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THE MINISTERIAL MEASURES.

At length signal-guns of distress have been fired from the Liberal fleet. Albeit stoutly denying the existence of any extraordinary suffering in Ireland, Ministers have brought forward a measure, based upon the admission of a distress there much exceeding anything which their opponents have alleged. Concealing or evading the loud cries of Colonial discontent, they have announced a policy implying a total revolution in Colonial government, and which never could have been conceded but from the consciousness of a vast amount of former maladministration. The Irish Reform Bill and the New System of Colonial Government are, *par excellence*, the measures of the session. We are not surprised they are so. They are the natural complement and unavoidable consequence of three preceding years of Free Trade and a fettered Currency.

The policy of Government since 1846 having been entirely founded upon the interests of the towns against the country, of the consumers against the producers, of those who had a majority in the House of Commons over those who were still in a minority, it might naturally be expected that the consequent suffering would be most acutely felt in the producing parts of the empire; in those places where agriculture was the staple of life, where producers were many and consumers few, and where, necessarily, the measures of the British urban majority acted with unmitigated severity. Ireland and the Colonies were the places in which these circumstances combined, because they were both provinces in which rural districts were of boundless extent, and towns few and of inconsiderable importance; in which civilisation was as yet, comparatively speaking, in its infancy; and mankind, yet occupied in the labours of the field, in felling the forest and draining the morass, were not congregated in the huge Babylons or Ninevehs, which are at once the distinctive mark and ineradicable curse of long-established civilisation. Ireland and the Colonies, therefore, were the places which suffered most, and in which discontent might be expected to be most formidable from the new system; and, accordingly, the first announcements of the Session of 1850 were of measures calculated, as Government supposed, to assuage the irritations and conciliate the affections of these important and avowedly discontented or suffering parts of the empire.

Ten years have not elapsed since Lord John Russell declared that we could not afford to have a Revolution every year, and that the Reform Bill had fixed the Constitution upon a basis which must not again be shaken. There can be no doubt of the justice of the observation; but the Liberals have always some qualification or reservation to let in a change of measures, if it appears expedient for their interests as a party to promote it. That declaration was made before the grand and distinctive features of Liberal government had developed themselves: before Free Trade had crushed Agricultural industry, and sapped the foundations of Colonial loyalty; and

when no overbearing pressure from without reminded Ministers that the time had arrived when they must eat in their pledges. That time has now, however, come; distress, all but universal, has spread among all the rural producers of the empire; Ireland, the West Indies, and Canada, as the most entirely agricultural districts, have been the first to suffer in consequence. Measures calculated, as they conceive, to allay the prevailing discontent, have been brought forward by Government at the very time when they themselves, and their organs in the Press, were most strenuously denying that the new measures had produced anything but universal contentment and satisfaction throughout the empire.

The so-called Liberals have a very easy, and, as they deem it, efficacious mode of stifling or appeasing public discontent when it arrives at a formidable height. This consists in extending the suffrage among the querulous and suffering part of the people. They think that by so doing they will at once demonstrate their sympathy with the middle and lower classes, and secure, at least, for some elections to come, a majority of electors for their support, from a natural feeling of gratitude towards the Government which has conceded to them the suffrage. This system has been acted upon now for above a quarter of a century. No sooner had the contraction of the Currency, by the bills of 1819 and 1826, rendered it wholly inadequate for the industry of the empire, and produced the dreadful distress from 1826 to 1830 among the manufacturing and commercial classes, than they brought forward the Reform Bill in March 1831, and gave a decided majority in the House of Commons to these suffering and discontented urban electors. They have existed ever since on the gratitude of these newly enfranchised city voters. And now when the measures adopted, at the instigation of these urban constituencies, who compose three-fifths of the House of Commons, have totally ruined the West Indies, all but severed Canada, from the empire, and spread unheard-of distress throughout Ireland, they have a remedy, as they conceive, ready, in the extension of the suffrage to the suffering population. In this way the successive stages of general suffering, induced by Free Trade and a fettered Currency—in other words, a system of general cheapening of everything—issue in successive degradations of the franchise. The monetary crisis of 1825 led, after five years of suffering, to the Reform Bill for Great Britain; and the Free Trade crash of 1847 has issued, after three years of mortal agony, in the new Irish Reform Bill, and the announcement of provincial assemblies for the Colonies. If this system is continued for half a century more, it may reasonably be expected to lead, as it has done in France, to the introduction of universal suffrage. When everything is so cheapened that one-half of the population is landed in the workhouses, it is thought, everything will be righted, wisdom at once imprinted on the measures of Government, and contentment diffused through the country, by the paupers rising from their straw mattresses to vote for the Liberal candidates in ballot-boxes put up at the corners of every street.

