guessed that a spry hand might do a good streak of business there; and, in short, finally repudiated America, as coolly as America has since repudiated her engagements. He would settle down to no fixed trade or profession; but, as he possessed a considerable capital, he entered into the field of speculation. Never, perhaps, was there a man better qualified by nature for success in that usually dangerous game. His powers and readiness of calculation were unequalled—his information quite startling, from its extent and accuracy—his foresight, a gift like prophecy. I verily believe he never lost a single shilling in any one of the numerous schemes in which he was engaged; what he made, I have private reasons for keeping to myself. If the apostolic order against taking scrip is to be considered in a literal sense, Scipio was a frightful defaulter. He scampered out of one railway into another like a rabbit perambulating a warren, and was the wonder of the brokers and the glory of the Stock Exchange. Men perverted his Roman prefix, and knew him solely by the endearing appellation of old Scripio.

To me, who was his only living relative, Mr Dodger supplied the place of a parent. He placed me at school and college, gave me as good an education and liberal allowance as I required, and came down regularly once a-year to Scotland, to see how I was getting on. Scripio, though he never failed to taunt the Scotch with their poverty, was, in reality, very partial to that nation; he had a high opinion of their 'cuteness and reputation for driving a good bargain, and—somewhat incongruously, for he was a thorough democrat—piqued himself on his connexion with my family, which was old enough in all conscience, but as poor, in my particular case, as if I had been the lineal descendant of Lazarus. In fact, all my patrimony was the sum of a thousand pounds, firmly secured over land, and not available until I came of age—a circumstance which frequently elicited tornadoes of wrath from uncle Dodger, who swore that, if he had got the management of it, he could have multiplied it tenfold. Subsequent events have convinced me that he was perfectly right.

Be that as it may, I was ultimately called to the Scottish bar, and entered upon my profession with the same zeal, promptitude, and success, which are exhibited by, and attend three-fourths of the unhappy young gentlemen who select that school of jurisprudence. I appeared punctually in the Parliament House at nine, cravatted, wigged, and gowned, to a nicety; took my prescribed exercise, of at least ten miles *per diem*, on the boards; talked scandal with my brethren, (when we could get it,) and invented execrable jokes; lounged at stove and library; wrote lampoons against the seniors; and, in short, went through the whole curriculum expected from a rising votary of Themis. I followed the law diligently; but, somehow or other, I could never overtake it. The agents in Edinburgh must be a remarkably slow set, for they never would appreciate my merits. At the close of two years, a decree in absence, and a claim in a multiplepoinding, remained the sole trophies of my legal renown. [Pg 550]

One day I was surprised in my study by a visit from uncle Scripio, who had just arrived from Liverpool. I was reading a novel (none of Justinian's) at the moment, and hastily shoved it into my desk. After the usual congratulations were over, the aged file took a rapid survey of the apartment, which fortunately was in tolerable order, glanced curiously at a pile of legal papers, procured—shall I confess it?—from my friend Cotton, the eminent tobacconist of Prince's Street, uttered a hem, in which incredulity seemed mingled with satisfaction, and then, having been supplied with a tumbler of sherry and ginger-beer—a compound which he particularly affected—he commenced the work of inquisition.

"Well, Fred, my boy, how goes it? Slick, eh? Lots of clients coming in, I suppose? You must be driving a pretty smart trade to judge by them 'ere bundles."

"Pretty well;" I replied, "when my standing at the bar is considered, I have no great reason to complain."

The old fellow looked at me with so quizzical an expression, that I could hardly play the hypocrite longer.

"I'll trouble you for that packet," he said; and, remorselessly clutching a bundle made up with red tape to resemble a process, he took out a written pleading, to which the signature of a counsel, now ten years in the grave, was appended.

"What a devil of a time these lawsuits last!" remarked Mr Dodger, unfolding another document. Worse and worse! It was the juvenile production of a judge in the Inner-House. I had nothing for it but to make a clean breast.

"The fact is, my dear uncle," said I, "these papers are just part of the furniture of a lawyer's room. It would never do, you know, to have an empty table, if an agent *should* happen to come in; but the real truth of the matter is, that the only agents I know are lads with as little business as myself, who sometimes look in of an evening to solace themselves with a cigar."

"I knew it, Fred—I knew it!" said Scripio, rubbing his hands, as if he thought it a remarkably good joke; "there are tricks in all trades, my boy, and the American blood will break out. But you can't do for me, though, you cunning young villain. Oh no! though you wanted to try it on." And he chuckled as heartily as any of Mr Dickens' characters in the Christmas Carol.

"So you ar'n't making a farthing, Freddy?" he resumed; "I'm glad of it. You'll never grease your coach-wheels here. Where's the thousand pounds that were lent over the Invertumblers estate?"

"Mr Constat, the agent of old M'Alcohol, paid it to me about three months ago," replied I, rather astonished at the question, which seemed to have no connexion with the former subject. "I have put it into the National Bank."

"Two per cent? Pshaw—trash!" said my uncle. "Here, look at this;" and he shoved a printed paper into my hands.

It was headed, "Prospectus of the Grand Union Biggleswade, Puddockfield, and Pedlington Railway, in 50,000 shares of £20 each. Deposit £1 on each share." If the line had run through the garden of Eden, supposing that place to have furnished a large passenger traffic besides agricultural produce, with London at one terminus and Pekin at the other, the description could not have been more flattering than that which I perused. Nature seemed to have lavished all her blessings upon Biggleswade, Puddockfield, and the country thereunto adjacent; in short, I never recollect so flattering a picture, with one solitary exception drawn by my friend Frizzle, who had stuck twenty pounds into some railway in a mineral district. "When we recollect," said Bob in a burst of poetical frenzy, "the enormous population of the district, the softness and geniality of the climate, and the fairy aspect of its scenery—when we think of the varied traffic which now chokes up the ordinary avenues of industry—when we estimate the inexhaustible beds of ore and minerals, absolutely heaving [Pg 551] themselves from the ground, as though to entreat the aid of man in adapting them to their proper destination;—when we consider all these things, I say, and finally combine them together, fancy closes her astonished eyes, and even imagination swoons!" I will not say that the writer of the Biggleswade prospectus was as soaring a genius as Bob; but he was quite enough of a Claude to seduce the investing public. I forget what amount of return he promised, but it was something hitherto unheard of, and my mouth watered as I read.

"That's the spec!" said my uncle Dodger. "Sit down and write me an order for your thousand."

"Eh, uncle—for the whole?" said I somewhat aghast.

"Every sixpence. There—that will do," and Mr Dodger disappeared with the cheque.

To say the truth, I was not quite pleased with this proceeding; for although I had confidence in my uncle's sagacity, it was decidedly a serious thing to hazard one's whole patrimony on a speculation which might, so far as I knew, be as visionary as the Aërial Machine. However, my constitutional carelessness very speedily relieved me of all anxiety. I went out to balls and steeple-chases as formerly, attended the House *pro formâ* in the mornings, and messed three times a-week with the cavalry at Piershill. The pace, indeed, was rather rapid, but then I had a strong constitution.

For three or four weeks I saw little of my respected uncle. He had—heaven knows how—got himself affiliated to one of the clubs, and sat half the day in the reading-room, poring over the Railway Journals and the Money-market article in the Times. He played whist of an evening on a system peculiar to himself, and levied a very fair contribution from the pockets of certain country gentlemen, who piqued themselves on understanding the antiquated tactics of Major A.; but never had the fortune before to measure trumps with an American. On the whole, he appeared remarkably comfortable and contented.

One morning I was honoured with an early domiciliary visit. "Fred," said my uncle, "put up half-a-dozen shirts and a tooth-brush. We start for Liverpool this evening."

"This evening!" said I in amazement. "Impossible, my dear sir! Only reflect—the Session is not over yet, and what would become of my business if I were to levant without notice?"

"I'll insure all your losses for a pound-note. Tell them you've got business elsewhere: I daresay a good many of the old hands are up to that trick already."

"But my engagements"—persisted I. "There's Mrs M'Crinoline's ball on Tuesday, and Lady M'Loup's the week after—really, uncle, I don't see how I can possibly get away."

"Do you wish to make your fortune, sir?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then do as I bid you. Get up and shave, and in the mean time I'll look after breakfast."

There was nothing for it but obedience, so I rose and polished my outer man. Mr Scripio was apparently in high feather and digestion. He put the finishing stroke to what had once been a prize mutton ham, and dug as diligently into a pot of marmalade as though he expected to find a layer of doubloons at the bottom. To my amazement, he dedicated his last cup of coffee as a special bumper to the health of the Noble President of the Board of Trade.

"What's in the wind now?" thought I. "Uncle, have you any thing dependent before Parliament? Perhaps you want a junior counsel for a bill."

"Confound Parliament!" said the irreverent Columbian; "I don't care a cent more for it than I

do for Congress. The Board of Trade's the thing for my money! That's your constitutional tribunal—close-fitting boxes and Bramah locks—no humbug there! 'Zooks, won't we smash old Jobson after all!" and Scripio neighed like a Shetland pony at its first introduction to oats—all the while helping himself to a caulker of genuine Glenlivat.

We set off in the afternoon accordingly, and next morning arrived at Liverpool. Our stay there was very short. I was led captive to the Exchange, and hurried into a stockbroker's [Pg 552] office in an obscure alley behind. The Plutus of this den, an old bald-pated gentleman, in a blue coat and drab terminations, started up from his seat as we entered, with more manifestations of respect than would have welcomed the avatar of the Cham of Tartary. Two consumptive clerks looked up with awe as they heard their master pronounce the venerated name of Dodger. It was clear that my uncle was well-known and appreciated here—his mere patronymic acted as a species of talisman.

We were conducted into an inner sanctum, where, having nothing else to do, I betook myself to the study of a map of England, where lines of railway already laid down in black, and projected ones in red, intersected the surface as closely as veins and arteries in an anatomical preparation. Mean time, the two seniors entered into a deep, and apparently interesting conversation, the purport of which I did not very clearly understand.

"How's Dovers?" asked my uncle.

"Up. Forty to forty-two ex div.," replied the broker.

"Sell sixty. Bumpton Watfords?"

"Rather better this morning."

"Good!" said Scripio, evidently gratified by the amendment of the interesting convalescent. "What's doing in the Slushpool Docks?"

"Heavy," replied the broker. "There's been a forced sale or two, but they won't go up."

"I should think not," said Scripio. "Have you bought me these forty Jamaicas?"

I started at the prodigality of the order. "Heaven and earth!" thought I, "can this uncle of mine be a kind of occidental Aladdin? After this, I should not be surprised to hear him bid for Texas and the Oregon territory!"

"I've got them," said the broker quietly; "they are going up without steam. Have you got any Biggleswades?"

"Yes," said my uncle, "what about them? No screw loose, eh? Sure to pass the standing orders, I hope?"

"All right," said the broker, "hold for the bill, and you'll make a good thing of it."

"Well, then," said my uncle, "that's all, and we're off. I'll write you from London about other matters. Good-day,"—and we sallied into the street.

"Fred, you dog!" said Mr Dodger in high glee, "you've put your teeth into it this time."

"Into what, sir?" asked I, very innocently. "If you mean luncheon, I'm sure I should have no objections."

"Oh come! none of that humbug. I mean the Biggleswades. There hasn't been such a catch in Britain since the opening of the Coal-hill Junction."

"I'm devilish glad to hear it," said I, with a vague kind of general impression that I was going to make money, though I could not well tell how, and a fixed determination, since I *had* got my teeth in, to take as large a bite as possible, though, with regard to the process of mastication, I was just as ignorant as a baby. That afternoon we set off for Wales, and next day arrived at one of the most extraordinary households, in the southern extremity of the principality, which it ever was my fortune to visit.

The house was large and spacious, indeed a masterpiece of architecture, and probably had been built in the time of Charles the Second. It stood upon the slope of a hill, and immediately below were a succession of terraces, with walks of smooth green turf, and exotic shrubs, which in summer must be most luxuriant. It was winter when I visited at Mervyn Hall, but, even then, the terraces were beautiful. Every tree and spray was coated with armour of clear crystalline ice, except the thick old yew-hedge at the bottom, which kept its coat of dark perennial green. The Hall commanded the prospect of a large and fertile valley, diversified by wood and domain, tower and village spire; and in more than one place, a pillar of smoke, curling lazily upwards, marked the situation of a famous forge, or foundery. It was, in fact, one of the great iron districts, though you scarcely could have believed so by day; but at night, fire after fire seemed to burst out all down the reach of the [Pg 553] valley; and probably years had gone by since the smallest of these was quenched. It is not often that nature lavishes her beauty and her wealth so prodigally upon the selfsame spot.

Uncle Scripio strode into the house with the air of a proprietor. I am not sure that he had not some interest in the concern, for Mervyn Hall was a kind of mystery to the neighbours. We were shown into a handsome apartment lined with black oak, where a regiment of

cavaliers might have dined with both credit and satisfaction; but times had altered, and the banqueting-hall was now put to different uses. On two sofas and a table lay a pile of maps and plans, sufficient, according to my limited comprehension, for a survey of the whole world. Then there was an ingenious model of a suspension bridge, where a railway of white-painted cord spanned a valley of undulating putty, with a stream in the centre, which bore evident marks of being ravished from a fractured looking-glass. Bundles of thick clumsy sticks—they might be instruments—with brass knobs at the top, like the morgenstern of a Norwegian watchman, were huddled into the corners. There was a grievous hole in the centre of the carpet; and several but-ends of cigars scattered on the mantelpiece, showed me very clearly that female domination was not acknowledged by the inhabitants of Mervyn Hall.

Our host, Mr Ginger, received us with great cordiality, and a flagon of superior ale. There are worse things under the skirts of Plinlimmon than the ancient *cwrw* of the Cymry. In five minutes the two gentlemen were deep in the discussion of certain disputed gradients, and my jaws were on the very verge of dislocation, when uncle Scripio, good-naturedly suggested that I might retire to another apartment.

"How many of the lads have you here just now, Ginger? I think Freddy had better step in and make their acquaintance."

Mr Ginger looked rather sour. "There's Gordon and Mackinnon working at the estimates, and William Cutts writing out the notices. I'm afraid they'll be disturbed."

"No fear of that," said I, too glad to make my escape on any terms; and accordingly, without further ceremony, I entered the adjoining study.

Mr Gordon, the senior engineer, as a sinewy-limbed fellow of some three-and-thirty, whose countenance and complexion bore satisfactory evidence of a pure Caledonian extraction. He was considered by his scientific brethren as a kind of engineering Robert the Devil, having performed various feats with the theodolite which were the marvel of the whole fraternity. If any old gentleman was foolish enough to object to a proposed line on account of its traversing his garden or preserve, or invading the sanctity of his pig-stys, Gordon was instantly sent for. No sooner were the stars out, as also the lights in the mansion-house, than, on the verge of the disputed territory, an accurate observer might have described something like the glimmer of a glow-worm advancing stealthily forwards. That was Master Gordon, with his lantern, staff, and chain; and before the grey dawn of morning, the whole gradients were booked and ready for the most searching inspection of a committee of the House of Commons. It is even alleged that, despite the enmity of a northern thane, this Protean Archimedes surveyed a Highland line with nothing but his leister, or salmon-spear, and actually killed three fish whilst ascertaining the practicability of a cutting through a tremendous Pass. Be this as it may, he was certainly a clever fellow, and as ugly a customer as a keeper could cope withal before the dew had vanished from the clover. Mackinnon was a quiet-looking lad, with a latent dash of the dare-devil; proud of his name and of his genealogy, and maintaining some show of a Highland gentleman's dignity, in a following of three ragged Skye terriers, who yelped incessantly at his heels. Cutts was a grand specimen of the Londoner, redolent of the Fives' Court and Evans's; one of those fellows whom it is very desirable to have on your side in a row, and very unpleasant to encounter if you happen to be particular about the colour and symmetry of your eyes. With these gentlemen I speedily became hand in glove, and the afternoon passed rapidly away. It may be questionable, however, whether the accuracy of the estimates was improved by the introduction of cigars, and a pitcher of the Welsh home-brewed. [Pg 554]

After dinner, we all got remarkably merry. Mr Dodger related, in his happiest manner, several anecdotes of the way in which he had "flummox'd" old Jobson, his arch-enemy and railway rival; Mr Ginger favoured us with an imitation of a locomotive train, perfect even to the painful intensity of the whistle; and Gordon told, with great gusto, various miraculous adventures, which might have done honour to a Borderer in the good old days of "lifting." Somehow or other, as the evening got on, we became confoundedly national. The Scotch, of course, being the majority, had decidedly the best of it; and the American Scripio and Cambrian Ginger having joined our ranks, we all fell foul of the unfortunate Cutts, and abused everything Anglican as heartily as O'Connell upon the hill of Tara. We soon succeeded in extorting an admission, that the Scots, upon the whole, had rather the best of it at Flodden; and thereupon, and ever thereafter, Mr Cutts was accosted by the endearing epithet of Saxon, presently abbreviated, for the sake of euphony, into Sacks. I don't exactly recollect at what hour we retired to bed.

"Freddy," said my uncle next morning, "I am going off to London with Mr Ginger; and I don't think you could do better than remain where you are. You'd be sure to get into no end of scrapes in town; and I haven't time to be continually bailing you out of Bow Street."

"Very well, sir; just as you please. I dare say, I shall manage to make myself quite comfortable here."

"I say, though," remonstrated Mr Ginger, "he'll keep the whole of the lads from their work. Gordon is too fond of fun at any time; and the moment our backs are turned, they'll be after some devilry or other. Couldn't your nephew carry a theodolite, and take a few practical lessons in surveying?"

"Lord help you!" said my uncle, "he's as innocent of mensuration as an infant. Can't you spare Cutts?"

"Better than the other two, certainly."

"Well, then, we'll hand over Freddy to him; and let them amuse themselves the best way they can. Cutts, you may do what you like for the next ten days; but, remember, Gordon and Mackinnon are not to be disturbed on any account. Now, good-by, and take care of yourselves."

The Saxon and I made ample use of the permission. We established our headquarters at the Saracen in Shrewsbury, and went the pace for some days at a hand-gallop. I can't help laughing, even now, at the consternation into which South Wales was thrown by the re-appearance of Rebecca and her daughters, who carried off, in one night, seven turnpike-gates. It was a pity that the London journals should have been at the expense of sending down special correspondents on that occasion; for I can bear personal testimony to the fact, that no country could possibly be quieter. Even the tollkeepers appeared to slumber with a tenfold torpedo power. A little incident, however, soon occurred, which completely changed the nature of my occupations.

I went, one day, to call upon a family who resided some miles from Shrewsbury. It was a visit of ceremony; and I therefore considered it a bore. Cutts, who was no lady's man, preferred waiting for me at a neighbouring public-house; so I effected my *entrée* alone. I went in a free-man; and came out, two hours afterwards, as complete a bond-slave as ever hoed the sugar-canes of Cupid. A pair of laughing blue eyes, and the prettiest lips in the universe, had undone me. Sweet Mary Morgan! yours was a rapid conquest! and—you need not pinch my ears.

I went down to the inn in that state of pleasing bewilderment which characterises the first stage of the amatory complaint. Cutts had got tired in my absence; and, being rather in a pensive mood, had gone to the church-yard with a quart of beer, where I found him copying the inscriptions on the tombstones.

"What the devil kept you so long?" said the Saxon.

"Hold your tongue, Sacks! I have just seen the prettiest angel! Who on earth can she be? No relation, I dare be sworn, of that fat old rascal Owenson." [Pg 555]

"Whew! that's the sort of thing, is it?" quoth Cutts. "What may be the name of the divinity?"

"Mary Morgan."

"What? little Mary! Oh yes! I know her very well," said the Saxon. "She's the daughter of the principal medical man in Shrewsbury; a pompous old blockhead, with twenty thousand pounds and a pigtail. Mary is a sweet little creature; and, between you and me, I rather flatter myself I have made an impression in that quarter. You have no idea how she laughed when I danced the fetter hornpipe at the Jones's."

"Sacks," said I quietly, "if you dare to mention that young lady's name in connexion with yourself again, I shall knock out your brains on the nearest monument. I am perfectly serious. Now listen—how can I get an introduction to the doctor?"

"It won't do, old fellow, if you have a complaint of the chest."

"How so?"

"The phlebotomizing Jew swears he won't marry his daughter to any man who is not as rich as himself. But I'll tell you what it is, Fred.—You are a confoundedly good fellow, though you *are* a descendant of William the Lion, which I consider to be utter gammon, and I don't care if I lend you a helping hand. Miss Morgan is very intimate with Letty Jones, who is a nice larking girl, and understands how to manage her mamma. I'll arrange a quiet tea-party there to-morrow evening, and you may make love as long as you like, provided you don't interfere with supper."

No arrangement could possibly have pleased me better. The Saxon was as good as his word; and after an early dinner, at which I tyrannously curtailed my friend of his usual allowance of liquor, we made our way to the Jonesian habitation.

Cutts, very good-naturedly, took the whole task of amusing the company upon himself. He gave pantomimic representations of T. P. Cooke and Taglioni, sang half-a-dozen songs that are nightly encored at the Surrey side, and finally performed a series of antique statues in his shirt-sleeves. For myself, I was far too agreeably occupied to pay much attention to his masterpiece of "Ajax defying the Lightning." Mary Morgan was prettier and more fascinating than ever, and before supper was announced, I had made considerable progress. I saw her home, and made an appointment for next day to visit a ruin in the neighbourhood. Cutts was rewarded for his good behaviour by three extra tumblers of brandy and water at the Saracen, and became so affectionate that I had much difficulty in making my escape to bed.

I shall pass over, without condescending upon minute particulars, the history of the ensuing week. Love-making is always pleasant; certainly more so in summer than in winter, but

there is a strange alchemy in the tender passion, which, despite of frost and snow, can endow all nature with the hues and odours of spring. So, at least, it was with me. I met my charmer every day, and at length succeeded in extorting from her lips the only confession, to obtain which the labour of years is but a trifling sacrifice. What a pleasant thing it would be, if, in those matters, there was nothing more to consult than the inclinations of the parties who are principally concerned! What, in the name of cross-purposes, have parents to do with controlling the affections of their children? Thirty years ago, there is not one of them who would have submitted patiently to the dictation which they now exercise without scruple. I sometimes wonder whether, twenty years after this, I shall continue of the same opinion; but, thank heaven, there is ample time for consideration—Poor dear little Jemima is only cutting her teeth.

Mary was quite alive to the difficulties which stood in her way. Old Morgan loved her, it is true; but it was that sort of love which antiquarians and coin-collectors have for their rarest specimens—they cannot bear to see them for a moment in the hands of others. Wealth alone could bribe the doctor to part with his child, and, alas! of that I had little or nothing. True, I might be considered as uncle Dodger's prospective heir; but that esteemed gentleman was [Pg 556] as tough as India-rubber, and very nearly as good a life as my own. Professional prospects—ahem!—they might do to talk about in Wales; certainly not in Edinburgh, where few lawyers are accounted prophets.

In this dilemma, I resolved to take sweet counsel with the Saxon, having no one else to apply to. As I had neglected him horribly for the last few days, he was rather sulky, until I gave him to understand that I was in downright earnest. Then you may be sure he brightened up amazingly. There was mischief evidently in the wind.

"That comes of your confounded Scotch education," said Cutts, interrupting a very pretty speech of mine about honourable conduct and disinterested motives. "Who doubts that you are perfectly disinterested? Of course it's the girl, and not the money you want. She *does* happen to have twenty thousand, but you don't care about that—you would marry her without a shilling, wouldn't you?"

"By the bones of King David the First"——

"That's enough. Don't disturb the repose of the respectable old gentleman—he might not be over happy if he saw his descendant in breeches. The case seems clear enough; I wonder you have a doubt about it. Old Morgan won't give his consent, so there is absolute necessity for a bolt. Leave it all to me. I'll provide a chaise and four, and if the lady has no objection, we can start to-morrow evening. I'll sit behind on the rumble, and shoot the leader if there should be any pursuit. Only mind this, I don't go unless there is a lady's maid. Every thing must be done with strict regard to decorum."

"Is the lady's maid also to occupy the rumble?"

"Of course. You wouldn't have her inside, would you? Come now, set about it, like a good fellow. It will be a first-rate lark, and you may command me at an hour's notice."

I confess that I felt very much inclined to adopt the suggestion of the Saxon. Most men, I believe, are averse to elopements as a general principle; but there are always exceptions, as every one discovers when his own wishes are thwarted. I was not destined, however, to offer my hymeneal sacrifice at the shrine of the Gretna Pluto. A letter of mine to Mary, rather amorously worded, found its way into the hands of Doctor Morgan. The usual consequences followed—an explosion of paternal wrath, filial incarceration, and the polite message to myself, that if I ventured to approach the house, it would be at the risk of appropriating the contents of a blunderbuss. My feelings may be easily imagined.

"If you amuse yourself that way with your hair," said my friend and consoler Cutts, "you'll have to buy a wig, and that costs money. Hang it, man, cheer up! We'll do the old boy yet. Mackinnon will be here to-night, and the deuce is in it if three clever fellows like us can't outwit a Welsh apothecary."

I assisted at that evening's conference, which was conducted with due solemnity. We smoked a great deal, after the manner of an Indian war-council, and circulated "the fire-water of the pale-face" rather rapidly. Both my friends were clearly of opinion that our honour was at stake. They vowed that, having gone so far, it was imperative to carry off the lady, and pledged their professional reputation upon a successful issue. Cutts had learned that on the following Friday there was to be a great ball in Shrewsbury; and, through the medium of Letty Jones, he understood that Mary Morgan and her father were to be there. This seemed a golden opportunity. It was finally arranged that I should withdraw myself from the neighbourhood in the mean time, but return on the evening of the ball, and conceal myself in a private apartment of the Saracen, where the ball was to be held. Mackinnon was to attend the ball, and lead Mary to the supper-room, from which the retreat could be easily effected. Cutts was to remain below, look after the horses, and act as general spy. Nothing more seemed necessary than to make Miss Morgan aware of our plans; which the Saxon undertook to do by agency of his fair and larking friend, who was in perfect ecstasies at the prospect of this coming elopement.

The eventful Friday arrived; and from a solitary bed-room in the third floor of the Saracen, I [Pg 557] heard the caterwauling of fiddles announce the opening of the ball. I had asked Cutts to take

a quiet chop with me up-stairs, but that mercurial gentleman positively refused, upon the ground of expediency. Nothing on earth could induce him to leave his post. He was to act the spy, and therefore it was absolutely necessary that he should remain below. All my remonstrances could not prevent him from dining with Mackinnon in the coffee-room; so I was compelled to give him his own way, merely extracting a pledge that for this once he would abstain from unbounded potations. Down went the two gentlemen, and I was left alone to my solitary meditations.

I have read Victor Hugo's *Dernier Jour d'un Condamné*, but I do not recollect, in the course of my literary researches, having met with any accurate journal of a gentleman's sensations before perpetrating an elopement. It is a thing that could easily be done at a moment's notice, but the case seems very different after the calm contemplation of a week. You begin, then, to calculate the results. Fancy takes a leap beyond the honeymoon, and dim apparitions of bakers' bills, and the skeletons of cheap furniture, obtrude themselves involuntarily on your view. I lay down on the bed, and tried to sleep until I should receive the appointed signal. For some time it would not do. The nightmare, in the form of a nurse with ponderous twins, sat deliberately down upon my chest, and requested one of them, a hideous red-haired little imp, to kiss its dear Papa! At last, however, I succeeded.

In the mean time Messrs Cutts and Mackinnon sat down to their frugal banquet in the coffee-room. A glass of sherry after soup is allowed to the merest anchorite, therefore my friends opined that they could not do less than order a bottle. After fish, Mackinnon discovered that he was in very low spirits—a dismal foreboding had haunted him all forenoon; and as it would not do to betray any depression in the ball-room, he rather thought that a flask of champagne would alleviate his melancholy symptoms. The Saxon loved his ally too much to interpose any objections, so the cork of the Sillery was started. A jug of ale during dinner, and a pint of port after cheese, were fair and legitimate indulgences; and these being discussed, Cutts proceeded to the stable to look after the horses. All was right; and after an affecting exhortation to the postilions to keep themselves rigidly sober, the Saxon rejoined his friend.

"It is a great relief to my mind, Mackinnon," said Cutts, throwing himself back in his chair, and exposing his feet to the comfortable radiance of the fire, "to think that matters are likely to go on swimmingly. It's a fine frosty starlight night—just the sort of weather you would select for a bolt; and Freddy and his dove will be as comfortable inside the chaise as if they were in cotton."

"Rather cold, though, on the rumble," replied Mackinnon.

"Gad, you're right," said the Saxon. "I say, don't you think, since I'm good-natured enough to expose myself in that way, we might have a bottle of mulled port just by way of fortifier?"

"You're a devilish sensible fellow, Cutts," said Mackinnon; and he rang the bell.

"Won't it be rare fun!" said Sacks, helping himself to a rummer of the reeking fluid. "Think what a jolly scamper we shall have. The horses' feet ringing like metal as they tear full gallop along the road, and old Morgan in a buggy behind, swearing like an incarnate demon! Mac, here's your good health; you're a capital fellow. Give us a song, old chap! I won't see you again for three weeks at the soonest. My eyes! what a rage Ginger will be in!"

Mackinnon was of a Jacobite family who had rather burned their fingers in the Forty-five, and being also somewhat of a sentimental turn, he invariably became lachrymose over his liquor, and poured out the passion of his soul in lamentations over the fall of the Stuarts. Instead, therefore, of favouring Cutts with any congenial ditty from the Coal-hole or Cider-cellar, he struck up "Drummossie muir, Drummossie day," in a style that would have drawn tears from an Edinburgh ticket-porter. Sacks, without having any distinct idea of the period [Pg 558] of history to which the ballad referred, pronounced it to be deuced touching; whereupon Mackinnon commenced a eulogy on the clans in general, and his own sept in particular.

"Ay, that must have been a pleasant fellow," said Cutts, in response to a legend of Mackinnon's, concerning a remote progenitor known by the *sobriquet* of Angus with the bloody whiskers; "a little too ready with his knife perhaps, but a lively companion, I daresay, over a joint of his neighbour's beef. 'Pon my soul, it's quite delightful to hear you talk, Mackinnon; as good as reading one of Burns's novels. Just ring the bell, will you, for another jug; and then tell me the story of your great ancestor who killed the Earl of Northumberland."

This adroit stroke of the Saxon, whose thirst in reality was for liquor, not for lore, proved perfectly irresistible. Mackinnon went on lying like a Sennachie, and by the time the second jug was emptied, both gentlemen were just tottering on the verge of inebriation. The sound of the music in the apartment above first recalled Mackinnon to the sense of his duties.

"I say though, Cutts, I must be off now. I'll bring the girl down to supper, and Freddy will take her off my hands at the door; isn't that the agreement? Faith, though, I'll have a waltz with her first. I hope there's no smell of port-wine about me. It won't do for a ball-room."

"Try a glass of brandy," said Cutts, and he administered the potation. "Now you be off, and I'll keep a sharp look-out below."

The Saxon's ideas of a look-out were rather original. In the first place he paid a visit to the bar, where the niece of the landlady—a perfect little Hebe—presided, and varied the charms of a flirtation with a modicum of brandy and water. He then returned to the coffee-room, in which were two gentlemen who had seceded for a moment from the ball. They were both very accurately dressed, proud of French polish, white cravats, and lemon-coloured gloves, and altogether seemed to consider themselves as the finished D'Orsays, of Shrewsbury. A few supercilious looks, which they vouchsafed upon Cutts, who, to say the truth, was no beauty in his shooting-jacket, roused the Saxon lion. Some complimentary expressions passed between the parties, which ended in an offer from Cutts to fight both gentlemen for a five-pound note; or, if they had not so much ready cash, to accommodate them with a thrashing on credit. This proposal was magnanimously declined by the strangers, who edged gradually towards the door; however, nothing, but the arrival of several waiters, who recognised, from frequent practice, the incipient symptoms of a row, could have prevented some little display of pugilistic science. The temper of Cutts was, of course, a little ruffled by the encounter, and, in order to restore his mind to its usual equilibrium, he treated himself to another soother, and then ascended the stairs to see what I was doing. By that time it was late in the evening.

A tremendous slap on the shoulder roused me from my dreams. I started up, and there, to my amazement, was Cutts sitting upon the bed with a fresh-lighted cigar in his mouth, puffing as vigorously as an engine.

"Good heavens, Cutts!" cried I, "what is the matter? I hope nothing has gone wrong? Where's Mary?"

"All right, old fellow," said the Saxon with a mysterious smile. "We've plenty time yet for another glass of brandy and water."

"Surely, Cutts, you can't have been making a beast of yourself!" and I seized a candle. There could be no doubt of the fact: he was very fearfully disguised.

"That I should have trusted myself in the hands of such a jackass!" was my first exclamation. "Leave the room this moment, sir, or I shall knock you down with a chair; and never let me see your disgusting countenance again."

"Did you apply those epi—epitaphs to me, sir?" said the Saxon, with an abortive attempt to look dignified. "You shall hear from me in the morning. This is an ungrateful world—very! I've been doing all I can for him, keeping all the liquor out of the postilions—and that is my reward! I can't help it," continued Cutts, lapsing into a melodramatic reminiscence of the Adelphi—"so I'll just belay my pipe. Bless my dear eyes—how came the salt-water here? Hold hard, old boy,—no snivelling!" and he drew the back of his hand across his eyes, as if he was parting from a messmate upon the eve of execution. [Pg 559]

"This is intolerable!" I cried. "Get out, sir, or I shall throw you over the window!"

"Like to see you try it," said Cutts with a Coriolanus air of defiance. I had just enough command over myself to see that a row with the Saxon was worse than useless, as it would effectually destroy my last remaining chance. I therefore changed my plans.

"Mark me, sir. I am going to ring the bell for the waiters, and if you don't choose to relieve me of your presence at once, they shall have my orders to carry you down stairs. Will you go, sir? No! then take the consequences;" and I rang the bell like a demoniac.

The music stopped in the room below. Cutts, drunk as he was, observed the circumstance; and no sooner were steps heard upon the stairs, in obedience to the tocsin, than he took his departure with the candle. I lay down again till the tumult should subside, when I intended to apprise Mackinnon of the present state of matters.

My appeal to the bell, which was a vigorous one, had produced a marked effect. Several of the company had come to the door of the ball-room, in order to learn the true nature of the alarm; and Cutts on his descent was assailed by vehement enquiries.

"Oh, don't ask me—don't ask me!" said the villain, wringing his hands like a male Antigone. "My poor friend! he's just going! Oh, gentlemen, is there no medical man here to save him?"

"Doctor Morgan! Doctor Morgan!" shouted twenty voices.

"Bless my soul, what's the matter here?" said the doctor, emerging from the ball-room. "Any body taken suddenly ill, eh?"

"Oh, my poor friend!" groaned the traitor.

"Mercy on me! is it so bad as that?" said the Doctor, "I must see him immediately. My dear sir, what *is* the matter with your friend?"

"His head, sir—his head!" said Cutts with a sob—"he is quite mad at the present moment. If you go up-stairs to No. 3, you'll find him biting the bed-posts!"

"This must be looked to instantly," said the Doctor. "Gentlemen, if I want assistance I shall call for you; but we must use gentle means if possible. Poor young man! No. 3 did you say, sir?" and the doctor ascended the staircase.

"This is an awful thing, Mr Cutts!" said Mrs Hickson, the comely mistress of the house; "is there nothing that would do the poor gentleman any good?"

"I think he'd be a great deal the better of a little brandy and water," said Cutts—"the doctor hinted as much just now; and, my dear madam, you had better make two glasses of it, rather stiff, and send them up-stairs by the Boots."

I was startled by the entry of a stranger with a light, who approached the bed with all the stealthiness of a cat.

"'Zounds, sir, what do you want here?" cried I, springing up.

"Hush, my dear sir, hush! we must be calm—really we must. It will never do to allow ourselves to be agitated in this way."

"Confound you, sir! what do you mean?"

"Oh, my dear sir! merely a friendly visit, that's all. I would like to have a little quiet chat with you. How is our pulse? Do we feel any pain about the temples?"

"I'll very soon make you feel pain enough somewhere," cried I, in towering passion. "If you don't quit my room this moment, you old idiot, by the bones of the Bruce I'll toss you over the stairs!"

"Oh, if that be the case, the sooner we send for a straight jacket the better!" said the doctor. "But, eh! what! by Jove, it's the young Scotch rascal who was making love to my daughter!"

"Dr Morgan!" I cried. "Upon my honour, sir, I am quite annoyed"——

"Hallo! what's this? We are calm enough now. Answer me directly, sir; are you delirious or not?"

"No more than yourself, doctor." [Pg 560]

"This, then, was a concerted trick to make a fool of me!" sputtered the Welsh Esculapius. "But I'll be revenged. I'll have you before a magistrate for this, you villain!"

"Upon my honour, sir, I am perfectly innocent. If you'll only hear me for a single moment"——

"To be exposed before the whole town of Shrewsbury, too! I'll never forgive it!" and the doctor banged out of the room. To his dismay he found himself face to face with Cutts, who, along with the Boots, had been a delighted auditor of the scene.

"How is our patient, doctor?" said the Saxon, "Is our pulse good to-night? Did we take a look at our tongue?"

"Sir, you're a ruffian!" roared the doctor.

"Oh, come—we must be calm; it will never do to discompose ourselves. Take a glass of brandy and water, doctor, and we'll drink success to the profession. What! you won't, eh? Well then, Boots, you take one and I'll finish the other. Here is Doctor Morgan's very good health," cried Cutts, advancing to the head of the stairs, "and may he long continue to be an ornament to his profession!"

"Low scoundrel!" cried one of the young gentlemen in lemon-coloured gloves, recognising his former antagonist.

"There's the rest of it for you, my fine fellow," retorted Cutts, and the tumbler whizzed within an inch of Young Shrewsbury's maccassared locks.

A rush was made up the staircase by several of the aggravated natives; but Cutts stood at bay like a lion, and threatened instant death to the first person who should approach him. The commotion was at its height when I recognised the voice of Mr Ginger.

"Cutts, is that you? come down this instant, sir!" and the crestfallen Saxon obeyed.

"Freddy, where are you?" cried my uncle.

"Here!"

"A pretty business you two fellows have been making of it!" said Scripio, with wonderful mildness. "But never mind; let them laugh who win. We've done the trick for you!"

"Indeed, uncle! how so?"

"The Biggleswade bill has passed, and I've sold your shares at nineteen premium."

"Then I have"——

"Exactly twenty thousand pounds."

I felt as if my head were turning round. At that moment I caught a glimpse of Mary leaning on her father's arm. She looked prettier than ever.

"Doctor Morgan," I said, "there has been a mistake here—will you suffer me to explain it?"

"Certainly," said the doctor, in a very mollified tone; "if you will breakfast with me to-morrow morning." Twenty thousand pounds *do* make a difference in a man's position.

"May I come too, doctor?" hiccuped Cutts.

"No, sir; and, if you do not wish to be prosecuted, you had better send me a fee to-morrow morning."

"Oh, come!" said old Scripio. "I daresay it was merely a bit of fun. I'll settle the fees, doctor. Put Cutts to bed, and let the rest of us have a bit of supper."

On that day three weeks I married Mary Morgan, and have never taken another share in any railway since. If the reader wishes to know the reason, he may consult the list of present prices.

GERMAN-AMERICAN ROMANCES.

[Pg 561]

The Viceroy and the Aristocracy, or Mexico in 1812.

Part the Third.

In commencing a brief final notice of "The Viceroy and the Aristocracy," we regret much to inform our readers that it is, in a manner, a story without an end. One of the most striking peculiarities of this anonymous author, consists in his singular and unaccountable habit of leaving every thing unfinished. Despising the rule generally observed by romance writers, of bringing their works to some sort of climax or *dénouement*, he in no one instance takes the trouble to dispose satisfactorily of his characters; but, after strongly interesting the reader in their fate, abandons them in the middle of their career, as if he intended, some day or other, to complete their history in another volume. The inventive and descriptive powers displayed in his writings, render it impossible to attribute this peculiarity to lack of ability. A chapter or two would frequently be sufficient to terminate every thing in one way or the other; but these chapters, owing to some whim of the author, are denied us. Manifold are the eccentricities of genius, and our unknown friend has evidently no small share of them. We are compelled, therefore, to look upon his books less as regular novels, than as a series of sketches, scenes, and adventures, with slight connecting links; and resembling, by their vivid colouring, and graphic and characteristic details, some admirably painted and gorgeous panorama, of which the materials exhibit infinite variety and the most striking contrasts.

We cannot hope, in our translation, to do full justice to so able an original; and the less so as, in the extracts given, we are compelled to take considerable liberties in the way of abridgement. We are, nevertheless, desirous of following the fortunes of Don Manuel as far as the author acquaints us with them; previously to which, however, we will lay before our readers one or two fragments, having little connexion with the plot of the book, but highly illustrative of the singular state of Mexican society and manners at the period referred to. We commence with a striking sketch of the Léperos, as they appeared when assembled outside the city of Mexico, awaiting the arrival of Vicénte Gueréro and the patriot army.

The morning of the ninth of February 1812, had scarcely dawned, when the entire multitude of those wretched beings, known by the name of Léperos, left the city of Mexico, and advanced along the Ajotla road as far as the chain of volcanic hills already alluded to.

The road in question forms, with the land adjacent to it, one of the most dreary portions of the rich valley of Mexico or Tenochtitlan; and the swampy ground through which it passes, and which is only exchanged, beyond the hillocks, for a stratum of lava, exhibited, even in the most palmy days of Mexican splendour, the same gloomy and desert character as at the period here referred to. Wretched huts, inhabited by half-naked Indians, who either worked at the *desague*,[7] or gained a scanty existence by fishing, and here and there a spot of ground planted with vegetables, were the most agreeable objects to be met with; while the low grounds lay entirely waste, even the obtuse Indians being deterred by their poisonous exhalations from attempting their cultivation.

It was along this road, early upon the above-named morning, that hordes of brown, squalid, sullen-looking beings, equally debased in mind and body, were seen advancing; dragging themselves listlessly along, now slowly, then more rapidly, in the direction of the hills. It was [Pg 562] a disgusting, and at the same time a lamentable sight, to behold this mass of filth, misery, and degradation, which came crawling and limping along, scarcely human in aught except the form of those who composed it. The majority of the Léperos were completely naked,

unless the fragments of tattered blankets that hung in shreds over their shoulders could be reckoned as clothing. Here and there might be seen a thread-bare jacket or *manga*, or a pair of ragged calico trousers; while the *sombrero de petate*, or straw-hat, was worn by nearly all of them. The women had their long lank hair hanging loose about their persons, forming their chief covering, with the exception of some scanty rags fastened round their hips. In groups of twenty to a hundred, some of several hundreds, on they came, all wearing that vacant look which is the attribute of the degraded and cretin-like Indian of the Tenochtitlan valley; but which was now modified by an uneasy restlessness that seemed to impel them irresistibly towards the Rio Frio mountains. There was something strange and mysterious in the deportment of this sombre-looking mob; no shout, no laugh—none of those boisterous outbreaks commonly witnessed amongst numerous assemblages of the lower classes. On most of their callous, but naturally by no means stupid, physiognomies, the expression was one of spite and cunning, combined with indications of a secret and anxious expectation. Over the whole column, which was at least a mile in extent, hung clouds of smoke, more or less thick according to the greater or less density of the crowd. Destitute and wretchedly poor as the Léperos were, they had, nevertheless, managed to provide themselves, almost without exception, with one article of luxury; men, women, and children, all had cigars, and the smoke of the tobacco was by far the most endurable of the odours emitted by this rank multitude.