It must be confessed that this system of appeasing discontent by extending the suffrage, has several things to recommend it. In the first place—and this is a most important consideration with Governments which behold the national resources wasting away under the influence of monetary and commercial measures, introduced by the dominant class—it costs nothing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is sure to give it his cordial support. It is much easier to enfranchise two hundred thousand paupers or bog-trotters, than to issue two or three millions of exchequer bills to sustain their industry. The old panacea, so often applied in the days of Tory Government, when distress became general, to relieve it by issues of exchequer bills, has been totally discarded since a Liberal Administration, resting on the urban constituencies, was installed in power. It is now discovered that it is much better to give the sufferers votes. Undoubtedly it is cheaper; and in these days, when everything is sacrificed to cheapness, charity itself, albeit covering a multitude of sins, must be sacrificed to it with the rest. In the next place, it implies, or is likely to lead to, no change of public measures, no reaction against the commercial policy which has produced the suffering. The new voters, it may be presumed, will support the Liberal Government which has enfranchised them: gratitude will bear Ministers over more than one contested election. The very suffering produced by Free Trade measures will bring up a host of voters to the poll who will, it is hoped, support from gratitude the Free Trade candidate. That is a matter of immense importance. It is not only spreading division through the Protection camp, but recruiting in it for troops to themselves. And though, doubtless, it is scarcely to be expected that men in the long-run are to support representatives who are ruining them, yet it is often astonishing how long they will continue to do so from party influences: the poison, like the contagion of the cholera, floats in the air, without any one knowing whence it comes or whither it is going: and, at any rate, the opening of men's eyes is the work of time; and the great thing with Liberal Governments is to secure immediate support, or tide over immediate difficulties.

For observe one very remarkable feature in both the Liberal measures intended to allay the discontent in the agricultural districts of the empire—that is, that there *is no change in the composition of the House of Commons*. That assembly, which, as it has the command of the public purse, rules, by its majority, the whole empire, remains the same. Three-fifths of its members are still returned by the urban constituencies of Great Britain. At the late division on the motion of Mr Disraeli, the majority of twenty-one was composed of *Scotch* members, most of them members for burghs. Thus the ruling power is lodged in the urban constituencies, and the suffering rural districts are to be pacified by an extension of their electors, which will confer no *real* political power, and benefit no human being. The majority for Free Trade measures will be the same, whether the Irish members are returned by seventy-two thousand or three hundred thousand voters; or, rather, it is hoped by the promoters of the new measures, the Protectionists will be weakened by the change—because the Liberal candidate will be able to call himself the friend of the people, and to call out the new voters to record their votes for the Government

which has enfranchised them.