Upon reaching the rising ground, the squalid throng distributed itself in groups over the road, or on and around the hillocks, as if intending to take up its position there. In all imaginable postures, lying, standing, sitting, and squatting down, they waited; why, and for whom, it would have been hard to say, since they themselves had only an indistinct perception of their object. Hours passed away, and there they still were, sunk in the lazy apathy which is a characteristic of the Mexican Indians, and of all much-oppressed nations—a natural consequence of the despotism that crushes them, and causes them at last to look upon the unseen power by which they are oppressed as the decree of an iron fate which it would be impossible to resist or evade. For a long time profound silence reigned among these thousands and tens of thousands—a silence broken only by an occasional indistinct murmur or sigh, which found, however, neither reply nor echo.

A group that had stationed itself on a projection of the hillock over which winds the road from Mexico to Ajotla, at last had its attention attracted by a party of horsemen approaching from the direction of Buen Vista. This sight, although by no means unusual on that frequented road, appeared to interest the Léperos. They raised their heads, gazed a while at the riders, gave a kind of growl, like dogs who perceive something strange or suspicious, and then for the most part stretched themselves out again. Some, however, continued to mutter and grumble, and at last began to utter audible curses.

"Ahuitzote!" exclaimed one of the Guachinangos, rising to his feet, and fixing the oblique gaze of his eyes, which were set wide apart, upon the distant horsemen.

"Ahuitzote!" repeated his companions—the last syllable of the word seeming to stick in their throats.

"I was lying yesterday under the *portales*," murmured an Indian, "when Agostino Iturbide came by"——

He was too indolent to finish what he would have said; but a glance at his legs and shoulders, which were bloody and scarred with sabre cuts, completed his meaning.

"The earth belongs to Tonantzin,[8] the heavens to the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the *portales* to the red men," said another Indian. "The day will come when no Gachupin shall drive us out of them." [Pg 563]

"And when the sons of Tenochtitlan shall have pulque for their drink," muttered a third.

"And tortillas with fat chili for their food," chimed in a fourth. "*Maldito Don Agostino!* He is more the Ahuitzote of the children of Tenochtitlan than the Gachupins themselves."

During this dialogue, an old Indian of powerful frame had ascended the hillock, and squatted himself down on one of the blocks of lava with which the ground was strewed. The other Léperos seemed to regard him with a certain degree of respect and attention, and, after muttering the name of Tatli Ixtla,[9] they remained silent, as if expecting him to speak. As this, however, did not immediately follow, they let their heads sink again, and relapsed into their previous state of brooding apathy.

The Indian gazed mysteriously around him, lit a cigar, and, after a few puffs, broke silence in the low murmuring tones peculiar to the Indian race.

"Ixtla has heard the discourse of the Cura Hippolito of Tlascala. It was no *cuento de fraile*.[10] Ixtla has often heard the same from the priests of his own race. Will my brothers hear the words of the Cura Hippolito?"

There was an unanimous sign of assent from the Indians.

"He who hath ears to hear, let him hear! So said the Cura Hippolito, and so saith Ixtla. When Don Abraham, a most excellent caballero, greatly esteemed both by the Holy Virgin of Guadalupe and by Mexicotl"——

The speaker paused, for his cigar was going out. We take advantage of the pause, to inform our readers that the Don Abraham who was thus strangely, and, according to the custom of the Mexican Indian priests, brought into the society of Mexicotl and the Virgin of Guadalupe, was no other than the Jewish patriarch.

"When Don Abraham," continued the Indian, "felt his end approaching, he called his son, Don Isaac, and bequeathed to him all his possessions; after which he died in the Lord. This Don Isaac was, as the señores have perhaps heard, a God-fearing man, who had two sons, Don Esau and Don Jago. Of these, your worships must understand, Don Esau was the elder, or first-born, and Don Jago the younger. And when Don Jago was twenty years old, he had a dream, in which he was told to go to the Madre Patria, where great good fortune awaited him."

The man paused at the words Madre Patria, by which the reader will always understand Spain. A number of Léperos had ascended the hillock, and collected round the speaker.

"As Señor Don Jago," resumed Tatli Ixtla, "as younger son, had less claim upon the inheritance of his father than Don Esau, he did according to his dream, and betook himself to the Madre Patria, where, by his pleasant discourse, he won the favour of the King of the Moors, who bestowed on him his daughter, the Princesa Doña Lea, in marriage, and also, after two years, his second daughter, the Princesa Doña Rachel. By these two wives he had twelve sons and daughters, who were all kings and queens in the Madre Patria, as well as their father, to whom the Gachupins still pray, under the name of Sant Jago de Compostella."

The Indians and Metises, of whom the crowd of Léperos consisted, nodded with that air of quiet conviction which may be frequently remarked amongst the lower classes in certain European countries, when they hear histories related which are supported by the authority of great names, and to doubt the truth of which might endanger both body and soul.

"When Don Jago had established his kingdom," continued the old Indian, "the wish came over him to visit his own land again; so he set out with his servants, and, after many days, came to his father's house. And now listen, Señores," said the Indian, raising his voice. "Don Esau was, as you know, the first-born, and as such would have possessed his father's land, had not the traitor, Don Jago, or, as the Gachupins call him, San Jago, cheated him out of it. Through this it was that the sons of Tenochtitlan became the slaves of the Gachupins, who are the sons of Jago." [Pg 564]

The countenances of the Léperos began to express increased interest in the narration.

"It was in the *estio*,"[11] resumed the Indian, "that Jago returned to his father's house, where a great entertainment was given to him. Don Esau was away at the hunting-grounds, while Don Jago was feasting on the best of tortillas and the finest Tacotitlan pulque, better no Count could have."

At the mention of the pulque, there was a strong sensation amongst the listeners.

"Don Esau came home hungry from the chase, and found his brother with a dish of *frijolos* before him, the best that ever were grown upon the Chinampas of the Chalco.[12] Now, what think you the traitor Jago did?"

"*Io sé! Io sé!* We know!" cried several Indians eagerly.

"The señores," said the old man gravely, "will hear that Ixtla speaks no lies. Jago drew back his dish of frijolos, as if from a dog; and when Don Esau begged for a mouthful, he promised him the whole dish if he would give up his birthright; but if he would not do so, then Jago swore that not a single frijolo should pass Don Esau's lips."

"And Don Esau?" cried the Léperos.

"What would my brothers have done had they been thirsty and a-hungered, and had seen before them the skin of pulque, and the dish of tortillas and frijolos?"

This *argumentum ad hominem* elicited sundry greedy looks from the surrounding crowd; and cries of "Ah, tortillas! ah, pulque!" burst from the craving lips of the Léperos.

"In short," continued the old Indian, "Don Esau gave what his hunger forced him to give, and Don Jago gave in return the dish of frijolos and a fine large skin full of Tacotitlan pulque."

"*Maldito gavacho!*" growled the Léperos, who, in spite of their longings, could not help finding the exchange an unfair one.

"Hush!" said the Indian. "Don Esau, as you shall now hear, was the father of the sons of Tenochtitlan."

At this new piece of intelligence, the crowd opened their eyes wider than before.

"Well, señores," continued the Indian, "Don Esau had his dish of frijolos, and Don Jago the inheritance which he had long coveted. Then Jago went back to the Madre Patria, and Esau, having lost his birthright, wandered out into the wide world. You all know, señores, that Mexico is the world, for Tenochtitlan is the capital of the world."[13]

The Léperos nodded.

"To Tenochtitlan, then, did Esau betake himself, with his wives and his sons, and built the great city on the lake, and made the Chinampas; and soon the city became greater than any one in Mexico. For many hundred years did the sons of Don Esau rule in Tenochtitlan and Anahuac, and his younger sons in Mechoacan and Cholula; and the children of his concubines lived as freemen in Tlascala."

"*Es verdad*," murmured one of the Léperos.

"*Es verdad*," they all repeated.

"Well," continued the narrator, "the sons of Don Esau throve and multiplied, and had dollars and tortillas in plenty, when of a sudden it came into the heads of Don Jago's children's children that their father had had the share of the first-born, and that they, as his descendants, inherited the right over the whole world; that is to say, over Mexico, and that the sons of Esau owed them a tribute. Thereupon, as they were a daring and knavish race, [Pg 565] they got upon their ships and landed in Yucatan and Vera Cruz, and ascended the heights of Xalappa and Tlascala, and by sweet words enticed the men of Tlascala into their nets, and with their help got through the barrancas and over the mountains of Tenochtitlan. Then they besieged and destroyed the city, put to death all those who bore spears and machetes, and made slaves of the rest."

"*Malditos hereges!*" muttered the Léperos.

"And when they had taken Tenochtitlan," continued the Indian, "they said, 'See, here it is good to dwell. Here let us build our ranchos, and the sons of Esau shall plant our maize and sow our chili, dig our gardens, and tap our agave-trees; and their daughters shall spin our cotton, their wives bake our tortillas, their children seek for gold in the rivers, and their men, instead of warriors, shall be caballitos and tenatores.' And so it came to pass."

The Indian who had given this *résumé* of Father Hippolito's sermon, now paused, either because he had nothing further to say, or because he was reflecting what would be the best application he could make to his hearers of these various wanderings and sufferings of the children of Esau. The pause that ensued, however, was sufficiently long for the Léperos entirely to forget all they had heard. Their look of stupid vacancy returned, and they relapsed, like so many swine, into their various postures of lazy repose, quite oblivious of the orator who had so skilfully transferred to Mexico the heroes of the Old Testament. Some of them continued gazing down the road at the horsemen, who were now drawing near.

"*Ahuitzote!*" grumbled an Indian. "*Son Gachupinos.*"

"Don Agostino, though a Creole, is a worse Ahuitzote than the Gachupins," murmured another Lépero.

"The Creoles," screamed a Zambo, "are the *piques'* eggs,[14] the Gachupins the *piques* themselves. The Creoles are the sons of the Marquis, and of his conquistadores and camerados, who made the Tlascalans help them against Anahuac, and when they had won it, made slaves of their allies. *Larifari! Viva la libertad!*"

"*Viva la libertad!*" cried another of the same negro-Indian race, who was standing with his arms a-kimbo, and looking down with sovereign contempt upon the mob of Léperos. "*Viva la libertad! Viva! Viva!* See there, the house of Conde San Jago, the richest caballero in Mexico, who made netto six million dollars out of a single *bonanza*.[15] Netto, señores. *Viva la libertad!* D'ye know, señores, what liberty is? *We* have been where it flourished, in Guanaxato, where we brought the dollars out of the Alhondega by baskets-full. *Si, señorias*, the most beautiful, milkwhite, silver dollars, to be had for the taking; that is liberty."

"*Viva la libertad!*" exclaimed the knot of Léperos. The cry was repeated by the next group, and by the next, till it was taken up by thousands of voices.

"*Todos diablos!*" cried the Zambo, "a hurra for liberty, that Cassio may take what he likes, and where he likes. I will have the condesa Ruhl's donzella to pour out my pulque, and the condesa herself—by the virgin of Guadalupe, she shall be our *tortillera*!"[16]

"*Santa Brigida, santa Agata, santa Marta, santa Ursula, con todas sus diez mil virgenes*, pray for the senses of the señor Chino!" cried the Léperos, beyond measure astonished and angry at the presumption of the Zambo. "Chino!" screamed the negro-Indian furiously, "do you [Pg 566] take me for a Chino? *Es posible?* Is it possible?" cried he, tearing open his jacket, and producing from a small silver case a dirty bit of paper, which he held up in triumph. "See, here, señorias, '*Que se tenga por blanco!*'"[17]

"*Que se tenga por blanco!*" yelled a hundred, and soon a thousand, Léperos, roaring with laughter. And then dancing round him in a circle, they again vociferated, "*Que se tenga por blanco!*"

The ragged Zambo, who, in his day-dream of ambition, had selected a countess for his cupbearer, did not seem disposed easily to give up his claims to a white skin. He gazed for a moment at the mad antics and grimaces of the filthy and ugly mob by which he was surrounded, and then again vociferated, "*Io soy blanco, y todo blanco es caballero!*"

"A rascally thief from Vera Cruz, that is what you are," was the retort; "a sand-fly that would

fain creep in and make its nest amongst us."

"I will show you who has the most power, your Vicénte Gueréro, or Cassio Isidro," cried the Zambo. "I will let you know it," added he, his hands stuck in his sides as if in defiance, "and before ten months are past, I will have Vicénte Gueréro for my muleteer."

The Zambo's cup was filled to overflowing by this last piece of presumption, and a thousand Indians, forgetting their sloth and apathy, sprang forward to seize and punish the man who had dared to speak lightly of one of the greatest heroes of the Revolution, the representative of the interests of the coloured races. But the Zambo was far more nimble than the sluggish Léperos, and his speed of foot, and active bounds over the heaps of lava, enabled him to laugh at the pursuit and menaces of those zealous partisans of the illustrious Vicénte Gueréro.

This kind of familiar, not to say profane, adaptation of the Scriptures to the comprehension of the lowest and most ignorant classes, for the furtherance of a political or other temporal object, is not altogether without example amongst the priesthood of some European countries.

We pass on to a midday scene in the city of Mexico. There had been a disturbance, followed by some menacing demonstrations on the part of the authorities; and the streets, instead of being silent and entirely deserted, as is usually the case in Mexico during the first three hours of the afternoon, were traversed by numerous passengers. The following picture of a Spanish-American interior, is peculiarly characteristic.

It was one of those delightful February afternoons, when the freshness of the Mexican winter blends with the approaching summer heat which is so soon to succeed it, when the sun begins to resume its power, and the heavens appear so pure and deep, and so transparent in the brilliancy of their golden-tinted azure, that the eye seems to penetrate beyond them into infinite space. From the *mirador*, or balcony, of the house of St Simon Stilitta, whence they commanded a view of the cathedral, of several palaces, and for nearly a mile down the long Tacuba street, three pairs of dark eyes were flashing bright glances through the gilt trellis-work. It was a stately and right Catholic-looking mansion, that Casa de San Simon—which was so called because its front was adorned with the image of the aforesaid patron. An image of St. Francisco was his companion, and between the two was the balcony, occupied by three young girls, whose blooming beauty contrasted strongly with the harsh-featured and indifferently carved and painted effigies of the two holy men.

Although none of the three damsels were more than half through their teens, they had not [Pg 567] the less attained the full perfection and ripeness of Mexican womanhood. First, there was the Señorita Doña Celestina, daughter of the intendant of Valladolid, a little round-faced beauty, with some tendency to *embonpoint*, lips rather too full, eyes black and brilliant, although somewhat prominent, a well-turned waist, and a healthy Spanish complexion—that is to say, bordering on the yellow—of which hue her teeth, thanks to the filthy cigar, also participated. Doña Ximene, daughter of Señor Vivar, one of the *oidores* of the Audiencia, was of more slender form than her above-named companion, her lips also rather too thick—a defect modified, however, by the grace with which they occasionally parted, and disclosed a symmetrical row of teeth. Her eyes, although not sufficiently deep-set, sparkled like diamonds, and she smoked her *pajita* with an elegance that was quite enchanting. Laura, a round-chinned, plump-cheeked damsel, youngest daughter of the vice-president of the Hacienda Real, made up the trio. All three had the smallest possible feet, the most fairy-like hands, the blackest eyes, and the best Woodville cigars; and all three were suffering from a most extravagant fit of ennui. It was to get rid of this last, that the poor girls, who lived in the Calle de Aguila, the fashionable Spanish street, and had been awakened from their siesta by the *grito* and disturbance, had come, attended by their negro waiting-maids, to pay a visit to their friend Isidra, whom they had found giving herself up to all the delights of Mexican *farniente*.

The mirador on which the three girls were lounging and smoking, was connected with the *sala*, or drawing-room, by lofty folding-doors, which stood open. At the further end of this sala was the *estrada*, a kind of raised platform; on the estrada a large low ottoman, and on the ottoman two figures, of which the one sat upright, and the other was in a reclining posture. The girdle of the latter was loosened, and the upper part of the body bare of all covering, except a profusion of glossy black hair, which was spread out over the bosom and shoulders; answering, however, less the purpose of a veil, than that of making more evident the whiteness of the owner's skin. The lady thus unceremoniously disapparelled was apparently very young; but no inference could be drawn from her face, which was concealed in the lap of her companion, a mulatto girl, whose fingers and eyes were alike busy in an investigation of her mistress's head; a search so eager, active, and absorbing, that she resembled a huntress, forgetting, in the ardour of the chase, all surrounding objects.

The saloon occupied by these two damsels was furnished in the usual manner of Spanish

houses of the better class; the floor spread with *esteras*, or mats, a large table in the centre, and two smaller ones at the sides, the latter supporting images of the Virgen de los Remedios, and of San Jago de Compostella. A dozen or two high-backed chairs, dating probably from the time of Philip the Fourth, made up the furniture. The walls were covered with square tiles of blue earthenware, the hangings were of green Cordovan leather, and instead of the chandelier, which hung in one corner of the extensive apartment, six silken cords were suspended from the large gilt hook in the centre of the ceiling. On the table in the middle of the room lay several musical instruments, amongst them a Spanish guitar and a Mexican *teponatzli* or lute—the latter a hollow wooden cylinder, with two parallel holes cut in the centre, and played upon by means of sticks tipped with caoutchouc.

A cloister-like stillness reigned in the saloon as well as on the balcony, and not a syllable was uttered, although fully a quarter of an hour had elapsed since the arrival of the young ladies and their donzellas. Nor was there more vivacity of movement than of tongue. From time to time, one or other of the three girls would push aside her mantilla, and dart a flashing glance into the street, and then, meeting no return, relapse into her former languor.

"*A ellos! a ellos!* Go on!" at length cried a voice out of the lap of the mulatto girl.

"*Que quiere?* What do you want?" replied the latter, as she discontinued her diligent search amongst the raven locks, and raising the head from her knees, exposed to view a youthful and charming countenance. "*Basta!* enough!" added she, in a decided tone. The lady gave her an angry look. [Pg 568]

"*Porque?*" she asked "*Porque acabar?* Why leave off?"

"*Que quiere vmd?*" returned the waiting-maid; "*matar los todos? A ninguna señora de calidad se los mata todos.* No lady of quality has them all killed."

"*Mentira!* 'Tis a lie!" screamed her mistress peevishly.

"*Es verdad!* 'Tis true!" interposed Doñas Ximene, Celestina, and Laura, putting their hands into their hair, and after a short search producing manifest proofs of the truth of the waiting-maid's assertion, and of their own powers of endurance. Thereupon the head sank once more into the lap of the mulatto maiden, who began to disentangle and arrange the hair.

Again all was still. The three señoritas gazed out into the street, and smoked and yawned; the attendant twisted and plaited her mistress's abundant tresses; all was apathy leaden, Mexican apathy.

In a side chamber, of which the door stood half open, a voice was suddenly heard, uttering sundry Oh's! and Ah's! in such a strange, half-groaning, half-screaming tone, that the four young ladies burst into a loud fit of laughter. The chamber was much smaller than the saloon, but yet far larger and higher than an ordinary European bedroom, and, like the sala, was lined with blue china tiles. In one part of it there hung a hammock, the occupant of which, judging from his or her loud and regular snore, was soundly sleeping. On the right hand stood a sort of hybrid machine, between a bed and an ottoman, which might have been cleaner, and on which, besides other articles of dress, lay a blue cloak, richly embroidered with gold. Hats crushed out of shape, dusty trowsers, dirty linen, and implements of the toilet, were scattered about the apartment, side by side with costly articles of apparel, the value of one of which would have sufficed to cleanse the whole house, and keep it clean for half a year to come. Below the hammock sat an Indian girl, with a fan of feathers upon her lap; her head was inclined upon her breast, and sleep had overtaken her in the midst of the monotonous occupation of fanning the inmate of the hammock. Near the bed or sofa stood a mulatto, holding a box of cigars and a light.

"Oh! Ah! Ih!" again groaned the occupant of the bed, from which a nightcap now emerged. A meagre grimy hand next appeared, pulled off the nightcap, and disclosed a dry, brown physiognomy, of which the cheeks, temples, and hollows round the eyes, were puckered into innumerable dark olive-green wrinkles.

This lamentable interjection, which was somewhat louder than the preceding one, caused a commotion in the hammock, from which there now appeared another tawny countenance, ornamented with a few warts as large as peas, and with a beard which would have been a fitting decoration for a grenadier. All effort was made to raise the body as well as the head, but the weight of the former made the attempt abortive, and the whole figure again disappeared in the hollow of its hanging couch. A second, and more vigorous trial was successful, and there came into view the head, neck, shoulders, and other component parts of a female bust, the more minute description of which we will spare our readers. The lady of the house, for it was no less a person, did not seem in the least embarrassed by the presence of the mulatto, but sat upright n her hammock.

"Manca!" cried she, in a voice like an ill-conditioned trumpet, and gazing around her as she spoke. "Manca!" she repeated in a yet harsher tone; and then throwing her right foot and leg over the side of the hammock, she, by a tremendous kick, knocked the drowsy Manca off her perch. By this exertion there was communicated to the hammock a swinging motion which seemed highly pleasing to the Spanish lady, who allowed her left foot to follow her right, neither of them being protected by stockings or any other covering; and then, holding on

with both hands to the cords of the hammock, she rocked herself to and from with infinite satisfaction, her sole garment being her chemise. [Pg 569]

For the third time did the Spaniard utter his lamentable Oh! Ah!

"Don Matanzas!" screamed the señora, "it is impossible to shut one's eye for your groans. Can one have no quiet; not even for the siesta? *C—jo!*"

And again she jerked herself into her hammock, which Manca now kept in a state of vibration, creating a cool breeze in the room, but at the same time raising clouds of dust. About two minutes elapsed, during which not a word was spoken; the Spaniard had lighted a cigar, and was puffing forth volumes of smoke. On a sudden he took the cigar from his mouth, apparently in a great rage.

"*Muerte y infiernos!*" he exclaimed. A twinge interrupted him, and he relapsed into his groanings, while his greenish-brown physiognomy was horribly distorted. "*Muerte y infiernos!*" he resumed, as the pangs diminished in violence. "No quiet, say you? And whose fault is it? Who brought us up here from Acapulco?"

"Would you have stopped there to be made minced meat of by the rebels?" retorted his wife.

"*Maldito mal pais*," growled the Spaniard. "Would that I had remained in the Madre Patria!"

The lady cast a glance of the most supreme contempt upon her shadow of a husband, took a cigar from the Indian girl, and beckoned the mulatto to bring her a light. It was only when her cigar was in full puff that she vouchsafed a reply.

"Remain in the Madre Patria, say you? To dine with St Antonio,[18] I suppose. To feast upon garlic soup, with six-and-thirty garbanzos in it, and as many drops of oil swimming on the hot water. *Porquerias! No hablas como Cristiano.*"

"Not speak like a Christian, say you?" cried the Spaniard with a sort of comical shudder. "Jesus, Maria, y Jose! *Nosotros!* We, who descend from the oldest Christians of whom Castile can boast—we, whose ancestors were at the fight by Roncesvalles"——

"Pshaw! the man talks nonsense. Did we not come all the way from Acapulco to get him cured of his consumption? And now we are here, the fool will not see the doctor, because he would be obliged to call the Zambo Don, or Señor. Cursed folly!"

"Folly!" returned her better half furiously—"Folly, do you say? *You* may call it so; you who have not a drop of the blood of the Matanzas in your veins. Folly, quotha!" continued he with a fresh outburst of indignation; "the heroism of a Matanzas, whose three hundred forefathers must look down on him from heaven with pride and exultation, especially the great Matanzas who in the fight by Roncesvalles"——

"Roncesvalles or no Roncesvalles!" interrupted his spouse, "my ancestors were members of the Seville Consulado, Señor! remember that; and it was through them that you got your present place, and became what you now are, a richer man than all your three hundred ancestors put together; three hundred beggars, indeed, who had only three cloaks amongst them all, and as many soup-dishes, in which they begged their *olla*."

The Spaniard threw a scornful glance at his wife.

"We have," said he, in mighty dudgeon——"Oh! ah!" groaned the poor devil, his features twisted up with pain. "We have," he continued after a moment, "a pedigree as long as the Tacuba Street, Señora, while yours—pshaw! it would not make a mat for this room."

The man had raised himself up, and spoke in a sharp screaming voice, but the last words he uttered were half stifled by pain.

"Folly!" continued he, after a pause—"folly, do you call it! because we refuse to indulge an insolent Zambo, who dares to expect that a descendant of the great Matanzas, a *viejo Cristiano*, should style him Señor—a Matanzas, whose nobility is older than that of the king himself!"

And so saying, the shrivelled anatomy of a creature placed upon his head an enormous three-cornered cocked hat, with a red cockade and waving plume of feathers. [Pg 570]

"Folly! d'ye call it?" he repeated.

"Yes, folly," laughed his wife; "I would style the Zambo 'your majesty,' if I wanted him." And she went on with her smoking and swinging. The Spaniard took a fresh cigar out of the mulatto's box, lit it, and soon enveloped himself and his cocked hat in a cloud of vapour.

The truce between the contending parties lasted several minutes, during which the Spaniard sat up in his bed without any other clothing than a flannel shirt and the cocked hat aforesaid, and his lady lay quiescent in her hammock. She was the first to break silence.

"Matanzas, you are an old fool," cried she, "and if I were Don Toro"——

"Don him no Dons!" interrupted her husband. "He has no right to them. Ah! oh!" groaned the suffering wretch. "No, never will we give to a miserable Zambo the title of Señor; we, whose ancestors were at the fight of Roncesvalles. And the dog expects that we should stand up on

his entrance, as before a *viejo Cristiano*, and greet him as Señor!"

"The standing up might be dispensed with," rejoined the lady, "seeing that you are not able to do it."

"*We* call the Zambo Don!" reiterated the Spaniard, "and stand up on his entrance! Madre de Dios, what insolence! No, Señora, that shall never be," continued he with much solemnity. "By the Virgen de los Remedios, and the most excellent Sant Jago, that shall never be! Were we a thousand times as ill, and this Zambo could cure us by the mere touch of his staff, as Señor Don Moses did the Israelites—Doña Anna," said the man, with an assumption of immense dignity, "we would rather die a thousand deaths that call the Zambo Señor, or stand up before him. We are a *viejo Cristiano, y basta*! Enough! I have spoken."

During this declaration of his principles, the Spaniard's cigar had gone out; he lit another, pressed down his huge cocked hat deeper upon his forehead, took a long cross-hilted dagger from the wall, with the words, "*Ven, mi querida Virgen!*" and kissing the sacred emblem, laid it before him. Husband and wife had quarrelled themselves weary, and now remained silent.

The dispute seemed to have excited no interest in the saloon and mirador, where the young ladies were still lounging, yawning, and smoking; their features wearing that disagreeable relaxed expression which is frequently to be observed in the countenances of Mexican women. A moment, however, was sufficient to change the scene. The Señorita Ximene had gazed awhile, with the drooping underlip and careless glance of indifference, upon a number of persons who were coming up the Tacuba Street, and who, to judge from their garb, were for the most part members of the *cinco gremios*, the five guilds or handicrafts. On a sudden, however, her eyes lost their vague and languid look, and became fixed and sparkling; her lips were protruded as if inviting a kiss; her hand was extended, her mantilla fell, as of itself, into graceful folds—it was but an instant, and the damsel was completely transformed. Her two companions had scarcely remarked this change, when they in their turn underwent a like metamorphosis; their countenance became all animation, their manner fascination itself; they were no longer the same beings.

"*Don Pinto y un superbo hombre!*" whispered Ximene.

"*Quien es?* Who is it?" asked Celestine.

"*No sé*," replied the other two.

The whispering and commotion in the balcony had roused Doña Isidra from her state of indolent apathy. Her hair was already tressed and knotted; she now hastily slipped on a gown, darted through the folding-doors out upon the mirador, and clapped her hands together, uttering the words, "*Venid, venid, querido!*" Then tripping back into the saloon with her three companions, they all four seized the cords of variegated silk that hung down, as already mentioned, from the centre of the ceiling, which was full fifteen feet high. The waiting-maid had just had time to slip on Doña Isidra's basquina, and fasten her mantilla on the crown of her head, when the door opened, and Don Pinto, accompanied by another cavalier, entered the room. [Pg 571]

The damsels were now picturesquely beautiful. No trace was visible of the dull apathy which, but two minutes before, had seemed to weigh them down. The yellow tint of their cheeks had become a glowing carnation; the thick-lipped, half-open mouth was closed with an arch expression, the eyes flashed fire; all was grace and seduction. The fascinating basquina, embellishing the full round form, and reaching down to the knees; beneath it the petticoat of light blue silk; the elegant folds of both garments, and the indescribable play of the mantilla, now half veiling, then revealing, the speaking, love-glancing eyes. It was an enchanting group, which acquired additional grace when joined by the two cavaliers, in their characteristic Mexican costume, embroidered jackets, and short cloaks. The girls bounded forward to welcome Don Pinto and his companion, a handsome young Creole; and with a "*Venid, venid, senores!*" offered them the two remaining cords. A hasty pressure of the hand, an ardent glance, and the dancers stood ready to begin.

"The Chica of Yucatan," whispered Don Pinto.

The maidens were all fire, glowing with eagerness. An Indian girl took up the guitar, and began to play the dance that had been asked for, accompanied by another on the Mexican instrument already described, which yielded tones hollow and tremulous, but yet melodious, somewhat resembling those of an harmonica. The dance commenced with a slow gliding step, the dancers holding the ropes with one hand, while with the other the ladies coquetted their mantillas. It was impossible to behold any thing more fascinating than their movements, as they glided past each other, their eyes flashing, mantillas waving, their full and graceful forms exhibiting the most enchanting contours. Presently the step changed, the movements became quicker, ladies and cavaliers more animated, crossing, circling, winding, quite unembarrassed by the cords, which they still held, and which, as they trode the complicated mazes of the dance, gradually formed themselves into a sort of network. As the ropes grew shorter, the movements of the dancers became necessarily more circumscribed, until at length the completion of the net brought them together into one panting, glowing, voluptuous group. For an instant they remained motionless, and the music ceased; but then again commencing, they retraced their steps through the complicated mazes of this most singular of dances, until the network they had so skilfully interwoven, was as skilfully and

gracefully disentwined.

Y basta! as Don Matanzas says; for we cannot allow ourselves to follow our author any further in his somewhat glowing description of Mexican dances, the license of which appears to be in accordance with the unrestrained morals and manners of the people. We return then to Don Manuel, who cannot get over his remorse at having, under the influence of a generous but fleeting impulse, assisted the rebels against the troops of his rightful sovereign; and as his free-agency is in no way restrained by Gueréro, he leaves the patriot army and repairs to Mexico. Whilst endeavouring to obtain an interview with the viceroy's sister, Doña Isabella, he is discovered, apprehended, and thrown into one of the subterranean dungeons which extend under a considerable portion of the viceregal palace. On discovering the name of the prisoner, the viceroy, in pursuance of his designs on the immense wealth of the Conde de San Jago, resolves to make away with this, his nephew and heir. The great power and influence of the count, his popularity in Mexico, a popularity which is in some degree shared by his nephew, compel the viceroy to proceed with extreme caution in carrying out his design. While deliberating as to the best means to be employed, one of Don Manuel's servants, named Cosmo Blanco, is brought in a prisoner, and this circumstance suggests a plan to the plotting viceroy and his secretary and creature, Don Ruy Gomez. The servant is put out of the way in a dungeon, and his arrest not registered, while Don Manuel, under the name of Cosmo Blanco, is brought before a sort of arbitrary [Pg 572] tribunal, which sits in the vaults adjoining the prison. Despairing and half frantic, the unfortunate young nobleman takes no note of the name under which he is arraigned, confesses all the charges brought against him, and implores that the punishment, which he acknowledges himself to have merited, may be immediate. He is condemned to death; but, before the sentence can be executed, his real name gets wind, and great alarm is excited even amongst the very judges and officials who have had to do with his capture and condemnation, as to what the consequences of his death may be. Already have two of the alguazils who apprehended him, been stabbed in the open street; there is a rumour and a murmur throughout the city of Mexico, which bodes no good. Nevertheless the viceroy holds firm, trusting to his Spanish bayonets to keep down rebellious demonstrations, and to his assumed ignorance of Don Manuel's identity to bear him harmless with Count San Jago. It is a critical time; the hour appointed for Manuel's death draws near; the Count, apparently unaware of his nephew's peril, has made no visible effort to rescue him; when, by a boldly devised and rapidly executed scheme, which several Spanish officials are induced by their fears either to aid or connive at, the viceroy's secretary, who has been commissioned to witness the secret execution of Don Manuel, is deceived, and the young Creole's life saved. We will extract the chapter in which this occurs, and the one that precedes it. The action of them both passes in the prisons beneath the viceregal palace.

Chapter the Forty-First.

> "I'll see if his head will stand steadier on a pole or no:—Take him away, and behead him."—*King Henry VI.*

Don Penafil, alcalde of the right worshipful *cabildo* or town-council of Mexico, was in the act of raising a glass of sangaree to his lips, when the chief alguazil entered the vault and informed him that his excellency the Oidor of the Audiencia wished to speak with him. Setting down his glass, he looked searchingly at the messenger.

"His excellency wishes to speak with us? Shall be at his service as soon as we have finished with this rabble. Will cut it short; Don Ferro," added he to his coadjutor, who was busily writing, "how far have we got?"

"No. 4," answered the escribano.

"Bring up No. 4," growled a voice at the further end of the vault, and a hoarse laugh was heard, although the person who uttered it still remained invisible. The lower part of the vault was gloomy, being only lighted by glimmering lamps that hung on either side of a pillar, and shed a misty imperfect gleam over surrounding objects. In various recesses, dark figures might be seen lurking in the gloom, as if they shrank from observation. Some of them were lying stretched upon stone benches, wrapped in sheep-skin garments, and snoring loudly. Here and there, iron hooks protruded from the massive walls, over which the damp was trickling in thick heavy drops. The whole aspect of the place was dismal and terrible. On the upper portion of the vault, which was raised a couple of steps above the lower part, from which it was separated by a bar, more care had been expended. It was wainscoted, the floor was covered with mats, and furnished with cushioned chairs. Its appearance, however, was still rude enough, but by no means out of keeping with that of the two hard-featured and surly officials by whom it was occupied.

During the pause that ensued after No. 4 had been called out, the chief alguazil held a brief conversation with the alcalde, the effect of which seemed to be greatly to increase the impatience of the latter.

"*Muerte y infiernos!*" exclaimed he violently.

"*Vengo! vengo!*" replied a voice, accompanied by the rattle of chains, and then, supported between two grim-looking executioner's aids, an enfeebled and wretched object was dragged forward, and placed at the bar. [Pg 573]

"Your name is Andres Pachuca?" asked the alcalde sharply.

The prisoner, a youth some twenty years of age, gave no answer.

"Is it so, or have you lost your tongue, perchance?" demanded the alcalde in an angry tone.

"He had tongue enough in the fonda of Trespana," snarled a voice from the background, "when he proposed the health of the accursed Morellos."

"You hear the charge," said the alcalde, too lazy to repeat it himself, and converting the words of the police spy into a formal accusation.

"Señor, for the sake of God's mother, have mercy!" cried the culprit beseechingly. "I was misled."

"So were eighty thousand others," was the surly answer. "Write down his confession, and away with him to the Acordada."

"Above or under ground?" asked the escribano.

"Wherever the maestro has room," replied the alcalde. "No. 5."

The knees of the unfortunate youth smote together, and he fell down as if he had received a sudden and stunning blow.

"Do not be a fool," growled one of the executioner's assistants with a horrid laugh. "You drank Morellos' health in sherry and sangaree; you can drink it now, for a change, in fresh Tezcuco water; it is a trifle saltish as you know, but there is soft lying in it, at least if the snakes and lizards will leave you alone. That is to say, if you get into one of the lower cells, where many people have lasted half a year. If you give the maestro fair words—gold and silver words, mind ye—he will only put you the fifty pound chains on, and it will be nearly a fortnight before *they* begin to cut into your flesh."

With such consolations was the wretched prisoner dragged out of the vault, while another, designated as No. 5, took his place. He was also a young man, apparently not much over twenty.

"Elmo Hernandez," resumed the alcalde, "you are accused of having cursed his excellency the viceroy, and of having uttered cries of '*Maldito Gobierno*,' and '*Maldito Gachupin*,' and of '*Mueran los Gachupinos*,' in the quarter of the Trespana. You also shouted, '*Abajo con la Virgen de los Remedios*.'[19] Crimes both against the state and the holy Catholic church. What can you say in reply to these accusations?"

"Señor," replied the prisoner, who was violently agitated, "I have seen my own sister forcibly compelled to wed the sub-lieutenant Garcia, my estate wrested from me, my sister's health and happiness ruined by the ill-treatment and excesses of her husband." [Pg 574]

"Lieutenant Garcia is a Spaniard, a *viejo Cristiano*; and if your sister—but enough, you are a Creole and a malecontent."

The young man ground his teeth, but said nothing.

"You are a malecontent," repeated the alcalde. "A malecontent has a discontented disposition, and a discontented disposition is a rebellious one, and he who has a rebellious disposition is a rebel. Write it down, Don Ferro."

After coming to this just and logical conclusion, the alcalde took a draught of sangaree, and then again turned to the escribano.

"In the Cordelada—under ground—chains of the second class."

"You have thirty pounds more to carry," whispered a jailer to this new victim. "Eighty pounds at the least. You may say your prayers, for an *inferniello* will be your portion."

The prisoner gnashed his teeth, and shook his fetters with impotent rage. He was instantly led away.

"Cursed rebel!" growled the alcalde after him.

"The rest are all *gente irracionale*," observed the escribano.

"So much the better—Nos. 12 to 21," cried the alcalde.

For about a minute there was a deep silence, only broken by the scratch of Don Ferro's pen, and the snoring of the sleepers; then a rattle of chains was heard approaching, accompanied by a hollow murmur, that resounded strangely through the extensive vault; and at last several dark figures emerged from the gloom, their coal-black and fiery eyes glittering out of the darkness like *ignes fatui*. They were ten in number; desperate-looking men, who

appeared neither bowed down by the sufferings they had already endured, nor concerned about their future fate. Some were of gigantic frame, and the form and materials of the rags which clothed them betokened Indians from the Baxio. With indomitable resolution and defiance depicted on their countenances, and an expression of desperate cunning in their widely parted eyes, they approached the bar.

"Accused of causing disturbances, and exciting the Léperos to rebellion," said the escribano. "One, also, of having torn down the proclamation issued by the Audiencia."

"Which is he?" enquired the alcalde.

"That one," replied a voice, and the Zambo called Cassio Isidro stepped forward, and pointed to the old Indian whose acquaintance we have already made under the name of Tatli Ixtla.

"So the Gachupins are the *piques* that have laid their eggs in the flesh of Mexico?" asked the judge, reading from the police-spy's report, which he held in his hand.

"Ixtla did not say that," replied the old Indian. "This dog of a negro said that."

"You lie," screamed the Zambo furiously.

"And the Gachupins, who are the sons of Jago, have despoiled the sons of Esau, that is to say, the *gente irracionale*, of their birthright?" continued the alcalde.

The Indian made no answer. The judge was silent for a moment, and then uttered the word "Verdugo."

A man of lofty stature and great strength, with a bushy beard of an iron-grey colour, and in a dress consisting entirely of white and blue patchwork,[20] stepped forward, and gazed for a moment expectantly at the alcalde. On a nod from the latter, he cast a noose round the Indian's neck, and dragged him away, as the hunter does the buffalo he has caught in his lasso. [Pg 575]

"Nos. 13 to 21," cried the alcalde. "Accused of gritos, and of stirring up the Léperos, and being in correspondence with the Gavecillas. They are from Zitacuaco and Guanaxato, and therefore rebels."

"The nine Indians, who were of various ages, were now standing in a row at the bar. The alcalde addressed them.

"What if you were to say, just once, and for the joke's sake, 'Death to the traitor Vicénte Gueréro!'"

The prisoners gazed at their interlocutor with a fixed and stolid look.

"Are ye all tongue-tied?" resumed the judge. "We will put it in another shape. Cry '*Muera el traidor Morellos!*' Perhaps that will suit ye better."

None of the Indians made any reply.

"Would you object to cry, '*Viva el Rey?*'" asked the alcalde with a sneer. "They will not answer," he added, shaking his head. "Away with them all."

And at the word, half a dozen familiars sprang from the stone benches and out of the recesses, passed lassos through the iron collars of the prisoners' fetters, and dragged them away, like calves to the slaughter.

"Cut it short, Don Ferro," said the alcalde abruptly. "The shorter the better; his excellency is waiting for us. You know they do not pay much attention to the writing part of the business, and right enough too, seeing that the sentence is generally executed before it is signed."

The escribano took the hint, and handed the paper to the Alcalde, who signed it, as did also the chief alguazil.

"Caramba!" exclaimed the magistrate, yawning and stretching himself. "We have done for to-night, but it is only to begin again to-morrow. Well—*oremos, Señores!*"

And so saying, the man rose from his seat, approached a sideboard, on which was a basin and can of water, and after he and his two companions had washed their hands, they took from the table the candles, a crucifix, and an image of the Virgin de los Remedios, placed them upon a stool that stood against the wall, knelt down, and prayed audibly, "Ave Maria, regina cœli, audi nos peccatores!" Those of the verdugos and jailers who still remained in the vault, joined in the supplication with that solemn fervor which Spaniards are wont to blend with their devotions. When the prayer was ended, the alcalde rose, took up his papers, and left the vault, accompanied by the escribano and chief alguazil, and followed by the inferior officials, with the exception of one, whose blue and white dress indicated an executioner. To this man the alguazil, in going out, had whispered something which made him start. Recovering, however, from his surprise, he extinguished the candles, wrapped himself in a sheep-skin, and lay down upon one of the benches.

Chapter the Forty-Second.

"Per me si va nella citta dolente,
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore,
Per me si va tra la perduta gente."
Dante.

All was now still in the spacious vault, with the exception of a distant clank of chains and murmur of voices, which echoed dismally along the massive walls and under the gloomy arches. Suddenly, rapid but cautious footsteps were heard, and three persons, the foremost of whom was the chief alguazil, entered, looked cautiously around them, and then beckoned to the executioner, who rose from his hard couch, and preceded them into a narrow gloomy [Pg 576] corridor. This led them into another vault, of dismal and dreary aspect. It was lighted by a single lamp, of which the light fell so pale and dim upon the grey and gloomy walls, that it seemed as if the intention had been to give those who entered only a gradual acquaintance with the horrors of the place. The roof was supported by pillars of enormous thickness; along the walls were fixed tables and benches of various construction, some resembling chests, others grates, and some like small carts; but all of iron. Chains, thick as a man's arm, hung upon the walls and pillars, which were running with moisture, and in these fetters were figures, in sitting, standing, and kneeling postures, of which the outline was that of human beings, but, whether living or dead, the imperfect lamp-light rendered it impossible to distinguish. They gave, however, no sign of vitality. There were also numerous low doors, or rather iron gratings, closing narrow holes in the wall. The aspect of the whole place was that of a subterranean slaughter-house, with dens around it for wild beasts.