So also in regard to the Colonies. The new measures announced by Lord John Russell propose to give provincial assemblies or parliaments to all the Colonies; and so far they are founded on just principles. But they contain no provision for the representation of any of the Colonies in the Imperial Parliament which meets in London. The fatal majority of three urban to two rural representatives still determines the measures of Government. The invaluable nomination burghs, by means of which the Colonies, under the old constitution, were so effectually represented, still are extinct. Colonial wealth now can get into Parliament only by the favour of urban constituencies—that is, by adopting Free Trade principles. Any man who stood upon the hustings in a British burgh, and proclaimed "Justice to the Colonies," would be speedily thrown into a minority, from the dread that his return might raise the price of sugar a penny a pound. Lord John Russell's Colonial parliaments will afford no remedy for this great and crying evil. It leaves the ruling power still in the hands of those actuated by an adverse interest, and directed by adverse desires. Give *real representation* to the Colonies indeed—give them a hundred members in the *Imperial* Parliament—and you make a mighty step in the principles of real, just government, and in reconstructing the bonds which once held together this great and varied empire. But to give them local assemblies which have no real power, and which are doomed to sit by and be the impotent spectators of their own and their constituents' ruin, by the burgh-directed 380
measures of the Imperial Parliament, is to mock them with a shadow of constitutional privileges which, in this age of intelligence, will not long be borne. It is giving the means of organising discontent, without those of averting disaster; and preparing, in those powerless provincial assemblies, men for the assertion of rights which, as was the case with North America, will one day cause the tearing asunder and dismemberment of the empire.

Nineteen years have elapsed since, in the very first paper on Parliamentary Reform in this Magazine, we pointed out the fatal effect of the extinction of Colonial representation by schedules A and B, as the grand defect of the Reform Bill; and predicted that it would, if not remedied, lead to the dissolution of the empire.[1] Consequences, since that time, have followed precisely as we predicted. The short-sighted urban majorities of the dominant island have perseveringly pursued their separate and immediate interests, until they have ruined the West Indies, to make sugar cheap,—all but ruined Ireland, to make oats cheap,—and rendered agricultural distress universal in Great Britain, to make bread cheap. The discontent produced by these measures having become universal among the rural producers in the empire, Government, thinking they are applying a remedy to the most suffering parts, propose to extend the rural suffrage in Ireland, by lowering the existing suffrage of ten pounds, requisite to enfranchise on a piece of ground, to an eight-pound interest, and creating everywhere provincial parliaments in the Colonies. They never were more mistaken. What is wanted in the Colonies and in Ireland is not an extension of voters or local parliaments, but a *just system of government at home*. Fiscal measures, which shall secure their interests, are what they require; and they can only be passed by the Imperial Parliament. What these measures are, is well known: you have only to take up any file of the Jamaica, Sidney, or Montreal papers to see what are the sentiments of the Colonies. Introduce Colonial representation, in numbers adequate to their wealth, population, and importance, into the Parliament of Great Britain, and the effect will be immediate. Measures such as they desire will soon be carried, and the threatened dismemberment of the empire averted. Delay or refuse the possession of real power to these important parts of the British dominions, and you only aggravate existing discontent, and accelerate approaching dismemberment. To suppose you can now alleviate Irish suffering by quadrupling its electors, and stifle Colonial discontent by giving them local parliaments, is as absurd as if it had been proposed to still the storm of indignation raised in all the manufacturing towns of Great Britain by the suffering consequent on the contraction of the Currency, by giving the complainers all votes for their respective town-councils.

Although, however, for twenty years past, we have anticipated with certainty the ultimate extension of the suffrage to a still lower class of voters, as the unavoidable consequence of the Reform Bill, yet we must admit that we did not anticipate the *mode* in which the necessity for this extension was to be brought about. We thought it would arise from the increase of the unenfranchised population, and the loud cry for electoral privileges on the part of the inferior urban or working population. Not at all: a very different reason is now assigned for the extension of the suffrage in Ireland. It is not the increase of the unenfranchised, but the *diminution of the enfranchised*, which is assigned as the reason for the change. It is said there are now only 72,000 voters in Ireland, instead of 250,000, which there should be, and which it was calculated the Reform Bill would bring up to the poll. Mr Cobden boasts that he has more constituents in the West Riding than there are in all the counties in Ireland put together. We have no doubt the remark is well founded; although the fact of so numerous a constituency having selected the man who made the boast, augurs but little for the wisdom, if kindred, of the measures which we may 381
expect from the popularly elected representatives for the sister kingdom. But the material thing to observe is this: A great and important change on the Reform Bill—an innovation on the foundations which, we were told, were *non tangenda non movenda* of the new Constitution, is vindicated on the immense destruction of the former freeholders which has taken place within these few years. We have long been aware of the fact: we adverted to it, in the most pointed manner, in a late article on the effects of Free Trade.[2] But we little expected that our observations were so soon to be confirmed from so high a quarter, and that the first breach in the Constitution, as fixed by the Reform Bill, would be justified on the avowed destruction of the freeholders of Ireland which the Reform measures have effected.

For what is it which has occasioned such a chasm in the freeholders at this time, and rendered it necessary, on the admission of Ministers themselves, to lower the suffrage to an £8 *interest*, if we would marshal anything like a competent number of freeholders round the Reform banners? It is in vain to refer to the famine of 1846. That famine occurred three years ago: it was bountifully relieved by the British Government; and since its termination we have had two fine harvests, those of 1847 and 1849, for each of which a public thanksgiving was returned. A bad harvest does not destroy some hundred thousand electors. If it does, there are heirs who succeed in ordinary circumstances to the freeholds, and form as respectable an army of electors as their fathers had done. What has become of all the heirs of the starved electors, if they were really starved? What has become of the freeholds which they formerly held? The answer is obvious, and has been now officially returned by Government, and made the foundation of a great constitutional change. THEY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY THE FREE TRADE MEASURES. The Reform Bill, in its ultimate effects, has crushed the brood whom it warmed into life. Above 200,000 holders of land, in Ireland, have disappeared since 1845. It is now admitted that they were, for the most part, the highest class of cultivators; for the extension of the suffrage is justified on the fearful diminution of their numbers. So rapid has been their destruction, so fearful the process of deterioration they have undergone, that out of above 500,000 holders of land who are still in Ireland, only 72,000 could be found qualified under the Reform Act; and, to augment the number of these, it is necessary to lower the franchise to £8. Eight pounds a-year is little more than the average maintenance of a pauper in England. But such is the misery which Free Trade measures have spread in Ireland, that it is there the standard of a freehold qualification.

It is in vain to refer to the 40s. freeholders of England as affording a precedent or a parallel to town franchise. Everybody knows that the 40s. freehold—originally, when established in the time of Henry VI., a measure of landed property worth £20 or £30 a-year at this time—had come, from the change in the value of money, to be a mere house qualification. No one supposes that the 40s. freeholder *lives on his 40s.*; it is the value merely of the cottage, garden, or paddock which he holds in freehold. He *lives* on extraneous resources, the wages of labour, realised means, or the aid of his family. But the £8 tenant in Ireland *lives* on the subject which qualifies him. In nine cases out of ten, he has no other means of livelihood whatever, and the franchise is the measure of his whole substance. It is little better in most cases than the income of an English pauper; but, such as it is, we have no doubt it is all that Free Trade measures will allow the great majority of Irish cultivators to earn; and that, unless the franchise is to dwindle away till the Irish counties in many cases become Gattons and Old Sarums, it is absolutely indispensable to enfranchise such a miserable and destitute class. But we did not expect, amidst all the gloom of our anticipations from the effects of the Reform Bill, and its consequent Free Trade measures, that this misery and destitution were to reach such a height, that it was to be proclaimed by Lord John Russell himself, and made the ground of the first great breach in his own Constitution!