Upon entering this vault, two of the four persons, who were wrapped in ample cloaks, paused behind one of the pillars, while the other two hastened to a cell and crept into it. It was one of those dungeons devised by the ingenious cruelty of Mexico's tyrannical rulers, and which had received the appropriate name of *infernillos*—five feet high, six feet long, and as many broad. No superfluity of furniture—a stone bench, rings and chains. Upon the former a young man now sat, or rather hung, his neck encircled by a massive iron ring, his hands stretched out and maintained by chains in the attitude of one upon the cross, his head drooping forward over the iron collar. A cap that covered his head was drawn down over eyes and face, allowing little more than the mouth and chin to be visible. From time to time the unfortunate captive uttered deep moans, like those of some vanquished and expiring lion, and which for an instant startled his two visitors. Recovering himself, however, the chief alguazil, for he was one of them, approached the prisoner, and endeavoured to open the neck-iron. His companion, the executioner, hastily seized his arm.

"Beware, Señor," cried he; "if you touch a wrong spring, his neck is snapped as though it were a maize stalk; and, by San Lorenzo! I think it would almost be a kindness to do it. The caballero is the first whom ever heard beg for death, and call upon God and devil to send it him. But, nevertheless, may the lowermost hell catch me, if I had not a notion that this manga would never see the inside of old Lorenzo's wallet."

While thus discoursing, this wild executer of the laws had unfettered the prisoner.

"*Silencio!*" said the alguazil. "You were mistaken. The manga shall be yours."

"He is to change his clothes then? Will your worship be pleased to give a helping hand, for it will be a full hour before he gets the use of his limbs. A damnable shower-bath it is, this inferniello; and for that matter, so are they all."

It was with no small difficulty that the alguazil accomplished his task of undressing the prisoner, who seemed more dead than alive, and lay passive and motionless while he was stripped, first of his manga, then of his embroidered jacket, and finally of his hose. He seemed to have lost nearly all sensation; only at times an agonized sigh burst from his over-charged breast, and was accompanied by a convulsive quivering of the whole body. His sufferings had evidently been dreadful.

"We will leave him his under garments," said the alcalde, who had experienced, on trying to remove them, that kind of unconscious resistance which even persons in a swoon will sometimes make when their instinctive sense of modesty is wounded. Then, throwing his cloak round the prisoner, he took him in his arms, and partly bore, partly dragged him out of the inferniello.

"Is it he?" asked one of the two figures who had remained near the pillar, raising the cap a little as he spoke.

"It is," muttered the other.

"It is," repeated the alguazil.

"*De pregonero a verdugo*," muttered the executioner; "so says the proverb, but here things [Pg 577] are reversed. Follow me, Señorias—I will lead you to a place where he shall sleep safely; that is to say if the rats, whom he will have for companions, will allow him."

The party now disappeared in the windings of a corridor, whence, after a short absence, the executioner and alguazil again emerged, bringing with them a young man whose stature,

hair, and general appearance, coincided strongly with those of the prisoner they had just carried away. Like the latter, the newcomer had a cap drawn over his face, but he appeared much less exhausted and suffering.

"Jesus Maria! Where am I, Señores? For the mother of God's sake, where am I?"

"*Silencio!*" growled the hangman, placing him against the wall, and beginning to undress him. The manga as soon stripped off, and the jacket followed.

"Lift your foot," said the executioner, pulling at his trousers. "Now the other! So. The shirt is not worth much—you can take that with you. The botines and shoes tolerable. But don't be frightened, Señoria; it is only an exchange."

"Jesus Maria! Mercy, gracious Señor!" stammered the unfortunate wretch. "Ah! if my poor mother, who lives at the corner of the Plateria, could"——

"We will tell her of it, Señoria," interrupted the hangman, in almost a feeling tone; "and she will perhaps be able to get you an *indulgencia plenaria*—for we have no confessors here. It is short work with us, particularly since the rack is done away with. But for twenty dollars she can get the best of indulgencias. They are cheap since the rebellion."

The poor fellow listened to this speech, his head bent towards the speaker in an attitude of attention; but he did not seem to understand. He slivered like an aspen leaf; for he now stood nearly naked upon the cold, damp stones.

"Jesus Maria!" whimpered the lad, "what is it you want with me? I only went to accompany my young master. How could poor Cosmo help it? We begged and prayed of him—Maestro Alonzo, Pedro, and I—that he would not interfere when Major Ulloa charged the *gente irracionale*. Jesus! how cold it is!"

"You will soon be warm, Señor," quoth the executioner. "In our hands, the coldest grows warm. There—take that!"

And he handed him, one after the other, the garments which the alguazil had taken off the other prisoner. The unfortunate creature caught at them, and slipped them on with a haste that had something shocking in it. On a sudden, he left off dressing himself, passed his hands over the fur trimmings and gold embroidery of the jacket, and exclaimed, in a trembling voice—"Holy Virgin! they are my master's clothes!" For a moment he stood shivering, with the jacket in his hand.

"Quick, Señor!" cried the executioner; "time is short."

The prisoner put his arm mechanically into the sleeve of the jacket. The hangman helped him on with it, threw the short cloak over him, and placed him hastily in the cell which had been so recently vacated. He had scarcely done so, when the sound of a bell was heard from the adjacent vault. Alguazil and executioner listened for a moment, and then hurried through a corridor, in the direction whence the summons proceeded. After a couple of minutes, they returned, accompanied by the alcalde, and by a person muffled in a blue cloak.[21] The two latter carried dark lanterns.

"Executioner, do your duty!" said the alcalde. "No. 3."

The executioner disappeared in the inferniello; the clank of chains was heard, and he again emerged from the den, bringing with him the unfortunate prisoner.

"*Por el amor de Dios!*" implored the latter. "Cosmo will do any thing, confess every thing"—

"He raves," interrupted the alcalde.

"Jesus Maria," groaned Cosmo again. "We begged, we entreated him not to fire at Major Ulloa. Never in my life will I again take a trabuco in my hand." [Pg 578]

"That voice!"——exclaimed the cloaked figure—

"Is altered," hastily interposed the alcalde. "The poor fellow has lost voice, reason, and courage. But it is always so."

"There," muttered the hangman; "these bracelets might have been made for your Excellency; they just fit on over the fur cuffs." And so saying, he pushed the prisoner against the wall, and placed both his arms in rings.

"*Santissima Madre, ora pro nobis!*" prayed poor Cosmo between his teeth, which chattered as he spoke. Then suddenly he raised his voice, and broke out into the beautiful hymn, "Madre dolorosa, dulcissima y hermosa," which he sang, in this his moment of extreme anguish, with such expression and melody, that even the executioner suspended his proceedings, and listened for a moment, visibly moved. A sign from the alguazil recalled him to his duty.

"A little farther back, Señoria. The legs asunder, on either side of this stone. We want you to sit comfortably."

"It is cold, bitter cold!" whined the poor fellow. "Oh, my poor mother!"

"The head higher," resumed the hangman, "or the springs might catch your skull. So—that is right. Don't be afraid. We are not going to hurt you."

The prisoner now stood with his legs straddled out, a large stone, that projected from the wall, between them, his neck in a huge iron collar, his arms spread out and hanging in the rings.

"Remain standing, Señoria, till we have fastened your cravat. Don't tremble. We are doing nothing to you. In two minutes you will be as you should be."

While uttering these words of consolation, the executioner had fastened a thinner chain, of which the end was secured to the stone above mentioned, round the neck of the victim, who stood shaking and trembling, and allowing himself to be thus dealt with as unresistingly as a lamb. The poor fellow had left off sobbing, and was now repeating Ave Marias in a low hurried voice, with all the agonized eagerness of one who in his last moments would fain make up for former omissions.

"Would you, Señoria, wish to have the sentence read?" enquired the alcalde of the man in the blue cloak, who stood observing the proceedings in deep silence, and now made no answer to the question.

"Would Don Ruy Gomez be pleased to hear the sentence read?" repeated the alcalde in a hoarse whisper.

Still no reply.

The alguazil made a sign to the executioner. The latter pressed the prisoner down upon the stone—the snap of a spring was heard—the stone fell out of the wall.

"Jesus Maria! Todos Santos!" shrieked Cosmo. "Madre mi"——

The last syllable was not uttered; in its place there was the noise of crushed and breaking bones; and then the tongue protruded from the mouth, and the eyes from their sockets, the face became of a deep purple colour, and the victim hung a corpse in his manacles.

"*El ultimo suspiro!*" said the executioner, in an unusually solemn tone.

The viceroy's secretary shuddered, and gazed fixedly and in silence upon the corpse.

"The finest youth in Mexico!" he murmured. And then, as if devils had been goading him, he hurried to the door.

"Show his Señoria a light," cried the alguazil gravely; "and may his dying hour be as easy as that of this unfortunate. By my soul," continued he to the alcalde, "these great men are delicate. They take us for tongs, made to pull their chestnuts out of the fire."

The alcalde nodded.

"Do not forget the prisoner," said he. And with an abrupt "*Adios*," he left the vault.

"Come, and that quickly," cried the alguazil anxiously; "in a quarter of an hour it might be too late. An alcalde and an alguazil cannot be always blind."

His summons, which had been uttered in a loud tone, was replied to by the appearance of the original occupant of the No. 3 cell, who now re-entered the vault, supported by the two strangers with whom he had quitted it a short time previously. [Pg 579]

"Where am I?" he exclaimed.

"In a place which few ever leave alive, Don Manuel," was the answer; "but he that has the Pope for his cousin, as the proverb says, need not fear hell-fire. Nevertheless, let your Señoria beware! Another time it might not be so easy to rob the tiger of his prey."

And with these words the chief alguazil led the way out of the vault.

With this rescue of Don Manuel, and sacrifice of his unfortunate servant, the plot of the book may in great measure be said to terminate, although there are still several lively and interesting chapters. Count San Jago next comes upon the scene, and has an interview with the viceroy, who at first is disposed to carry matters with a high hand; but the count exhibits such an accurate and dangerous knowledge of the viceroy's secrets, and, amongst others, of some treasonable negotiations the latter had been carrying on with the French—proofs of which, the count assures him, are deposited out of the country in the hands of friends of his own, ready to be used should aught happen to him—that the satrap is completely cowed. The count has no wish to have Vanegas deposed, considering his continuance on the viceregal throne more favourable to the prospects of Mexican freedom, than would be his replacement by Calleja, who has a strong party in his favour amongst the Spaniards. The matter is therefore compromised; Don Manuel receives a passport for England or the United States; the Conde Carlos is promoted to an important command in the army; and in return Count San Jago gives the viceroy his support against the cabal that is for pulling him down

and elevating Calleja. The book, to be complete, should have a continuation dated ten or twelve years later, showing the successful issue of the struggle of which these volumes narrate the commencement, and terminating the various intrigues, both private and political, which are here commenced, but not carried to a close.

Our limits have prevented us from giving more than brief glimpses of work which, if translated as a whole, would fill three or four comely post octavos. We trust that it will be worthily done into English, without greater abridgement than may be rendered indispensable by the epithets and expletives so abundant in the German language; many of which are unnecessary, and some without equivalent in ours:—done, however, not as translations usually are, but in a manner worthy of the admirable original. Out of the numerous translations of clever German books that have recently appeared, it is lamentable to observe how few have been done, we will not say *well*, but decently, and how little justice has been rendered to the talent of the authors; the translators having been for the most part incompetent drudges, working by the square foot, or persons of some ability, who apparently deemed it beneath them to bestow upon translations even a small portion of the pains they devote to original productions. We are aware of very few instances where this description of labour, which to do well is not altogether so easy as is usually supposed, has fallen into hands alike competent and conscientious. We trust that whenever the works of our German Unknown are translated, they will be undertaken by persons at once sensible of their merits, and able to do them justice.

THE RECTOR'S DAUGHTER.

[Pg 580]

Chapter I.

The rapid shade of an October evening, borrowing deeper gloom from the wildness of the adjacent Tipperary mountains, was falling over the lonely town of Clogheen, within whose classic precincts took place that important meeting between Sergeant Snap and Paddy Carey, which has been recorded immortally in song. Forty years ago, (of which period we are about to write,) when roads were not as good, travellers as adventurous, and markets as abundant as at present, Clogheen was a smart, or, as the *Itinerary* of that day has it, "a thriving place with a decent church," boasting a comfortable inn and several hucksters' shops, where every variety of merchandise, from brandy and bandle-linen to hand-saws and halfpenny whistles, was procurable.

In a double-countered shop (for the appliances for the inward creature were sold at one side, and those for the outward man at another) in one of the handsomest houses of the town —where a double-story, slated roof, and a sign-board with a red splash in the middle, and the characters, "General Hutchinson," underneath, was the standard of excellence—on the evening in question stood Curly Cahill,[22] spirit retailer, and, according to the signboard just quoted, "dealer in soft goods, butter, leather, iron, eggs, and tobacco," busily engaged in serving a customer.

"Beautyful baffety, Miss," said Curly, a dapper middle-aged worthy, his short black hair combed sleek over his low forehead, with a face half smooth, half smirking, and—for the little fellow pretended to no small degree of sanctimony—his person dressed neatly in black, as closely as possible to resemble the fashion just imported by the new *Co'juther* from Maynooth.

"Beautyful baffety, Miss Katey, fit for any lady from this to Knocklofty, let alone for servants' wear, an' only tenpence-halfpenny a yard. It's giving it away I am."

"It does not seem a very good colour," said the purchaser in a musical voice.

"Is it the colour! Take your hand ov it, take your hand ov it, astore," cried the dextrous merchant; "a bleachground would look yallow an' that purty hand to the fore. An' here, Padeen, bring a candle—an' turn out them pigs, you sir, an' boult the half-dure, till Miss Tyrrel sees the goods.—Now, Miss," he said, when the light was brought and his behests obeyed, slapping his hand in fond emphasis on the bale as he unrolled it wider along the counter, "there's an article!—that I may be happy if I'd wish finer for my windin' sheet; only, to be sure, a body would like *that* to be linnen, an' go to the grave decent. Yeh! what need you be so very particular for servants?"

"I really do not like the calico, Mr Cahill," hesitated the lady, "and, papa"——

"You don't see it, Miss," interrupted Curly; "push back them darlin' locks o' yours that's sweepin' the counther, an' I'll be bound the goods 'll be at the Glebe afore an hour;" and as he spoke he playfully, but with great respect and tender fingers, lifted aside some of the

masses of golden hair that drooped above, and, as he truly insinuated, in some measure overshadowed the good qualities of his merchandise.

"Curly, you are a sad old flatterer," said the young lady, and she impatiently raised her head, and shaking back its weight of ringlets, exposed a fair high forehead and beautifully oval face to view. "I find it always difficult to deal with you; however," she added with a smile, "the better way, perhaps, is to send up the whole piece to the Glebe to-morrow, and I shall then be able to judge of it."

"Ah, then, that I may be soon sellin' you the weddin' sheets, Miss Katey," said the successful shop-keeper, as he rolled up the bale and pushed it to the end of the counter; "and," he [Pg 581] added, in a very different tone, modulated to the lowest key of suppleness and deference, "shure that 'ould be to-morrow, if you take my advice, an' were kind en' thrue-hearted to *the one you know*"——

"Yes, indeed!" half ironically half regretfully murmured the young lady, as she drew down her veil and prepared to depart, but was stayed by a prognostication from Curly, who pledged nothing less than his "hand an' word to her," that she'd break the heart of the anonymous individual alluded to, "afore long, if she didn't take care!"

"'Twas when the men wor goin' to work at broad daylight this mornin', Miss, I hear *him* in the next room to me, stealin' to bed afther sittin' up the night readin' them books, an' songs, an' things, that you're deludin' the poor fellow's senses with—ach"——

"Oh! that reminds me," said the listener, producing a small volume from the folds of her cloak; "I will just leave this book with my compliments. He is, of course," she carelessly observed, "not now at home?"

"Jest took a short stick in his hand and went out for a solithary walk; by himself, poor fellow, down by the Shuire. 'Tis the only time o' the day he likes for walkin'."

"The time of the night, you mean, Curly," said the girl with a laugh, glad to shake off a certain air of embarrassment she felt, by affected gaiety. "Tell him he should keep better hours; though, upon my word," as she prepared to face the darkening twilight, "I don't set him a very good example myself. Good evening."

"The best of evenin's to you, *a cushla*," said Mr Cahill, as he bolted the shop-door after her. "The bloody tithe-devourin' parson's daughter," he muttered, as he turned in and prepared to roll up his goods to be forwarded to the Glebe next morning; "an' for all, she's a darlin' herself, an' a blessin' to every one that's about her—but her murdherin' father! Here, Padeen!—Padeen, I say!"

Katey Tyrrel was the spoiled child of an indulgent parent. Her father, the Reverend Edward Tyrrel, was rector of the parish in which our story lies. A man whose disposition, naturally soft and affectionate, had, in the course of years, become sharp and irritable, from the long series of petty vexations he had been subjected to in his efforts to collect the unsatisfactory revenues of his incumbency, from as ingeniously-obstinate a set of parishioners as were to be found in the most litigation-loving island in the world. The district of country, too, in which Mr Tyrrel's lot had fallen, although sufficiently fertile and wealthy, was, of all others, from its situation at the foot of the high and sterile tract of the Kilworth mountains, (then the favourite resort of highwaymen and fugitives from the law,) with the gloomy range of the Gaultees to the north, and on its southern edge the long and lonely Commeragh hills, that divided it from Waterford, the most unfavourable to passing a life of quiet plenty and security. When to this it is added, that from the scanty number of gentry the Government of the day deemed it prudent to entrust with the commission of the peace, in self-defence he was obliged to be a magistrate, an office which not unfrequently compelled him to be complainant, counsel, and convicting justice in his own cause, some idea may be formed of the difficulties and vexations the Vicar of Clogheen had to encounter in the collection of those tithes from which his income was principally derived. Notwithstanding, during the twenty or five-and-twenty years of his incumbency, if his temper did not progress towards improvement, his fortune did. By an ample dowery received with his wife, and exact economy and prudence, he had been enabled, from time to time, to make considerable purchases in land; until at length Mr Tyrrel was accounted, if not the most popular, at least one of the most prosperous clergymen from Dunmanway to the Devil's Bit. He had become a widower early in life, and around his daughter Katey, the sole offspring of his marriage, those sympathies and affections which were denied vent in every other quarter, were concentrated in a lavish and inexhaustible flood. A few short years of a mother's [Pg 582] superintendence—some attempts at home-education, (for he would not trust her from his sight,) in the shape of a little petticoated rebel, who would be taught nothing, and a sickly governess who had nothing to teach—a girlhood of romance-reading, riding rough colts with her cousin Lysaght Osborne, and rambling among the peasantry—and we have the result of the clergyman's fondness and folly in the wild, lively blue-eyed maiden of nineteen, now wending her way along the dim and elm-darkened road leading from the town of Clogheen to her father's mansion, nearly a mile away. Even in the early part of an autumn evening few persons were desirous of travelling alone in that neighbourhood; but Katey trod her path in

perfect security. She was known to every body, and by the surrounding peasantry (to whom she ever came, with her purse or prescriptions of pots of jam, warm jackets and flannel bed-gowns, a living and lovely Replevin for many of her sire's exactions) she was treated with a fond regard, which can only be estimated by those who know how largely the smallest loan of kindness—of real *disinterested* kindness—is repaid by that people. Wayward and innocent, however, as she was, Katey, on the evening in question, had not, without a motive, dispensed with the companionship of the staid female domestic who usually attends young ladies in Ireland, when they are necessitated to go out shopping after dinner by themselves. It might be for this reason, that she hastened homeward with more anxiety than usual, although her step was neither as elastic, nor her brow as unclouded, as they were wont to be. But she did not pursue her way uninterrupted.

Chapter II.

Half-way upon the road, where a stile opened into the adjacent fields, a man suddenly appeared, and, coming forward, walked for some paces in silence by her side, as though awaiting some recognition before he ventured to address her. He was of middle stature—his figure was entirely concealed in the thick and ample wrappings of a long, dark riding-coat, (or *bang-up*, as it was called,) common to that country; his step was firm, and its very sound, quick and decided, so different from the shambling pace of the peasant, told that, whatever he might be, he did not belong to that condition. As Miss Tyrrel showed no symptom of surprise or alarm, it is possible his appearance was not entirely unlooked for. She likewise, however, forbore to speak, and the stranger at length was obliged to commence the conversation—turning back, at the same time, the high collar by which his face was muffled, and exhibiting features so extremely dark that they would have been deemed repulsive, had they not been finely formed, and enlivened by the full light of manhood, which, however, some feeling of deep interest, or passion, seemed at the present to overcloud.

"The hour is come that we have so often talked of," he said, in a low tone. "I have no time to waste, Katey—*are you ready?*"

"Then you were right in your conjecture," said Miss Tyrrel, with an unembarrassed air; "your retreat is discovered?"

"At least it can no longer shelter me. News arrived to-day that the soul of this ill-starred enterprize—Emmett—has perished by legal murder in Dublin. The gibbet awaits all those of his followers who may be arrested. Certain intelligence has reached me that my assumed name and character are no longer of avail—the local authorities are aware of my real offences. If I do not instantly escape, before the coming midnight I shall be a prisoner."

"I expected this," said Katey, half musingly; "it could not be otherwise; you yourself anticipated it. And yet I have been to Cahill's," she added, looking down, "to—to—leave a book, for I was anxious, and *he* seems to know nothing of your danger."

"I have only just learned it myself, and have hastened to seek you; the mine at our feet is about to be sprung, and"——

"So ends *your* life of ignoble disguise and *mine* of duplicity. We should both be thankful." [Pg 583]

"One of us at least—thankful as the wrecked seaman, when the plank he clings to splits and sinks him within sight of shore. But time presses; I have come to test the truth of your character. Once more—are you ready?"

"I am indeed—ready to part this instant. I knew it should be so; it was a pleasure to have known you, but I am resigned—ready. Fly! O lose not a single moment; the moon is rising. Farewell, and fly!"

"Not without *you*! Girl, you affect to misunderstand me; or have you forgotten those promises of friendship and faith, even to death, that you have made me so often and so lately?"

"Promises—faith?" cried his startled companion; "even admitting those playful assurances of a wild, country girl's friendship, were a compact, could you be cruel enough to insist upon my fulfilling it in this desperate hour?"

"Then all the interest you have expressed hitherto in my fate," pursued the stranger; "the sympathy you have led me to think you felt for one, suffering as I have suffered in the cause of my unhappy country—the hopes excited in this heart when, as I pictured a delighted life passed with you, and love, and freedom, beyond the Atlantic, you listened on, with a consenting smile—all this was but pastime for your vacant hours?"

"It was wrong, I know," replied Katey yieldingly; "yet Heaven knows it was no pastime. I found you in concealment—a fugitive—hunted, you told me, by the laws for your exertions in the cause of a country I have been taught by you to deem misgoverned; I saw you superior to all those around you; you complained of cheerlessness and solitude, of ill health—I brought you books, music, all that I could judge likely to lighten your hours, and dearly am I punished for it."

"But think"——

"*Think!*" cried the girl, passionately interrupting him, for the chord had jarred, "I never *thought*—till now—when all my giddy, imprudent conduct crowds on my mind as if to crush me. A few months back, and we were ignorant of each other's existence."

"Would that it had continued so," he said, in a voice of sadness; "a few months more, and my memory will be to you as the nameless gravestone, telling alone that it hides the dead. Cruel, but beloved, farewell!" and he turned to depart.

"Yet stay," said Katey, hurriedly. "Why not let me tell my father of this business—I mean of your story—that I know it all, and entreat of him, as I have often urged you to let me do, to interest himself with Government and procure your pardon, which he can readily obtain? I will go this instant."

"And give me up to justice—for such, I assure you, will be the result of an appeal to your father."

"You wrong him, believe me. He is perhaps stern and vindictive in his feelings towards those whom he considers instrumental in keeping alive a spirit of animosity and disturbance among the people; but you know not," she said with a smile, "how all-powerful is my influence with him. Yes, even at the risk of his displeasure—for he little dreams I am acquainted with you, I will tell him your sad story—there is nothing in it a brave or noble man should be afraid of. I will go to him this moment," and she moved on.

"Impossible!-you are mad. The very fact of your having known and befriended me in this clandestine way, will incense your friends. I shall be arrested, and you will accuse yourself for life as my destroyer. No, dear girl," he continued, in a softer yet not less eager tone, as he placed his arm round her, "why not yield to the impulses of your own high, disinterested spirit, and fly with me, as I have so often implored you? Be mine first in the sight of man and heaven, and then plead for me afterwards with your father?"

"I dare not—it would break his heart—my own is breaking fast already," and she trembled from head to foot in her attempts to subdue the sobbing of her bosom.

"And this is the energy, the firm-mindedness, you have so often boasted of! You have it in your power this instant to raise me to happiness, wealth, and safety; and, forgetful it was the charm you threw across my path which has kept me near you until the bloodhounds have [Pg 584] run me to bay, you doom me to despair and death. I see *you* have made your decision—hear *mine*. Life since I knew you has no value in my eyes if unshared by you. Exile from you would be worse than death. Here, then, I still await the pursuers. Never will I leave, with life, the mountains that surround you."

"Oh—no—no! Heaven forbid your blood should be shed on my account! Fly, I implore you, before it is too late."

"Never! I will sell my life dearly, but my grave at least shall be where you can sometimes visit it and remember"——

"Unkind, dark, inhuman man! was it *all* my fault? My poor father, what will he say? give me at least a day or two to think"——

"It is now of no use, the night has half past, my doom is fixed."

"No! again no! you will drive me mad! Oh fly, fly, but this once, and I will, at least I promise—I must see him—my father—before—fly now and return, and I will do all you desire—only, only, save your life at once."

The man replied not for some minutes, he then resumed—"I have here that copy of the Gospels you gave me—will you swear on that gift that when we next meet you will be prepared to share life, be it happiness or horror, with me?"

"Yes, I do—I will—any thing; but fly and save yourself."

"Swear then," he said, as with one arm around her he prepared with the other to place the sacred Book upon her lips, when at that very moment an aspersion of cold water was dashed with such ample profusion in the impassioned faces of the pair as to cause them to spring asunder with a start that had very nearly as much the character of discomfort as alarm.

"Hell and"——half-exclaimed the man, as he tore open his coat and grasped one of several pistols it now appeared he was armed with.

"*Dhieu, a's Marudha, a's Phaidhrig, a's*"[23]——said a voice, following up the lustration with a blessing, cut short, however, by the Stranger's clutching the throat of the pious intruder, and dragging forward from beneath the trees which had hitherto overshadowed their way a little Bundle of some dark coloured cloth, surmounted by a straw bonnet, so battered in its outlines that to fix it there it must have been flattened down with no ordinary emphasis, and from beneath which guttural shrieks now arose, whose extent of volume was out of all proportion to the diminutive object from which they proceeded.

"Hold! let go, for goodness sake!" cried Miss Tyrrel, "it is only poor Sally-the-tin, the Holy-Water woman."

"A—a—a! my windpipe!" cried the Bundle, as soon as that interesting organ had been extricated. "A—a—Miss Katey, take the bushblunder out ov his hand 'fore he blows my brains out," and the shrieks were renewed with more vociferation than before.

"She will raise the country. I must stop her, were I to kill her," said the stranger furiously.

"No, no, dear friend, she is a deaf harmless thing—hush! I hear steps. Oh, in mercy fly!"

"Not without your promise," he said doggedly.

"I am ready, I promise—next time we meet; now farewell and away," said Katey, while she waved one hand to the departing fugitive as he dashed through the thicket, and placed the other on the roaring mouth of the creature at her side, whose terrors seemed under considerable self-control, for they at once subsided.

"Mother o' Grace, pray for us now an' at the hour ov our death, amen!" mumbled the Bundle, as it righted itself, and assumed the appearance of a withered and ancient little Woman, who, in flinging back her dark blue cloak to adjust herself, exhibited a small scarecrow frame, round which was hung, until its shape became orbicular, every variety of feminine [Pg 585] attire, from the petticoats, under, upper, and quilted, through the higher gradations of gown, apron, spencer, jacket, pelerine, handkerchief, and shawl. A broad leathern strap was buckled round her waist, from which on one side hung a rosary or string of large beads, to the other was fastened a *canteen* or tin can without a cover, containing a large supply of holy water, procured from the neighbouring chapels on Sundays. She bore in her hand literally nothing but (as they would say in Ireland) her *fist*, which was of immense size, and of whose convenience for the purposes of aspergation Katey and her friend had just been afforded such convincing proof.

Footsteps now approached rapidly, and Miss Tyrrel, holding Sally-the-tin by the arm, turned towards home. She was shortly encountered by a lively-voiced gentlemanly young man, who saluted her in an affectionate tone with "Katey, pet, what on earth has kept you out so late. Hallo! Sally, I bar that!" he exclaimed, adroitly slipping aside, and escaping the showery blessing which, despite the lesson just bestowed on her, this incorrigible lady of the Tin had (as was her wont with all she met) discharged at him. "But did I not hear some one," he continued, "screeching violently as I came up?"

"Yes, Lysaght," said Miss Tyrrel, "this stupid, deaf, old creature here, who is a torment to all who meet her, with her benedictions and holy water, suddenly threw some of the contents of her tin (as she always does when saluting a person) on a Stranger, a man she happened to be passing close to, which so irritated him that he has given her a proper fright."

"I could chide you soundly, dear Katey, for such late scampers as these; but you take my hints——well, don't be cross, and have it all your own way if you like," said the young man, interrupting himself, dejectedly.

"I *am* very cross to-night, Lysaght, so don't talk. But here we are, and I am glad of it," and Katey knocked impatiently and loudly at the door of their home. "Now don't go away sulky, there's a good boy," she cried after her cousin, who turned towards the stables; "and, Lysaght, I have done the rosettes for Lightfoot's headstall, which you asked me to make, though I said I wouldn't—you shall have them in the morning. And now to give this silly old woman her supper and a night's lodging," and followed by Sally-the-tin still groaning heavily, she entered the house.

Chapter III.

Sleepless and miserable to Katey Tyrrel was the night that followed her interview with the Stranger. The fearful and critical position in which she was placed caused her, for the first time in her life, to go through a rigid course of self-examination, the result of which but added to her alarm and anxiety. For some months past the person she had just parted from had been a sojourner in lodgings at Cahill's under circumstances of great privacy—rarely venturing out during the day, and in the evening only with secresy and caution. As that remote country, ill-supplied at the period with police, (and even those of the most "ancient and quiet" description,) and wholly inaccessible to bailiffs and all other functionaries attendant on county sheriffs, was deemed peculiarly favourable as quarters for that class of magnanimous men whose expenditure happens to exceed their incomes, to the detriment of their tailors and their own personal inconvenience, it was soon whispered, and as quickly believed, that the resident at Cahill's was one of that generous brotherhood, or in other words, was "a gentleman on his keeping."[24] In her visits to the shop, which, from her idle though innocent life, were frequent, Katey had several times encountered him as he sauntered in and out. An intimacy sprang up. There was a frankness and a half-military air in [Pg 586] his deportment that interested her. He had evidently seen much of the world and society, his conversation was lively and varied, his knowledge and accomplishments, to the secluded country girl, seemed extensive, and round all circled a halo of mystery, not the least of those attractions for Katey, whose passion for riding to the Kilfane hounds had just been succeeded by a stronger one for Mrs Radcliffe and romances. Time flew on. Their daily interviews improved to evening rambles, the interchange of notes, supplies of books and

flowers upon one side, an avowal of love and tale of lofty but luckless patriotism on the other. To the object of his passion alone did the stranger confide his story. Fascinated by the principles of freedom with which France had lately inoculated mankind, and maddened by the miseries of ill-government under which his own green Island groaned, he had engaged, full of hope and high aspirations, in that enterprise for the recovery of her national independence, which terminated in the martyrdom of as noble and pure-spirited a being as sleeps buried and unhonoured in "the cross ways of fame"—Robert Emmett. The Stranger had been dispatched, he said, to the south to forward the movement of his party in that quarter, when their central Power in the capital prematurely exploded, carrying dismay and destruction to every remoter organ of the confederacy. His name—the name of Fergus Hewitt, citizen of the new Western Republic, and major of brigade—was one of the first upon the list of the proscribed; a reward was offered for his head; and it was while lurking a hunted man, amid the fastnesses of Tipperary, that he wooed and ventured to win the heart and hand of the heiress of Clogheen.

Such was the tale along whose vicissitudes the fair girl to whom it was imparted now glanced with a bewildered mind. The interview just terminated will have given the reader some idea of the unsettled state of her feelings; but it was in the solitude of her chamber, when she found herself called on to part for ever, or for ever to be united with this interesting stranger, that she seemed to discover, not without consternation, how necessary to her happiness he had become. The waste vacancy of her time and thoughts before she had met him—broken only by dull and distant visits to duller and more distant aunts, vapid rides through rude and solitary scenes, and incessant feud and amnesty between her cousin Lysaght and herself—was this once more to be her portion? or would she fly with Him who had relieved her from them all, and relinquish her father and her home? How, she continued to ask herself, would that beloved parent, so stern to all else, so blindly indulgent to her, endure her loss? Would he proscribe her for ever? She felt not—assuredly not. No, her father would once more receive her into his grace and affection; but Lysaght, who had been reared with her, who loved her so well, so all the more deeply, she knew, that he had never told her so—what would *he* feel? How would he look the first morning after her flight, when he came in to breakfast and found the room solitary, the urn cold, her little spanniel, Lapwing, moaning about the hearth, and Katey away over the mountains in the dead of night with a nameless and lawless man? Yes, poor Lysaght, she felt, would *then* be to be pitied: her father might once more be hers; but her cousin—even her little quarrels with him had something pleasant to her recollection, and on this portion of the picture, much as she desired to banish it from her mind, she again and again returned to dwell; nor did she succeed in *overlaying* it by painting her reconciliation with Lysaght on her return, and her reparation in the shape of a large present of real and personal estate which her father should be induced to make to him, and thereby enable Lysaght to settle in life. And then his wife—which of all her surrounding country friends would she choose for him? The sketch was still unfinished, when the bell announced the morning's repast; and Katey, sleepless, agitated, and undecided, descended to breakfast.

There was nothing in that meal calculated to allay her anxiety. She found her father and [Pg 587]
cousin (the latter having just come in from his matutinal tour through the farm, and laden, of course, with the news of the neighbourhood) busily engaged with cold beef and conjectures upon the sudden flight of the gentleman resident at Curly Cahill's, which had taken place during the night, half-an-hour previous to a domiciliary visit from three peace-officers who came from Clonmel, and departed as they came, in profound silence regarding the object of their expedition, upon discovering the stranger had left. As Mr Tyrrel had not been consulted by the authorities on this occasion, the reverend magistrate testified no very poignant regret at the disappointment of the officers; but as his curiosity was commensurately excited, he hazarded several ingenious solutions of the Problem that had been paying eighteen-pence a-week for "dry-lodgings" at Cahill's, the last four months. Lysaght was loud in his decision that the fellow was "some coiner or poaching blackguard;" while his uncle rather inclined to the arson and agrarian-outrage line. Poor Katey sat behind the coffee-stand stifling her feelings in the manner she best might, until she heard her father propose "sheep-stealing" as an emendation of the probable offence of her banished friend, when she could support it no longer. Little accustomed at any time to hide her emotions, the high-spirited girl burst into tears, upbraided her respectable parent and thick-headed cousin for their hardheartedness and want of charity, ventured at first to disbelieve every sentence they had uttered, proceeded to confess that she had had the pleasure of the stranger's acquaintance, and ended by proudly introducing him (in an imaginary way) to her astonished friends as Major Fergus Hewitt of the Second Republican Brigade of Artillery, and Commissioner to Mononia from the Provisional Government.

Had a petard from the Major's own brigade been projected into the centre of the little breakfast table, it could not have played the mischief more effectually than did this stunning explosion. Lysaght Osborne, after remaining speechless for some minutes, having helped himself to a cup of scalding water from the urn, was compelled to retreat upon the pump outside. His uncle, who had received so large a portion of the shell, necessarily, too, exhibited much suffering, which his daughter at length attempted in vain to alleviate. But the spoiled and petted Katey had for once overcounted. There are in certain minds bursts of passion, which, like the tempests of tropical islands, are all the more violent and unsparing from the halcyon seasons that precede them. Such was the storm of wrath that now for the first time descended from Tyrrel's lips upon his daughter's head. He raved and stamped at

her like a maniac, terrified her into an acknowledgment that she had listened even to amatory communications from the unhappy Hewitt, commanded her from his presence, then recalled her to be reprimanded for retiring so hastily, and again expelling her, pursued her with all but palpable fire and sword to her own territory, where, locking her in her bed-chamber, he deposited the key in his pocket, and set out on foot to finish the work of disaster by annihilating the "dealer in soft goods," who had, he felt assured, been a proximate agent in nearly ridding him of his child. His first intention was to hold no terms whatever in his approaches upon Curly's fortalice, or, in other words, "to make an open show of him;" but a mile's walk of a muddy day has a sedative effect, and by the time he arrived at Cahill's Mr Tyrrel had seen the impolicy of giving any publicity to what *he* considered the folly of his daughter. His interview, therefore, with Curly took place in private, and for any satisfaction that resulted from it he might as well have placed himself in communication with the intelligent milestone, "Clonmel XII.," which he had passed as he entered the town. Cahill, on his part, received the first discharge of the clergyman's indignation with a look of stolid surprise, to which one Liston, a player, could alone have done justice. For some time he seemed at a loss to comprehend whether the remarks had reference to his last year's arrear of tithes, or the projected invasion from Boulogne; and [Pg 588] when at length their real purport *did* overtake him, the shock was overwhelming. Well it was for the Fugitive that he was at the moment out of reach of his estimable host's indignation. To be "skivered," to "have every bone in his body smashed to smithers," or "to be torn asunder as one would tear a lark," was the mildest of the horrible fates he had escaped for attempting to inveigle the affections of "the darlin' young lady." As to Cahill himself having ever perceived the remotest approach to any intimacy between the parties, he "declared to his heart" he never saw them together in his life; if he had, his instant duty would have propelled him to inform the rector of it "in a shake;" so that as Mr Tyrrel saw his interview was likely to be a fruitless one, he cut it short and departed, while Curly was concluding a declaration, that "if he could go on his hands an' knees to Clo'mel for his rav'rence, he'd be proud to do it."

During the rest of the day, the discomfited parent had full occupation in his own self-upbraidings. In his boundless indulgence, he had permitted his daughter to be perfectly mistress of her time and actions; and the conviction now pressed upon him, that he had done so to a very culpable and unfortunate degree. In order to remedy one false step, however, he now took another in a contrary direction; and Katey, so long the sole object of his tenderness and love, was henceforth to experience a share of that hardness in his character, which the rest of the world had so largely felt. Although he did not persist in keeping her locked up in one apartment, he forbade her for the present to appear in his presence, and strictly commanded that she should not, on any account, stir from the house.

This was the step to the opposite extreme, and it had the effect that might be expected. His daughter's sensibilities revolted at such severity—her prepossessions in favour of the hapless person on whose account she was subjected to it, became more confirmed; she was determined she would not be thwarted, that, at least, she would attempt to learn some intelligence of Hewitt's fate, and, if possible, see him once more before they parted for ever. While, however, she awaited an opportunity of communicating with a faithful messenger, who had sometimes conveyed notes from him when accident prevented their meeting, she was attacked with illness, a smart febrile indisposition—the result, no doubt, of the mental disquietude she had undergone—and several weeks elapsed before she was again able to reach the little conservatory, which, opening on the lower apartments of the mansion, constituted the utmost limits of that domestic boundary beyond which she was not permitted to proceed.

Chapter IV.

It was late in a dreary night of November. The wind blew a perfect hurricane, rushing up the thick avenue which led to the Glebe house of Clogheen, driving before it in its fury vast clouds of withered leaves it had collected on its way, and showering them in impotent wrath against the doors and windows of the house, which shook and clattered as if each had its own separate assailant. Midnight—black midnight had passed, and the faint light of a rising moon was beginning to mingle with the disturbed and dismal air. It was no night for mortals to forsake quiet and comfortable beds, and, least of all, delicate female invalids; yet Katey Tyrrel, shadowy and wan as a ghost, was standing at this hour watching the roaring tempest from the windows of the conservatory, that looked upon the front lawn of the dwelling. She had not, however, been long stationed there, when the darkness of the spot in which she stood (for there was no candle) was made still murkier by the shadow of a man who appeared outside. Katey softly undid the Venetian door, and Hewitt stood before her.

"Dear, dear girl! how am I to thank you?" he murmured as he pressed with impassioned [Pg 589] eagerness the hand she extended to him.

"Speak low—low—low!" whispered the confused and trembling maiden. "Oh, what a night—what an hour to meet in!"

"Any where—every where—no where—no matter—with you it is paradise to me!" ejaculated her lover with a random delight. "How did you manage the dogs though?"

"Oh—I—locked Buffer in the stables, ever so far off—and Bang—indeed *he* is so savage I was obliged to take him a field away, to the potatoe-house;" and Katey felt her cheek blush, until she feared it would light the gloom.

"High-souled, devoted being! how am I rewarded for all I have gone through! You are indeed worthy to share the existence of one like me, whose hopes have been ruined in the holiest cause that——but there is not a single minute to lose—I have horses ready beyond the avenue gate—oh, come, my Katey—'fly from a world'—etcetera. You know the song."

"Fly!—dear friend—you rave—do you not know how ill I have been? Can you not see what a wretched thin fright I have become."

"Nonsense, my love, you look—(for dark as it is I can see that)—a thousand times more interesting with that pale sweet face. My own life, this is no time to trifle—who could suppose you were so undecided, you so lofty-spirited, so *heroine*-like.—Oh, Katey"——

"Believe me, Hewitt, I have not strength even to mount, much less to sit a horse at present."

"Then, why this meeting, my love?"

"Why—why—I scarce can tell; surely it is a pleasure to meet for once, even in this way, after all we have suffered."

"Decidedly"—said her lover with an abstracted air. "I'll tell you what," he added eagerly, as if struck by some sudden thought, "there is fearful danger of our being separated if we do not act quickly, and for ever. Suppose—suppose, my beloved one—you now here, in this blest spot, give me a *legal* claim to your hand, we may not again have such an opportunity?"

"What—how do you mean?" asked Katey bewilderingly.

"Why, you see the truth is this—I *did* dread your health might have interfered with active flight—might not have been such as seconded our wishes—and I came prepared—the fact is, I have brought a Reverend Friend with me—you understand?—he is now not far away—indeed, he is just outside."

"Hewitt!—are you mad!" exclaimed the overwhelmed girl, shrinking away. "I cannot—indeed, I cannot, think of such a thing."

"Folly—stuff! I see, my beloved one, I must act for you in this matter"——

To go to the window—give a gentle tap—summon a low corpulent little man before it—to seize him by the neck and drag him softly into the room, as though the unwieldy individual were unable to accomplish the feat himself—was but the work of an instant; the next, Hewitt had caught the half-swooning Katey's hand and led her forward.

"'*D-d-dom-dominus adimp-p-p-lea bened-d-dic* (hic!) *benedictionem suam in v-v-v-obis!* (hic!)" stutteringly whispered the new-comer, while the powerful smell of whisky-punch, which began to pervade the apartment, bore far less testimony to his piety than to his potations.

"Douce your lingo!" muttered Hewitt. "Keep it till 'tis called for.——Now, my own dear Katey," he said in his most persuasive tone, "let this moment make you mine—mine indissolubly. Come, Father Larr,[25] there is not an instant to spare—do your office;" and supporting Katey, and half-forcibly, half-entreatingly, bringing her forward, he stood with her before the priest—if indeed it is right to profane that name by conferring it on the drunken and dissolute creature, who, long since expelled from the altar, was forced to depend for a livelihood on his services in such desperate hours of need as the present. [Pg 590]

"Oh, Hewitt, give me a moment—my father—Lysaght—I did not look for this"—murmured the agitated bride.

"Then such is your faith after all?" whispered Hewitt; "but as you please—even here—at this moment I give you up for ever, since you desire it."

"No—it is God's will—there is no use in struggling against my fate—I am ready," she answered, endeavouring to rouse her stupified faculties.

"Go on, then," whispered her lover to the priest, "be quick!"

"*Co—co—conjungo vos*," began Father Larr as he joined their hands, "*in nom—nom*—(hic!)—*nomine P—p—patris* (hic!) *et F—f—f—fil*—(hic!)"—

The rest of his articulation was effectually stopped by his receiving, full in the face, the contents of what he felt to be a basin of cold water, conferred, it appeared to him, by the hands of the timid bride; while, at the same time, a voice that split the very room like thunder saluted the group with a blessing from the Virgin and St Patrick, and Sally-the-tin stood beside them, who, however, no sooner recognised Hewitt, with whose grasp she had before now been familiar, than she set up a shriek in which entreaty, benediction, curse, complaint, and consternation, were so vociferously blended that it would have alarmed Erebus. The next instant the whole house above and around them was heard in commotion; bells rung, and were instantly answered by the noise of heavy bodies jumping out of bed; windows raising; servant-women squalling; and grooms rushing madly down-stairs. Miss Tyrrel sank fainting on the spot; and Hewitt had but time to treat Sally-the-tin to a parting

kick, which conveyed her in a state of collapse to a small bower of pelargoniums at the further end of the green-house, drag his reverend friend through the window, and disappear, when the whole effective force of the household burst into the apartment.

Chapter V.

We have long been persuaded, not less by the impartial assurances of respected friends than by our own internal convictions, that, if we possess any one excellence beyond another—and our talents are varied and extraordinary—it is a tendency to dramatic perfection. And albeit the narrative Arimanes too often mars the beneficent desires of the dramatic Oromasdes; yet at all times we endeavour as much as in us lies to adhere to those venerable observances the Unities, so long and no doubt so justly objects of respect and admiration. In the present tale, although compelled to violate the unity of Time, we have hitherto pretty closely adhered to that of Place, our characters having, for the course of some pages, hovered within and around the precincts of the celebrated village where the scene opened, which (although a hall, or some spacious chamber, might be a little nearer to those rules the classic stage so strictly enforces) we flatter ourselves will be found sufficiently limited for present exigencies. We are now, however, about to take a liberty with the second unity by transporting the reader (may we hope in more senses than one?) to a spot distant from our former scene some six or eight miles, on the high and solitary summit of Kilworth mountain, in that place where the great southern road from Dublin to Cork winds over the acclivity.

The peculiar character of the landscape in question may best be conveyed in the words of a friend whom we once, in an hour of juvenile arrogance and self-exaltation, induced to accompany us thither in order to astonish him with what we conceived to be the boundless impressiveness and glory of the scene. It happened to be rather a breezy day towards the fall of the leaf, and after a pretty sharp and tedious journey, enlivened, however, by our friend's various and interesting converse—for he had been a marvellous traveller, and had crossed the globe from Spitzbergen to Caffraria in one direction, and circled it from Pekin to Peru, *viâ* Paris, in another—we arrived at our *point d'appui*. Having allowed him time to recover from what we felt must be his stupendous wonder and delight, we ventured to enquire "what he thought of *that*?" Whereupon, sinking his arms to the elbows in the pockets of his Petersham, and doubling himself in two, as if seized with a cramp in the stomach, he, after a short altercation with himself, replied in a tone that made our very teeth to chatter—"No, I never—yes—now I think on't—there is—there is one slip of wilderness in Crim Tartary as *bad*, as to *howl* at least, but this beats it out in the *whinstone*." [Pg 591]

Over this howling desert, then, we beg to present to our readers Mr Curly Cahill travelling slowly, about dusk, a month or two after the occurrence which took place in the preceding chapter. He was warmly muffled in his great-coat or *loody*, and mounted on a very high-boned horse, whose hoofs, with many interjections of stumble, made the only noise that broke the dismal stillness around. The summit of the mountain passed, the traveller began to descend the southern side, when, after proceeding a few hundred yards, his steed *toed*, and tumbled the rider over its head as softly as if it were his favourite mode of alighting. Mr Cahill, having taken a few minutes' time for reflection, on his face and hands, quietly arose, threw the bridle over his arm, and proceeded to walk the very short remnant of the journey. Turning aside to a miserable hovel on the road, he unbolted the half-door, fastened his rein to the latch, and with a *Dhieu-a-uth*, or "God save you," entered the hut. It was in darkness, save where around a large fire that was flickering half-smothered in its own ashes, sat three men, at a little table, sharing between them a mug of poteen whisky, the only vessel on the table, or probably in the house.

"How long you wor entirely!" said one of the men (who did not move) knocking the ashes out of his pipe, as the traveller entered.

"The baste thravelled badly," replied Curly; "besides, I waited for the fall of the evenin,' as I was loth to be seen comin' the road."

"Well, an' what's on?" asked another. "Be quick—we're not easy here so close to the road, and it'll be pitch-dark with us across the bog."

"Well, then," said Cahill, "the long an' the short of it is this—they're back from Dublin at the Glebe agin. The Capting has sure word from *her* that she'll be ready to go away with him to-morrow night at twelve. Let ye get three more good boys an' watch, an' soon as ever ye hear them gallop from the gap where they'll mount—make a dash for the house, she'll be shure to leave the windy open, an' then—ye have her murdherin' father—*I need say no more*."

"I'm agin the *blood* any how," said one of the men; "he forgiv' my brother Mick two years' 'rear of tithe—an' he giv' Jug Sheedy an' her two childher a cabin an' half an acre o' garden when Buck Rice turned her off the Clo'mel estate"——

"Iss"——said another, "an' the wife, when she was alive, was good to the poor. As far as smashin' the place, an' makin' a fire upon the stairs, an' bringin' away the tithe-books goes, I'm agreeable; but I vote agin blood unless we can't help it."

"Then ye'll not get a rap from me," said their tempter.

"Bloor-an-nagers! what do you mean?" asked a third. "Will you be satisfied if we giv' him a beaten'?"

"No—I won't," answered Cahill.

"Nothin' but blood? Well, I'll tell you what, we'll shplit the difference—we'll cut the ears ov' him—he was always hard on us—but h—— to the one ov us will go further; he never took a spade[26] ov ground over a man's head yet, an' he don't desarve it. I won't say but he hurt many a poor boy by the processes—still *that's* law—but the villyans that go to eject creathures out of house an' home"——

"Well—I'm satisfied with the ears," muttered Cahill. "It'll be some satisfaction for my hundhred-an'-forty-sevin pounds eighteen-an'-tenpence, including costs, of the last arrear; besides he'll suffer in losin' the daughter. I'll meet you here again afther to-morrow night, this hour, an' we'll settle." [Pg 592]

And Mr Cahill, remounting his steed, rode away.

Chapter VI.

He did not journey far. A mile further over the mountain, he pulled up before a lonely public-house, the only abode deserving the name of habitable that then existed for many miles on that desolate range of hills. It was of a very suspicious appearance, and quite as questionable a character; but the Shopkeeper seemed to entertain no scruple on those heads, for he alighted and entered with a pleasant air, and met, from numerous stragglers who were loitering in the kitchen, a cheerful reception.

Curly, having cast a reconnoitring glance through the place, wiped his mouth softly with his right palm, and before he withdrew it managed to whisper from behind it to mine host—

"Is he within jest now?"

"You'll find him in the back room; he has been askin' for you this half hour," was as gently responded.

Curly carelessly, or, as he would say himself, "promiscuously," wandered across the ample kitchen, and, stumbling heavily, slipped, as if by the merest accident, through a door close beside him, and, closing it after him, found himself alone with Major Hewitt, late of the 2d Brigade of Republican Artillery.

That gentleman was standing with his back to a good fire, in a small apartment, lighted by a single candle, which stood on a rude mantelpiece. He exhibited some slight symptoms of impatience at Curly's entrance, and, like the desperado-gentlemen of the hut, enquired peevishly what had delayed him.

"I'm proud to see you, Capting," said Cahill evasively; "the job is near finished at last, I hope?"

"Yes, to-morrow night, I think. We go off after twelve, provided you don't fail in having the horses ready."

"Don't fear me in that. Well, 'twill be great sport intirely—the ould man's tatteration when he finds his colleen gone." And Curly was obliged to bend himself double with laughter. "You'll find Ned Burke at the gap in the avenue-wall with two as good coults as there is in the barony. But, Capting, when it's all right, an' you settled in life, you'll not forget the friend that stood by you an' helped you to the fortun'?"

"For the sake of his own revenge at being cast in a law-suit about ten shillings' worth of potato-tithe? Certainly not, most upright Curly."

"An' where'll you take the brideen—Miss Katey—the darlin'?" said Cahill with a jocose wink.

"Curse you, villain! you'll drive me to give you a token on that head of yours you'll remember until—you see me again, at all events," cried Hewitt passionately. "Thank God, I'm 'most done with you. Have you brought the money?"

"Sorrow a sixpence, jewel. I had the arrears an' costs to pay this mornin', a'n I'm run dhry teetotally; that's the thruth."

"Then all my plan's gone for nothing!" said Hewitt. "In the fiend's name, what brought you *here*, then?"

"Jest a thrifle o' business up the road," answered Curly, "an' a great wish intirely for *you*, Capting."

"And *she* prepared and all!" continued Hewitt abstractedly. "I thought I was done with it for ever.... Go back, I implore you, Cahill, and raise me fifty pounds in any way. I am perfectly penniless."

"I couldn't raise you fifty farthens—I could *not*, 'pon my word and honour to you, Capting."

"Then I give up the business," replied Hewitt.

"An' the fair-haired girleen, an' her goold, an' what's betther, I know, to you, her goodwill; an' the land, an' the laugh at Lysaght"——and Cahill ran on rising towards his climax.

"I can't stand this; d—n you," cried his hearer. "Since you won't aid me, I must try the old treasury once more." [Pg 593]

"An' you're the boy to have your dhrafts honoured, never fear, Capting."

"Will you escort me to the bank?" asked Hewitt with a savage sneer.

"He! he! he!" laughed the worthy Cahill. "My road home lies partly that way; an' if I don't lend you my note-o'-hand, at all events I've no objection to witness the deed, Capting."

"Go out and get your horse, then, and I shall be ready in a few minutes," said Hewitt, with something like a sigh.

Chapter VII.

A post-chaise with two stout horses, and as stout a man to drive them, was standing before the door of Jackson's Inn, in the then little village of Fermoy, at the close of a dry and frosty February day. In the parlour of the inn, two or three gentlemen stood watching or eagerly conversing with a couple of tall and powerful-looking men, who were engaged with a beef-steak, which it seemed—from a watch being placed before them on the table—they had but a limited time to discuss.

"Then you are really determined on it, Mr Skelton?" said one of the standers-by to the elder and busier of the banqueters.

"Quite," answered the person addressed, speaking as rapidly as he fed. "What's to be done?—road stopp'd up—business checked—six months gone—mails cut off—guard killed—alarm increasing"——

"If it continues much longer," interrupted his slower companion, "all communication with the capital will be at an end, unless a blow be struck," he said, looking round him loftily, "that will paralyze the enemy, gentlemen."

"Now for it, Rudd," said Skelton rising; "our time's up—twenty-five minutes past five," and he pocketed the watch by which he counted.

"I'm your man," answered Rudd, as he swallowed his last glass of sherry, and jumped up: "have you the blunderbuss?"

"Ay have I."

"I have the dirk and pistols, then: so bolt at once. Good-by, gentlemen;" and without waiting for the "good-bys" and "successes" that were showered on them, Messrs Skelton and Rudd hurried into the attendant post-chaise, and, giving some earnest directions in a whisper to the driver, dashed rapidly over the bridge which crossed the Blackwater, and took the road leading north, over Kilworth mountain, to Dublin.

Half an hour's travelling brought them to the foot of the hill, where the road began to ascend, and from this spot the driver was instructed to proceed at a slow pace. The night had thoroughly set in, both dark and foggy, and an hour elapsed tediously in winding up and attaining the vast level of the Wild. As they had no lamps, though desirous now to advance at a brisker rate, they were compelled to keep in a slow and cautious trot, the hearts of the travellers, intrepid as they seemed to be a short time ago, thumping violently every step they proceeded.

After various short pauses to avoid deep ruts, and several descents by the driver to free his horses' hoofs from the loose stones that lay plentifully along the wretched road—during one of which he seemed to hold colloquy with some benighted traveller—the carriage had nearly crossed the long summit of the desolate hills, when its occupants perceived it to stop with a sudden and forcible impulse, that betokened instant danger. Dropping the glasses at once, they called loudly to the driver to enquire the cause.

"There's a gentleman here," replied the man in a timid sullen voice, "houldin' the horses heads, that says I must stop here a spell."[27]

"How many of 'em?" asked Skelton in a low tone.

"Two," was the answer, just as softly; "one a-horseback, t'other a-foot."

"Here we are, then!" said Rudd to his companion in a feverish whisper.

"Yes; I wish 'twas over," was the reply, which was scarcely breathed when a man appeared at the right-hand carriage-window, and, presenting a pistol, said in a strong loud voice— [Pg 594]

"I'm sorry, gentlemen, but I must have your money."

"Or your lives," added a man on horseback, blocking up the opposite side of the chaise.

"This is very hard, sir," answered Rudd hesitatingly—"very—hard—indeed; however, I suppose it must be so: perhaps you'll be good enough to come round to the other door of the chaise—my friend here is, I fear, seriously ill—

"Certainly," said the robber, who was now heard walking round to the door already occupied by his mounted companion.

"Are you steady?" whispered Rudd.

"As steel!" answered Skelton.

"Then slip the muzzle of the blunderbuss across me, and the moment the door is well opened, when I raise my arm with the purse, shoot him dead on the spot."

The click of a trigger was the sole reply:—the highwayman had come round to the door. He had his grasp on the handle, when he was suddenly struck in the eyes with some icy liquid, that caused him to swerve violently aside, dragging open the door at the same moment. There was a terrific volley from the carriage, and Curly Cahill, receiving the greater portion of the contents of the blunderbuss intended for his friend, dropped heavily from his horse.

Rudd and Skelton instantly sprang out. They found Hewitt (for our readers, no doubt, have anticipated it was he) engaged with their stalwart driver, who had already grappled with him, having, before he could recover from his shock, as well as surprise, by a well-directed blow knocked the pistol from his hand, and closed with him. The man would have been no match for Hewitt; but before the latter could draw another pistol, he was struck down by Rudd, and, with the powerful assistance of Skelton, handcuffed, and secured in the chaise.

The travellers, who had come determined and prepared for this expedition,[28] now struck a light, and proceeded to raise Cahill, who continued to groan heavily where he had fallen. He seemed to bleed inwardly, having been wounded chiefly in the chest and stomach, and was lifted into the carriage beside his captured companion, and where he almost instantly expired, having squandered his last breath in a feeble laugh, and the expression of his conviction, that "the Capting was cashiered at last."

The travellers now hurried rapidly onwards, conveying with them Sally-the-tin, whom, having been benighted on her return from some country-fair, the driver (an old acquaintance) had overtaken and given a lift to on the bar beside himself, and whose elemental piety, for once not ill-timed, was the means of saving Hewitt's exit. Leaving Cahill's body at the very roadside-hut where he had so lately planned his villanous revenge, they continued their course to Clogheen; and being informed that the nearest magistrate was the rector of the parish, about nine o'clock at night they entered Mr Tyrrel's parlour, where, though still suffering under her father's suspicions, Katey was presiding at the tea-table to Lysaght and his uncle, and begged to introduce to the Reverend Justice's notice, the person who accompanied them—the dreaded and notorious freebooter, Roderick O'Hanlon, who had been so many months the terror of all who travelled Kilworth mountains—and who, on a previous occasion, had been ushered, in an imaginary way, to his acquaintance as Major Fergus Hewitt, commissioner to Mononia from the Provisional Government. [Pg 595]

Hewitt (or O'Hanlon) was tried at the ensuing Tipperary Assizes, and, notwithstanding the extreme severity of the law at that period, there were so many palliating circumstances pleaded in his favour at the trial—particularly a popular, and we believe a not altogether unfounded eulogium, (since grown into an apothegm in that country,) that "He robbed the rich to give to the poor," and so many persons of distinction, who had known him at one time as a performer on the Dublin stage, came forward to interest themselves in his behalf—that he escaped with transportation for life. He ultimately conducted himself with such propriety at Sydney, that he obtained a free pardon—and lived to amass some property, and settle in that colony. Previous to his quitting Ireland, he conveyed to Miss Tyrrel, by the hands of her father, a few lines explanatory of portions of his conduct and career, and which concluded with the assurance, that, next to *one* nameless and bitter regret, he most deeply lamented the injury he had, were it only in *her* estimation, inflicted on the cause of brave and unfortunate men, by passing himself as an adherent of Robert Emmett's, and the affair of 1803—with neither of which, he declared, had he had any connexion.

Katey Tyrrel recovered so rapidly from the shock and illness that succeeded the appearance of Hewitt as a prisoner in her father's parlour, that it is more than probable her wounded pride and convicted folly annihilated at once that affection for a highwayman which she would have had no scruple of bestowing on a Major of the Republican Brigade. Her father, grateful that, before it was too late, he was afforded an opportunity of atoning for past severity, no less than former indulgence, restored her speedily to favour. Katey profited largely by the lesson her giddiness and obstinacy had received. She became a steady and domestic character, and in due time saved herself the trouble of looking out a wife for Lysaght Osborne among her neighbours, by marrying him herself. They continued to reside with her father, who survived to such an extreme old age as to see all feuds between himself and his parishioners extinguished by the Composition Act.

Sally-the-tin, as often as her vagrant disposition admitted of it, had always a corner in Katey Osborne's kitchen; and it would be an injustice to woman's heart not to say, that this protection was afforded her not a whit the less warmly and permanently, for having been instrumental (however unconsciously) in saving the life of Hewitt.

A GLANCE AT THE PENINSULA.[29]

In England, where politics are so generally and largely discussed, where in fact they form the only subject upon which most men appear disposed or competent to converse, it is not uncommon to meet with persons well informed concerning the social and political state of the principal European countries. But we have frequently observed, that even amongst those who display the most varied knowledge of this kind, there are very few who either possess or pretend to any thing like a thorough appreciation of the affairs of the Peninsula. Yet there are obvious reasons why Englishmen ought to be more conversant with Spanish affairs than with those of any other European state—our nearest neighbours, perhaps, excepted. Here is a country about which we have been fighting or diplomatizing, almost without intermission, since the commencement of the present century; a country to which, by its intestine broils and frequent political changes, the attention of the English public has been continually directed, while that of the monied and commercial classes has been specially attracted to it [Pg 596] by the frequent fluctuations and consequent speculation in what are facetiously termed Spanish *Securities*, and by the oft-revived but hitherto fallacious expectation of a commercial treaty. When these sources of interest are considered, it does seem singular that so few persons should have thought it worth while to investigate the real state of Spain in all its various relations; and that of those who have gone thither with that view, none should have produced a book fully elucidating Spanish affairs to the numerous classes in England which are more or less interested in them. The probable cause of this is, that no country has been so difficult to follow and comprehend through all its countless changes; an indispensable key to which is a thorough knowledge of the national character. On the other hand, that knowledge is doubly difficult to obtain at a period when, as now, the people and the institutions of Spain are in a state of transition.

It is a truism which, at first sight, looks like a paradox, that contemporary history is the most difficult to write. Time, which, in its more extended lapse, destroys and obliterates—previously, by successive operations, purifies and enlightens; classes men and events; elevates the important and the true; and gives praise and obloquy to whom they are severally due. And in the Peninsula, more than in any other country, is this kind of classification requisite. Amidst the various parties and factions, the strange contradictions of the national character, the interminable web of intrigue and political manœuvre, how arduous the task to unravel the truth, to throw a clear light upon the state and prospects of Spain, and explain the hidden and complicated machinery by which many of the recent events in that country have been brought about!

We have now lying before us a book in which this task has been attempted, and, we are disposed to think, by no means without success. It is the work of a man who has evidently passed a considerable time in the Peninsula; and, after becoming well acquainted with the language and habits of the people, has studied the peculiarities of their manners, feelings, and institutions, with a keen and observant eye. The result of his observations he has committed to paper pretty much as they were made; so at least we infer from the style of his book, which, without being on any regular plan, touches upon every subject connected with Spain, nearly, as it would appear, in the order in which they chanced to come uppermost in the writer's mood of the moment. The frequent change which this occasions, from grave subjects to gay, and *vice versâ*, serves, perhaps as well as any more regularly preconceived plan could have done, to carry the general reader pleasantly through two rather copious volumes; in which, whatever nay be their deficiencies, there is certainly no lack of variety; while the style in which they are written has about it a characteristic vigour and originality, and at times a considerable degree of humour. We are not informed how long the author has lived in Spain; but we suspect that his residence there has been of considerable duration, and that he has become in some degree *Españolisado*. We infer this from an occasional foreign idiom; from his intimate knowledge of the habits of various classes, which only a long residence in the country could have brought in his way; and from a familiarity with Spanish proverbial language, which now and then breaks out in an amusing and Sancho-like passage. In short, the whole book is characteristic both of the man who has written it, and of the people whom it describes.

Commencing with the fall of Espartero, the first twenty chapters of the first volume are chiefly political in their nature;—containing explanations of the various circumstances attending the above event; details of the state of parties, of the intrigues against Olózaga, and his final overthrow by the Camarilla of the day; the history of Camarillas generally, and sketches of several of the most prominent actors upon the Spanish political stage. The

figurative signification of the word *camarilla*, which, in its literal sense, means a little chamber, is almost too well known, even out of Spain, for an explanation of it to be necessary. Since the fourteenth century, the days of Alonzo the Eleventh, and the beautiful [Pg 597] Leonor de Gusman, it has been the wont of Spanish monarchs, with rare exceptions, to rule, and often to be ruled, by cabals or coteries composed of an indeterminate number of courtiers. We find men of all ranks and classes of society taking in turn their share of this back-stairs influence; priests and soldiers, jesuits, nobles, and lawyers, and not unfrequently women, composed the courtier-conclaves that governed the rulers of Spain, sent their own foes to the scaffold or dungeon, and raised their own friends to the highest dignities of the state. In conformity with this time-honoured tradition of the Spanish monarchy, no sooner was Espartero expelled from Spain than Christina hastened to send creatures of her own to Maddrid, to watch over her interests pending her own arrival, and to intrigue against those who should appear disposed to thwart her designs and line of policy; to form, in short, a Camarilla. This was soon done. "It was composed of Narvaez, the Marchioness of Santa Cruz, and Valverde, the Duke of Ossuna, Juan Donoso Cortes, and a member of the Senate named Calvet—all faithful adherents of Christina, Moderados in their politics, and strongly tinged with absolutist principles, although most hostile to the claims of Don Carlos." These half-dozen intriguing spirits soon carved out for themselves abundant and mischievous employment. The then minister, Lopez, the same whose famous amnesty project caused the downfall of Espartero, alike averse to encounter their opposition or to truckle to them in his government, resigned his office although possessing a strong majority in the Cortes; and Olózaga took his place, having been himself designated by Lopez as the most fitting man. The new premier trusted to his energies and talents to make head against the Camarilla; but he had underrated the ingenuity and cunning of the latter; and, still more, the hatred borne to him by Queen Christina. This hatred he had excited to a deadly extent, when ambassador at Paris in the time of Espartero, by demanding the expulsion of Ferdinand's widow from the French capital, on the ground of her plottings and attempts to revolutionize Spain. As will be remembered, no attention was paid to these demands by Louis Philippe, who was far better affected to Christina than to Espartero; and the cunning dowager remained snug at the Hôtel de Courcelles, hatching plots against the existing government of Spain—plots in the carrying out of which she was largely aided by French gold and French counsels. But she neither forgot nor forgave Olózaga's interference; and no sooner did he assume the reins of government, than her adherents opened their batteries upon him with unusual vigour. So effectual was their fire, that Olózaga, who took office on the twenty-first of November, was dismissed from it on the twenty-ninth;—one week's tenure. The absurd history of the violence employed by him to obtain the Queen's signature to a decree for the dissolution of the Cortes is well known, as are also the efforts that were made to crush him, even after his expulsion from the ministry had been obtained by this pitiful pretext—a pretext at once disgraceful to the artful and unprincipled framers, and injurious in the highest degree to Queen Isabel, one of whose first acts, after her majority had been declared, was thus made to be the attestation of a gross and shameless falsehood. In the long and stormy debate that ensued in the Cortes, Olózaga amply confirmed all parties of the absurdity of the charge brought against him, and utterly confounded his enemies. What they could not accomplish by public means, the latter now attempted to bring about by underhand ones—namely, Olózaga's destruction in a literal as well as a political sense; and after one or two narrow escapes from assassination, the ex-premier was advised by his friends to withdraw from Spain. "Portugal presented the readiest asylum; and following very nearly the course of the Tagus, the exile, escorted by twenty well-armed contrabandists, came by way of Talavera and Coria on the back of a mule, in the disguise of a trader, with copious saddle-bags, and crossing the little river Herjas into the Portuguese province of Beira, was soon in Castello [Pg 598] Branco." Olózaga was used to this sort of thing, having already had to fly for his life in the time of Ferdinand. On that occasion he drove out of Madrid in the disguise of a Calesero, in company with his friend Garcia, the then intendant of police, who was also obliged to fly from the vengeance of the Camarilla of the day. They reached Corunna in safety, and embarked for England; the facile versatility with which Olózaga had smoked, joked, and drunk his way, adapting himself to the humours of all he met, and supporting admirably his assumed character, having in no small degree contributed to save them from detection.

The account our author gives of Queen Isabel is any thing but a favourable one; although we have much reason to fear that it is substantially correct. Wilful and pettish, at times obstinate, deficient in intelligence as well as temper, and above all, *dissimulada*, a dissembler. Ugly words these; but if it be true that children inherit their parents' virtues and vices, what better could be expected from the offspring of a Ferdinand and a Christina? Indeed it will be fortunate for herself and her people, if, at a later period of this child-queen's life, there are not a few more failings to be added to the above list—already sufficiently long. At present, artfulness and insincerity seem her chief faults—no trifling ones, certainly; and to these may be added a want of heart, very unusual in a girl of such tender age, and which is perhaps the worst symptom in her character. It has been frequently and strongly exemplified in her conduct to those nearest her person. Previously to the anti-Christina revolution of 1840, the Marquesa de Santa Cruz was her governess, and to her the young Queen appeared much attached. But when the Marchioness left Spain in the suite of the Queen-mother, Isabel never made an enquiry after her, receiving Madame Mina with just the same degree of apparent affection that she had shown to her preceding governess. Whilst Espartero was Regent, she professed unbounded attachment to him, insisted having the portrait of her "*caro amigo*" hung in her room, and seemed proud of showing it to all her

visitors. The wheel went round; Narvaez was at Madrid, and the Duke of Victoria a refugee on board the Malabar. The Señora de Mina was dismissed, and her royal pupil took leave of her with the same absence of feeling that she had shown when separated from the Marchioness of Santa Cruz:—

"'Since you are leaving me,' she said, 'I must make you a present.' And away she ran to take down the portrait of her very 'dear friend' Espartero, which precious relic she handed over to her outgoing *Aya*, saying 'Keep this portrait, señora; it will be better in your possession than mine!'"

Taken to a bull-fight, her youthful majesty of Spain was delighted beyond measure, enjoying the sufferings of maddened bulls and gored horses with as much zest as could have been shown by her illustrious and respectable father. Unfortunately, *auto-da-fés* are out of date, or they might serve to vary her pastimes. As it is, she is obliged to fill up her leisure by the consumption of confectionery, of which she has a constant and abundant supply on hand. "This pastry-cook museum, which extends over every apartment of the palace, contains some most interesting specimens—the *tortas*, or tarts, of Moron, the most celebrated in Spain; the *panes pintados*, or painted buns, of Salamanca; the *Paschal ojalores*, or Carnival and Easter dainties; the hard *turrones* of Alicant, composed of almonds, nut-kernels, filberts, and roasted chestnuts, intermixed with honey and sugar; *dulces* of cocoa-nut frosted with sugar; roasted almonds; *avellanas*, a peculiarly nice sort of filbert, whole and in powder; *alfajor*, or spiced bread; the delicious cheese called *jijona*; pomegranate jelly; *blando de huévos*, or sweetened yolks of eggs," &c. &c. &c. When in a good humour, she makes presents of these delicacies to the persons about her; and the degree of favour in which her courtiers stand, is to be estimated by the amount of cakes and sugar-sticks bestowed upon them. No place is secure from the invasion of these sweets; even in the council-chamber, while dispatching business with the ministers, she is surrounded by them, "and the confection of decrees, and discussion of dainties, proceed *pari passu*." [Pg 599]

The abundance of the comfits and the badness of the counsellors by which the poor child is environed, menace grievous injury both to mind and body, heart and stomach. A puppet in the hands of factions, living from her earliest childhood in an atmosphere of intrigue and falsehood,—the usual atmosphere of Spanish courts and camarillas, how was she to escape the contagion? Her education seems also to have been grievously neglected. When Arguelles was her governor, she was indocile and refractory; under the care of Olózaga she only remained three months. Her female instructors, with the exception of the Countess of Mina, have been women of equivocal reputation, seeking to advance themselves and their friends, and teaching their pupil few lessons but those of dissimulation. To aggravate the evil, during the three years of Christina's exile, that princess was allowed to be in constant correspondence with her daughter, and of course lost no opportunity of inspiring her with a dislike of her own political enemies, the Progresistas. These latter, however, being in power, and about the person of the young Queen, she was obliged at least to *appear* friendly with them, and was thus "taught to be false and artful by the force of circumstances, and trained by events to deceit."

The chapter headed "Narvaez" is extremely interesting, giving graphic sketches of one of the most remarkable of living Spaniards. In Narvaez we find the faults and the virtues of the soldier of fortune; prompt decision, great energy and determination, on the one hand—cruelty, impolicy, and violence, on the other. His character has made him popular with a portion of the army, and over the officers, in particular, he exercises great influence. His severities, however, especially his shooting eight men the autumn before last, for demanding what had been solemnly promised them, permission to quit the service, have lost him many adherents, and made him numerous enemies in the ranks. But his deadly foes, and those from whom he has the most to fear, are the Ex-National Guards of Madrid. Their hatred of him is unlimited, and savage beyond conception, founded upon various causes, any one of which is, with Spaniards, sufficient to account for it. Their confidence betrayed, their arms taken from them, themselves recklessly sabred and bayoneted when assembled for the most peaceable purposes—these and many other injuries will never be forgotten or forgiven by the Madrileños. We in England are now so accustomed to hear of bloodshedding and outrage in the Peninsula, that we have began to consider it almost as a matter of course, and scarcely accord a moment's attention to the horrors of to-day, which are no worse than those of yesterday, and may probably be surpassed by those of to-morrow. Yet, if we except a portion of the period of Espartero's rule, there are no three months in the history of Spain for the last ten years, which would not, if transplanted into the annals of any other country, form an era of bloodshed. Since the advent of Narvaez to power, although the vigour of his government has prevented civil war and checked insurrection, that has only been accomplished by a system of despotic cruelty worthy of the days of Ferdinand the Well-beloved. Countless instances may be adduced in support of this assertion. Executions, like that of Zurbano and his family, have been defended by the argument, that the sufferers were rebels against the established government of the country, and as such deserved the fate they met. Rather a flimsy argument, it appears to us, in a country in which revolution flourishes as an evergreen plant. How is it to be decided which is the rightful governor, and which the usurper? who shall say whether those in power are there by right as well as might; or whether they are merely successful rebels, banditti on a large scale, who have seized upon place and power with as much justice, and by the same violent means, as highwaymen of inferior grade possess themselves of the purses of travellers? But even if we

concede this point, and admit that whoever holds the reins, though but from yesterday, and [Pg 600]
with a bloodstained hand, is justified in slaughtering by wholesale all who show a disposition to drag him down again, it will still be impossible to palliate the treacherous and tyrannical proceedings of Narvaez. The inhabitants of Madrid, lured out of their houses by the bait of some joyous festival, the streets hung with banners and strewed with flowers, the fountains playing wine and milk—on all sides rejoicings and festivity; the *insouciant* light-hearted Castilians forgetting for a while the misfortunes of their country, and giving themselves up to the unrestrained enjoyment of the moment. But there are those amongst them who will soon trouble their pleasures; agents of their rulers, tutored to excite them to some apparently rebellious demonstration. A shout or two, interpreted as indicative of disaffection, and caught up by an excitable mob; and immediately battalions appear upon the *plaza*, dragoons gallop out of the side streets, bayonets are lowered and sabres bared, and amidst the clatter of the charge, the screams of women and the oaths of men, the festal garlands are trodden under foot, and blood reddens the pavement. "On many a *fiesta*, or day of saints," says our author, "which Spain regards as of special holiness, plots and snares were thickly strewn around the people's footsteps; murder lurked beneath the wreath of festivity, and the day which began in prayer, concluded with mourning."

During the three days' rejoicings on occasion of the Queen's majority, scenes of this sort occurred. "They invited us to a ball," said the people in the true Madrileño spirit—"they invited us to a ball, and we had to assist at a funeral." The object sought to be obtained by such barbarous means, was the intimidation of the populace, and the deterring of revolutionists and progresistas. The suppression of the national guard produced another *alboroto*, or disturbance. A crowd assembled, and moved through the streets, giving *vivas* for the constitutional Queen, and *mueras* for the ministers and the traitors. Narvaez asked no better chance than this. Out turned the palace guard, composed of strong bodies of infantry and cavalry, and, without a moment's delay, charged the mob, which, although principally composed of national guardsmen, was unarmed, save with a few bayonets and knives. In all the adjacent streets, people were running for their lives; and the congregations, which were then just leaving mass—for this occurred on a Sabbath morning —recoiled for safety into the churches.

As a politician, Narvaez is unquestionably an obstinate and unscrupulous dunce, who feels his incompetency to rule by any means but the sword, and has substituted a tyrannical dictatorship supported by bayonets, for the legal and constitutional government of Spain. In a military point of view he is more respectable, although even as a general his exploits have been few and little heard of. In his brief campaign against the Esparterists, he had no opportunity of showing more than activity and daring; since at the very moment when he was on the point of measuring strength and generalship with Seoane and Zurbano at Torrejon de Ardos, the troops under those two leaders came over to him. During the War of Succession, he gave proof of some skill as an organizer of armies of reserve, and even fought a gallant and successful battle with Gomez at Majaceite in Andalusia, in which, if one might believe the lying Spanish bulletins, he nearly swept the Carlists from the face of the earth. There is no doubt he mauled them a little; but neither that nor the various other decisive overthrows recorded by gazettes, prevented Gomez from returning to the Basque provinces with a considerable force at his back, and an immense amount of booty.

It will be contrary to all precedent in modern Spanish history, if Narvaez's career terminates otherwise than by a violent death, met, in all probability, at the hands of the populace, or at those of some disgusted adherents of his own. The deaths of Carlos de España, slain by his own escort on his way to the French frontier; of Moreno—the butcher of Torrijos, Lopez Pinto, Florez Calderon, and fifty other martyrs—himself murdered in the wood of Vera by [Pg 601]
the bandit followers of the savage priest Echeverria; these, and fifty similar instances, are events but of yesterday. It is still fresh in the memory of the Madrileños how they pursued the stern Quesada to his place of refuge—Quesada who, alone and by his single energy, had cleared the streets of an excited populace, and stopped a revolution for one whole day; how they dragged him forth, piecemeal it may almost be said, and with his severed fingers stirred the bowl in which they toasted the downfall of tyrants. Between Quesada and Narvaez there is more than one point of resemblance. Their deaths, also, may be alike.

The sketches of Spanish political men, the various party leaders and conspicuous senators of the day, are done with much spirit and cleverness, and give an excellent idea of the fickle inconsistency, the showy talent but want of steadiness of purpose, that characterize most of the notable Peninsular politicians. One is much accustomed to receive information upon such subjects with doubt and mistrust, it being so often tinctured with the violent party spirit which, in Spain, distorts men's views and opinions; and the book before us being published anonymously, we are prevented from judging, by circumstances of position or others, to which side or men, if to any, the author is likely to incline. But we think we discern in him the wish to be impartial, and are therefore disposed to place unusual confidence in his statements; the more so as he represents no character as entirely bad, but, while laying on the lash for their faults, does not forget to give them credit for their good qualities. According to his account, Lopez is the most brilliantly eloquent, and, at the same time, one of the most incorrupt members of the Spanish Chambers; one of the very few Spaniards who have held office without advantage to themselves.

"It is a most creditable distinction in Spain, where office is sought almost

> exclusively for its emoluments, that Lopez has been at three different times a minister of the crown, and retired thrice from that government, of which he was always the most influential member, without any permanent office, or title, or decoration; without even a cross or a riband to display upon his breast, in a country where those favours are most extensively distributed. Even from the premiership of the provisional government, by which high titles and orders were lavishly disseminated amongst the leading instruments of a successful national movement, and from the side of a Queen whose majority had been just proclaimed, he withdrew into private life in a strictly private capacity, without a charge upon the pension list for himself or any of his connexions—without an inscription in the court list or a *real* of the public money. Five hundred different lucrative and permanent offices were at his disposal, but he preferred a practising lawyer's independence."

This would be rare praise in any country; in Spain it must be almost without parallel. In striking contrast stands the character of Don Luis Gonzalez Bravo, or Brabo, as he affects to write himself, who succeeded Olózaga in the premiership, for which post he united some of the most singular disqualifications ever possessed by a prime minister.

Spain, while imitating the fashions of England and France in dress and suchlike petty particulars, has also thought proper to copy certain political peculiarities of those two countries. Thus, while La Jeune France vapours in long-bearded and belligerent splendour, under the special patronage of a Joinville, and Young England peeps out, gentlemanly and dignified, from beneath the ægis of a less high-born, but, in other respects, equally distinguished character, La Joven España, emulous of their bright example, ranges itself under the patronage of the disreputable editor of a scurrilous journal. It is difficult for us in England to imagine the state of things existing in a country where such a person can head any party or section, however insignificant, in the legislative assembly, and still more difficult to conceive any amount of satirical and vituperative talent placing within his grasp the portfolio of prime minister.

Bravo's first introduction to public notice, was as member of the "*Trueno*," or Thunder Club —a society that amused itself, of evenings, by molesting peaceable citizens as they returned [Pg 602] home to their families, thrashing the *serenos* or watchmen, and suchlike intellectual and dignified diversion. He got seriously wounded by a pistol-shot on one of these occasions, and we next find him editing the Guirigay or "Slang," a paper remarkable for its personal and unscrupulous tone. For some time its attacks were directed against Christina, to whose expulsion from Spain it is said to have contributed, so great is the influence of newspaper violence in the Peninsula. During the Queen-Dowager's three years' exile, however, Bravo wrote himself round from a violent *exaltado progresista*, or Radical, into a very decided *moderado*, or Conservative, in which latter character he entered office. Taxed with his renegade conduct, his defence was a most impudent one, highly characteristic of the man. "*No es ridiculo*," said he, "*estar para siempre el mismo?*" Is it not ridiculous to be always the same?

But though he managed to get on while in opposition—and even, by a certain amount of impassioned energy and satirical *verve*, to place himself at the head of a party of young members, who, although not exceeding fifty in number, turned the scale in many parliamentary contests—his incapacity became glaringly apparent as soon as he took office.

> "The prime minister, when he should have been writing sage decrees, was scribbling scurrilous paragraphs; from his portfolio peeped forth old numbers of 'The Slang' and his official robes could not hide his harlequin's jacket. '*Vistan me, dijo Sancho, como quisieren qui de cualquier manera que vaya vestido sere Sancho Panza.*' Let them dress me up as they will, quoth Sancho, however I am dressed I shall still be Sancho Panza."

Bravo, however, did as well as another to be the tool of Narvaez, and moreover he was found pliant, which doubtless prevented his being kicked out of office as soon as he got into it. Of course he lost no time in taking care of himself and his friends. His father, who had been dismissed from a government employment for malversation, received the appointment of under-secretary to the Treasury; his wife's brother, a hanger-on at one of the theatres, was made state-groom to the Queen; while a number of other equivocal characters were appointed to the diplomatic corps, and half the political chiefs and public employés in Spain were dismissed to make room for the new premier's friends, including a considerable number of newspaper scribblers. The power of the newspaper press in Spain is enormous, and nearly all the leading politicians in Madrid either are, or have been, editors or proprietors of some one of the principal journals.

The manners and peculiarities of the lower orders in Spain offer a fertile theme, differing as they do *in toto* from those of the corresponding classes in any other country. They have furnished our author with materials for some amusing chapters. The description of a roadside *venta*, or inn, and its frequenters, is capital, and reminds us of some of Lewis's admirable pencillings of Spanish life and interiors. The amalgamation of grades of society, which in most countries would be kept carefully distinct, but in the Peninsula hobnob together in perfect good fellowship, the mixture of muleteers and alcaldes, priests and banditti, smugglers and custom-house officers, all sitting in the same smoky room, dipping

in the same dish, exchanging the latest intelligence, local and political, forms a strange but a characteristic and perfectly true picture. *Apropos* of smugglers, here is a small statement worthy the notice of that sensible party in Spain which opposes the introduction of foreign manufactures upon payment of a reasonable duty.

> "Spain is, of all European countries, the most helplessly exposed to contrabandist operations. With an ill-paid and sometimes ragged army, and with revenue officers directly exposed to temptation by inadequate salaries, she has 500 miles of Portuguese frontier and nearly 300 of Pyrenean; and with a fleet crumbled into ruins, and no longer of the slightest efficacy, she has 400 miles of Cantabrian and 700 of Mediterranean coast. Four hundred thousand smugglers are constantly engaged in demolishing her absurd fiscal laws, and some 1,600,000 pounds weight of cotton goods alone, are every year illicitly imported."

But things in Spain are now rapidly approaching that happy state when it will become quite [Pg 603] unnecessary for the gentlemen contrabandistas to expose their valuable health to the Pyrenean fogs, or their lives in contests with *aduaneros*. The system is becoming each day more beautifully simple; and, strange as it may seem, the direct road for the importation of contraband goods is through the custom-house. "Bribery is here reduced to the old electioneering simplicity; and the tariff of custom-house corruption is arranged with more uniform regularity, and far more perfectly understood, than the tariff of customs' duties—the difference being, that the customs' revenues may not be paid, but the customs' officers must." The due amount of fee being insinuated into the "itching palm" of the revenue officers, your goods pass with all imaginable facility. By the magic of a four, eight, or sixteen dollar bit, as the case may be, a mist settles over the vision of the complaisant official, and either prevents his seeing at all, or else transforms in the most remarkable manner the objects that pass before him. Bales of manufactured goods assume the appearance of sacks of potatoes and onions—nay, those useful products of the soil are sometimes even supposed to be contained in wooden cases and casks, carefully hooped and nailed; "and huge canvass bales are likewise cleared, and reported to be indubitably filled with the said potatoes, the softness of the packages to the touch arising probably from the fact of their being boiled!"