It is not surprising that Government, amidst all the professions of confidence in the national resources, and assertions of general prosperity from Free Trade measures, should be thus, in their legislative acts, betraying a secret consciousness of the rapid decline of agricultural remuneration and of the existence of widespread Colonial distress. The prospects of the cultivators, both at home and in the Colonies, are gloomy in the extreme. The price of wheat is now known: it has been judicially fixed, at least in Scotland. The *fiar* prices in that country are, on an average, £1, 16s. for wheat, and 14s. for oats; instead of 51s. for the former, and 24s. for the latter, which they were three years ago, before the Irish famine set in. Good wheat is selling at this moment in the Haddington market at £1, 13s. 6d. a quarter—lower than it has been for a hundred and fifty years. Black cattle have fallen in the proportion of ten to six, or forty per cent; and although the rents of sheep-farms have as yet, from the high prices of wool, not been materially affected, yet it is well known that they too will ere long share in the general decline. Rents are in most parts of Ireland irrecoverable: the misery in many of its Unions equals that of the worst period of the famine. Rents in Scotland will at next term-day be postponed: the tenants, acknowledging their inability to pay, generally are already asking for time; and it is well understood on both sides, that, if the present low prices continue, the arrears, now fast accumulating, will become irrecoverable. On England it is unnecessary to dwell: it has spoken out in a voice which can neither be mistaken nor pretended to be unheard.

But why go into details to illustrate a fact which, so far from being denied, is openly admitted, and even gloried in by the Free-traders? In a late paper on Free Trade, we estimated the decline in the value of agricultural produce, in the British islands, in consequence of free trade in grain, at £75,000,000, or a fourth of its amount. But the Free-traders tell us, and apparently with reason, that this is too low an estimate. Mr Villiers, in seconding the Address in the House of Commons, calculated the saving of the people, in the consumption of all the kinds of food, since 1847, at £91,000,000; and if to this is added the price of the 12,000,000 quarters of all sorts of grain, which were imported in the course of 1849, estimated at the moderate average of 20s. a quarter, the loss to the agricultural interest will be £103,000,000. But this is evidently too high, as the prices of 1847 were scarcity prices, owing to the famine in Ireland; and deducting £13,000,000 on that account, there will remain £90,000,000 at the very least which has been lost in one year to the agricultural interest of Great Britain and Ireland. This is more than *a third* of its amount, which may be taken, under the reduced scale of prices, for three years prior to the Irish famine, at £250,000,000 annual value.

But this, it is said, is all a landlords' question: the community at large, and, above all, the borough electors who rule the empire, have no interest in it. A landlords' question truly! Why, the

whole *land* rents of the two islands,[3] abstracting from them those of houses, are under £60,000,000 annually; and a loss of £90,000,000 a-year is a landlords' question only! It is, at least, as much a tenants' question as a landlords'; and as there are now 750,000 holders of land in the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland, amounting with their families to 2,500,000 souls, this body, one and all of whom have been impoverished by the change, must be taken as a clear addition to the landlords, who have been directly and deeply injured by the same causes. And what are we to say to the agricultural labourers, mechanics, millers, wheelwrights, and artificers, who depend directly, immediately, and almost entirely, on the market for the produce of their industry among the rural population? At the very least, their incomes would all decline a half, and they, with their families, amount to some millions more. And this is what the Free-traders call a landlords' question!

But, in truth, we deprecate, and that in the most earnest manner, all these calculations of class loss or suffering, so far as they proceed on the idea that it is possible for one class to suffer without every other speedily doing the same. Such arguments and topics were never heard of in Great Britain till the Reform Bill gave *one class* in society, viz. the urban shopkeepers, the command of the British Empire. We acknowledge one only interest in the whole community, and that is the interest of all classes; we acknowledge one only family—that is, the whole British people. Their real interests are, and ever must be, the same. It is impossible, in one community, that one great interest can be suffering while others are thriving. Such a thing might happen for a time, when the manufacturing interest was prosperous from a sudden extension of the export sale in some considerable foreign markets; but such a gleam of sunshine must be temporary only, if not accompanied by a simultaneous growth in the great and, only durable issue for goods—the home market. The whole manufactures exported at present—one of the most prosperous years, so far as the export sale goes—are about £60,000,000 a-year. The manufactures taken off by the home market are estimated, by the most experienced authorities, at £120,000,000. Of the £60,000,000 exported, about £16,000,000 goes to our own Colonies, so that the home and colonial market takes off yearly £136,000,000; all foreign markets put together, £44,000,000.