At times, however, by a rare chance, an incorruptible custom-house is discovered; and for that, or some other reason, it is deemed advisable to resort to the old, and certainly more sporting plan, of running the cargoes, which is accomplished in a most systematic and comfortable manner. The smugglers are usually in sufficient number to deter the carabineros from meddling; and if, by chance, the latter *should* interfere, they almost invariably receive a sound thrashing. There are a large number of small Portuguese craft constantly employed in running contraband goods; and the quantity of merchandise introduced from Gibraltar is enormous. The latter town, which, by the census of 1835, had 15,000 inhabitants, contains *only* 3000 cigar manufacturers. As our author says, what a frightful deal they must smoke in Gibraltar!

It is all nonsense talking in mincing terms about English smuggling in Spain. However much our Government might discountenance it, nothing could be done to prevent it, not even if English guarda costas were stationed round the whole eleven hundred miles of Spanish coast. The smuggled goods would then go through Portugal, as many of them do now; or any diminution in the amount of English merchandise imported, would be made up by a corresponding increase in the quantity of French. Why, even the Germans, the respectable, plodding Germans, supply their quota of indifferent calicoes and dull cutlery to the Spanish consumer. The French, who are fond of charging England with being the nation "*egoiste par excellence*," who consults only her own interests, and is equally ready to poison antipodean barbarians with opium, or to violate the principles of fair dealing that ought to exist between friendly countries, by introducing contraband goods in every possible manner—the French, we say, albeit so Pecksniffian in their condolences with Spain, and other nations, which they affect to consider victims to the practices of greedy and treacherous England, are themselves most reckless and determined in their smuggling transactions with their southern neighbours; and the sole circumstance which "rises their dander" is to find English goods obtaining the preference in the Peninsula, as every where else. The constant aim of the French is to irritate Spaniards against England; and the ground upon which they have hitherto gone is, that of representing us, in all our actions, as thinking only of our own advantage. The activity and skill of French political agents were long exerted to bring about a reaction against the friendly feelings which, only a very short time back, were entertained in the Peninsula towards England; and these exertions were at last successful, although we may now hope that Spaniards are again opening their eyes to the deceit that has been practised on them. The friendly offices of France are probably by this time beginning to be [Pg 604] appreciated at their just value; and doubts must be arising in the minds of the rational portion of the Spanish people, whether the "*perfides insulaires*" did not mean and act as honestly by them as the more smooth-tongued and insinuating allies who have reimposed upon them a Christina and a Narvaez.

"Exaggeration in all things," says the English resident, "is the leading vice of Spain. There is not a city in the Peninsula that is not '*muy noble, muy leal, y muy heroica*;' not a corporate body that is not 'most excellent,' or 'most illustrious;' not a military corps that is not renowned, and matchless for its valour; not a ragamuffin in Castile that does not esteem

himself noble, nor a brigand in Andalusia but calls himself a soldier; not a man but is a Don, nor a woman but is a Doña; not a dunce of a doctor but is profoundly learned, nor a scribbling poetaster but is a European celebrity. Where all are first-rate, how shall there be improvement? Where there is no humility, how shall there be acquisition of knowledge? Pangloss might here have found his perfect world."

It is, we fear, this Bobadil vein, this unbounded self-approval and vain-gloriousness, entailing an unwillingness to acknowledge obligations, and an impatience of feeling that they have received any, which renders a large proportion of Spaniards less amicably disposed towards England than we might expect them to be, when we look at the recent history of the two countries, and recall all the friendly offices Spain has received at the hands of England. We have ourselves noticed amongst Spaniards—even amongst men of good average intelligence and education—a fretful sort of feeling whenever the support for which their country has been indebted to Great Britain was alluded to. Some of them go so far as to endeavour to persuade the world, and more especially themselves, that the parts played by English and Spaniards in the Peninsular War were the converse of what is usually supposed—that it was Spanish valour, skill, and generalship that swept Napoleon's armies before them, and drove his best commanders across the Pyrenees. The English were there, certainly; they were very useful, but they played second fiddle to their allies on most occasions. In short, to hear many of the present generation of Spaniards talk, one might suppose that it was their ill-disciplined, badly-officered troops which won the numerous hard-fought fields of the War of Independence.

Another subject of difference, and a far more serious one than these petty ranklings of offended pride and ill-borne obligation, is the slave-trade, and the right of search. Persuade Spaniards, or Frenchmen, or any nation in the world, if you can, that Great Britain added twenty millions to her debt, impoverished her own colonial proprietors, and still goes to a heavy annual expense for the suppression of the slave traffic, with any other view than a very decided one to her own benefit. To Spain, thanks to the wretched administration of her internal resources, the revenue derived from her few remaining colonies is a great object; and in our hostility to the slave-trade, she beholds a direct attack on that source of income. Again, in the present depressed state of Spanish commerce, a large portion of the commercial capital of the country is invested in the slave-trade; and a constant bitter feeling towards the English is consequently kept up amongst the class whose money is thus employed. If they bring one cargo out of three to the Havannah, they have, it is said, a profit on the transaction; but at the same time it is not likely to put the slave-dealing Dons in particularly good humour to hear of the other two having been walked off by British cruisers. On the contrary, they curse the meddling Ingleses, who having, they say, cut off their own tail by emancipating their negroes, now, like the fox in the fable, wish to persuade, or, if necessary, to compel all their neighbours to follow their example.

The English resident is enthusiastic on the subject of slave emancipation, and gives us a lively account of some arguments he maintained on the subject with sundry Gaditano slave-dealers, the result of which was, of course, that each party remained precisely of the same opinion as before. The abstract philanthropy of English legislation on that question cannot be doubted; and it is to be hoped that the course adopted may eventually prove beneficial to humanity, although it seems very doubtful whether such has as yet been the case. Meanwhile, there is small credit given to us for disinterestedness by foreigners, who, in our resolute opposition to the slave-traffic, are determined to see nothing but a wish to harass their commerce, injure their colonies, and insure our dominion of the seas. [Pg 605]

Under the favouring auspices of that poor creature, Leopold O'Donnel, who distinguished himself during the War of Succession by the skill with which he managed to get beaten by the Carlists on nearly every possible occasion, and who now occupies the important post of Governor of Cuba—under his auspices the slave-trade is flourishing with renewed vigour. Slaves, we are told, can now be legally imported into Cuba upon payment of the governor's fee of twenty-five dollars per head, and "*la traite* has seldom, of late years, been more successful than under the rule of this governor." One of the most striking chapters of the book before us is the one on colonial slavery, in which some curious details are given concerning the recent conspiracy of Matanzas. This outbreak, like all others that occur in the Spanish West Indies, was most falsely laid at the door of the English by the whole Spanish press. "It was directed," said they, "by a committee of five members. Placido was president, two of the other four were mulattoes, *and two Englishmen*. This latter circumstance is worthy of note." "As being an utter falsehood," observes our author.

Placido, the mulatto leader of the insurrection, seems to have been a remarkable man, of commanding appearance, great energy of character, and superior intelligence. One of the means he adopted to rouse the coloured population of Cuba against their oppressors, was the writing of revolutionary songs and verses. During the whole of 1843 he was busy laying the foundations of his scheme, and, although his designs were known to thousands, no one was found to betray them. The plot was finally discovered by the conversation of some of the conspirators being overheard. An obscure warning of it, given by a young negress to her master, with whom she was in love, also led to enquiry. The project was for nothing less than the total extermination of the white race, and the formation of a republic after the example of Hayti The leading posts and commands were assigned to the mulattoes, as well during the revolt as in the organized government that was subsequently to be formed. The

Thursday in Passion Week was the day fixed for the outbreak; the signal to be given by the simultaneous burning of the sugar-canes; the watchword, "*La Muerte y la Destruccion*." The domestic servants were in the plot, and were to aid in various ways. "The cooks were to poison their masters, and the caleseros, with their coach-horses, to form a corps of cavalry."

The alarm was not given till the morning of the day on which the conspiracy was to have broken out. Then the arrests began. Five hundred of the conspirators were thrown into the prison of Matanzas, which town was the headquarters of the conspiracy, and gave its name to it. But the negroes finding themselves discovered, and expecting no mercy, resolved at least to glut their vengeance as far as the time would allow them. Overseers were flung into their sugar-boilers, two entire families at Matanzas were poisoned, and other excesses took place. The reprisals exercised were most horrible; two hundred prisoners were immediately butchered, and numerous straggling parties shot down like dogs; some wretched victims were flogged to death to induce them to betray their accomplices. Further outbreaks were the result of these severities. The planters who fell into the hands of the negroes were mercilessly massacred; numerous plantations were burned. The insurrectionary movements were, however, isolated and without organization; the Spaniards succeeded in repressing them, and then, furious and alarmed at the imminence of the peril they had so narrowly escaped, inflicted the most terrible punishment on the unsuccessful mutineers. Eight hundred prisoners had been secured in the Matanzas Jail; of these two hundred were shot without trial, the remainder, for the most part, strangled in their dungeons. The meaning of the Spanish word *Matanzas* is "a place of slaughter," and such, indeed, the town became. [Pg 606] Placido, the chief of the conspiracy, made a tremendous resistance before he was taken. "He fired three pistols, killing or wounding a man at each discharge, and then hacked and hewed away with his sword, speedily making for himself a ring of more than its span, and clearing a space around him as rapidly as an Utreran bull when he rushes into the circus. But a soldier's musket soon brought him to the ground, and bleeding and faint he was flung into the Matanzas carcel."

As the prisoners refused to a man to make disclosures, torture was resorted to. The lash was applied till they confessed or fainted. Most of them yielded, the plot was acknowledged to be of ancient date, and to have Placido at its head.

Placido bore, with the resolution of a stoic, the rude and unsparing stripes with which his broad shoulders and back were speedily covered. Not a groan nor a sigh escaped him; but he fainted away at last from loss of blood, and with such little apparent change, that the executioners continued to flog for some time after he was senseless. He was loosed from the triangles, and tied to a neighbouring stake, after the mummery of a five minutes' court-martial. He was still senseless when bound to the stake—lifeless, for all that his *verdugos* knew to the contrary. Ere he received the fusillade, he recovered from his fainting fit sufficiently to exclaim, in an audible tone. "*Los dias de la esclavitud son contados!*" "The days of slavery are numbered."

A horrible account, but doubtless a correct one. Our author seems to have been in the south of Spain at the time of the Matanzas insurrection, and consequently in the right place to get at the true particulars of the affair.

In the chapters on the Spanish Army, &c., although amusing enough, we do not consider the English resident to have been so successful as in most other parts of his work. We would caution him against believing, or at any rate expecting others to believe, the marvels recorded by Spanish gazettes of Spanish armies and generals—marvels which usually get repeated and magnified to most preposterous dimensions by the *embustero* retailers of such intelligence. We would also warn him against indulging in such enthusiasm as he displays in speaking of General Léon—a very fine fellow undoubtedly, a good soldier and dashing officer, but yet a little overrated in these lines. "In his unexaggerated feats of war, he eclipsed the Homeric heroes, and rivalled the incredible exploits of Charlemagne and his peers. His tremendous lance spread terror and dismay among the enemies of his queen and country, and the glorious inequalities of Crécy and Azincour were revived in the deeds of Léon, witnessed by living men." Revived and considerably eclipsed, we should say, judging from the list of exploits that follows. If our friend the English resident be in any degree acquainted with military matters, he must be aware that the dispersal of an army of eleven thousand infantry, and one thousand horse, by a hundred and fifty hussars, a feat which he attributes to Léon, is an absurdity; and that if such a thing, or any thing like it, did occur, it must have been when the hundred and fifty dragoons were closely backed by some much more numerous force.

The Spanish army, as it existed at the close of the Carlist war, was perhaps in a higher state of discipline and practical usefulness than it had been at any previous period of the present century. Rendered hardy and martial by six years' unremitting warfare; officered, too, for the most part, by men who had something besides title or family interest to recommend them, it only required greater regularity of pay and supplies to prove highly efficient. Gradually reduced by Espartero to about fifty thousand men, its numbers were doubled by a decree of Narvaez, who felt that so small a force was insufficient to support him in his tyrannical rule. At the same time an unprecedented system of conciliation, or of adulation it should rather be said, was adopted by the dictator towards his legions. Espartero had done all in his power, and that the disordered state of Spanish finances allowed him to do, for the comfort and well-being of his army; but he had not thought fit to sacrifice to it all or any

other classes of the state. It had not been necessary for him to do so; *his* government was not based upon fear, nor dependent on bayonets. With Narvaez it was very different. His sole tenure of power was in the fidelity of the army, and this he sought to ensure by every possible means. "The priest may starve and the exclaustrado perish; the last rotten planks of the navy may go to pieces; public monuments may totter for want of conservation or repairs; the civil employé may be pinched, and the very palace pine for its arrears; but money must be found to clothe and feed the army, and maintain it like a prancing charger." The extent to which this courting and propitiation of the soldiery is carried, is almost incredible, and often ridiculous. Allowances of cigars, extra rations of wine upon holidays, boxes and stalls at the theatre provided gratis for the officers upon the Queen's birth-day—these and similar indulgences are the sops thrown by Narvaez to his capricious cohorts. But, with all his pains, he obtains no feeling of security. He is well aware that no man in Spain has so many enemies, not mere ill-wishers, but deadly foes thirsting for his blood; he knows that the National Guards of Madrid have sworn his destruction; and he cannot even tell how soon he may be turned upon or betrayed by the very army which he takes such trouble to conciliate. They may sell Narvaez, as they sold Espartero, to the highest bidder. [Pg 607]

In a recent number of this Magazine, we took occasion to animadvert on the conceit and presumption of certain tourists who imagine themselves qualified by a flying visit to write their opinions concerning a country and people, thus doing grievous injustice to those they write about, and sadly misleading any credulous portion of the public which may be beguiled into reading and placing confidence in their lucubrations. It has been seen that no such reproach can be addressed to the author of the book we are now noticing, who has moreover performed his labour, which was no light one, in a conscientious and creditable manner, without prejudice, favour, or affection. We scarcely think he does full justice to Espartero, whom we must still persist in considering the most estimable and respectable of the Spanish public men of the day. He may not possess the glowing and fascinating eloquence of an Olózaga, nor the fierce energy of a Narvaez; but neither has he the versatile insincerity of the former, nor the unscrupulous and brutal recklessness of the latter. He has not, like Olózaga, according to the uncontradicted testimony of Roca de Togores in the Cortes, "broken faith with all parties;" nor did he ever, like Narvaez, cause his dragoons to charge inoffensive crowds, assembled by invitation of their rulers to celebrate saint-days or national festivals.

Our author's general remarks on the state of Spain, of its people and prospects, are acute and sensible; and they also coincide in great measure with as much as has been said on those subjects by one or two recent and intelligent travellers in the Peninsula. In short, setting aside a slight occasional tendency to high colouring, more calculated, however, to amuse than mislead, the principal fault we have to find with the book is its title. After the deluges of Mysteries and Revelations that has been poured upon the shoulders of the reading public during the last two or three years, commencing with the rhapsodies of Sue and company, and continued through countless varieties by writers of every degree on both sides the Channel, we really cannot think that such a title as "Revelations" of any thing will tend to prepossess the public in favour of the work it designates. One frequently sees books of very small merit, or of none at all, ushered into the world under some highly enticing name, conveying the idea that the author has expended at his bantling's christening the whole of his diminutive modicum of talent. Here, however, is an example of the opposite mode of proceeding; a title that we must decidedly condemn, given to a book of much interest and utility—a book which, from its liveliness, and the amount of anecdote and light matter it contains, will be read by many who would shrink from the perusal of a mere dry statistical work.

ÆSTHETICS OF DRESS. [Pg 608]

No. III.

The Cut of a Coat and the Good of a Gown.

So you have got a decent coat on your back, gentle reader! Well, we congratulate you upon this fortunate circumstance, this honourable badge of æsthetic distinction; but do not be too proud of it—there are coats, and coats—*non ex quovis ligno fit Mercurius*, you know. Wait a bit till we turn you round, and trot you out to see the cut of the thing, ere we admit you to be a well-dressed, or even a sensibly-dressed man. But before we enter into controversy on the superficial appearance of man in the nineteenth century, let us hasten to recall attention to our definition of good taste in all matters of dress—utility first and ornament afterwards, but ornament always subservient to utility—and let us also appease the indignation of the tailoring world by affirming, that in one grand class of coats—we will specify which by and by—the public seem to have arrived at a tolerably reasonable result. There certainly are some men, many men indeed, in the world who may be said to be sensibly dressed. 'Tis a

phenomenon when you come to think about it; but the fluctuations of taste in this matter have, for the time being, arrived at a normal state. After the variations of centuries, the vagaries of taste in male attire, (which may be measured, for their ups and downs, by curves, with quite as much reason as the rise and fall in prices of corn, and various other things that the members of statistical societies delight in portraying)—these variations, in their endless wrigglings and windings, have come back in more cases than one to their points of departure, and there form *nodi*, points of reflection, contrary flexure, &c. At all these points the curve of taste may be assumed to be stationary. Pray, excuse us, good reader, for being scientific—do not call it obscure—on so luminous a point. But is not the mystery of tailoring become a science? Is not the ninth part of a man now called an *artiste*? Have we not regular treatises published, with no end of diagrams, on the art of self-measurement? Just look at the advertisements at the back of your Sunday newspaper, or in the fly-leaves of your last Maga. And, after all, where is the harm? "The noblest study of mankind is man!" However, it is a learned point, on which a world of talk may be got up; so we will waive it for the moment, to be resumed in the due course of our ruminations.

Now, there is no man in his sober senses who will not admit that a European, but especially a Briton, requires one or more coats to protect him from the varying influences of climate. Whether we suppose him muffled up in the skins of the *urus* and the wolf of the old Hercynian forest, or sporting in the soft fabrics woven from the fleeces of Spain and Saxony, no one but a sheer madman, in any parallel north of the 40th, ever thought of dispensing altogether with a stout upper garment. It has been a necessary thing, rammed into every man's head by Jack Frost, Dan Sol, and other atmospheric genii, that he should provide himself with suitable upper toggery; and hence we infer that public and private attention has been directed as much to coats and cloaks as to any other two things that can be mentioned, next after meat and drink. No wonder, then, that men have differed in their tastes as to the manner in which they should best adorn their beloved persons. No wonder that caprice and dandyism have prevailed in all ages of the modern world. There is plenty of room, and even of occasion, for such fickleness. Man is an imitative animal, and the clothing propensities of any one European people have always run the round of the rest of the family. On the whole, we think that men have been more reasonable about their coats than they have about their hats. They have been absurd enough, it is true, but their are grades of absurdity; and, we fancy, the comfort of the wearer has been of more direct influence in keeping up some degree of good sense concerning the covering of his corporeal trunk, than it has in protecting and adorning his head. Not that we intend going into a long history about coats—excuse the pun, we are not fond of long *tales*—we will rather be quick in giving our opinion as to the best manner of settling the *vexata quæstio* of the clothing system. [Pg 609]

Our modern coats, those *chefs-d'œuvre* of Stulz and Co., are to be traced back by their pedigree to about the middle of the seventeenth century; while our paletots, wrappers, or whatever else you like to call them, may lay claim to a higher antiquity by three hundred years. In the brilliant courts of Louis XIII., Philip IV., and Charles I., the costume had changed from the tight jacket or vest of the sixteenth century, to the open and somewhat *négligé*, though picturesque jerkin, so familiar to the lovers of Rubens and Vandyke. Over the linen integuments of his body, a gentleman in those days wore only one upper permanent garment, the jerkin or vest in question: the sleeves were loose and rather short; the waist was not pinched in; the cut was rather straight; the length extended only to the loins, and abundance of fine linen and lace was displayed. Over this garment, which was very plain, was worn a small cloak, more or less ornamented, in the hall or the hunting field; but in the tented camp, the cuirass was buckled on, and the jerkin appeared below, covering the tops of the cuissards or thigh-pieces. There is many a charming Vandyke portraying our ancestors in this elegant dress; and even the furious fanaticism of the Cromwellian times allowed the fashion to remain in England, till the taste of the French court underwent a change, and modified the habiliments of nearly all civilized Europe. To what cause we do not know, but probably to some degree of additional comfort required by Louis XIV. and his courtiers in their earlier campaigns—is to be ascribed the lengthening of the skirts of the jerkin, and the corresponding increase in the dimensions of the cloak, which we find to have taken place soon after 1660. The portraits of Mignard, and the battle-pieces of Vandermeulen, all show us the change that was then going on at the court of Versailles: we find the form of the dress stiffening, the sleeves lengthening, pockets either yawning wide, or covered under deep lapels, the cuffs turned up halfway to the elbow, and a glorious display of gold lace and ribands, that must have made a fine gentleman of those palmy days glitter with the colours of the rainbow. To the easy and languid elegance of the Spanish costume, had succeeded a certain degree of military stiffness and precision among the French beaux: all Europe was at that time lost in admiration of the Grand Monarque and his brilliant court; and their fashions were adopted as the universal rule of taste. It was this stiff coat of Louis XIV. that was the direct progenitor of two degenerate, yet widely differing, sons—the *habit* or coat, and the frock or *surtout* of the present day. Degenerate descendants truly! Who that ever saw the rustling, heavy, and almost self-supporting coat of Charles II., could have imagined that the plain, close-fitting, and supple frock, or the be-clipped and almost evanescent *habit paré* of the nineteenth century, were to spring from them as types? Scarcely less wide is the difference between the plate armour of an old English baron, and the simple cuirass of a covenanter!

Hitherto a man of fashion had worn only one coat; but, towards the end of Louis XIV.'s reign, was introduced the superfluous luxury of a second and thinner under-covering, universally

known in France as a *veste*, but in England corrupted into a waistcoat, or rather, from its general inutility, a *waste*-coat. This kind of garment grew in importance throughout the eighteenth century; and, like its neighbours the coats-proper, indulged in enormous lapels, and revelled in all the luxury of lace and brocade. The beaux of the First and Second George's times, knew right well how to stiffen out the skirts of their coats; how to dispense with the comfort of a collar; how to have buttons more than they would ever be patient enough to fasten; and how to have button-holes, or rather button-slits, six inches long, cut [Pg 610] into the rich velvets and silks of their garments. They were grand, solemn times those! There was no such thing as a man taking liberties with his toilet; it was a serious piece of business to dress properly; and it must have been a matter of no small difficulty to keep a coat clean and decent. We strongly suspect, notwithstanding those flattering rogues the limners, that our great-great-grandfathers had to put up with a vast lot of dirt and discomfort; and that their coats, so expensive to purchase, must have been in no very enviable condition by the time they were left off. Fine days those for a valet-de-chambre! An honest fellow had then some chance of getting a penny out of the Israelitish dealers; and my lord's gentleman might entertain a reasonable prospect of retiring upon his means, long before reaching his grand climacteric. But events marched onwards. The coat, originally intended to be buttoned all the way down—and Louis XIV. actually did wear it buttoned below the ventricular curve—was gradually allowed to flaunt away in an open, dissolute manner, and to display the radiant glories of the vest. Men then came to ask themselves that momentous question, What is the use of such large skirts to our coats, if we do not employ them? And so they took the liberty, some of buttoning them back, others of cutting off a good large corner. The tailors found their account in this. Coats kept up at a proportionally equivalent price; but the profits of the drapers were much diminished, and by and by dwindled to a mere nothing. It was from that fatal period when the waistcoat wheedled itself into fashion, that the glory of the coat began to set; and, when once the skirt came to be retrenched, the majesty of the coat was gone for ever. Dear old Sir Roger de Coverley! gentle Will Honeycombe! ye were the last that knew how to unite the graces and the dignity of these two discordant garments: from your times, down to those of poor Beau Brummell, coats and waistcoats have degenerated through all degrees of folly, even to the verge of stark staring madness!

The noble mantle, and the solemn cloak, its successor, and the comfortable roquelaire, its grandson, and the old, farmer-like great-coat, its *arrière-petit-fils*, and the pilot-coat, the great-coat's brother that ran away from home and went to sea, and the paletot, a foreign bastard that could not prove who its father was, nor even tell how it came by its name, and the wrapper, the paletot's cousin, a regular commercial gent—such is the genealogy of that other family of garments which we cherish as our household gods. But, as we hinted above, we can hunt up the descent of some of these articles to times far removed—(the mantle, we know, came to us from the Romans)—we allude to the upper coat, or wrapper; for we find that a two-sleeved cloak, with enormously long sleeves, by the way, and a most surprisingly scanty allowance of body, was worn by the dandies in the days of the rival Roses; and, to go still further back, we have seen a contemporary portrait of that glorious old fellow Chaucer, clad in a grey wrapper that might have been made in St James's Street, A.D. 1845. If the paletot and the wrapper wish to prove any claims to gentle birth, they cannot do better than refer their wearers to the father of English poets. He was a man of first-rate taste, you may depend upon it.

With all these changes—and we do not intend to blacken our fathers' memories for having made them—what have we arrived at in this point of dress? What are the conveniences of our present garments? in what are they useful? in what are they beautiful? in what do they need to be improved? To begin at the top of the tree—the modern *habit-de-cour*: coat for coat of the dress kind, (military coats are, for the present, out of the question,) this is the most useful, and the most becoming, of any now worn. People are inclined to ridicule this coat, not so much on its own account as for the foolish trappings with which it is commonly accompanied; but we assert that, in its form, its dimensions, and in its suitableness of purpose, it is far superior to what is vulgarly called a dress-coat. The curve of the fronts, and the still somewhat ample sweep of the skirt, the plainness of the collar, and the absence of all pretension in its composition—above all, the total absence of any useless, unmeaning [Pg 611] ornament, such as sham pocket-flaps, &c.—all these qualities give it a claim to superiority. If the opinions of the extremes of mankind be sometimes right, as opposed to those of the majority, then the form of that coat, which is worn alike by the courtier and the Quaker, must have some large share of innate merit.

Nothing of this kind can be said of the common short, or dress coat. This most silly and unmeaning habiliment possesses neither dignity nor beauty to entitle it to public favour. It is useless on the person of a youth, and undignified when worn by a man—an elderly person looks absurd in it, and to nobody is it in reality becoming. What is the good of the scanty skirts, that barely admit of a pocket being made in their folds? They add no symmetry nor grace to the person—they furnish little accommodation to the wearer. What is the good of the rolling lapel in the front, and of the collar never intended to be turned up? This coat is only a debased and withered skeleton of the original garment of the seventeenth century, deprived of all the qualities that recommended its type for general adoption; it has neither warmth nor comfort on its side, and it cannot stand the scrutiny of elegance for a moment. It may be a difficult thing for a tailor to make, but that is all; and the sooner that men emancipate themselves from the thraldom of its sway the better. If an open coat is to be

adhered to, the old *habit-de-cour* is the thing; utility and ornament there make a much nearer approach to each other, and for comfort there is no doubt about the matter. We object, however, to the idea of an open coat on the score of ornament, though we admit some of its claims to utility. Two surfaces of decoration on the human body are absurd; they distract the attention, and often, by the incongruous opposition of colour and substance, produce a most disagreeable effect. Without wishing to hurt the feelings of Young England—or, as some facetious wag or other has called him, Little Britain—we declare our dissent, *in toto*, from the dangerous heresy of the white waistcoat with the black coat. 'Tis a most unnatural conjunction. If the colour of the under-garment were only red instead of white, we should suspect some secret connexion with the old woman in scarlet, *où vous savez*; as it is, we set it down to the account of her friend in black, and we launch against it our æsthetic anathema. True, it makes a man look clean; but cannot a gentleman enjoy the reputation of cleanliness without turning himself into a magpie? Carry the point out a little further—to its ultimate results, in fact—and picture to yourself Albion junior, in a black coat lined with white silk, a white waistcoat, white cravat, black unmentionables, and white silk stockings—each good and legitimate articles of dress in their way—what a figure! No! turn rather to one of those splendid old canvasses of Velasquez. Look at the great Duque de Olivarez, the finest gentleman in Europe; behold him in black velvet and black silk from the chin to the toe—no white but his lace collar—all black except this and his face and hands! There is no effort at display in his person, no attempt to attract attention by a glaring contrast; he knew that his looks proclaimed him a gentleman, and there he stands in quiet dignity, a model of good taste. Philip IV. the same; Charles I. of England, at times, the same. Even the Dutch burgomasters knew how to consult unity of dress, and to harmonize the colours of their vestments. We are not speaking of state-robes, but of the dress worn in society among men of fashion; and we would recommend any one sceptical on the point to compare the evening suits of the middle of the last century with those of the beginning, still more with those of the close of the seventeenth. He will find an immense falling off in good taste. Lord Chesterfield was not half so well-dressed a man as Lord Warwick, nor Lord Warwick as Lord Rochester.

To return, however, to waistcoats. They constitute a class of garments that have fallen into vulgar hands, and are applied to vulgar purposes. Your gents in the city, and your Margate-steamer men, know how to display a yard of velvet or silk to infinite advantage; see how ostentatiously they throw open their coats, and show you half-a-mile of mosaic gold chain [Pg 612] meandering over a *champ fleuri*. They are regular tailors' advertisements, and disgust one by their abuse of cheap decoration. We never see a man in a smart waistcoat but we think of what lies at the back of it—a yard of silk or calico—all the glory of the front negatived, and the garment so mean behind that he dares not show it. Not so the good old sailor who spent his prize-money with honesty of purpose, and, let us add, with real good taste also; he decorated his shattered timbers stem and stern alike—there was no make-believe finery about him, and he was not ashamed to take off his coat before any body! Away, then, with the petty vanity of a waistcoat; away with all false idea of its giving decoration to the *ensemble* of the toilet. We know of nothing in its favour except one single claim on the score of some small utility. To any one living in a variable climate it is of value, as enabling the wearer to modify the temperature of the body. Is the day unusually warm? he can throw open his coat, and preserve that prim neatness of appearance which is required in the present age, but is at variance with the display of fine linen of the Caroline epoch. Or is there a sudden blast of wind from the east, searching his rheumatic limbs to the very bone? he may button his coat over his waistcoat, and he has then a double protection for the tenderest chest. But if thus anxious for the chest, why not for the back also? Why should there be two thicknesses of cloth or stuff over the one, and only a single thickness, with some flimsy calico, over the other? In all this there is an inconsistency. Our ancestors, who wore only one coat at a time, had always a small mantle ready against any change of temperature; and they wore it either appended to the neck, as in the days of James I., or more constantly on the shoulders, as in the time of Cromwell. The main advantage of the waistcoat consists in its being light and permanently worn,—but it should be made of the same stuff throughout, and we think it might well be dispensed with altogether. If Kneller, Lely, Vandyke, and Rubens could visit the earth again for a moment—and they were good judges of what was, or what was not becoming—we have no doubt but they would be unanimous against waistcoats.

We come, therefore, to our last remaining class of coats, and here we halt with a hum of approbation: it would be hard indeed were we to pull the modern dandy to pieces, and leave him no protection against the wintry blast. Yes! the frock or surtout is good! we have little or nothing to say against it,—much in its favour. Utility and elegance are at once seen combined in this garment; it is warm, easy to wear, and comfortable it is of graceful and dignified appearance, and it is becoming, to man at all periods of his life. The frock-coat is nothing more than the ancient tunic opened in front, and made to sit tight upon the upper part of the body: the superior half of it shows the form of the wearer to advantage, and imparts to it a due degree of manly rigidity, while the inferior half partakes of the flowing folds of drapery, and gives warmth and covering down to the very knees. Of all garments that are to have any degree of freedom and looseness about them, the frock-coat is the best: it is good for a man in almost any avocation, and may be made suitable for the common business of life, as well as for the refinements of society. But then it should not be worn open: it should be buttoned upon the breast. Place an officer in his plain closely-buttoned

undress coat by the side of a civilian, with his loose and open frock, and the contrast is so decidedly in favour of the former, that the point, as a matter of taste and effect, will not admit of a dispute. The one is a regular sloven compared with the other. If any thing can be said against this buttoning, it is on the score of inconvenience in civil life:—is a man at his library-table or his office-desk always to be fastened up in buckram? where are we to stow away our watches, our knives, our toothpicks, our loose cash (when we have any—*par parenthèse*)? There is some weight in these objections; for these little articles of comfort cannot be dispensed with; and we have no better answer than to propose small external pockets with lapels, which would not spoil the symmetry of the figure; or else, if you are [Pg 613] obstinate, good reader, and are determined on throwing away your money upon waistcoats—then keep your frock-coat open; but have a waistcoat either of the same colour, or of some respectable hue, and have it made jacket-fashion, as good behind as before. For ourselves, however, we confess we shall prefer

> "That you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,
> Might traverse England safely to and fro,
> An honest man, close-button'd to the chin,—
> Broad-cloth without, and a warm heart within."

Any quantity of ornament that might be deemed requisite, could easily be applied to this kind of coat—so as to make it a fit habiliment for occasions of ceremony: in its present state, it retains the stiffness of its military origin, (for it may be called an invention of the Great Duke's, of him who wore it on the glorious fields of Salamanca and Waterloo, and it came into fashion at the close of the Peninsular war:) but it may be embroidered as much as you please, or its stuff may be varied *ad infinitum*, from Manchester fustian to the finest Genoa velvet. Not that embroidery is always consonant with good taste, when applied to male attire. A plain, dark, close-buttoned coat, whether of cloth or velvet, fastened with a single row of diamond or steel buttons in front, would be far more effective, as an object of good taste, than if its seams were all covered with gold lace.

As for the colour of coats, we do not intend to speak of this till we come to the subject of military costume. We leave it awhile to the taste of the nation,—colours have always served as marks of national differences. We beg leave to subjoin a few words in behalf of a poor little garment that has hardly any grown-up friends to say any thing for it; and which, when it left school, either went into a manufactory, or was sent to sea—we mean the jacket. In warm weather, for a country walk, for a ride, for a game at billiards or cricket, even for shooting, (*experto crede*)—a jacket is a capital contrivance; while for a sail, whether down the Thames or up the Mediterranean, it is indispensable. We do not appreciate the jacket as we ought, or rather we do not remember the good service it did us at Eton and Harrow—when the limbs were free and supple, and when their full activity was called into constant play, who would have thought of a coat? It was only when we began to fancy ourselves men, and to think that our claims to virility lay in the skirts of our coats, that we discarded the jacket. 'Twas an ungrateful proceeding:—school friendships ought not to be broken—and we recommend you, courteous reader, some day or other to lay your dignity aside for a while, and indulge in the innocent freedom of a jacket: you will get through any work you have on hand twice as quickly. The beaux of Queen Elizabeth's and King Jamie's courts wore nothing else but jackets, you know, with their short mantles hanging in the most *dégagé* manner from the shoulders:—and truly we do not see why a man in a well-cut jacket, properly decorated, should not be entitled to as much admiration in his civil capacity, as when he has the honour to hold her Majesty's commission in the Tenth, and avails himself of that privilege to disturb the equanimity of the beauty and fashion of England. Much may be said upon all sides in this matter: the jacket would now be deemed too familiar without a sword and sabretache; the frock might be considered as slovenly; about the *habit-de-cour* there can be no dispute; as for the dress-coat, it ought to be sent to Monmouth Street; waistcoats should be given to your valet. Speedily judge for yourself, tasty reader; but let us have a garment calculated for real use, and real ornament; no pretence, no sham; a fine manly figure, and a covering worthy of it, *voilà la chose essentielle!*

To criticize a gown is always a more pleasing task than to waste one's patience upon a coat; and, independently of this, the æsthetician has to lay aside nearly all terms of reprobation, in alluding to the habiliments of ladies of the present day. Women have never wandered into so many absurdities of form with regard to this main article of dress, as men have; they have been volatile enough in the material, and colour, and ornament of their gowns; but in shape [Pg 614] and cut they have kept much nearer to the golden rule of comfort and utility than the lords of the creation. The period of greatest aberration in this matter may be taken as extending from the latter quarter of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth. During those long years, absurdity and inconvenience seemed to hold paramount sway in the wardrobes of the fair; and to apply the word "taste," in its good sense, to any portion of the female dress, at least in England, is hardly allowable within the limits mentioned. Look at your grandmothers' pictures, or turn over the leaves of any edition of Hogarth's works, and the broadness of the caricature cannot fail to strike you. That women should ever have consented so greatly to travestie the beautiful proportions of their fair frames; that they should ever have so completely lost sight of the main principles of decoration and comeliness, is inconceivable. The mischief all originated in France; and it must have come, in the first instance, from the deformity, either of body or mind, of some crabbed old dowager at Versailles; no young unsophisticated girl would ever of herself have invented the

hoop or the *négligé*. But those times have happily gone by; and after passing through a transition state of minor absurdity—(look to the prints of the *Belle Assemblée* from 1800 to 1815)—we have thrown away all unnatural short waists; we have discarded scanty skirts; stomachers have been sent nearly to the right about; and with the exception of a single opisthodomic folly—to which we do not care to allude more particularly—our better halves, and our fair friends, seem to have entered upon an age of good taste and good sense. The happy change has been brought about partly by some women of good sense consulting their own ideas of utility and simplicity—partly by a return of public taste to the dresses of the middle ages, and also of the times of Charles the First. Ladies have at length become aware, that novelty of form is not essential to beauty of effect—and they have opened their eyes to the truth, that the less they disfigure the proportions of their persons, the more becomingly and the more comfortably will they be clad.

The main divisions of lady's gown—every milliner understands what we mean—are the *corsage* or body, and the *jupe* or skirt. They are as independent of each other as the upper and lower divisions of a wasp—(indeed, some giddy girls have carried the similitude too far, and have been seen to approximate in their lacing contractions to that wonderfully small animal passage)—and these two divisions of the garment are to be formed and ornamented on totally different principles. By the common practice and consent of all womankind, it appears that the lower portion should be loose and flowing; and that the upper should be so conformable to the contour of the body, as to show that contour to the best advantage; these must be taken as the fundamental definitions upon which all laws of female dress are to be tried. And, first of all, of the skirt; if its form is to be loose and flowing, it should be made to derive its beauty from the curves and breaks and folds which drapery, partly suspended, partly at rest on the ground, will afford. It must be ample and symmetrically proportioned; and its material must have sufficient stiffness as well as pliability—drapery always requires a certain volume of material to be effective. The extreme limit of a scanty skirt, and its poor effect, as well as its great inconvenience, may be judged of from the figures and pictures of the old Egyptian priestesses—they look very *statuesque*, and make capital *caryatides* for temples—but they will not bear a comparison with those lovely Athenian virgins, winding round the Parthenon, in their sacred pilgrimage to the shrine of their tutelar goddess. Drapery, then, must be ample, if it is to fall in graceful folds. But drapery, only suspended, will not produce the entire effect desired; it will hang in merely longitudinal lines, whereas one of the most pleasing effects produced by it is caused by those abrupt breaks in a fold, those sudden cuttings off of volutes, which are only to be seen when part of the drapery is in horizontal repose, or rests partially on the ground. Hence short gowns are not so graceful as long ones; they are beautiful at any time, it is true, and when the wearer is seated, produce [Pg 615] somewhat of the effect alluded to; but for a woman to be robed with all the combined influences of grace and dignity, she must allow her dress to trail partially around her. Think upon the short garments of many classes of peasantry, and think of the train of a lady when dressed for court—we speak of their form, not of their substance—it will easily be seen how much dignity is conferred by length. The utility of long skirts is not so easy to be proved as their beauty; but this is only on the score of the difficulty in keeping them clean; as for warmth and comfort, the advantage is quite on their side. Our fair contemporaries, however, seem to have arrived at a reasonable and happy medium upon that point; they never wore better-formed skirts than at the present day. A gown, if properly made, and without any stinting of stuff, and if that stuff have any thing like substance, needs no adventitious aids to give it sufficient amplitude of contour; let our gentle readers take the hint; they will otherwise militate against one of the main laws of good taste. Let them only look at the portraits of their ancestors in the middle of the last century but one—let them look at Hollar's prints, and if they are open to conviction they will agree in what we say.

If the skirt is to be ample, the body should be confined to the natural shape of the human frame; and the more nearly it is so, the more graceful and effective will it become. Do what we will, distort the sleeves and waist as much as we may, we shall never come up to the symmetry of Dame Nature; she is a better milliner than any in Regent Street; and if the ladies would have their corsages made after her pattern in all cases, they would find their clothes fitting better, pinching less, and keeping them much warmer. Women assert—and we are not competent to dispute the point with them—that they need an enveloping support for the body; in fact, that they must have corsets: be it so: there is no harm in the article itself, provided the utility of it can be clearly proved; but there is much harm in it, if, by an abuse of its powers, this same thing is made to distort the body, and to injure the internal organization of the human frame. As far as beauty of form is concerned, whatever intrenches on the proportion of natural shape is intrinsically contradictory to it: let no woman imagine that she has a fine figure, if she can lace herself into a diameter of nine or ten inches; for by so doing, she disturbs the harmony of all the curves—all the lines of beauty, as Hogarth calls them—with which she has been so richly endowed; she fails of her effect, and, instead of beauty, produces only absurdity. Still the corsage of her dress should fit close; and for this to be possible, there must be a well-fitting corset beneath; but it need not pinch or squeeze the least in the world; let it fit close; that is enough. It is no doubt uncommonly convenient for a lusty alderman's wife of forty to reduce herself to the proportions of "fair seventeen;" but she ought to be able to reduce the whole frame in the same ratio; otherwise to pull in at the waist till the idea of suffocation is painfully evident to the most careless beholder, and yet to leave the bust with the symmetry of Minerva Victrix, is a gross and palpable absurdity. Far from being the το χαλον, this is the το χαχον of all female decoration.

And, if the waist should not be metamorphosed into unnatural smallness, so the sleeves should not be puffed out into preternatural enlargement. Those abominable gigot-sleeves, so well named from our old familiar family-joint—they were utter abominations; and those bishop's sleeves—they were foolish caricatures. Ladies are doing much better now: either, in the evening, they trust to nature herself to set off their arms as she pleases, or else, in the morning, they envelope them in a covering that hardly destroys the beauty of their form. This is as it should be: one of the principal characteristics of female grace consists, as any sculptor can tell you, in the narrowness of the shoulders—just as of male dignity, in their breadth. What, then, could ever have made ladies suppose that they were ornamenting themselves by extending the upper portions of their sleeves until they measured full three [Pg 616] feet in a direct transversal line? We are now witnesses of better ideas; the neck, the shoulders, and the arms are allowed to make a continuous series of curves. The corsage is simple in its form, and the only attempt at enrichment is the pendant border of lace, or other material, that gives due relief, without destroying the harmony of the outline.