In other words, the home and colonial market is more than *three times all foreign markets put together*. How is it possible after this to deny that a serious and lasting blow, struck at the rural producing interests in the British islands and the Colonies, must ere long react, and that, too, with terrible effect, on the prosperity of our manufacturers? Mr Villiers boasts that Free Trade has cut £91,000,000 off the remuneration of the British farmers. Is it not evident that, assuming this to be true, the greater part of this sum is cut of the funds which pay in the home market? and if so, how long will our £120,000,000 consumed in the home market be in sinking to £80,000,000, or some still lower figure? And will Manchester and Glasgow be much benefited, if they gain £10,000,000 or £12,000,000 annually in the foreign market, and lose £40,000,000 or £50,000,000 in the home?

Already it has become painfully evident that this effect is taking place in this country. Ministers boast of the exports having increased above £10,000,000 in 1849 over what they were in 1848, and of their having now turned £60,000,000 a-year. Let it be supposed that this is all to be put down to the account of Free Trade, and that our Indian victories, the pacification of Europe, the crushing of revolution in France, and the impulse given to American purchase by Californian gold, had nothing at all to do with the matter. Is the country prosperous?—are the railways prosperous?—are poor-rates declining?—is labour in request either in the rural or urban districts? The facts are *notoriously the reverse*. At this moment we happen to know that above ten thousand looms in Manchester are preparing to put their mills upon the short time of forty hours a-week. The railways never were so low: at an average, their stock is worth little more than *a third* of what it was three years ago. Much was said in Parliament of the decrease of poor-rates by £300,000 or £400,000 a-year. That is *entirely owing* to the fall in the price of provisions, which at once, and materially, lessened the cost of maintaining the paupers. Had the rates fallen really in proportion to the decline in the price of provisions, they would have gone down fifty per cent, or above £2,000,000 annually. A decline of a few hundred thousand pounds a-year only, in such circumstances, was in reality not a fall, but a rise. And in Scotland, the poor-rates for 1849, despite the fall in the cost of maintaining the paupers, were higher than in 1848, or than in any preceding year: they rose from £544,000 a-year to £576,000. As to Ireland, it is admitted on all hands that its condition was never worse, even during the worst periods of the famine.

Now, the real question which it behoves the moneyed interest, and especially the fundholders, to conder, and that most seriously, is this:—How do they expect that the interest on their bonds or the dividends on their stock are to be paid if this ceaseless and progressive *decline in the resources of their debtors* is to go on? How are the dividends raised for payment of the national creditors, or the interest provided to meet private mortgages, on which so large a part, probably two-thirds, of the realised capital of the country depends? Is it not entirely from the exertions of the producing classes, who, or whose fathers, became debtors in these varied transactions? But is it possible that the security of creditors can escape being shaken, if the resources of their debtors are continually declining? In private life we are never mistaken on this subject. If a creditor sees his debtor's funds wasting away under improvident or absurd management, or a landlord sees his tenants running out his land by scourging and ruinous crops, he at once takes the alarm. But with the public creditors the case is just the reverse. They sit by and see the indirect taxes, upon the faith of which their money was advanced, repealed one after another for a long course of years; and the national armaments, upon which the public safety and the independence of the country depend, threatened with ruin by an ignorant, blind, and selfish

democracy; and it never enters into their imaginations for a moment to entertain the least apprehension for their own payments. They think, though every other interest in the country is ruined, they will stand erect amidst the wreck. Deceived by the perfect regularity with which their interest has been paid for the last hundred and fifty years, they cannot conceive that it should ever be otherwise. They would as soon expect to see the sun not rise in the morning, as the dividends on the three-per-cents not paid in January and June. But a little consideration must show that this confidence may ere long be found to be misplaced. The dividends are paid entirely out of the national income: whatever seriously affects or diminishes the national income, so much diminishes the fund from which they must be drawn. The ninety millions which Mr Villiers boasts has been cut off from the remuneration of agriculture has made a fearful chasm in it—probably not less than a third of its whole amount. One other such blow, and the payment of the dividends will become impossible—and the moneyed interest, whose selfish rapacity has occasioned all the mischief, will share in the general ruin they have created.