As for form, then, we congratulate the ladies on having attained and preserved so much excellence in their habiliments. We have only to recommend, that they do not rashly try to innovate upon what they now delight in; or rather, if new ideas are to be introduced, that they control them by a perpetual reference to the form and framework of nature, as their best, indeed their only, guide to what is true and beautiful. Thanks to the manufacturing skill of European nations in general, and of our own more particularly, there is no lack of material for women to choose their dresses from. The loom teems with all kinds of substances; and every requirement of climate, every caprice of fancy, can now be gratified at a reasonable rate. One of the best symptoms of taste amongst Englishwomen is the increasing use of the finer woollen fabrics. They are well suited to the climate, and they are calculated to make graceful habiliments in whatever manner they are employed. But cotton is an immense boon for the mass of the population; and, by contributing to the cleanliness of the lower orders, has been of great value to the health of the community. The fact is, that it is of little consequence what an elegant woman wears, as far as her appearance is concerned. All clothes require, as the French say, to be *bien portés*. An awkward woman will never look well in any thing, however fine. Let ladies consult their own comfort, their own purposes, and the material they hit upon will certainly become them. We have now, too, ample means of decoration: furs, and lace, and ribands, and embroidery, are gradually coming within the grasp of large classes of society; we have to fear rather a deluge of ornament than the opposite; and, if caution is to be used in any direction, it is in this. The true secret of female ornament is, that it should be genuine: no sham flowers; no make-believe lapels; no collars only stitched on to the edge of the gown; no bows that do not untie; no ribands without some positive use; all false ornament should be avoided as the direct contrary to what is tasteful and becoming. If lace is worn, let it be of thread or silk—not of cotton; if fur, let it be from the real animal—not dyed or imitated; if jewels, let them be few but good, and set in real gold—no abominable sham decoration.

And what are we to say about cloaks, and pelisses, and shawls, and the other preservers of gowns, that correspond to the outward comforters of man? They flutter about in shop windows, thick as gnats in a summer sunbeam: many of them are elegant; not a few useful; some are quite loves!—witness the polka-pelisse—others are frumpy and old-fashioned; such as the cloak with a deep cape of ever-to-be-respected maternal memory. But there are two which we single out as simple and unspoiled, and indeed unspoilable, items of dress, which ought to be in fashion as long as women love pretty things. One is the Spanish mantilla; that plain black scarf which forms the sweetest disguisement a woman can put on: by its simplicity, and its obvious utility, it claims our approbation at the first glance. The other is the Indian shawl; that marvellous product of the mountain loom, fit for any climate, for any temperature, for any complexion, and for any purpose; women may rack their inventions for ever, but they never will invent a garment more generally useful, more constantly becoming, than this.

NORTH'S SPECIMENS OF THE BRITISH CRITICS. [Pg 617]

No. IV.

Dryden on Chaucer.

Nothing is gained by attempting to deny or to disguise a known and plain fact, simply because it happens to be a distasteful one—Time has estranged us from Chaucer. Dryden and Pope we read with easy, unearned pleasure. Their speech, their manner of mind, and their facile verse, are of our age, almost of our own day. The two excellent, graceful, and masterly poets belong, both of them, to THIS NEW WORLD. Go back a little, step over an imperceptible line, to the contemporary of Dryden, Milton, and you seem to have overleaped some great chronological boundary; you have transported yourself into THAT OLD WORLD.

Whether the historical date, or the gigantic soul, or the learned art, make the separation, the fact is clear, that the poet of the "Paradise Lost" stands decidedly further off; and, more or less, you must acquire the taste and intelligence of the poem. Why, up to this hour, probably, there are three-fifths of the poem that you have not read; or, if you have read all, and go along with all, you have yourself had experience of the progress, and have felt your capacity of Milton grow and dilate. So has it been with your capacity for Shakspeare, or you are a truant and an idler. To comprehend with delight Milton and Shakspeare as poets, you need, from the beginning, a soul otherwise touched, and gifted for poesy, than Pope claims of you, or Dryden. The great elder masters, being original, require of you springs of poesy welling in your own spirit; while the two latter, imitative artists of luxury, exact from you nothing more, in the way of poetical endowment, than the gusto of ease and luxurious enchantment. To prefer, for some intellectual journey, the smooth wafture of an air-gliding ear—to look with pleasure upon a dance of bright-hued images—to hear more sweetness in Philomela's descant than in a Turkish concert—to be ever so little sensible to the bliss of dreams—ever so little sick of reality, and ever so little glad to be rid of it for an hour—is qualification enough to make you a willing and able reader of verse in the latter school. But if you are to prefer the style of the antecessors, other conditions must come in. It is, then, not a question merely whether you see and love in Imogen the ideal of a wife in love with her husband, or take to the surpassing and inimitable portraiture of the "lost archangel" in Satan; but whether you feel the sweetness of Imogen's soul in the music of her expressions—whether you hear the tones of the Will that not the thunder has quelled, in that voice to which all "the hollow deep of hell resounded." If you do, assuredly you will perceive in yourself that these are discernments of a higher cast, and that place you upon a higher degree when critics on poetry come to be ranked, than when you had nothing better to say for yourself than that your bosom bled at the Elegy on an Unfortunate Young Lady, or that you varied with Alexander to the varying current of the Ode of St Cecilia's Day.

We call Chaucer the Father of our Poetry, or its Morning Star. The poetical memory of the country stretches up to him, and not beyond. The commanding impression which he has made upon the minds of his people dates from his own day. The old poets of England and Scotland constantly and unanimously acknowledge him for their master. Greatest names, Dunbar, Douglas, Spenser, Milton, carry on the tradition of his renown and his reign.

In part he belongs to, and in part he lifts himself out of, his age. The vernacular poetry of reviving Europe took a strong stamp from one principal feature in the manners of the times. The wonderful political institution of Chivalry—turned into a romance in the minds of those in whose persons the thing itself subsisted—raised up a fanciful adoration of women into a law of courtly life; or, at the least, of courtly verse, to which there was nothing answerable [Pg 618] in the annals of the old world. For though the chief and most potent of human passions has never lacked its place at the side of war in the song that spoke of heroes—though two beautiful captives, and a runaway wife bestowed by the Goddess of Beauty, and herself the paragon of beauty to all tongues and ages, have grounded the *Iliad*—though the Scæan gate, from which Hector began to flee his inevitable foe, and where that goddess-born foe himself stooped to destiny, be also remembered for the last parting of a husband and a wife—though Circe and Calypso have hindered homebound Ulysses from the longing arms of Penelope—and Jason, leading the flower of a prior and yet more heroic generation, must first win the heart of Medea before he may attain the Golden Fleece—though the veritable nature of the human being have ever thus, through its strongest passion, imaged itself in its most exquisite mirror, Poetry—yet there did, in reawaking Europe, a new love-poetry arise, distinctively characterised by the omnipotence which it ascribed to the Love-god, legitimating in him an usurped supremacy, and exhibiting, in artificial and wilful excess, that passion which the older poets drew in its powerful but unexaggerated and natural proportions.

Thenceforwards the verse of the South and of the North, and alike the forgotten and the imperishable, all attest the predominancy of the same star. Diamond eyes and ruby lips stir into sound the lute of the Troubadours and the Minnesingers. Famous bearers of either name were knights distinguished in the lists and in the field. And who is it that stole from heaven the immortal fire of genius for Petrarch? Laura. Who is the guide of Dante through Paradise? Beatrice. In our own language, the spirit of love breathes, more than in any other poet, in Spenser. His great poem is one Lay of Love, embodying and associating that idealized, chivalrous, and romantic union of "fierce warres and faithful loves." It hovers above the earth in some region exempt from mortal footing—wars such as never were, loves such as never were—and all—Allegory! One ethereal extravagance! A motto may be taken from him to describe that ascendancy of the love-planet in the poetical sky of renewed Europe. It alludes to the love-freaks of the old Pagan deities upon earth, in which the King of the Gods excelled, as might be supposed, all the others.

> "While thus on earth great Jove these pageants play'd,
> *The winged boy did thrust into his throne*;
> And scoffing thus, unto his mother sayde,
> '*Lo! now the heavens obey to me alone*
> *And take me for their Jove, now Jove to earth is gone*.'"

The pure truth of the poetical inspiration which rests upon Spenser's poems, when compared to the absolute departure from reality apparent in the manners of his heroes and

heroines, and in the physical world which they inhabit, is a phenomenon which may well perplex the philosophical critic. You will hardly dare to refuse to any true poet the self-election of his materials. Grant, therefore, to Spenser knight-errantry—grant him dragons, and enchanters, and enchanted gardens, satyrs, and the goddess Night on her chariot—grant him love as the single purpose of human life—a faëry power, leading with a faëry band his faëry world! But while you accept this Poem as the lawful consummation and ending of that fabulous intellectual system or dream which had subsisted with authority for centuries, it is wonderful to see how, in the very day of Spenser, the STAGE recovers humanity and nature to poetry—recalls poetry to nature and humanity! Shakspeare and Spenser, what contemporaries! The world that *is*, and the world that *is not*, twinned in time and in power!

This exaggeration of an immense natural power, Love—making, one might almost say, man's worship of woman the great religion of the universe, and which was the "amabilis insania" of the new poetry—long exercised an unlimited monarchy in the poetical mind of the reasonable Chaucer. See the longest and most desperate of his Translations—which Tyrwhitt supposes him to have completed, though we have only two fragments—seven thousand [Pg 619] verses in place of twenty-two thousand—the "ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE," otherwise entitled the "Art of Love," "wherein are shewed the helps and furtherances, as also the lets and impediments, that lovers have in their suits." Then comes the work upon which Sir Philip Sydney seems to rest the right of Chaucer to the renown of an excellent poet having the insight of his art—the five long books which celebrate the type of all true lovers, Troilus, and of all false traitresses, Creseide. Then there is "The Legende of GOODE Women," the loving heroines, fabulous and historical, of Lemprière's dictionary. The first name is decisive upon the signification of "*goode*"—Cleopatras, Queene of Egypt—Tisbe of Babylon—Dido, Queene of Carthage—Hipsiphile and Medea, betrayed both by the same "root of false lovers, Duk Jason"—Lucrece of Rome—Ariadne of Athens—Philomen—Phillis—Hypermnestra.

The "Assemblee of Foules" is all for love and allegory. Chaucer has been reading Scipio's dream. Whereon he himself dreams that "Affrican" comes to him, and carries him away into a sort of Love's Paradise. There were trees with leaves "grene as emeraude," a garden full of "blossomed bowis," running waters in which small fishes light, with red fins and silver-bright scales, dart to and fro, flowers of all tinctures, all manner of live creatures, and a concert commingled of stringed instruments, of leaves murmuring to the wind, and of singing-birds. Under a tree, beside a spring, was "Cupide our Lord" forging and filing his arrows—his daughter (*who is she?*) assisting, and tempering them to various effects. A host of allegorical persons are in attendance of course; and there, too, stands a Temple of Venus, described from the Teseida of Boccaccio. But the principal personage whom Chaucer encounters, and the most busily engaged, is the great goddess, NATURE. It is St Valentine's Day, whereon all the birds choose their mates for the coming year. The particular business to which *this* anniversary of the genial Saint is devoted was intelligible, no doubt, to the quick wits of Chaucer's age, if to the dull ones of ours a little perplexing. Nature held in her hand "a formell eagle, of shape the gentillest," benign, goodly, and so full of every virtue, that "Nature herself had blisse to looke on her, and oft her beeke to kisse." The question is, who shall be her mate? Three "tercell eagles" offer themselves, and eagerly plead their claims. The four orders of fowl, those "of ravine," those that feed on insects, the water-fowl, and those that eat seed, are by nature required to elect each a delegate that shall opine on the matter. The birds of prey depute "the tercelet of the faucon." He gives the somewhat startling if otherwise plausible advice, that the worthiest of knighthood, and that has the longest used it, and that is of the greatest estate, and of blood the gentlest, shall be preferred, leaving the decision of those merits to the lady eagle. The goose, on the behalf of the water-fowl, merely advises that he who is rejected shall console himself by choosing another love; which ignominious and anserine suggestion is received by the "gentill foules" with a general laugh. The "turtle-dove," for the seed-eating birds, indignantly protests against this outrageous and impracticable proposal. The cuckoo, for the worm-eaters, provided that he may have his own "make," is willing that the three wooers shall live each solitary and sullen. The "sperhawke," the "gentle tercelet," and the "ermelon," severally reply in high scorn to the goose, to the duck, who seconds the goose, and to the cuckoo. Dame Nature ends the plea by referring the choice to the "formell eagle" herself, who begs a year's respite, which is granted her. The rest, for the day is now well spent, choose their mates—an elect choir sing a roundel in honour of Nature; and at the "shouting" that, when the song was done, the fowls made in flying away, the Poet awoke! Amongst the hard points of this enigmatical love-allegory are, that when the first lover, a "royal tercell," has ended his plea, the "formell eagle" *blushes*! as does afterwards the turtle upon the proposal made of changing an old love for a new, and that the duck swears by his *hat*. Be the specific intent what it may, the general bearing speaks for itself, namely, the unmeasured lifting-up of [Pg 620] Love's supremacy—though we cannot help feeling how much nearer Chaucer was to the riddling days of poetry than we are. Did the old Poet translate from plain English into the language of Birds, and expect us to re-translate? Or are these blushes and this knighthood amongst birds merely regular adjuncts in any fable that attributes to the inferior creation human powers of reason and speech? It is curious that the *rapacious* fowls are presented as excelling in high and delicate sentiment! They are the aristocracy of the birds, plainly; yet an aristocracy described as of "ravine" seems to receive but an equivocal compliment.

The HOUSE OF FAME is in Three Books. The title bespeaks Allegory; and the machinery which justifies the allegory, as usual is a Dream. But the title does not bespeak, what is nevertheless true, that here, too, love steals in. During the entire First Book, the poet

dreams himself to be in the temple of Venus, all graven over with Æneas's history, taken point by point from the Mantuan. The history belongs properly to its place; not because Æneas is the son of Venus, but because the course of events is conducted by Jupiter consonantly to the prayer of Venus. Why the House of Venus takes up a third part of the poem to be devoted to the House of Fame is less apparent. Is the poet crazed with love? and so driven against method to dream perforce of the divinity who rules over his destiny, as she did over her son's? Or does the *fame* conferred by Virgil upon Æneas make it reasonable that the dream should proceed by the House of one goddess to that of the other? Having surveyed the whole, the poet goes out to look in what part of the world he is, when Jupiter's eagle seizes upon him, and carries him up to the city and palace of Fame, seated above the region of tempests, but apparently below the stars, and there sets him down. The Second Book is spent in their conversation during their flight. Some singular inventions occur. Every word spoken on earth, is carried up by natural reverberation to the House of Fame; but, there arrived, puts on the likeness of the wight, in his habit as he lives, that has uttered it. The palace itself stands upon a rock of ice, inscribed with names. Those on the southern face are nearly melted away by the heat of the sun; those on the northern stand sharp and clear. Some of the minstrels—Orpheus of old, and the later Breton Glaskirion, he hears playing yet. The great Epopeists are less agreeably occupied. 'Omer,' and aiding him, 'Dares,' 'Titus,' 'Lolius,' 'Guido' the Colempnis, that is, of Colonna, and English Galfrida, standing high upon a pillar of iron, 'are busie to bear up Troy' upon their shoulders. Virgil, upon a pillar 'of tinned iron clere,' supports 'the fame of pius Æneas.' Near, upon a pillar of iron, 'wrought full sternly,' the 'grete poete, Dan Lucan' bears upon his shoulders the 'fame of Julius and Pompee.' An innumerable company kneel before the goddess herself, beseeching her for renown. She deals out her favours capriciously—to one company of well-deservers, utter silence and oblivion—to another, like meritorious, loud slanders and infamy—to another assembly, with similar claims, golden, immortal praises. A fourth and a fifth company have done good for the pure sake of goodness, and request of her to hide their deeds and their name. To the one set she readily grants their asking. To the other not—but bids her trumpet "Eolus" ring out their works so that all the world may hear, which happens accordingly. Another throng have been sheer idlers on the earth, doers of neither good nor ill. They desire to pass for worthy, wise, good, rich, and in particular for having been favourably regarded by the brightest eyes. The whole of this undeserved reputation is instantaneously granted them. Another troop follow with like desert and with like request. Eolus takes up as bidden his "black clarioun," and blazons their dishonour. A troop of evil-doers ask for good fame. The goddess is not in the humour, and takes no notice of them. The last comers of all are delighters in wickedness for its own sake, and request their due ill fame. Amongst them is "that ilke shrewe that brente the temple of Isidis in Athenes." This is, no doubt, the gentleman who burned the Temple of Diana at Ephesus for that laudable purpose. The goddess is complaisant, and grants them exactly their desire. [Pg 621]

There stands by the first, a second House of Fame of a strange sort. It is built cage-like of twigs, is sixty miles in length, whirls incessantly about, and is full of all imaginable noises—the rumours of all events, private and public, that happen upon earth, including murrains, tempests, and conflagrations. The eagle gets the dreamer in, and he notes the humours of the place. This is most remarkable, that as soon as any one of the innumerable persons, in press, there hears a tiding, he forthwith whispers it with an addition to another, and he, with a further eking, to a third, until in a little while it is known every where, and has attained immeasurable magnitude—as from a spark the fire is kindled that burns down a city. The tidings fly out at windows. A true and a false tiding jostled in their way out, and after some jangling for precedency, agreed to fly together. Since which time, no lie is without some truth, and no truth without some falsehood. An unknown person of great reverence and authority making his appearance, the poet, apparently disturbed with awe, awakes, wonders, and falls to writing his dream.

The criticism of so strange a composition is hardly to be attempted. It shows a bold and free spirit of invention, and some great and poetical conceiving. The wilful, now just, now perverse dispensing of fame, belongs to a mind that has meditated upon the human world. The poem is one of the smaller number, which seems hitherto to stand free from the suspicion of having been taken from other poets. For Chaucer helped himself to every thing worth using that came to hand.

The earlier writings of Chaucer have several marks that belong to the literature of the time.

First, an excessive and critical self-dedication of the writer to the service of Love, this power being for the most part arrayed as a sovereign divinity, now in the person of the classical goddess Venus, and now of her son, the god Cupid. Secondly, an ungovernable propensity to allegorical fiction. The scheme of innumerable poems is merely allegorical. In others, the allegorical vein breaks in from time to time. Thirdly, a Dream was a vehicle much in use for effecting the transit of the fancy from the real to the poetical world. Chaucer has many dreams. Fourthly, interminable delight in expatiating upon the simplest sights and sounds of the natural world. This overflows all Chaucer's earlier poems. In some, he largely describes the scene of adventure—in some, the desire of solace in field and wood leads him into the scene. Fifthly, a truly magnanimous indifference to the flight of time and to the cost of parchment, expressed in the dilatation of a slender matter through an infinite series of verses. You wonder at the facility of writing in the infancy of art. It seems to resemble the exuberant, untiring activity of children, prompted by a vital delight which overflows into the

readiest utterance; and, in proportion to its display, achieving the less that is referable to any purpose of enduring use. Even the admired and elaborately-written *Troilus* and *Creseide* is a great specimen. The action is nearly null; the discoursing of the persons and of the poet endless. It is not, then, simply the facility of the eight-syllabled couplet, as in that interminable *Chaucer's Dreme*, that betrays; there is a dogged purpose of going on for ever.

Of the poems expressly of Love, are, "The Romaunt of the Rose—Troilus and Creseide—The Legende of Goode Women—The Assemblee of Foules—Of Queen Annelida and False Arcita—The Complaint of the Blacke Knight—The Complaint of Mars and Venus—Of the Cuckou and the Nightingale—The Court of Love—Chaucer's Dreme—The Flour and the Leaf—The First Book of the House of Fame"—and, if you choose, the "Boke of the Duchess," which is John of Gaunt's mourning for his lost wife. There must be something like thirty thousand verses, long, short, in couplets or stanzas, which may be said to be dedicated to LOVE!

And of them all, only the four following Poems tread the plain ground—have their footing upon the same earth that we walk—Troilus and Creseide, The Legende of Goode Women, [Pg 622] Queen Annelida and False Arcita, the Complaint of the Blacke Knight. We grant them for human and real, notwithstanding that most of the persons are of a very romantic and apocryphal stamp—because they are not presented in dreams or visions, and are not allegorical creations of beings out of the air, Impersonations of Ideas. They are offered as men and women, downright flesh and blood, and so are to be understood. Nevertheless even here, when Chaucer is nearest home, taking his subject in his own day, and putting his own friend and patron in verse, there is a trick of the riddling faculty, since the Blacke Knight lodging, during the love-month of May, in the greenwood, and bemoaning all day long his hard love-hap, represents, it is presumed, old stout John of Gaunt in love, who might utter his passion, uncertain of requital,

"In groans that thunder love, in sighs of fire;"

but who, most assuredly, did not build himself a forest bower, and annually retire from court and castle, to spend there a lovesick May.

Of absolutely fanciful creations are, as we have seen, the "Assemblee of Foules," and the "Complaint of Mars and Venus," which the poet overhears a fowl singing on St Valentine's Day ere sunrise. "Of the Cuckou and Nightingale:" the poet, between *waking and sleeping*, hears the bird of hate and the bird of music dispute against and for love. When the nightingale takes leave of him, he wakes. "The Court of Love." The poet, at the age of eighteen, is summoned by Mercury to do his obeisance at the Court of Love, "a lite before the Mount of Citheree," called further on Citheron. He is, on this occasion, not asleep at all, but dreams away like any other poet, with his eyes open, in broad daylight.

In Chaucer thus we find every kind of possible allegory. There is the thoroughly *creative* allegory, when thoughts are turned into beings, and impersonated abstract ideas appear as deities, and as attendants on deities. This is the unsubstantial allegory, which has, it must be owned, a different meaning to different climes and times. For example, to the belief of the old Greeks, Aphrodite and Eros, albeit essentially thoughts, had flesh that could be touched, wounded even, and veins, in which for blood ran ichor. In the verses of our old poet and his contemporaries, Venus and Cupid are as active as they were with Homer and Anacreon; only, that now their substance has imperceptibly grown attenuate. So that in the "Assemblee of Foules," for example, these two celestial potentates are upon an equal footing, for subsistency and reality, with the great goddess Dame Nature, who seems to be more of modern than of ancient invention, and with Plesaunce, Arrai, Beautee, Courtesie, Craft, Delite, Gentlenesse, and others enow, whom the poet found in attendance upon the Love-god and his mother. With or without belief, this belongs to all the ages of poetry, from the beginning to the consummation of the world.

Then there is the *disguising* allegory—for by no other appellation can it be described—which may be of a substantial kind. For example, the Black Knight, as we have seen, forlorn in love, builds himself a lodge in the wild-wood, to which he resorts during the month of May, and mourns the livelong day under the green boughs. If the conjecture which Tyrwhitt throws out, but without much insisting upon it, that John of Gaunt, wooing his Duchess Blanche, is here figured, this is a *disguising* allegory of the lowest ideal idealization. The conjecture of Tyrwhitt, whether exact or not, quite agrees to the art of poetical invention in that age.

That old and deeply-rooted species of fable, which ascribes to the inferior animals human mind and manners, was another prevalent allegory. Usually, the picture of humanity so conveyed is of a general nature. But if, as has been guessed, the first and noblest of the Three Tercels that woo the "formell eagle," in the Assemblee of Foules, be the same John of Gaunt wooing the same Blanche, here would be two varieties of allegory—the disguising of particular persons and events, and the veiling of human actions and passions, under the semblance of the inferior kinds—mixed in this part of the poem, which, in as much as it also [Pg 623] introduces wholly ideal personages, would, if the key to the enigma has been truly found, very fully exemplify the allegorizing genius of the old poetry.

Certainly, many of the old poems, unless they are interpreted to allude, in this manner, to particular persons and occurrences, appear to want due meaning, such as this Complaint of the nameless Black Knight, this Wooing of the Three Tercels, and the faithless Hawk whom

Canace hears. We may often feel ourselves justified in presuming an allusion, although in regard to the true import of the allusion it may be that Time has first locked the door, and then thrown the key over the wall.

Of one Poem, to which we have hitherto but alluded, we feel ourselves now called on to give an analysis, both for sake of its own exquisite beauty and surpassing loveliness, and for sake of Dryden's immortal paraphrase—The Floure and the Leaf.

There is in the plan of "The Floure and the Leaf," a peculiarity which is not easily accounted for. In the other poems of Chaucer, which are thrown into the form of an adventure or occurrence personal to the relater, he relates in person his own experience. Here the parts of experiencing, and of relating an adventure, are both transferred to an unknown person of the other sex. It is also remarkable that this difference in the personality of the relater does not appear until the very close of the poem, and then incidentally, one of the imaginary persons addressing the relater as "Daughter." In the adventure, which is simply the witnessing a Vision, there is nothing that might not as well have happened to Chaucer himself as to dame or damsel.

In a sweet season of spring, a lady who, for some cause unknown to herself, cannot sleep, rises at the peep of day, and wanders out into a lofty and pleasant grove, where a slender unworn path, not easily seen, leads her to a fair arbour of elaborate workmanship, and so framed as that the sitter within sees, unseen, whatsoever passes without; adjoining which is a singularly beautiful medlar-tree in full blossom. A goldfinch leaps from bough to bough, eating buds and blossoms his fill, and then sings most 'passing sweetly,' and is answered by an unseen nightingale, in a note 'so merry' that all the wood rang again. Whilst the lady adventuress sits upon the turfed seat listening, a new burst, as if of angelical voices, is heard. The harmony proceeds from "a world of ladies," who march out from a neighbouring grove, clad in richly-jewelled surcoats of white velvet, each wearing on her head a chaplet of green leaves, laurel, or woodbine, or Agnus Castus. They dance and sing soberly, surrounding one who wears on her head a crown of gold, has a branch of Agnus Castus in her hand, excels them all in beauty, appears to be their queen, and sings a roundel having some allusion to the Green Leaf, and advance, dancing and singing, into a meadow fronting the arbour. The song is not given—its name is in half unintelligible French. Now a thundering of trumpets is heard: and innumerable "men of arms" issue from the grove from which the ladies came. Trumpets, kings-of-arms, heralds, and pursuivants clad in white, and wearing chaplets of leaves, ride foremost. Then follow Nine Knights magnificently armed, excepting that on their unhelmed heads are set crowns of laurel. Upon each three henchmen attend, clad in white, with green chaplets, and severally carrying the casque, the shield, and the lance of him they serve. Last, issue a great rout of knights, well-mounted, wearing chaplets, and bearing boughs of oak, laurel, hawthorn, woodbine, and other kinds. They joust gallantly for an hour or more: the laurel-wearers overbearing all opposition. At last, the whole company dismount, and move by two and two towards the ladies, who, at their approach, break off song and dance, and go to meet them. Every lady takes a knight by the hand, and in this fashion they pace towards a fair laurel, of such prodigious amplitude as that a hundred persons might rest at ease under the shadow of its diffused branches. All incline with obeisance to the tree; and then sing and dance around it; ever a lady and a knight going together. All these are, (but as is only afterwards at the close made known to [Pg 624] the spectatress of these occurrences,) as you may easily surmise, the homagers of the Leaf. Now the homagers of the Flower enter upon the stage. From the depth of the wide champaign there come roaming in a great company, ladies and knights, and ever a knight and a lady hand in hand. They are all richly clad in green, and wear chaplets of flowers; green-robed minstrels, with instruments of all sorts, and wearing variegated chaplets of flowers precede. They dance up to a great tuft of flowers in the midst of the mead; about which they incline reverently, and one sings the praise of the "Margarete" or Daisy, the others answering in chorus; meanwhile the hour grows to noon; the sun waxes hot; the unsheltered flowers wither; the ladies and the knights of the Flower are scorched with his rays; then the wind rises, and furiously blows down all the flowers; then comes on a terrible storm of mixed hail and rain; wets the knights and ladies of the Flower to the skin, and at last blows over. But the white-habited servants of the Leaf have stood under their laurel, shaded from the fiery noon beams, and shrouded from the tempest; and now, moved with ruth and pity, come forwards to tender their aid. The Queen of the Leaf greets, with loving sisterly compassion, the Queen of the Flower. The party of the Leaf proceed to more effectual relief than soothing words—hewing down boughs and trees to make "stately fires" for drying their wet clothes, and searching the plain for virtuous herbs to make for the blistered and drouthy sufferers salves and salads. She of the Leaf now invites Her of the Flower to supper, who accepts as courteously. The Leaf company, at the bidding of their mistress, provide horses for the Flower company. At this juncture the Nightingale, who all day long, sitting hidden in the laurel, sang "the service longing to May," flies to the hand of the Leaf-queen, and sings on as diligently as before—the Goldfinch, whom the heat had forced from his blossom of "medle-tree" into the cool bushes, betakes himself in like manner to his Flower-queen's hand, and sings there; and fast by the arbour, where our spectatress has remained all the while seeing and unseen, ladies and knights ride along and away. Only one lady in white rides alone after the rest. To her she comes out, and enquires what the wandering show means. The answer, given with courteous explicitness, imports in sum that those who wear chaplets of Agnus Castus are virgins; the laurel wearers, knights who were never conquered; the Nine most distinguished knights being the Nine Worthies; with whom

are the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne, and many "knightes olde" of the Garter. Those who wear woodbine

"Be such as never were
To love untrewe in word, thoghte, ne dede."

They wear the Leaf, because the beauty of the Leaf lasts. But the followers of the Flower are "those that loved idlenesse and not delite of no besinesse, but for to hunte and hawke and pley in medes, and many other such idle dedes." They wear the perishable Flower accordingly. The informant ends with enquiring of her auditress, whether she will, for the years to come, serve the Leaf or the Flower; who in answer vows her observance to the Leaf. The deep implication of the ancient mythology in the reviving poetry, here again discovers itself. It appears the lady of the Leaf is the goddess Diana; the lady of the Flower, Flora in person.

The invention is remarkably well purposed, and well carried through. The division of the world into those who follow virtue and those who pursue their own delight, is a good general poetico-ethical view, and the delicate emblems happily chosen for expressing the contrast. The heat and the tempest which overwhelm the dainty voluptuaries, and are harmless to the deed-worthy, express the true wisdom of virtue, even for this world, which moves not at our will; and the gentle healing kindness of the wiser to the less wise, whom they equalize with themselves, might almost seem profoundly to signify the recovery to the better wisdom of those who had set out with choosing amiss—a gracious hidden Christian lesson of charity and penitence. The contact of the simply human spectatress with beings brought from the [Pg 625] world of imagination, is boldly designed. Here is no Dream. She walks down from her own house into the wood, and the vision comes and goes, in all the strength of true flesh and blood. The solitariness of her stealing out from a sleepless bed, "about the springing of the day, long or the brighte sonne uprisen was"—therefore, whilst common mankind lie buried in sleep—is all the saving partition that the poet has deigned betwixt the coarse and harsh Real and the splendid Unreal. As for the poetical working-out—the descriptive narrative—it is elaborate and full of beauty. The natural scene is painted with exquisite sensibility to the influences of nature, and with such determinate strokes as show a conversant eye. For example, the mixed and illuminated spring-foliage, the

——"levis new
That sprongin out *agen the sonne shene*:
Some *very rede*, and some a *glad light* grene,"

would seem fresh and vivid from the hand of Coleridge or Tennyson—and the

——"path of *litil brede*,
——that *gretly had not usid be*,
For it *forgrowin was with gras and wede*,"

—which beguiles the foot of the vision-favoured away from the usual beat of men, leading her into the unvisited sequestration due to the haunting of an embodied Allegory—might, in its old simplicity, pass for well invented by whichsoever Priest of Imagination in our day can the best read, in the Sensible, the symbolized Spiritual and Invisible.

You wonder withal, if Chaucer was the poet, how the spectator was turned into a spectatress; and you are somewhat concerned at finding an unwilling word of the judicious Tyrwhitt's, which owns to a doubt on the authorship of the most beautiful minor poem, admitted into the volume of Chaucer.

Dryden felt the effusion of beauty, and has rendered and enhanced it. One may question the fitness of a material alteration which he has ventured upon. The allegory of the old Poem is pure. Dryden has changed the Knights and Ladies, collectively, into Fairies; for any thing that appears, indeed, of good human stature. The thought came to him apparently as making the beauty more beautiful, and possibly as obtaining, to an otherwise indefinite sort of imaginary beings, a known character and a recognized hold upon poetical—succeeding to popular—belief. A contradiction is—that the company of the Leaf have, in emphatic and chosen terms, been described as INNUMERABLE. The laurel is of such enormous diffusion, that A HUNDRED persons might repose under it. Yet IT SHELTERS THEM ALL FROM THE STORM.

It is also singular to us, that the Margarete or Daisy should suffer any slight from Chaucer, seeing the reverence with which he elsewhere regards it. It is here, too, no doubt raised into reverence by the observance of the Flower party; but then it suffers disparagement inasmuch as they are disparaged.

Truly does the amiable Godwin say—"In a word, the Poem of Dryden, regarded merely as the exhibition of a soothing and delicious luxuriance of fancy, may be classed with the most successful productions of human genius. No man can read it without astonishment, perhaps not without envy, at the cheerful, well-harmonized, and vigorous state of mind in which the author must have been at the time he wrote it."

"Now turning from the wintry signs, the sun
His course exalted through the Ram had run
And whirling up the skies, his chariot drove
Through Taurus, and the lightsome realms of love,

Where Venus from her orb descends in showers
To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flowers;
When first the tender blades of grass appear,
And buds, that yet the blast of Eurus fear, [Pg 626]
Stand at the door of life, and doubt to clothe the year;
Till gentle heat, and soft repeated rains,
Make the green blood to dance within their veins:
Then, at their call, embolden'd, out they come
And swell the gems, and burst the narrow room;
Broader and broader yet their blooms display,
Salute the welcome sun, and entertain the day.
Then from their breathing souls the sweets repair
To scent the skies, and purge the unwholesome air.
Joy spreads the heart, and with a general song,
Spring issues out, and leads the jolly months along.
"In that sweet season, as in bed I lay,
And sought in sleep to pass the night away,
I turn'd my weary side, but still in vain,
Though full of youthful health, and void of pain.
Cares I had none to keep me from my rest,
For love had never enter'd in my breast;
I wanted nothing fortune could supply,
Nor did she slumber till that hour deny.
I wonder'd then, but after found it true,
Much joy had dried away the balmy dew:
Seas would be pools, without the brushing air
To curl the waves, and sure some little care
Should weary nature so, to make her want repair.
"When Chanticleer the second watch had sung,
Scorning the scorner sleep, from bed I sprung;
And dressing by the moon, in loose array,
Pass'd out in open air, preventing day,
And sought a goodly grove, as fancy led my way.
Straight as a line in beauteous order stood
Of oaks unshorn, a venerable wood;
Fresh was the grass beneath, and every tree,
At distance planted in a due degree,
Their branching arms in air with equal space
Stretch'd to their neighbours with a long embrace;
And the new leaves on every bough were seen,
Some ruddy-colour'd, some of lighter green.
The painted birds, companions of the spring,
Hopping from spray to spray, were heard to sing.
Both eyes and ears received a like delight,
Enchanting music, and a charming sight.
On Philomel I fix'd my whole desire,
And listen'd for the queen of all the quire;
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to sing,
And wanted yet an omen to the spring.
"Attending long in vain, I took the way,
Which through a path, but scarcely printed, lay;
In narrow mazes oft it seem'd to meet,
And look'd as lightly press'd by fairy feet.
Wand'ring I walk'd alone, for still methought
To some strange end so strange a path was wrought;
At last it led me where an arbour stood,
The sacred receptacle of the wood;
This place unmark'd, though oft I walk'd the green,
In all my progress I had never seen;
And seized at once with wonder and delight,
Gazed all around me, new to the transporting sight.
'Twas bench'd with turf, and goodly to be seen,
The thick young grass arose in fresher green:
The mound was newly made, no sight could pass
Betwixt the nice partitions of the grass;
The well-united sods so closely lay, [Pg 627]
And all around the shades defended it from day;
For sycamores with eglantine were spread,
A hedge about the sides, a covering over head.
And so the fragrant briar was wove between,
The sycamore and flowers were mix'd with green,
That nature seem'd to vary the delight,
And satisfied at once the smell and sight.
The master workman of the bower was known
Through fairylands, and built for Oberon;

Who twining leaves with such proportion drew,
They rose by measure, and by rule they grew;
No mortal tongue can half the beauty tell,
For none but hands divine could work so well.
Both roof and sides were like a parlour made,
A soft recess, and a cool summer shade.
The hedge was set so thick, no foreign eye
The persons placed within it could espy;
But all that pass'd without with ease was seen,
As if nor fence nor tree was placed between.
'Twas border'd with a field; and some was plain
With grass, and some was sow'd with rising grain,
That (now the dew with spangles deck'd the ground)
A sweeter spot of earth was never found.
I look'd, and look'd, and still with new delight,
Such joy my soul, such pleasures fill'd my sight;
And the fresh eglantine exhaled a breath,
Whose odours were of power to raise from death.
Nor sullen discontent, nor anxious care,
Even though brought thither, could inhabit there;
But thence they fled as from their mortal foe;
For this sweet place could only pleasure know.
Thus as I mused, I cast aside my eye,
And saw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.
The spreading branches made a goodly show,
And full of opening blooms was every bough:
A goldfinch there I saw with gaudy pride
Of painted plumes, that hopp'd from side to side,
Still pecking as she pass'd; and still she drew
The sweets from every flower, and suck'd the dew.
Sufficed at length, she warbled in her throat,
And tuned her voice to many a merry note,
But indistinct, and neither sweet nor clear,
Yet such as sooth'd my soul and pleased my ear.
"Her short performance was no sooner tried,
When she I sought, the nightingale, replied;
So sweet, so shrill, so variously she sung,
That the grove echo'd and the valleys rung;
And I so ravish'd with her heavenly note—
I stood entranced, and had no room for thought,
But all o'erpower'd with ecstasy of bliss,
Was in a pleasing dream of Paradise;
At length I waked, and looking round the bower,
Search'd every tree, and pry'd on every flower,
If any where by chance I might espy
The rural poet of the melody;
For still methought she sung not far away:
At last I found her on a laurel spray,
Close by my side she sate, and fair in sight,
Full in a line against her opposite;
Where stood with eglantine the laurel twined,
And both their native sweets were well conjoin'd.
"On the green bank I sat, and listen'd long; [Pg 628]
(Sitting was more convenient for the song:)
Nor till her lay was ended could I move,
But wish'd to dwell for ever in the grove.
Only methought the time too swiftly pass'd,
And every note I fear'd would be the last.
My sight, and smell, and hearing were employ'd,
And all three senses in full gust enjoy'd.
And what alone did all the rest surpass,
The sweet possession of the fairy place;
Single, and conscious to myself alone,
Of pleasures to the excluded world unknown;
Pleasures which nowhere else were to be found,
And all Elysium in a spot of ground."

The Lake poets—Heaven bless them!—have one and all—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey—loudly and angrily denied to Dryden a poetical eye for nature, quoting in proof some inflated passage or another from his rhyming plays. Pope, too, according to them, was blind, and had never seen the moon and stars. Where, we ask, in all the poetry of the Lakes and Tarns, is there such a strain—so rich and so sustained—as that yet ringing in your ears? And "the ancient woman seated on Helmcrag" answers—"where?" True, the imagery is all in Chaucer. But had not Dryden's heart 'rejoiced in nature's joy,' not thus could he have caught the spirit of his master. Ay—the spirit; for there it is, in spite of the difference of manner—transfused

without evaporation or other loss, from the 'rhime roial' in which Chaucer rejoiced, into the couplet in which Dryden, in his old age, moved like a giant refreshed with gulps of the dewy morn. Again:—

"The ladies left their measures at the sight,
To meet the chiefs returning from the fight,
And each with open arms embraced her chosen knight.
Amid the plain a spreading laurel stood,
The grace and ornament of all the wood;
That pleasing shade they sought, a soft retreat
From sudden April showers, a shelter from the heat.
Her leafy arms with such extent were spread,
So near the clouds was her aspiring head,
That hosts of birds, that wing the liquid air,
Perch'd in the boughs, had nightly lodging there:
And flocks of sheep beneath the shade from far
Might hear the rattling hail, and wintry war;
From heaven's inclemency here found retreat,
Enjoy'd the cool, and shunn'd the scorching heat;
A hundred knights might there at ease abide,
And every knight a lady by his side:
The trunk itself such odours did bequeath
That a Moluccan breeze to these was common breath.
The lords and ladies here, approaching, paid
Their homage, with a low obeisance made,
And seem'd to venerate the sacred shade.
These rites perform'd, their pleasures they pursue,
With songs of love, and mix with measures new:
Around the holy tree their dance they frame,
And ev'ry champion leads his chosen dame.
"I cast my sight upon the farther field,
And a fresh object of delight beheld.
For from the region of the west I heard
New music sound, and a new troop apppear'd,
Of knights and ladies mix'd, a jolly band,
But all on foot they march'd, and hand in hand
"The ladies dressed in rich symars were seen, [Pg 629]
Of Florence satin, flower'd with white and green,
And for a shade betwixt the bloomy gridelin.
The borders of their petticoats below
Were guarded thick with rubies in a row;
And every damsel wore upon her head
Of flowers a garland blended white and red.
Attired in mantles all the knights were seen,
That gratified the view with cheerful green:
Their chaplets of their ladies' colours were,
Composed of white and red, to shade their shining hair.
Before the merry troop the minstrels play'd,
All in their masters' liveries were array'd,
And clad in green, and on their temples wore
The chaplets white and red their ladies bore.
Their instruments were various in their kind,
Some for the boy, and some for breathing wind;
The sawtry, pipe, and hautboy's noisy band,
And the soft lute trembling beneath the touching hand.
A tuft of daisies on a flowery lea
They saw, and thitherward they bent their way;
To this both knights and dames their homage made,
And due obeisance to the daisy paid.
And then the band of flutes began to play,
To which a lady sang a virelay;
And still at every close she would repeat
The burden of the song, *The daisy is so sweet*.
The daisy is so sweet, when she begun
The troop of knights and dames continued on.
The concert and the voice so charm'd my ear,
And sooth'd my soul, that it was heaven to hear."

O bardlings of Young England! withhold, we beseech you, from winsome *Maga*, your verse-offerings, while thus the sons of song, evoked from the visionary land, coming and going like shadows, smile to let drop at her feet the scrolls of their inspiration. Poetry indeed! "You lisp in numbers, for the numbers come." But in big boobies a lisp is only less loathsome than a burr. Some of you have both, and therefore deserve to die. Readers beloved! prefer you not such sweet, strong strains as these sounded by Dryden, when he had nearly counted threescore and ten? "Yet was not his natural force abated"—while his sense of beauty,

instructed and refined by meditations that deepen amongst life's evening shades, became holier within sight of the grave. You will thank us for another quotation; for much do we fear, O lady fair! that thou hast no copy of Dryden in thy *boudoir*, and yet life is fast flowing on with thee, for thou art—nay, there's no denying—yea, thou art—in thy twentieth year—and *if you continue to refuse our advice*—will soon be an old woman.

"The Lady of the Leaf ordain'd a feast,
And made the Lady of the Flower her guest:
When lo! a bower ascended on the plain,
With sudden seats adorn'd, and large for either train.
This bower was near my pleasant arbour placed,
That I could hear and see whatever pass'd:
The ladies sat with each a knight between,
Distinguish'd by their colours, white and green;
The vanquish'd party with the victors join'd,
Nor wanted sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind.
Meantime the minstrels play'd on either side,
Vain of their art, and for the mastery vied.
The sweet contention lasted for an hour,
And reach'd my secret arbour from the bower.
The sun was set; and Vesper, to supply [Pg 630]
His absent beams, had lighted up the sky:
When Philomel, officious all the day
To sing the service of th' ensuing May,
Fled from her laurel shade, and wing'd her flight
Directly to the queen array'd in white;
And hopping, sat familiar on her hand,
A new musician, and increased the band.
"The goldfinch, who, to shun the scalding heat,
Had changed the medlar for a safer seat,
And hid in bushes 'scaped the bitter shower,
Now perch'd upon the Lady of the Flower;
And either songster holding out their throats,
And folding up their wings, renew'd their notes;
As if all day, preluding to the fight,
They only had rehearsed, to sing by night.
The banquet ended, and the battle done,
They danced by starlight and the friendly moon:
And when they were to part, the laureat queen
Supplied with steeds the lady of the green,
Her and her train conducting on the way,
The moon to follow, and avoid the day."

Whatsoever merit of thought or of poetry may be found in the poems of which we have spoken, the world has rightly considered the CANTERBURY TALES as the work by which Chaucer is to be judged. In truth, common renown forgets all the rest; and it is by the Canterbury Tales only that he can properly be said to be known to his countrymen. Here it is that he appears as possessing the versatility of poetical power which ranges from the sublime, through the romantic and the pathetic, to the rudest mirth—choosing subjects the most various, and treating all alike adequately. Here he discovers himself as the shrewd and curious observer, and close painter of manners. Here he writes as one surveying the world of man with enlarged and philosophical intuition, weighing good and evil in even scale. Here, more than in any other, he is master of his matter, disposing it at his discretion, and not carried away with or mastered by it. Here he is master, too, of his English, thriftily culling the fit word, not effusing a too exuberant stream of description. Here he has acquired his own art and his own style of versification, which is here to be studied accordingly. Well therefore, and wisely, did Tyrwhitt judge, when undertaking to rescue the "mirrour of Rethoures alle" from the dust and rust of injurious time, he laid out his long and hard, but not uncheerful labour upon the Canterbury Tales alone.

Every soul alive knows something of them—but not very many more than Stothard, in his celebrated Picture, has informed their eye withal. Their plan ranks them among works which are numerous, early and late, but which rather belong to early literature. East and West such are to be found, but they belong rather to the Oriental genius. A slender narrative, the container of weightier ones—a technical contrivance, which gave to a number of slighter compositions, collectively taken, the importance of a greater work—which prolonged to the tale-teller who had once gained the ear of his auditory his right of audience—and which, in a world where the tongue was more active in the diffusion of literature than the quill, afforded to each involved tale a memorial niche that might save it from dropping entirely away into oblivion.

To Chaucer, the scheme serves a higher purpose of art, which of itself allies him to the higher poets. By it he is enabled to comprehend, as if in one picture, a more diversified and complete representation of humanity. The thought is genial and sprightly. A troop of riders, who have been stirred severally from their firesides by the searching spirit of spring, have casually fallen into company, and who pace along, breathing an air which "sweet showers"

have embalmed—exhilarated by the brightening radiance of "the young sun," and made loquacious by the very power which pours out the song of the glad birds from the newly-leaved boughs by the long wayside. [Pg 631]

And who are the riders? And what is the charm that has drawn together a company of thirty to ride on the same road at the same hour of the same day? The suddenly-spun band of a union that will be as hastily dissolved, squares happily with the large purpose of the poet, by unforcedly bringing together persons of both sexes, and of exceedingly diverse conditions, high, low, learned, unlearned, military, civil, religious, from city and from country, land and sea, of unlike occupations, buoyant with youth, grave with years. The momentary tie has poetical vitality, from the fact that it is borrowed from the heart of the time and of England. They are Pilgrims from all quarters to the shrine of England's illustrious and favourite Saint, the martyr of Canterbury. They have gradually mustered into cavalcade in coming up from the shires to the metropolis, one excepted—the Poet. He falls into their party, by the hap of sleeping the night preceding the journey out from the capital at the same inn, in the suburb towards Canterbury—Southwark.

The specific incitement of the Tale-telling is thus invented in a natural spirit, and aptly to the vivacity of the whole conception. Mine host of the Tabard, Henry Bailey, a hearty fellow no doubt, since Chaucer has thought his name worthy of his immortalizing, contrives the proceeding, and this half in good fellowship, and half in the way of his trade. To shorten the tediousness of the road, he proposes that each of them shall tell, on the way to Canterbury, one tale, and on the way back, another—or, for here the poem a little disagrees with itself, two tales going and two returning; and that he or she who tells the best tale shall have, on their return, a supper, for which all the others shall pay, and which of course, he, Henry Bailey, shall provide. Upon these terms he will, without fee, perform the part of their conductor to Canterbury and back again. In assenting, the Pilgrims constitute him the judge of the tales; and thus mine host, with his joyous temper, courtesy, where courtesy needs, worldly sense, rough, sharp, and ready wit, and unappealable dictatorship in all matters of the commonwealth, becomes a dramatic person of the very first consequence, the animating soul of the poetical action; and who, continually stepping in between the finishing of one tale and the beginning of the next, organically links together the otherwise disunited and incomposite Series.

The General Prologue contains, as was unavoidable, besides the scheme of the poem, the description of the several Pilgrims, and constitutes in itself, by the versatile feeling with which the portraits are seized, by the strength, precision, peculiarity, liveliness, rapidity, and number of the strokes with which each is individualized—a masterpiece of poetical painting. One lost generation of Old England moves before us in the warmth and hues of life.

The Knight, his son the Squire, his servant the good Yeoman—a gallant three—the Clerke of Oxenford, the "poure Person of a toun," and his brother the Ploughman, are, each in his estate, of thorough worthiness, and are all, accordingly, drawn in a spirit of full affection. The Prioress and the Franklin are laughed at a little—she for the pains she gives herself to display her *imitative* high breeding, and for—only think it!—A.D. 1489—her SENTIMENTALITY!—he for his love of a plenteously-spread board, and for his "poignant sauces!" But the two are good at heart; and the satire of the poet leaves to them undisturbed their place in your good esteem. His other men of some condition—the Monk, the Friar, the "Sergeant of the Lawe," the Merchant, the "Doctour of Physike"—he lashes with a more vigorous wrist. But not like a farce-monger, who, to gain your laugh, must utterly abase his characters, and make them merely ridiculous. The hunting Monk wants nothing but his hood off to be a distinguished country squire. He is "*a manly man* to be an abbot able!" and, if he keeps greyhounds, they are "as swift as fowl of flight." And look but at his horse's points and condition! The rascal of a "Frere," if, by his perseverance and persuasiveness in begging, he impoverishes the county, is a noble post of his order, and well beloved and familiar with franklins, and with worthy women. The Merchant has an assumed air of importance—magnifies his gains—thinks the protection of the sea betwixt the ports from which his vessels run the first duty of civilized governments—and keeps his wit set upon the main chance. But that is the worst of him—"For sothe he was *a worthy man* withalle." The Lawyer is at the top of his profession—wise, witty, perfect in statutes and in precedents, high in honours. What are his faults? You can hardly tell. There is a slight ostentation of wisdom. He has got a deal of money together—he is full of business—but he "*seems* yet busier than he is." The Doctor, too, is an excellent physician. He calls the stars in to his aid. But that may be Chaucer's belief, not his mirth. He knows the disease, and has the remedy at command. To be sure, he and his apothecaries understand one another. He is learned in a thousand books; but not in THE BOOK. Gold is of high esteem in medicine as a cordial. Therefore he loves gold. [Pg 632]

Why go on? Like Shakspeare, Chaucer portrays men in a spirit of humanity. He paints his fellows; and, if he is amused with our follies, he prefers showing the fairer side of our nature. Even the merry, warm-blooded Wife of Bath, with her five wedded husbands, earns some goodwill of us by her joyous and invincible spirit. Imagine the daring, the vigour, and the stirring wit of the west-country cloth-manufacturess, who cannot rest easy till she has been three times in pilgrimage to Jerusalem!

There is a visible purpose of keeping up the RESPECTABILITY of the company. If the MILLER, the COKE, the REVE, and the SOMPNOUR, stand on a somewhat low step of the social stair—the HABERDASHER, the CARPENTER, the WEBBE (Weaver)—the DYER and the TAPISER—who are lumped

in the poet's description—

"Were al yclothed in ye liveree,
Of a solempne and gret fraternitee.
* * * * * *
Wel semed ech of hem a fayr burgeis,
To sitten in a gild halle, ON THE DEIS."

They are of wisdom qualifying them to stand for Aldermen of their wards. Their wives are 'ycleped Madame'—take precedency in going to vigils—and have

——"A mantel reallich (*i.e.* royally) yborne."

Even our honest friend the Southwark innkeeper, Henry Bailey, has an air of dignity thrown over him. He was

"A semely man—
For to have ben *a marshal in an halle*.
A large man he was, with eyen stepe,[30]
A fairer burgeis is ther non in Chepe.
Bold of his speche, and wise and *wel ytaught*,
And of manhood him lacked righte nought."

Moreover, even that chief of poetical Taverns, the TABARD, is designated as

"This *gentil* hostelrie."

No wonder! since

"The *chambres and the stables weren wide*,
And *wel we weren esed* ATTE BESTE."

The Tales are, in some respect, like an extension of the Prologue. They carry out the characters, or the spirit of the characters, there drawn. Thus, if the chivalry of the time is impersonated, in respect of its valour, honour, and courteous demeanour, in the Knight, in his Tale it mounts into poetical aspiration, and shines out in regal splendour. The contrast, due to the different years of the father and the son, is in part disappointed by the cross destiny which has

——"left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold."

The youthful fancy, dipped or drenched in romance, of the twenty-year old Squire, shows itself, indeed, in the two sections which we have of his chivalrous narrative. The Sword, [Pg 633] which, with its edge, hews through all armour, and with its "plat" heals the else incurable wounds of its own inflicting—the Mirror, which discloses the plotting of the kingdom's enemies, the truth or disloyalty of a distant lover—the Ring, which enables its wearer to understand the "leden" of all birds, and to answer them in the same—and the marvellous Horse of Brass, which, with turning of a pin, and with a whisper in the ear, carries his rider whither he would through the air, vanishes and comes with a wish, and, farthermore, behaves and comports himself wholly after the best fashion of a horse;—these four gifts from the King of Arabie and Inde to the Tartar king and his daughter, transport us, as with a flight of the magical courser himself, into the deep, wild, and mystical heart of that region, unplaced by geographers, explored by the host of dreamers, Romance. So, the love-story of the forsaken Bird, with whom the Ring brings the Princess acquainted, is Eastern, is amorous, is high-fantastical, fit for the 'lover and lusty bacheler,' who

——"Coude songes make, and well indite,
Juste and eke dance"—

and stands off in complete distinction from the love-debate, with argumentation and with arms, of Palamon and Arcite. What is it, then, that we would have more? Truly, we fear, that for once we are half unreasonable. The Tale, with beginning, middle, and end, to satisfy the heart of Aristotle, in the Knight's mouth—and the finely-begun fragment in the Squire's—are, by their temper, allied and opposed, quite up to the dramatic propriety of the two speakers. What would we have more? Simply this, that Chaucer, by carrying to an end the unfinished fiction in the tone in which he has begun it, should have demonstrated himself the master of his art, which, by his project, he seems to be. The Knight's is a love-tale, as well; but there is, in the love-story, an involving of political interests, which, together with the known historical names, or such as are so reputed, tempers the romantic, confers a gravity, and mixes in a tone of the world's business that suits the sedate reason, and the various observation of the veteran warrior, tried in high services. It would have been a pleasant feat of poetical understanding and skill, especially for that unpractised day, if a second equally gallant recital of love and war—long and complex it would, by the intimations thrown out, have been—could have been pursued throughout its natural evolutions and vicissitudes, as resolutely as thus far it is, upon its own meet self-sustained wing. It would have been! Oh, vex not the shade of the true Maker with saucy doubts and fears! "Call up Him!" Yes—were there evocations of such potency; but "call Him" in the simplicity of your soul, because he has moved in you the lawful desire of hearing—because you long, insatiably, to know what was done, found, suffered, enjoyed, by Cambalo, Algarsif, Canace:

which none other segger, disour, maker, harper and carper, that shall ever arise shall have wit to tell you—not because you would fain sit in the chair of criticism, awarding or withholding the palm of dramatic skill, claimed by Dan Geffrey. Ay! "call up Him!" But call up no substitute for Him.

The Sergeant of Laws' Tale, and the Clerke of Oxenford's, have an affinity. Each describes a tried wife, an exemplar for all her sex, two perfectly pure-souled women. And nothing is more honourable to Chaucer than the love with which he has dwelt upon the story of both. Both suffer to extremity; but Custance, the Sergeant's heroine, under the hand of Providence, who proves her with strange calamities, and when she has well-endured the ordeal, restores her to deserved happiness. For the loving wife, whom the Clerke of Oxenford praises, a loving husband is pleased to devise a course of sharp assaying, which might have been conveniently spared. The manner of telling in the two stories is marked with a difference. In both it is somewhat of the copious kind; and it may be observed, generally, that the style of the narrative, in the seven-lined stanza, or "rime roiall," is more diffuse than in the couplets. There is a difference between the two which appears to belong to the characters of the speakers. The Man of Law has not a few passages of exclamatory and apostrophical moral and sentimental rhetoric. They compel you to recollect his portrait —

[Pg 634]

> "Discret he was, and of gret reverence
> He *seemed* swiche, his *wordes were so wise*."

The Clerk has nothing of the kind. The largeness in his manner of relating, is rather an explicit and lucid fulness in representing an interesting subject, than what is properly called diffuseness. Chaucer has said of him—

> "Not a word spake he more than was nede;"

and you will see accordingly, that although he *details* his narrative, every word, in its place, is pertinent and serviceable. He ends with a freak, which carries him, you are disposed to think, out of his character. He has related, after Petrarch, the story of patient Griseldis, with beautiful earnestness and simplicity. He has conducted her through all the trials which the high-born lord thought good to lay upon the low-born wife, has displayed and rewarded her inimitable "wifly pacience," and then confesses, that not being imitable, neither is it intended that it should be imitated. In short, he "stints of ernestful matere;" and to "gladen" his audience, ends with "saying them a song," in six quaintly-rhymed stanzas, in which he counsels the wives to stand upon the defensive against their husbands, and take all natural care of themselves—

> "Be ay of chere as light as lefe on linde,
> And let *him* care, and wepe, and wringe, and wail."

The ironical counsel does not belie the moral of the story; but it comes unexpectedly from him whom the Hoste has called upon for his tale, with remarking, that he "rides as still and coy as a maid newly espoused sits at her bord."

The Franklin has at home a graceless cub and heir of his own. If good living were one and the same thing with holy living, this should the less easily have happened. The Franklin is wonderfully captivated with our young Squire's breeding, grace, and eloquence. The contrast brings his own "burdane" painfully into his mind, and wrings from him a mortified exclamation. The old man, with his sanguine complexion, and his beard

> "White as is the dayesie,"

has—notwithstanding the sharp censorship which he exercises over his cook—a heart in his bosom. The pleasure with which he has heard the Squire, vouches as much; and more decisively so does the story, which he himself tells from the old Breton lays; another story of a virtuous wife, strangely tried, of all the three the most strangely. Her husband, a knight, is on a voyage, and she takes a horror of the perilous rocks that edge their own shore. Meanwhile, a youthful squire pursues her with love. One day, in a mockery, she promises to grant him his suit if he will remove all the rocks in a morning. After some perplexity of thought he resorts to an able magician at Orleans; who, for the consideration of a thousand pounds, undertakes, and accomplished the feat. Who is now hard bestead, but the lady? She, in her strait, consults her husband, who has returned; and the honourable husband says—you must keep your word. The squire comes for his guerdon. "My husband says that I must keep my word." "Indeed!—and shall a squire not know how to do a 'gentil dede,' as well as a knight? I release you your promise."—He carries £500—all of the agreed sum that he can muster to the conjurer, and prays of him time for the rest. "Have I performed my undertaking?" "Yes!"—"And the lady hers?"—The squire is obliged to relate the sequence of events.—"And is a clerk," exclaims the master, "less able to do a gentil dede, than squire and knight? Keep thy money, Sir Squire!"

That is a creditable tale for a country gentleman—

> "Whose table dormant in the halle alway
> Stood redy covered alle the longe day."

There is much feeling in the detail of the story, and the magical shows, by which the

enchanter, before striking his bargain, demonstrates his competency, and by which he afterwards executes his engagement, are dressed out with vivid imagination. [Pg 635]

But now it is really high time that you should hear Dryden on Chaucer. For is not this Number IV. of our Specimens of the British Critics?

> "With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue; from Chaucer the purity of the English tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike: both of them were well bred, well natured, amorous, and libertine, at least in their writings; it may be also in their lives. Their studies were the same—philosophy and philology. Both of them were knowing in astronomy; of which Ovid's *Books of the Roman Feasts*, and Chaucer's *Treatise of the Astrolabe*, are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Persius, and Manilius. Both writ with wonderful facility and clearness; neither were great inventors; for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables, and most of Chaucer's stories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predecessors—Boccace his 'Decameron' was first published; and from thence our Englishman has borrowed many of his 'Canterbury Tales.' Yet that of *Palamon and Arcite* was written, in all probability, by some Italian wit, in a former age, as I shall prove hereafter. The tale of *Grisilde* was the invention of Petrarch; by him sent to Boccace, from whom it came to Chaucer. *Troilus and Cressida* was also written by a Lombard author, but much amplified by our English translator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen, in general, being rather to improve an invention than to invent themselves, as is evident not only in our poetry but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him; but there is so much less behind; and I am of the temper of most kings, who love to be in debt, are all for present money, no matter how they pay it afterwards; besides, the nature of a preface is rambling, never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honest Montaigne, and return at my pleasure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to say. Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet since Chaucer had something of his own, as *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, *The Cock and the Fox*, which I have translated, and some others, I may justly give our countryman the precedence in that part; since I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his. Both of them understood the manners; under which name I comprehend the passions, and in a larger sense the descriptions of persons, and their very habits. For an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales*, their humours, their features, and their very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard, in Southwark. Yet even there, too, the figures of Chaucer are much more lively, and set in a better light; which, though I have not time to prove, [Pg 636] yet I appeal to the reader, and am sure he will clear me from partiality. The thoughts and words remain to be considered in the comparison of the two poets, and I have saved myself one-half of that labour by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian; Chaucer, in the dawning of our language; therefore, that part of the comparison stands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid, or of Chaucer and our present English. The words are given up, as a post not to be defended in our poet, because he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be considered; and they are to be measured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or less naturally from the persons described on such and such occasions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who see Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little less than mad, for preferring the Englishman to the Roman. Yet, with their leave, I must presume to say, that the things they admire are only glittering trifles, and so far from being witty, that in a serious poem they are nauseous, because they are unnatural. Would any man who is ready to die for love, describe his passions like Narcissus; would he think of *inopem me copia fecit*, and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing? This is just John Littlewit, in 'Bartholomew Fair,' who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his misery; a miserable conceit. On these occasions, the poet should endeavour to raise pity; but, instead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made use of such machines when he was moving you to commiserate the death of Dido; he would not destroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjust in the pursuit of it; yet when he came to die, he made him think more reasonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injustice of his proceedings, and resigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occasion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his deathbed; —he had complained he was farther off from possession by being so near, and a thousand such boyisms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They who think otherwise, would by the same reason prefer Lucan

and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets, they are sometimes a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and I confess they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with judgment; but Chaucer writ with more simplicity, and followed nature more closely, than to use them. I have thus far, to the best of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, not meddling with the design nor the disposition of it; because the design was not their own; and in the disposing of it they were equal. It remains that I say something of Chaucer in particular.

"In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences, and therefore speaks properly on all subjects. As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off, a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets is sunk in his reputation because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way, but swept like a drag-net great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill sorted; whole pyramids of sweetmeats for boys and women, but little of solid meat for men. All this proceeded, not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment. Neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets, but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth; for as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, 'Not being of God, he could not stand.'

"Chaucer followed nature every where, but was never so bold to go beyond her; and there is a great difference of being *poeta* and *nimis poeta*, if we may believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. * * *

"He must have been a man of most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we may now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta could not have described their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity; their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different; the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady Prioress, and the broad-speaking gap-toothed Wife of Bath. But enough of this; there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great-granddames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of monks, and friars, and canons, and lady-abbesses, and nuns; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though every thing is altered. May I have leave to do myself the justice, (since my enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a moral man,) may I have leave, I say, to inform my reader, that I have confined my choice to such tales of Chaucer as savour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchant, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers as there are beaux and ladies of pleasure in the town. But I will no more offend against good manners. I am sensible, as I ought to be, of the scandal I have given by my loose writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneness, be crept into these poems, I am so far from defending it, that I disown it, *totum hoc indictum volo*. Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad speaking and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them."

[Pg 637]

An English reader is likely to have held his way through the Palamon and Arcite of Dryden, ere arriving at the knight's Tale of Chaucer. It will not easily happen that he overleaps that Version, so full of the fire and vigorous grace which he delights in, and couched in the very choicest of that English on which his ears habitually feed, to introduce himself all at once to the antique and to him obsolete Original. The pure impression, therefore, with which he would read the Tale in its proper place, if he there first got acquainted with it, is hardly to be obtained. No matter! Forget Dryden, and plunge yourself into Chaucer.

Be surprised, if you can, as you surely will be amused, at encountering the inextricable commixture of manners, usages, tones, thinkings, and speakings, which time and space have done their best at keeping asunder—the chivalry of modern Europe, and of the middle ages, transplanted into the heroic age of old Greece, and to the Court of Theseus, "Duk of Athenes." Be surprised and amused, but do not therefore lay the book out of your hand, or laugh the old master to scorn, or do him other than reverent and honourable justice. Take rather the story to pieces, convince yourself step by step how strangely at every turn the old world and the new, the Christian and the Heathen, are confounded together, and feel at every step how the vitality which the good poet has infused into his work, reconciles and atones discordancies and discrepancies; and in spite of the perplexing physiognomy, how that must needs be one body which is informed and actuated, through all its joints and members, by one spirit.

Take in pieces the story—untwist the intertwined classical and romantic threads. Make sure of the fault, and then hasten to forgive it. The fault! Are you quite sure that it is one? Recollect that it is not Chaucer who relates the Knight's Tale. Chaucer is here a dramatic poet, and his Knight relates his own tale. What!—Shall he, who has "full often time the bord begun,"—

> "Aboven allé natiouns in Pruce;"

who has "reysed in Lettowe, and in Ruce," has been—

> "In Gernade at the siege
> Of Algesir, and ridden in Belmarie;"

who was—

> "At Leyes and at Satalie,
> When they were wonne; and in the Grete See,
> At many a noble armee;"—

he who has been at—

> "Mortal battailes fiftene,
> And foughten for our faith at Tramisene,
> In listes thries, and ay slain his fo"—

shall he, upon the qualm of a queasy criticism, not be allowed to transfer something of the

> "Chevalrie,
> Truth and honor, fredom and courtesie,"

which, "from the time that he first began to riden out," he has loved—across a gap of a few hundred leagues and years? To what end else, it may be asked, has he approved himself, "full worthy in his lordes werre," and "ridden thereto no man ferre,"— [Pg 638]

> "As well in Christendom as in Hethenesse,
> And ever honor'd for his worthinesse?"

Why, the Knight would have been no knight at all if he had been Richard Bentley or John Milton, and not, as there is every reason to hope he was, *le noble et vaillant Chivaler* Matheu de Gourney, whose marble tells us that he had fought at Benamaryn and Algezire, and been at abundance of battles and sieges, named and unnamed, in Christendom and Heathenesse —"*en les quex il gaigna noblement graunt los et honour*"—and who "died in 1406 at the age of 96." It is therefore Sir Matheu de Gourney who speaks, like a knight, of knighthood—and let him speak—

> "Who never yet no vilainie ne sayde,
> In all his life unto no manere wight."—

Let him speak, justifying his eulogist, and showing us, as well as may be by his words, what his deeds showed the world, that—

> "He was a veray parfit gentil knight!"

The first transaction that is related with some full process, is the chivalrous enterprise of Theseus against Creon; King of Thebes. This dispiteous and abominable tyrant prohibits the bodies of the warriors fallen in the celebrated siege of that city from burial. The widows of the slain princes and nobles move Theseus for vengeance and redress, which he instantly undertakes, and forthwith executes. And now mark the admixture of times and manners. In the first place, the heinousness of the crime, and even the imagination of such an impiety, are purely antique, as, in truth, the fact itself is on classical record in the "Antigone" of

Sophocles. Again, the suppliant, bereaved, and woebegone wives have awaited Theseus's coming "in the temple of the goddess Clemency," than which nothing can be more classical; and the manner in which, at his return home from his victorious war upon the "Amasones," the sorrowful company receive him, kneeling by two and two clothed in black, along the highway, might persuade you that Sir Matheu had read the Œdipus Tyrannus, and successfully imitated Œdipus's dolorous and picturesque reception in the streets of Thebes, by the kneeling, plague-smitten population of the city.

On the other hand, the claim of redress at the hand of the warrior carries your imagination to the interesting volumes of St Palaye; and clearly refers to the obligation by which the knight, at his investiture, bound himself to redress all wrongs, especially those of the ladies. And Theseus is nothing slack in acknowledging the obligation. He dismounts, takes them each and all up in his arms,

"And swore his oth, *as he was trewe knight*,"

that he will do his endeavour that the world shall applaud the chastising of the "false king."—Again, when the one day's demolishing fight has given Creon to death, and his Land into Theseus's hand, and the two right Heroes of the Tale, the Theban cousins, Palamon and Arcite, are dragged out, half-alive and half-dead, from the heap of the slain, the "herauds" know them, by the "cote-armoure," to be of the blood-royal. Of course, they are designated "knights."—Again: Theseus will take no ransom for them. That is perhaps, indifferently, ancient or modern; but it sounds to our ears rather modern, that he shuts them up in a high tower, which overlooks the Garden of his Palace.

But now we plunge into the bosom of our own Heroic times. To do observance to the May is a rite that we find continually occurring in the poetry of the middle ages. It is on May morning that Emelie, going into the garden to gather flowers, and wreathe for herself a coronal, is first seen by the two captive Theban kinsmen. Again, when Arcite, liberated by the intervention of Pirithous, has returned, and is living unrecognized in the service of Theseus, it is precisely upon the same occasion of going into the wood to gather "grenes" for May morning, that he falls in with Palamon, who has the night before broken prison, and hides himself during the day in the forest—which encounter leads to their set encounter in [Pg 639] arms the next day, and so to the interruption of their duel by Theseus himself, and so to all the consequent course of events. Whatever the true rites of returning May may have been, in classical antiquity, the observance comes into this tale from the manners of mediæval Europe, not of ancient Greece.

With what glad and light ritual, the Athenians, in the first years after the war of the Seven Chiefs against Thebes, did homage to their king and queen of the May, we do not remember to have seen distinctly described. At this day the young folk of old Hellas parade the streets, shouting the classical χελιδωνισμα, or song of the swallow, on the 1st of March. The Romans held their Floralia from the 28th of April to the 1st of May, danced and sang, and had games, and crowned themselves with garlands and with flowers. Nevertheless, you instinctively feel that the singularly graceful picture of Emelie, called up from slumber by the dawning May morning, and proceeding to pluck in the royal garden the dew-fresh and bright materials of her own coronal, owes nothing to the lore of books, but is breathingly imaged from some gracious original of our own good fourteenth century. You remain assured, that the trustworthy poet records his own proper love-experience in adjusting the occasion that is to vivify with a new passion the dolorous prison of the two Thebans, and turn the sworn brothers-in-arms into rivals at deadly feud with each other. That rougher age of the world—rude the day was not that produced and cherished Chaucer—had this virtue, that the grown-up men and women were still, by a part of their heart, children. The welcoming-in of the May is described by the old poets in different countries of Europe as a passion—seizing upon young and old, high and low. All were for the hour children—children of nature. When, therefore, that love at first sight, which immediately becomes a destiny to the two kinsmen, governing their whole after-life, is in this manner attached by our poet to the visit made upon this occasion by Emelie to the garden which their tower overlooks, the reader is entitled to understand that the poet does for him the very best thing any poet can do, that he infuses into his poetical dream his own pulsating life-blood.

The immense joy and universal jubilee of nature, called out by the annual renewing of warmth, light, life, and beauty, and the share and the sympathy of man in the diffusive and exuberant benediction, fix themselves and take form in stated and ordered celebrations all the world over. It seems hard to deny to any nation the rejoicing on the return of summer. All have it. Yet certainly Chaucer paints from his own experience, and not from erudition. The poem of "The Cuckou and the Nightingale" is a mere extolling of love and the May. The exordium is a sort of incidental hymn to the Love-god, and runs into affirming and arguing at some length the peculiar energy of his dominion in this month.

"And most his might he shedeth ever in May."

The Complaint of the Black Knight—love is his complaint—falls in May. The unhappy lover has built himself a lodge or bower in the greenwood, whether with returning May he withdraws himself from all feasts, societies, and throngs of men, to dedicate himself to love-mourning, and where, under the trees, whilst the month of love lasts, he remains abandoned to his love-martyrdom. That 'Dreme of Chaucer,' which has been supposed, although Tyrwhitt thinks fancifully, to refer to the marriage of John of Gaunt with the Lady Blanche,

happens as he lay alone on a night of May thinking of his lady. The opening of the Flower and Leaf puts you in doubt whether you are not rather in April than in May; but by and by you find that the nightingale has been all the day long singing the service of May. All this amorous and poetical caressing of the May discovers, in the twice resting the process of events in "The Knight's Tale" upon the observance of May-day, a significancy otherwise perhaps less evident. Shakspeare, in the verse—

"As full of spirits as the month of May,"

expresses the natural ground which ceremony and eulogy, solemn or quaint, have artificially displayed in the usages of old times, and in the poetry of Chaucer. [Pg 640]

But to return to our two knights. They are *brothers-in-arms*—by the by, rather a romantic, than a classical institution—and so pledged to help one another in love; and the question arises, as the ground of a long argument, which is traitor to the other. Yet here, too, is intermixed the classical with the romantic. For Palamon, who first sees Emelie, takes her for the goddess Venus; on which Arcite ingeniously founds his own plea, that *he* first loved her as a woman, and so is entitled to the help of the other. Their silent arming of one another, for mortal duel, in the forest, each

"As frendly as he were his owen brother,"

reminds you of chivalrous loyalty and faith; although it would be hard to deny that the antique warriors might have been as honest. But the truth is, that in Homer every knight arms himself, and the two Thebans must have worn modern armour to need this help. And yet here what a classical relief in the simile of the hunter! Of all transplantation from the modern to the ancient, tempered nevertheless with antiquity, their great listed Duel stands foremost. Take it, with all the circumstances that introduce it. Whilst the kinsmen are fighting, Theseus rides up, "pulled out a sword, and cried, Ho!" This is the language of the 14th century, and the western side of Europe. But he swears by "mighty Mars," that the first who strikes another stroke shall lose his head. Both are liable to death. Palamon for having broken prison, and Arcite, because his avoiding Athenian ground on pain of death was an original condition of his liberation. Theseus' challenge to them, "Tell me who ye are that are so bold as to fight here without judge or officer," is the manner of the poet's day. In the time of Theseus, fighting in a wood near Athens was free to all the world.

What saves them? The interposition of the ladies! Queen, princess, court and all, who think it a pity two gallant young "gentil men" of "gret estat" shall die, and all for love. The duke is moved; for pity soon melts in a "gentil herte." And he appoints a regular Tournament—that at the year's end they shall meet, each bringing a hundred knights, and fight it out. He pledges himself 'upon his troth, and as he is a knight,' that he who shall slay his adversary, or 'out of listes him drive,' shall have Emelie to wife.

The lists are—from the hint of antiquity—a regular Amphitheatre, a mile about—walled, and the seats in steps to the height of sixty paces. Art and wealth have been lavished in making the field worthy of the fight. Over the Eastern gate is an altar and an "Oratorie" to Venus—over the Western, to Mars—on the North side is one to Diana. The description of the three Fanes is of surpassing power. Among the portraitures in that of Mars is the Suicide, for whom the relater, poet or knight, forgets himself in his vivid conception, and says that he *saw it*.

The allies of the two knights are both classically and romantically chosen. With Palamon comes "Licurge, the grete king of Trace." That is classical. With Arcite "the grete Emetrius, the king of Inde." That is romantic. The persons of the two kings are described at large, with great strength and fecundity of painting. And here again, in the way of art, the contrast is admirably sustained and effective. Licurge is the older, more uncouth, and giant-like. The youthful Emetrius is more splendid and knightly. Both are thoroughly regal and formidable. Licurge is black-bearded, for the sake of more savage effect; wherefore the monarch of Inde, contrariwise to the actual distribution of races over the earth, or more properly speaking to the known influence of climate, is fair. His crisp and ringed locks are yellow, and glitter like the sun. His complexion may trouble the physiologists; but is not likely to discompose the poetical reader under the tuition of Christopher North. The "foure white bolles" that draw the 'char of gold' upon which the Thracian *stands*, are as antique as you can devise. The tamed eagle as any lily white, which Emetrius carries "for his deduit"—therefore, in lieu of a hawk upon his hand, is of manners that are almost our own. [Pg 641]

Each king brings his own hundred knights. They arrive "on the Sonday abouten prime." The tilting will be next day. The three persons principally interested in the issue of the impending combat perform, in the interval, their devotions at the three several shrines, which have been aptly provided for them in the building of the lists. Each of them obtains an answer from the respective deity. Two hours ere the day, Palamon visits the oratory of Venus. He prays that he may win Emelie, although he should lose what comparatively he regards with indifference, the palm of the conflict. The statue of the goddess renders, after a long delay, the signal of acceptance. Emelie, at sunrise, worships Diana. Her first prayer is, that she may remain till death the virgin servant, herself a huntress, of the divine huntress; and if that may not be, that he may win her who best loves her. Upon the altar she kindles two fires, which burn ominously. One goes out and revives again. Then the other is wholly quenched—drops of blood falling out from the hissing and burning brands. All this the

process of the combat and its consequences afterwards elucidate; as the appearing goddess forewarns her chaste worshipper. The 'nexte hour of Marte'—whereof anon—Arcite offers prayer and incense to the God of War. He is accepted, and victory promised; but the oracular voice murmurs the words faintly and hollowly.

All this intricate omination comes forcibly out in the sequence of events; and is in itself, as you feel, at all events right classical. The treatment of the Hours lies deeper. It is astrological. For the twelve now longer and now shorter hours, into which the time from sunrise to sunset—and the twelve now shorter and now longer, into which the time from sunset to sunrise was divided, belonged to the Seven Planets, in the order Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna—by following out which order, you will discover that, since the first hour of Sunday belongs to the Sun, giving name to the day—the twenty-third hour, or the second before sunrise of the following day, will belong to Venus, to whom Palamon then prays—and the hour of sunrise, next day, belongs to the Moon, or Diana, to whom Emelie then addresses herself. Following the circle, you find that the fourth hour of Monday belongs to Mars. This is Arcite's hour. And if you wonder how such Chaldaic and Egyptian lore should come into your tale of chivalry, you will be relieved by understanding that these dedications had, in our poetical ages, due popularity for infusing into them a poetical efficiency; forasmuch as an old French "Shepherds' Calendar," cited by Tyrwhitt, alleges the very rule which we have given, for the instruction of him "who will weet how the Shepherds do wit which planet reigneth every hour of the day and of the night." This timing, therefore, of sacrifice and orison to the planetary hours, is pertinently and speakingly feigned by Chaucer.

The Tournament follows, which is mediæval enough. Arcite, according to the promise of Mars, is victorious. Palamon is taken and bound. But here is the difficulty. Venus has promised Emelie to Palamon. Saturn, the αγχυλομητις, finds a remedy, and gratifies his grand-daughter. As Arcite, the victor, having taken off his helmet, rides along the lists to show himself to all, and especially to Emelie, Pluto, at the request of Saturn, sends an infernal fury who starts up out of the ground before him. The scared horse plunges and stumbles; Arcite is thrown upon his head, and taken up for dead. He is not dead; but he dies, and is burned, after the fashion of Patroclus and Hector; and twelve months after, his virgin widow is by Theseus given in marriage to Palamon.

What is the real effect of all this commixture? The truth is, that under such circumstances, after a little resistance and struggling, you give in, and let the poet have his own way, provided that he is a poet. There is but one condition—that the poet put, into whatever manners, true life. Then you willingly give up your own dull book-learning, and accept his painting for the authentic record of reality. You are, in fact, gradually conducted to this pass, that you look upon history as useful for ministering materials to poetry, not upon poetry as bound to teach history. But Chaucer *has* wonderfully put life into the classical part of the poem, so that you can hardly say that he seems more at home in giving the manners which he had seen, than in reviving the manners which he had only read. He has this in common with Shakspeare. In common with Shakspeare he has, too, the apology for the confusion of manners—of having lived before we were as critical in the costume of ages and nations as we now are. [Pg 642]

The 'Knight's Tale,' after the requisition usually laid upon an epic fable, makes use, and skilfully, of preternatural machinery. And here we will venture a vindication against an illustrious critic. The first suggestion to the banished Arcite of returning to Athens, comes to him in sleep. There is a slight invoking of the supernatural—at least of the fabulous. He dreams that Mercury appears, and announces to him an end of his woe at Athens. On awaking, he casts his eyes on a mirror, and sees that he is so changed with love-pining that he no longer knows himself—goes in disguise to Athens, offers himself to serve in the household of Emelie, and is accepted. Sir W. Scott blames this introduction of Mercury as needless, but let it be remembered:——

First, That this is introductory to far more important divine interpositions, is in keeping with them, and prepares the imagination for them.

Secondly, That, so managed, it is the least violent intervention of a god; the apparition being ambiguous between a natural dream and a real divine manifestation: an ambiguity which, by the by, is quite after the antique. So, Mercury appears to Æneas in a dream in the Fifth Book of the Æneid: and compare Hector's Ghost, &c.

Thirdly, That a psychological fact may be understood as here "lively shadowed:"—namely, that active purposes have often their birth during the mystery of sleep; and it would be a very felicitous poetical expression of this phenomenon to turn the oracular suggestion of the soul into a deity—*Sua cuique* DEUS *fit dira cupido*.

Fourthly, It is completely probable, that the fancy of a believer in Mercury would actually shape his own dreaming thought into the suitable deity.—The vision is lightly touched by Chaucer, and gracefully translated by Dryden. The classical inventions throughout appear to be very much from Boccaccio; but the poetry of the relation Chaucer's own.

Do you wish to see Dryden in his majesty? Look here:—

"But in the dome of mighty Mars the red,

With different figures all the sides were spread.
This temple, less in form, with equal grace,
Was imitative of the first in Thrace:
For that cold region was the loved abode,
And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.
The landscape was a forest wide and bare,
Where neither beast nor human kind repair;
The fowl that scent afar, the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old,
Headless the most, and hideous to behold;
A rattling tempest through the branches went,
That stripp'd them bare, and one sole way they bent.
Heaven froze above severe, the clouds congeal,
And through the crystal vault appear'd the standing hail.
Such was the face without; a mountain stood
Threat'ning from high, and overlook'd the wood;
Beneath the lowering brow, and on a bent,
The temple stood of Mars armipotent;
The frame of burning steel, that cast a glare
From far, and seem'd to thaw the freezing air. [Pg 643]
A straight long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls, and horror overhead;
Thence issued such a blast and hollow roar,
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door;
In through that door, a northern light there shone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.
The gate was adamant, eternal frame!
Which, hew'd by Mars himself, from Indian quarries came,
The labour of a God; and all along
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it strong.
A ton about was every pillar there;
A polish'd mirror shone not half so clear;
There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought,
And midwife Time the ripen'd plot to murder brought.
There the red Anger dared the pallid Fear;
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer;
Soft-smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown;
The assassinating wife, the household fiend;
And, far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.
On t'other side, there stood Destruction bare,
Unpunish'd Rapine, and a waste of war;
Contest, with sharpen'd knives, in cloisters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace,
And bawling infamy in language base,
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the place.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair,
With eyes half closed, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breathed his sullen soul away.
In midst of all the dome Misfortune sate,
And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,
And Madness laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd complaint on theft, and cries of blood.
There was the murder'd corpse in covert laid,
And violent death in thousand shapes display'd,
The city to the soldiers' rage resign'd,
Successless wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forced on rocky shores,
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars;
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars his nature, flame and steel;
The gasping charioteer beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruin'd house that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls.
The whole division that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains,
Were there; the butcher, armourer, and smith,
Who forges sharpen'd faulchions, or the scythe.

The scarlet conquest on a tower was placed
With shouts, and soldiers' acclamations graced;
A pointed sword hung threat'ning o'er his head,
Sustain'd but by a slender twine of thread.
There saw I Mars his Ides, the Capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall;
The last Triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love:
These, and a thousand more, the Fane adorn,
Their fates were painted ere the men were born;
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force [Pg 644]
Of the red star, in his revolving course.
The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,
All sheathed in arms, and gruffly look'd the God:
Two geomantic figures were display'd
Above his head, a warrior and a maid,
One when direct, and one when retrograde."

"The Knight's Tale, the longest and most laboured of Chaucer's stories, possesses a degree of regularity which might satisfy the most severe critic. It is true that the honour arising from thence must be assigned to the more ancient bard, who had himself drawn his subject from an Italian model; but the high and decided preference which Dryden has given to this story, although somewhat censured by Trapp, enables us to judge how much the poet held an accurate combination of parts, and coherence of narrative, essentials of epic poetry." This is in Sir Walter's happiest natural vein; not so the astounding passage that follows it. "*That a classic scholar* like Trapp should think the plan of the Knight's Tale equal to that of the Iliad, *is a degree of candour not to be hoped for*; but surely to an unprejudiced reader, a story which exhausts in its conclusion all the interest which it has excited in its progress; which, when terminated, leaves no question to be asked, no personage undisposed of, and no curiosity unsatisfied, *is abstractedly considered more gratifying than the history of a few weeks of a ten years' war, commenced long after the siege had begun, and ending long before the city was taken*!" Why, is not this the true and magnificent praise of the Iliad, that from the heart of the immense war it has taken out a story of individual interest, which begins where your curiosity asks, and where your sympathy finds repose? Achilles—his quarrel with Agamemnon—his loss of Patrocles—his vengeance on Hector—accomplished when he willingly relinquishes the body to burial? That is the integrity of an epic fable, which employs the Ten Years' War, not for its subject, but for the illimitable field in which its gigantic subject moves. He was the greatest of the poets, who knew how to make the storms, rising and falling, in the single breast of the goddess-born *more* to you, his hearer, than the war which has encamped a hundred thousand Greeks in siege before the imperial city of Priam. From a great poet, the most Homeric of modern poets—what a judgment on the Iliad! Trapp's words are—"Novimus judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam Chauceri pulchro sane illo, et admodum laudando, nimirum quod non modo vere epicum sit, sed Iliada etiam atque Æneada æquet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore viri illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissisimam critices normam exactas: *illo judice, id plerumque optimum est, quod nunc præ manibus habet, et in quo nunc occupatur*." Perfectly true. What says Dryden? "It is of the epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the 'Ilias' or the 'Æneid.' The story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various, and the disposition full as artful, only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up seven years at least." Godwin says truly, "This eulogium must be acknowledged to be written in a spirit of ridiculous and impertinent exaggeration." And he then says as truly, that it is "full of novelty and surprise, is every where alive, comprises the most powerful portrait of chivalry that was perhaps ever believed, and possesses every thing in splendour and in action that can most conspicuously point out the scenes of the narrative to the eye of the reader." Dryden's version is indeed what Warton has pronounced it to be—"the most animated and harmonious piece of versification in the English language."

If you ask what reconciles you to the prevalent confusion of manners in this noble poem, it is the earnest simple spirit with which the Knight goes on relating as if he believed every word. It is, as we said, with Chaucer as with Shakspeare. Shakspeare mixes times of the world, and we bear it. Iachimo, a complete modern Italian—a more courtly Iago—serves under [Pg 645]
Lucius, general to some emperor—we forget which, if we ever knew—of old Rome; and beguiles, to the death almost, that Posthumus Leonatus—a Celt, by the by, with two Latin names—to whom Jupiter—not exactly the supreme deity of the Celto-British Pantheon—descends in actual presence. We, the auditors, or the readers, meanwhile, breathe no whisper of doubt or dissatisfaction. Why should we? We believe with eye, and ear, and imagination, and heart; and are as fain of our wildly-compounded—*real-unreal*—dream, as the birds are of the dawning. Hamlet, born and bred in the court of our own Elizabeth, and abruptly called up to Town, on the point of graduating with honours at Oxford, is shown to our credulous apprehension rooted upon a soil and in a century when and where there were no human shapes to be met with but bloodthirsty Vikings and invulnerable Berserkers. And we take all in excellent part. Why shall we not? We gain past all computation by the slight intellectual concession. Besides, we cannot well help ourselves; for we are not the Masters. The enchanter is the Master:—who sets us down, not after the saying of Horace, now in

Greece and now in Britain—but in Britain and in Greece at one and the same moment.

Shakspeare commingles widely divided times; and why, two hundred years before him, shall not Chaucer? It requires practice to read Chaucer. Not only do you need familiarizing to a form of the language, which is not your own, but much more to a simplicity of style, which at first appears to you like barenness and poverty. It seems meagre. You miss too much the rich and lavish colours of the later time. Your eye is used to gorgeousness and gaudiness. The severe plainness of the old manner wants zest for you. But, when you are used to Chaucer, can accept his expression, and think and feel with him, this hinderance wears off. You find a strong imagination—a gentle pathos—no lack of accumulation, where needed—but the crowding is always of effective circumstances or images—a playfulness, upon occasion, even in serious writing—but the special characteristic of the style is, that the word is always to the purpose. He amply possesses his language, and his sparing expression is chosen, and never inadequate—never indigent. His rule is, that for every phrase there be matter; and narrative or argument is thus constantly progressive. He does not appear to be hurried out of himself by the heat of composition. His good understanding completely goes along with him, and weighs every word.

Dryden's rendering of Chaucer is a totally distinct operation from his Englishing of Virgil—Homer—Lucretius—Juvenal—Ovid. And you are satisfied that it should be so. He could not transfer these poets, accomplished in art, and using their language in an age of its perfection, with *too* close a likeness of themselves. He translates because the language is unknown to his presumed reader. This is but half his motive with Chaucer. The language would be more easily got over; but the mind is of another age, and that is less accessible—more distant from us than the obsolete dialect. We are contented to have the style of that day translated into the style of our own. Is this a dereliction of poetical principle? Hardly. The spirited and splendid verse and language of Dryden have given us a new poem. Why should our literature have forborne from so enriching herself? Hear Dryden himself.

> "But there are other judges, who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion. They suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language, and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion as that excellent person whom I mentioned, the late Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr Cowley despised him. My lord dissuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it some years before his death,) and his authority prevailed so far with me as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him; yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of writer be to be understood, then as his language grows obsolete his thoughts must grow obscure. [Pg 646]
>
> '*Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere; cadentque*
> *Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,*
> *Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi!*
>
> "When an ancient word, for its sound and significancy, deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed. Customs are changed, and even statutes are silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument—that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty by the innovation of words—in the first place, not only their beauty but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion—that is, in all translations; but the sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed, when it is scarce intelligible, and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer, so as to understand him perfectly! And if imperfectly, then with less profit and no pleasure. It is not for the use of some old Saxon friends that I have taken these pains with him—let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes who understand sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go further, and dare to add, that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally. But in this I may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them, who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up as misers do their granddam gold, only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him any where for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing without him. *Facile est inventis addere* is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have

deserved a greater."

You are an Englishman, and a scholar in your mother-tongue. Good! You have dabbled, it may be, in Anglo-Saxon, Alfred's English. It is all very well. You read Chaucer easily. We congratulate you. You will, we hope, love the speech, and the soul, and the green, grassy mould of old England all the better. We praise you for searching England near and far, high and low. Do this heartily; do this understandingly; and you are excellently engaged. But do not grudge your next neighbour, who is merely a modern Englishman—a thorough good-fellow of one, however—*his* Chaucer, in a tongue and manner that he can read without stepping out of himself—his Chaucer, for his possession of whom he thanks Dryden, and from his grateful heart ejaculates "glorious John!"

MAYNOOTH.

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It is due to the character of this Journal, unflinching in its Conservative politics through one entire stormy generation, that, in any great crisis of public interest, or in any fervent strife of public opinion, it should utter its voice strongly; under the shape of a protest and a parting testimony to the truth, where the case practically may be hopeless; under the shape of a hearty effort, co-operating with other efforts, where the case is *not* hopeless. There is nothing more depressing to patriotic honour and loyalty than the cowardice of despondency, even when a cause has touched the very brink of defeat; and we believe that no spectacle of firmness is more naturally congenial to the temper of our countrymen, than the fidelity which still makes signal of its affection in circumstances desperate for resistance, and which in mortal extremities will not relax its hold from a cause once conscientiously adopted. Do we insinuate by this that the anti-Maynooth cause looks desperate? Our trust is otherwise. But if it were, what we say is, that not the less the duty remains sacred of hoping after all light of encouragement seems to have departed. This in any case; whilst, in the present, that duty is trebly sacred, because a whole succession of objects will remain upon which our future hopes must retreat, even if this foremost intrenchment should be forced. Maynooth will be no *solitary* aggression on the great cause of Protestanism: that carried, others will rapidly follow: their "aspiring heads" are already above the horizon; and it is necessary to defend the first line in a spirit of gaiety and confidence, were it only that the second line and the third may not be abandoned under the contagion of dismay.

Of late this Journal has a good deal retired from the strife of politics. Our readers must not misunderstand this. It was not through any treachery to that duty of hope which we have been insisting on as sacred: it was through a change in the public rather than in ourselves. Ireland had for some time narrowed itself into Mr O'Connell; domestic feuds had dwindled into the corn question. Neither of these subjects, it is true, was so utterly exhausted that we could not have found something new to say. But by the intolerable persecution of much speaking and much writing upon two wearisome topics, the public attention at last fell into a mere lethargy, from which it could not be roused to vibrate or react under any amount of stimulation. The audience fell away to nothing as the garrulity of the speakers increased; the public patience languished as its abusers multiplied. Now, however, Ireland is again restored to us as a fountain of interest under a new and most agitating impulse. Never, for many years, has the public mind fermented with so uncontrollable a fervour. Ascendency upon one field at least for Popery is now felt to be making a forward rush; the balance of the constitutional forces, for a government essentially Protestant, is threatened with overthrow; and, if this Maynooth endowment prospers, Protestantism will receive a deadly wound in the empire which is, and *has* been, and by Providence was appointed to be, its main bulwark.

In speaking to this question, it is our purpose to array briefly before the reader its gravest aspects; to press upon his attention one or two which have been entirely neglected; to do this with the utmost rapidity that is consistent with distinct explanation of our meaning; but all along, with no purpose of rousing angry prejudices, or appealing to any one sentiment that a candid man of any one party could describe as bigotry. We disapprove entirely, as a needless irritation to Roman Catholic feelings, of going back to the Revolution of 1829. If that great event were now pending, instead of being sixteen years in the rear, it would be our duty, at any cost of possible offence in any quarter, to speak of it as our conscience might require us to speak. But, as things are, this would be to offer a wanton provocation, utterly useless for any practical end, and tending towards the continued alienation of many [Pg 648] excellent fellow-subjects. Wrong or right, the policy of "Emancipation" has triumphed; the thing is done, and cannot be undone; we must now adapt ourselves to a system which has become the law of the land. It is in such a case as with the past errors of a man's life: if he is wise, he will not suffer his energies to waste themselves upon unavailing regrets. To revoke the irrevocable being an effort so manifestly childish, he will apply himself to an effort which is rational, manly, and full of hope—to the correcting or mitigating of those consequences from his errors which are most threatening for his future welfare.

Social forms often show the same principle of vitality and reproduction; and, after the

deadliest convulsions, put forward corresponding tendencies to restoration of their natural health and equilibrium. It is one, indeed, amongst the tests of excellence in any political constitution, that it can stand very rude shocks, and that it has internal resources for healing all injuries not organically destructive. Catholic emancipation, whatever might be thought of it if viewed from a station of unlimited power to choose or to reject, must now be reconciled to our minds for better and worse; and in peaceable times will gradually adjust itself to the working of our political system, settling into the general economy of the machine. But this Maynooth endowment tends to other results. The steps are inevitable from this centre to the very outermost periphery that bounds the ambition of Irish Popery; viz. to absolute ascendancy for itself, to absolute overthrow of Protestantism in Ireland, and therefore to ultimate separation of that island from the British empire, so far as the dreadful effort is concerned. For we must not overlook the modern symptoms of the case. Formerly, as in 1782 for instance, Ireland dreamed not of any further advantages than such as could be extorted from the occasional difficulties of England under foreign hostility, and such as should be sanctioned by English parliamentary concession. But under the long agitation of Mr O'Connell a new party has grown up, which regards Ireland—however inferior for aggressive war—as strong enough, by means of its excessive population, and the local advantages inherent in every *possessor* of the soil, for throwing off the connexion with England. Independence, on the footing of a separate nation, is seriously aimed at by the young blood of Ireland; not with a view to any imaginary advantages from development of native resources or alleviation of taxes, but on the single excitement of nationality. And by this ultimate object, as undoubtedly a favoured object working underground and extensively in the Ireland of 1845, we must measure the tendencies of an endowment conferred by Parliament upon the Popish religion.

Rightly to judge of any favour or privilege whatever conceded to Popery, we must consider the position of Popery with respect to the altered prospects of the world as it now is, and the duties of Protestantism, permanently as well as specially, in relation to the changed and changing attitude of our own particular crisis. But these being the capital aspects of the case, we will first of all notice those more manageable and rememberable topics which are flying abroad upon the popular breath amongst our antagonists.

It is alleged that we, the confederate opponents of the grant, are not natural allies. Being heterogeneous, our opposition cannot be cordial. Why not? If comprehensive unanimity, and undistinguishing unanimity, were an indispensable condition towards a legitimate confederacy, then it would be an impossibility that any combined action of men (which is one main purpose of human society) should ever arise. Some of us think it a high duty of the state to endow and favour that form of Christianity which the predominant opinion (as collected from the *total* empire) pronounces the true one. This is our own creed; and it is our further belief that this duty is strengthened where not only the general opinion has pronounced itself strongly for that particular religious system, but where also the history and the institutions of the land have unfolded themselves for centuries, and through memorable struggles, under the inspiration of that system, conforming to it, and receiving its impress. On the other hand, considerable masses of those who now pull together with ourselves, are permanent protesters against all state endowments of any one particular church; and not only so, but they object to any possible mode of connexion between the government and the functions of ecclesiastical bodies. What of that? Those are most thoughtless, or else incapable of self-control, who at such a moment of common peril remind us of differences utterly impertinent to the question. Can we not abstract? If we are in discord upon political points, are we not agreed upon the great interests of our common Protestantism? Why must we be in harmony further than as to the one vast cause which we jointly defend? Upon this logic, Whigs and Tories meeting upon the same deck must not unite to "sink, burn, and destroy" the enemies of their common country; or two households, Radical and Conservative, in the same village, must not work the same engine for the extinction of a fire which threatens every hearth. As to the case of those who oppose the grant *exclusively* on the principle of hostility to state endowments of religious bodies, all of us see clearly that they travel on our road no inch further than it leads to a private purpose of their own, and that they will violently wheel away from us at the point where our purposes begin to divide. But, in the mean time, our purposes at this moment, and for the instant result, do *not* divide; and their support is good for so much of the struggle as they are conscientiously able to share with us.

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But surely, say another class of objectors, though it is a pity that the Irish are not Protestants, it is better that they should have Popery for their form of religion than no religion at all. True. And if this were the alternative necessity, viz. that, Popery decaying, all religion must decay in Ireland; then we also should cordially support any *safe* mode (but not *this* mode) of raising the standard of education for the priestly instructors of Ireland. But we are not called upon to legislate for that dilemma. If, indeed, the case were that of a Popish regiment, it is clearly the duty of government to provide a Popish chaplain, and to see that he is properly qualified for his office; because, if you do not open a regular channel to Popish instructions, you are sure that both conscience and worldly honour, paramount principles for cherishing amongst soldiers, will lead them to withdraw from all other instructions. Not being Papists, the men will become practically infidels. But the case is far otherwise for the Irish people. Government is not summoned to provide any part of an improved equipage for an Irish religious establishment. That is done, or done sufficiently. Whether as Protestant or Catholic, every man has access to religious instructions and religious consolations. There is

no call to improve the quality of the priestly ministrations; for, considering the quality of the doctrines and usages which are essential to Popery, we do not believe that the Irish priesthood is much open to improvement as a machinery for carrying out its own indefeasible purposes. To raise the standard of respectability at Maynooth, would not alter the character of the creed which Maynooth teaches. And when it is said that, with a higher education, the Romish priesthood would be more likely to breed schism or incipient reformation within their own order, we doubt greatly as to the interpretation of the facts upon which that speculation is grounded. The Reformation, which shook the sixteenth century, did not arise, (as we see it alleged,) because Luther or Melanchthon was so much above the standard of monkish education. Men quite as extensively learned as they, and even more highly endowed by nature, had but the more passionately undertaken the cause of Papal Rome in consequence of those great advantages. Luther was strong in the strength of his forerunners. The men of Luther's age *inherited* the zeal and the light kindled by three centuries of growing truth. And what put the crest and plumage upon the aspiring hopes of that period, was the providential madness of Rome, and the towering altitude of her corruptions, which just then, from mercenary causes, soared aloft more audaciously than [Pg 650] ever before. In the present state of the Papal church, and under the new hopes which we shall point out further on, as just now opening upon her, it is more than ever improbable that any laxity of discipline at Maynooth, or in the general government internally of the Irish church, will be suffered to leave openings for heresies to arise. Essentially, Rome is aware that, for the next half century, beyond all the churches of earth, she will be a church militant. Escaping decay during that critical period from the immense diffusion of *general* knowledge, [but of knowledge not by any means concurrently connected with spiritual knowledge]—Rome is likely (as we shall soon argue) to take a prodigious bound forward. And if, on the other hand, any great fermentation of truth *should* commence in the Popish church of Ireland, and that a vacuum should thus be created, into which the priests could no longer carry their minstrations acceptably, that vacuum would be instantly filled by zealous Protestants. Such a change would be so far from leaving any part of the Irish poor denuded of spiritual aid, or in any way exposed to the risk of infidelity, (according to the objection,) that Protestant help would arise (we are well assured) in a ratio more than corresponding to a necessity that must naturally have been gradual in its development. And thus it would appear—that, by strengthening Maynooth, Government, so far from protecting the people against the chances of infidelity, would (in the case supposed) have been intercepting the fair chances of our own Protestant missions. Besides, that (according to a constant reproach of our antagonists, which they must not be allowed to forget exactly when it furnishes an argument inconvenient to themselves,) the *regular* clergy of the Irish Protestant establishment, having churches (as they insist) without congregations, will always compose a staff large enough to intercept any possible expansion of infidelity that could attend the declension of Popery through one generation at the least. Fully agreeing, therefore, that Popery is a blessing to Ireland by comparison with any risk of no religion at all, we deny firmly that she exposed to such a risk. And if unhappily she were, a most Irish mode of averting that risk it would be—to fortify the claims of Maynooth, that last asylum of unhallowed and fraudulent casuistry, a casuistry which, like the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, makes void the pure law of God.

But a more cogent objection at first sight to us, the opposers of the Maynooth grant, seems this: "In 1796 your party it was that originally proposed and founded any grant at all. If it was right then, it is right now. And, as to the increase from nine thousand pounds *per annum* to twenty-six thousand, that is a consideration for accountants rather than for statesmen; the sum cannot affect the principle."

Here are our answers; for there are more points to answer than one.

First, It is not true, or near to being true, that the sum at issue could not affect the principle concerned. Many are the cases in which the quantities of the objects concerned in acts entirely vary the qualities of the acts. The law itself, which professedly neglects trifles, [*de minimis nor curat lex*,] and which, in criminal cases, will not entertain a charge where the injury is below a certain money amount, shows how essential to the moral estimate of acts is the quantity of the value in issue. Money being power, quite as much as ever knowledge was power, and much less restrictedly so, there arises with the variations of the sum the largest range of variations in the interpretation of the understanding between the parties as to the intention of giver and receiver. That sum is a bribe, which, divided by ten, is a fair acknowledgment of services performed. That sum in other cases is an insult, which, being centupled, would be an honourable expression of distinguished merit. Nine thousand pounds might have been given, and (if we go back to the facts) really *was* given as a donation to an abject pauper; whilst an addition of seventeen thousand more may be accepted—and (if we consult the facts) *will* be accepted—in the haughty spirit of one who affects to regard as a testimony to his own merit what secretly he believes to be offered in trembling propitiation. It was Burke who suggested the first endowment of a Popish College; but how different are [Pg 651] acts nominally the same! *His* motives were the motives of a reflecting patriot; Sir Robert Peel's are the motives of a compromiser between adverse interests, whose heart, though honourable as regards intentions, does not prompt him to give a preponderating weight to either side, however opposed in principle. The *motives*, however, belong to our next head. At present, we are dealing with the money amount. It is alleged that seventeen thousand added to nine thousand can make no difference as to principle, and that all we, who reverence Burke and Pitt, are bound by their precedent. Now to that point the distinct answer is—that

the nine thousand of Burke and Pitt was given as an eleemosynary dole to a body too poor, and at that time too abject, in political consideration, to move jealousy in any quarter. But the sum now asked is very nearly threefold of that fixed by Mr Pitt, and (if we add the interest of the outfit for the new furniture, appointments, &c.) is *more* than threefold. The small sum was given as charity; was given as an *annual* vote; and the large one will be given (if it *is* given) as an endowment in perpetuity to a haughty political interest, to a corrival of Trinity college, to a body that *has* moved jealousy in every quarter, and finally, (which sickens us to recollect,) to a body that will have the audacity, in concert with Mr O'Connell, one year after every favour shall have been received, to disown it as a subject for gratitude—acknowledging it only as the pledge and monument of English panic.

Secondly, As to the motives, these grew out of the perils diffused by the French Revolution. The year 1797, which followed the suggestion of this pecuniary aid to the Irish priests, was the last year of Burke's life. In what light he viewed the contagion from the anti-social frenzy then spreading over Europe, may be seen from the oracular works through which he spoke his mind both in 1796 and 1797. He was profoundly impressed with the disorganizing tendencies of the principles, but still more of the licentious cravings for change, which from the centre of Paris had crept like a mist over the whole face of Europe. France was in a less tumultuous state then than in 1792-3-4; but, as respected Europe generally, the aspect of things was worse; because naturally the explosion of frenzy in Paris during the Reign of Terror, took a space of two or three years to reproduce and train the corresponding sympathies in other great capitals of the Continent. By 1797, the contagion was mature. Thence came the necessity for some *domestic* establishment where Irish priests should be educated: it was no longer safe that they should resort to St Omers: both because the unsettled license of thinking upon all things established would form the very worst atmosphere for clerical sobriety; and more specifically because all the Jacobins of the time bore deadly hatred to England. The priests trained at St Omers, would in fact have become a corps of spies, decoys, and conspirators in the service of France. The rebellion of '98 read a commentary on this text. And no policy, therefore, could have been wiser than to intercept such a result by a periodical grant to Maynooth; whilst the requisite dependency of the institution was secured by making the grant annual. Now, however, not only is it proposed to make it permanent, which (together with the enlarged amount) totally changes its character, but a greater change still is—that the original reason for any grant at all, the *political* reason, has entirely passed away. The objection to a continental education may be strong as regards the convenience of the Irish; but the inconvenience has no longer any relation to ourselves. No air in Europe can be tainted with a fiercer animosity to England than the air of Ireland. In this respect the students of Maynooth *cannot* be more perilously situated. Whilst we all know by the Repeal rent and the O'Connell yearly tribute, that the Irish Papists could easily raise three times the money demanded for Maynooth, if they were as willing to be just in a service of national duty as they are to be liberal in a service of conspiracy.

Thirdly, Connected with this question of *motives*, arises another aspect of the case. A college, it may be said, cannot do much in the way of modifying the political temper of a country, whether for the better or the worse. If disaffection to the government prevails in Ireland, that may argue no participation in such a spirit by the rules of Maynooth. But in another direction, Maynooth cannot plead innocence. The O'Connell agitation would at any rate, with or without Maynooth, have distempered all public loyalty amongst the lower classes. *They* could present no resistance to influences operating too strongly upon their nationality. But the priestly order, if originally by their training at all adorned with the graces proper to their profession, would not have fallen under the influence of acts so entirely mobbish. Yet we know that by no other engine has Mr O'Connell so powerfully operated on the Irish mind as through the agency of the priests. Not O'Connell moulded *them* for his service, but they presented themselves ready moulded to *him*; and with exceptions so rare as to argue a more extensive secularisation of the priestly mind throughout Ireland, than has ever been witnessed in the strongholds of Popery. This early preoccupation by a worldly taint of the clerical mind amongst the Irish Catholics, could not possibly have reached an excess so entirely without parallel in Europe, unless chiefly through profligate systems of training at Maynooth. In all Ireland there was found with difficulty any specimen of the simple rural pastor (so common in France) who withdrew himself from political strife. The priest who considered his spiritual character degraded by partisanship, (no matter in what service,) was nowhere to be heard of. Wherever Mr O'Connell wanted an agent, an intriguer, an instrument for rousing the people, he was sure of one in the parish priest. Now this fact is decisive upon the merits of Maynooth. It matters not what latitude may be allowed to variety of political views; no politics of *any* sort can be regarded as becoming to a village pastor. But allow him to be a politician, how could a priest become a tool without ruin to his spiritual character? Yet this is the Maynooth, training its *alumni* to two duties, the special duty of living *in procinctu* and in harness for every assault upon the Protestant establishment of their country, and for the unlimited duty of taking orders in any direction from Mr O'Connell—this is the Maynooth to which, for such merits, we have been paying nine thousand pounds annually for exactly fifty years, and are now required to pay three times as much for ever.

[Pg 652]

But from these narrower questions, directed to circumstantialities local and transitory, we wish to draw the reader's attention upon certain other questions larger and more philosophic. And, first of all, let us say a word upon one point continually raised, and not at

all limited to Irish cases; viz. the latitude allowed by conscience to a Protestant in promoting the welfare of Papists, where it happens that the personal service is associated unavoidably with some service to the Popish cause. As individuals, or even as a collective body in the commonwealth, every liberal man would wish to protect and to favour his Catholic fellow-citizens, if he could do so without aiding them in their natural purpose of making proselytes. There are cases undoubtedly in which these mixed advantages for the person and for the creed would so blend as to offer a difficult problem in casuistry to a delicate conscience. Sir Robert Peel in the final debate on the second reading of the Maynooth bill, attempted to throw dust in the eyes of the House upon the principle concerned in cases of this nature; and even if he had been right in his argument, we believe that he would have gained little for the particular question concerned in the Maynooth grant. He argued, by way of showing how untenable was the notion that we could not conscientiously support a religion which we believed erroneous, that upon that hypothesis we should cut the ground from below our feet in the mode of supporting our own religion. The law of England insists upon the Dissenters paying church-rates and tithes to the English church; now, argued Sir Robert, the Dissenter might turn round and plead, in bar of this claim, the English churchman's demur to supporting Popery by supporting Maynooth. But the case accurately stated is—that no English churchman ever *did* demur to paying his quota towards Maynooth; on the contrary, [Pg 653] he has paid it quietly for fifty years. What some few churchmen *have* demurred to was—not paying after the law had said "*pay*," but legislating for the payment; passing the annual vote for the payment. Now, if a Dissenter happens to be in Parliament, he is quite at liberty to make the same demur as to church-rates; but he makes his demur in the wrong quarter if he addresses it to the collector. So again, as regards the increased grant, and the permanent grant to Maynooth, if it passes the two Houses, we shall all of us pay our share without scruple; neither will our consciences be at all wounded, for we pay under the coercion of a distress-warrant, contingent upon our refusing to pay. It is the suffering the law to pass, without opposing it in one way or other, that *would* wound our consciences. And, again, the English law does not require a Dissenter to concur in the propriety of paying church-rates, it requires him only to pay them.

But we Protestants, in paying to Maynooth, supposing that we made ourselves parties to the payment by consenting to the bill, feel that we should be wilfully abetting the propagation of error. It is true that the Papist finds himself in the same necessity of contributing to what he regards as heresy by contributing to the support of the Protestant Establishment. But if a Protestant resorts to a country, or acquiesces in a country where Popery is established, he does not complain that he falls under the relation of a tributary to a system which did not seek *him*, but which *he* sought.

There are other casuistical points, arising out of these practical relations to systems of religious belief, which are often unskilfully mingled with cases like this of Maynooth; but they cannot disguise the broad distinction between the principle in that question and the principle in the question of Catholic emancipation. There the object was purely negative, viz. to liberate a body of men from certain incapacities. Successive penal laws had stripped the Papist of particular immunities and liberties. These were restored by emancipation. A defect was made good. But no *positive* powers were created by that measure. Now, on the other hand, when a large revenue is granted, (as by the pending Maynooth grant,) this is in effect to furnish artillery for covering advances upon hostile ground. This gives positive powers to Popery for propagating its errors. That Sir Robert Peel should hold such a mode of collusion with falsehood to be lawful—would be astonishing, were it not that he manifestly confounds the case of promoting, a law by votes, or any mode of active support, which is a true and substantial assent, with the case of paying under a demand of the law. Now this is no assent at all, any more than the surrendering your person passively to the arrest of a police-officer is an assent to the justice of the accusation, or to the reasonableness of the law under which you will be tried. To pay on the demand of the law is no assent at all, but an abridged process of yielding to the physical coercion of the law. You are aware of the steps through which the compulsory action of the law will travel, and it cannot make any difference as to the principle of your submission, that, for the sake of saving time, you yield to the first step, instead of waiting for the last. It is, therefore, no duty of a Protestant, in any circumstances, to abet Popery by any mode of support, but only seems to be so by confounding cases essentially different.

Next arises for notice, the very interesting question on the prospects of Popery at this moment and its chances of a great restoration, by means of combination with various forms of human power. One cause of error upon this subject lies in the notion that conspicuous obscurations of civil grandeur, jurisdiction, and wealth, which Popery has suffered of late years in almost every state, have therefore, been absolute losses of spiritual power. On the contrary, these losses are likely to strengthen Popery. Precisely in the most bigoted of Popish kingdoms—Austria, Bavaria, Spain, and Portugal—the Popish religion has been shorn, during the last fifty years, of it most splendid temporalities. The suppression of the Inquisition in Spain, &c., the extinction of religions houses on so vast a scale, the limitation [Pg 654] of the Papal rights in the disposal of Bishops' sees, the confiscation or sale of church lands, to an amount unsuspected in Protestant countries—these and other convulsions have shaken the Papacy in a memorable degree. But it is certain that the vigour and vitality of Popery, in modes more appropriate to a spiritual power, are reviving. Popery has benefited by the removal, however harshly executed at the moment, of enormous abuses connected sometimes with wealth, sometimes only with the reputation of wealth, but in either case

with a weight of popular odium. The vessel has righted and become buoyant by the sacrifice of masts and rigging. A spirit of activity has again manifested itself in many directions. And with this has concurred a new body of hopes, arising from social accidents in America. Throughout the great central valley of North America, and along the line of the most recent inroads into the western forests, a great opening has arisen, of late years, for throwing a network of spiritual power over a vast territory that is rapidly unfolding its power and wealth. Through this opening has poured, for some years like a spring-tide, a huge host of Catholic missionaries. Such was the extensive demand for spiritual ministration amongst a population multiplying to excess, that *any* order of Christian clergy would have been welcome. Here is a basis laid for future magnificent development of Popish power. Rome itself has been stirred and agitated with the prospect of seeing its energies revive, and of reaping a malicious retribution by entering into combination with that Teutonic race, from whom, during the last three centuries, she had received her deadliest wounds. But a doubt arises, whether this very combination will not be more likely to impress a totally new character upon the Papal religion. The Saxon energy will be likely to strangle Popery, rather than Popery in the long run to pervert that energy. In England itself, through Oxford, unexpected auguries have dawned upon Rome, of a new birth for the pomps of Papal Rome. And exactly at this crisis of hope and unlimited anticipation, the splendid endowment of Maynooth, solemnly proposed and vigorously pressed forward by a cautious minister of England, coinciding also with the spasmodic throes of the Irish people to establish an independent nationality, have doubtless spread through the councils of the Vatican as much of what will probably be found visionary expectation, as through the hearts of our own Protestant countrymen, they have spread of what equally, we trust, will be converted by this national insurrection against Maynooth into visionary fear.

Another point we are bound to notice, as error generally diffused—though shocking to just logic. It is said, by way of reproach to ourselves—the England of this day—that we took all the splendid endowments of Oxford, Cambridge, and so forth, from Roman Catholics; which being so, we are bound to make some restoration of the spoils to the Catholics of this day. Was there ever heard more complex absurdity? Mark its stages:

1st, If you *had* taken them from Catholics of the 16th century, how would *that* translate any interest of property in the institutions to people of the nineteenth century, simply as professing the same faith? We took various spoils about 1780 from Hyder Ali, the sultan of Mysore: in 1799 we took others more costly from his son Tippoo: will that entitle some prince of Turkestan, or Bokhara, in the year 2000, to claim these spoils on the plea that he is a Mahometan? An interest of inheritance would thus be vested in the emptiest of abstractions.

2d, They were *not* Catholics, in a proper sense, who founded the chief colleges at Oxford, &c. The Roman Catholic faith was not developed fully at the period when many were founded: it could not be developed even as a *religious system*, until after the great polemic writers, on the one side and the other, had drawn out the differential points of doctrine. And when partly developed, or showing a tendency to certain conclusions, it was not fully *settled* until the Council of Trent. Next, as a *political interest*, it was not at all developed until between the beginning of Luther and the termination of Trent. Impossible it was that it should; for until a counter-pole existed, until an antagonist interest had arisen, the relations [Pg 655] of Popery, whether political or religious, must have been indeterminate: as a kingdom surrounded by deserts and trackless forests, cannot have its frontier line ascertained.

3dly, If they had been Catholics, in the *fullest* sense, who founded our Universities, it was not *as* Catholics that they founded them, but as great families who had accumulated property under our system of laws; and secondly, as natives of the land. They were *able* to found universities, because they had been protected by English laws; they were *willing* to found universities, because they were of English birth, and loved their native land. The Countess of Richmond, for instance, or Henry VI., in his great foundations at Eton or Cambridge, or Baliol at Oxford, did not think of Popery under any relation to heresy. They thought of it, so far as *at all* they thought of it, in its general abstraction of spiritual loveliness; and under that shape it differed not at all from the Protestantism of the English church. The temper in which they acted, is a pledge that they thought of man, and the children of man, not in relation to those points in which they differed, but to those above all in which they agreed. They were compatriots of the islanders—they loved knowledge—and in those characters, not as Papists, they founded colleges.

4thly, Supposing that in the plenary and controversial sense they *had* been Catholics who founded our great mediæval institutions; supposing, next, that they had founded them as Catholics, and *because* they were Catholics; supposing, also, that from them, in that aërial character of "*persons holding a creed*," any rights of inheritance could, by leave of Thomas Aquinas, be imagined metaphysically to descend; lastly, and notwithstanding all this, their establishments had passed into the hands of other trustees by due course of law—that is, by legislation under the countersign of king, lords, and commons; that is, by the same title under which any man whatever, Papist or Protestant, holds any property whatever. Are we obliged to settle an annuity upon A B, because he can trace himself lineally to a man who held our lands under Edward the Confessor? Yet, by the supposition, A B *can* prove a relation in blood to the ancient owner, though none at all to the lands. But the Catholics can show no relation whatever either to the foundations at Oxford, or to the blood of the

founder. Upon this conceit, if a man could trace his blood to an ancient Druid, he would have a *lien* in law upon all the oak-trees in the island! *Risum teneatis?*

Whilst this, however, is a mere vapour of the speculative brain, there is a final absurdity, less showy in its extravagance, yet in practice more misleading. We cannot allow ourselves, consistently with the rapid movement of our sketch, to do justice to this fallacy; but we will indicate its outline. Look back to all the pro-Catholic journals for the last forty years, and you will find it every where appealed to and relied on as a substantial argument—that, in many states on the Continent, Catholics and Protestants sit as assessors on the same bench of judgment; act harmoniously as officers, commanders and commanded, in the same regiment; meet daily as fellow-students in the same schools and colleges. The inference is—that mere partisanship, deeper bigotry, and no other cause whatever, has made it difficult or dangerous for English Protestants and Catholics to effect the same coalition. Having no room left for a fuller exposure of this delusive representation, we shall here content ourselves with an illustrative allusion or two. The Moors were expelled from Spain before any English Catholics became the objects (having wilfully *made* themselves the objects) of something like proscription under English laws. The chasm between the Moors of this day and their ancestors stretches over more than three centuries. Has that rent closed? Have those wounds healed? Is the reader aware of the figurative language, under the symbol of house-door keys, still hanging over Moorish hearths, &c., by which, to this hour, the Moors cherish for their children's ears deep vindictive remembrances of their ancient habitations in Spain, and their haughty vision of a bloody re-entrance? Does the reader imagine that an invasion by Moors of Italy or France would move under the same burning impulses as an invasion of Spain? The return of the Moors to Spain would be like the *recoil* of a catapulta. [Pg 656] And, allowing for higher civilization, of the same deep memorial character would have been any re-entry of Roman Catholics upon *power* in England, had it been less gradual than the prudence of Parliaments made it. The deep outrages of Catholics upon English rights, under the troubled movements amongst the thrones of Europe during the century of strife, which made the temptations to treason irresistible for vassals of Rome, forced from the Protestants such stern reactions, as have left with both parties an abiding sense of profound injuries. Attainders to be blotted out, judgments to be reversed, burning records of shame for persons and for creed, sculptured in our laws, to trample under foot, are likely to stimulate the malice (calling itself the retribution) of lineal descendants, even if there were no *estates to reclaim*. And surely those fantastic persons who think, that merely to bear the name or classification of "*Catholic*" must confer upon one, pleading no shadow of a connexion with the founder of a college, some claim to a dividend upon its funds, are not entitled to hold cheap the very different sort of claims, resting upon acknowledged heirship, which are now lying amongst the muniments of thousands. It is a record of the political imbecility, it is to the high *disgrace*, of the continental states, that with most of them Catholics and Protestants *could* meet in this insipid harmony: it was a harmony resembling the religious toleration of people—tolerant, because careless of *all* religion. Had they, like ourselves, possessed a constitution of slow growth, a representative system, a popular mind, all stimulating to noble political feuds,—in that case they would have had high principles like ourselves; they, like ourselves, would have faced the action and reaction of endless contest; and their political progress, like ours, would have been written on every page of their history and legislation. It was because they slept and snored for ages with no instincts of fiery political life, that they were able, in modern times—Catholics and Protestants—to fraternise in effeminate raptures of maudlin sentimentality.

We apply this last topic specially to our conclusion:—In pointing to the yet unappreciated difference between our own feuds with popery and those of other nations—which foreign feuds, at the very best, (if they rose at all to the grandeur of civil strife,) moved through butchery and violence, as in France, not through laws and scaffolds—moved like the uproars of Afghans, not like the grand tribunitial contests of ancient Rome—we could only indicate a feature or two of the inexhaustible case. And naturally it was to England that we pointed. But now—but by this Maynooth revolution, it is not England that is primarily menaced. Ireland it is upon which that evil will descend, which, by the wisdom of Parliament, backed by the protesting tumults of the people, did *not* descend on England. For England, Parliament was cautious and retarding in all its steps. The "return of the Heracleidæ" was by graduated movements; and, had it even been abrupt, a thousandfold greater were the resources for combined resistance of Protestants against combined reaction of Papists. But in Ireland, deeper are the vindictive remembrances, more recent are the deductions of claims to property, and louder the clamours for wide resumption; from massacre and counter massacre, from Cromwell, from Limerick, from Londondery, from Boyne, from Aughrim, the wounds are yet green and angry; and the hostile factions have never dissolved their array. This is the land into which a Moorish recoil is now threatened. The reader understands us to speak of a return—not for the physical men—but for the restored character of supremacy in which they will be able to act with power.

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Footnotes:

[1] *Etudes des Sciences Sociales.* Par J. C. Simonde de Sismondi. 3 vols. Paris, 1837.

[2] Viz.:—

In Ireland,	2,300,000
... England,	1,500,000
... Scotland,	200,000
	4,000,000

just a seventh of the whole inhabitants, who are now about 28,000,000.

[3] Committals for serious crime, in—

	England.	Scotland.	Ireland.	Total.	Population of Great Britain and Ireland.
1805,	4,605	89	3,600	8,284	15,800,000
1819,	14,254	1,380	13,251	28,885	20,600,000
1842,	31,369	3,884	21,352	56,605	27,300,000

—Porter's *Parl. Tables and Prog. of the Nation*, iii. 172, 227.

From this table it appears, that from 1805 to 1842 the population of the empire has advanced from 158 to 273—that is, increased about 70 *per cent*; while serious crime has increased from 8 to 56—that is, 700 per cent. Crime, therefore, has augmented ten times as fast as the number of the people.

[4] From χρημα—"money, riches."

[5] Nicolai, *dell' Agro Romano*, iii. 167-171. Sismondi's *Etudes Sociales*, ii. 46.

[6] *Ibid*, iii. 153. *Ib.*, ii. 44. This part of Sismondi's work, which will be found Vol. ii, pp. 1-74, is highly interesting. We may perhaps, at a future period, give a detached account of it, under the title of "The Campagna of Rome."

[7] The canal by which the waters of the river Guautitlan are carried through the mountains into the valley of Tula.

[8] The Mexican Ceres, goddess of maize.

[9] Tatli is an Aztec word, signifying father.

[10] Monkish legend.

[11] The dry season.

[12] The best pulque is that of Tacotitlan. Frijolos are a species of bean which grows in great perfection in the Chinampas, or swimming gardens upon the lake of Chalco.

[13] Tenochtitlan is the ancient name of the valley of Mexico. It is here used to designate the capital city.

[14] The *pique* or *nigua* is a small but exceedingly noxious insect that abounds in some parts of Mexico, especially in the low grounds of Vera Cruz and Acapulco. It bores holes in the skin and lays its eggs there, causing a violent irritation and sometimes dangerous sores.

[15] A term used in mining operations. A rich vein of silver, or, generally, success in mining.

[16] In Mexican houses of the more opulent class, a woman-servant is kept for the sole purpose of preparing and baking the tortillas or maize cakes. She is called a tortillera.

[17] *Que se tenga por blanco.* Let him consider himself white. The usual form of the emancipation certificates which the Mexican Audiencia was accustomed to sell at high prices to the coloured races. These certificates were originally confined to the quadroons and quinteroons, and other castes that had only a small admixture of Indian blood.

[18] To dine with St Antonio—on bread and water.

[19] La Virgen de los Remedios was the especial patroness of the Spaniards in Mexico. Her picture was found by one of Cortes' soldiers, and she proved herself on various occasions a warm partisan of the Spaniards. During the fight of Otumba, she was seen to hover over the Spanish troops and scatter dust in the eyes of the Indians. In other battles she also fought against the Mexicans. The Spaniards, out of gratitude, built her a chapel. Suddenly, however, to their exceeding sorrow, her portrait disappeared. Half a year elapsed, and then an Indian, in stripping an aloe plant, found the picture between leaf and stem. It was carried in triumph, and so grateful did the Virgin show herself for this attention, that she sent an abundant rain, which happened just then to be greatly needed. In consideration of the

innumerable miracles she had wrought in their favour, the Spaniards chose her for their patroness, and gave her the command of their armies. She struggled valiantly against the Virgin of Guadalupe, whom the Mexicans had elected to be their leader.

The original and miraculously discovered picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe is preserved in her magnificent church, two leagues from Mexico. It is on coarse bast, canvass made up of the fibres of the agave, but in a magnificent frame, and was found soon after the conquest of Mexico on a barren hill, by an Indian whom strains of heavenly music attracted thither. The Indian related the circumstance to the archbishop, who refused to credit it; whereupon the discoverer repaired to the hill a second time, and saw the harmonious picture lying amongst a heap of roses. It spoke to him, and commanded him to return to the archbishop, which he did, and now found him as eager to believe as he had before been incredulous. The prelate greeted the picture with the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe; a chapel was built, and this Virgin was finally promoted to be patroness of Mexico. Her complexion being of a brown colour, she was considered to watch more particularly over the aborigines.

When Hidalgo, after raising the standard of revolt, was excommunicated by the archbishop, and in danger of being abandoned by his followers, he had the fortunate idea of placing himself and his army under the guardianship of the Virgin of Guadalupe. An enormous banner was got ready, with a painting of that Virgin upon it; she was declared field-marshal and general-in-chief, pay allotted, and obedience sworn to her. She held her appointment for fourteen years—till 1824.

[20] White and blue were the colours of the ancient Mexicans and of the patriots. The Spaniards adopted them for the clothing of their executioners.

[21] The blue cloak was worn by the nobility, the brown by the lower and middling classes in Spain and Mexico.

[22] *Curly*—diminutive of Cornelius.

[23] The commencement of a common Irish benediction, *God and Mary and St Patrick be with (or bless) you!*

[24] A man concealing himself on arrest for debt is, in Ireland, familiarly said to be *on his keeping*, probably from his keeping or confining himself to the house when there is danger of the writ being executed.

[25] Abbrev. for Larry or Laurence.

[26] The length of a spade's-handle of ground. *Over a man's head*—i.e.—out-bidding the tenant in possession, by offering generally a larger rent for the land out of which he is about to be ejected.

[27] *Spell*—very short space of time, as long as it would take to spell a word.

[28] An achievement similar to that here described actually took place about the same period nearly on the same spot. It was planned and executed by two persons living at a town mentioned in the tale, and terminated in the instant death of the unlucky highwayman, whose body they placed in their vehicle, and brought back with them in an hour or two from the time they set out. In the present day, such a deed (thus premeditated) would be deservedly termed a rash and cruel act—the lawless and unprotected state of that country, however, at the time, led it to be considered—we believe—a laudable one.

[29] *Revelations of Spain.* By an English Resident.

[30] The Monk, too, has this characteristic, which is of dubious exposition. Tyrwhitt thinks that the meaning *may be*—"Eyes sunk deep in the head." Certainly a feature giving force and distinction to the physiognomy has been intended.

Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation has been corrected without note.

Other than the corrections noted by hover information, inconsistencies in spelling and hyphenation usage have been retained from the original text.

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