It is hard to say whether, as society is now constituted and power distributed in this country, the fundholder has most to fear from years of general suffering or from periods of transient prosperity. Is the nation flourishing, are exports increasing, taxes well paid, a surplus revenue beginning to appear, and a huge store of useless and costly bullion accumulated in the bank? We are immediately told the surplus must be devoted to the remission of taxes: it is dangerous to leave the Treasury full; it is a temptation to Government, and serves to feed the younger sons of the aristocracy. No matter how fleeting the surplus may be, though it has arisen from an accidental combination of circumstances which may disappear before the year is out—and it is well known, taxes once taken off are very rarely reimposed—the surplus must be instantly relinquished for the *permanent* remission of taxes. Are times adverse, do the heavens threaten monetary squalls, and is the import of grain and export of sovereigns likely to lay, as in 1847, half the commercial world on their beam-ends? Instantly the cry gets up that the taxes cannot be 385
paid; that the national expenditure is shamefully extravagant; that the army must be disbanded, the ships of the line sold, and the national independence trusted to the generous cosmopolitan spirit of the Americans, or the unambitious disposition of the Czar. In both circumstances the national safety, and with it the security of the public creditor, are endangered: in the first, by the permanent remission of revenue, in consideration of a transient gleam of prosperity; in the last, by a permanent abandonment of the national defences, in consequence of a temporary period of disaster. And as we inevitably pass now, and must ever pass, under our wise and judicious system of Free Trade and a Fettered Currency, from the one to the other, it is evident that not a year passes over our heads that the security of the fundholders is not more and more endangered, and this by the effects of the very system which their own selfish and class legislation has introduced.

It is to this point—the *inevitable* reaction of agricultural distress upon commercial prosperity and the general resources of the empire, that we anxiously wish to direct our readers' attention. The theory of the Manchester school is, "Give us a sufficient amount of imports, and the exports will take care of themselves." They care not how widely they may prostrate the industry of the country, so as they get a profitable trade to themselves. But the point they have now to consider, *Can they secure this profitable trade to themselves*, if the industrial resources of this country—in other words, their customers' means of paying for their goods—are daily declining? That our *imports* are constantly increasing, is true: it is what the Protectionists always predicted would be the case. But that increase is no index to national prosperity: on the contrary, it is the forerunner of national distress, because it implies a progressive supplanting of our own industry by that of foreigners. The following extract from the Returns for January 1850, ending 5th February 1850, will show how largely the productions of foreign countries are trenching upon those of our own:—

Month ending 5th Feb.	**1849.**	**1850.**
Silk, thrown, lbs.	13,847	71,600
Sheep Wool,	1,212,993	1,957,632
Gloves, pairs,	159,776	270,091
Silk Broad Stuffs,	13,036	22,124
———— Ribbons,	8,946	13,768
Potatoes, cwt.	6,793	190,511
Bacon, do.	2,537	8,036
Beef, do.	4,611	6,939
Pork, do.	2,038	6,308

It is the same with nearly all the other articles. How our manufacturers and artisans are to go on, any more than our farmers, striving against this prodigious and rapid increase of foreign importations, it is for them to say; but probably experience will, ere long, enlighten their understandings on this subject.

Indeed this inevitable reaction of domestic distress in trade, as well as agriculture, against the Free Trade System, has already set in. We make the following extracts from the Circular of Messrs T. & H. Littledale & Co. of Liverpool, perhaps the greatest brokers in the world, for Monday 4th March 1850:—

	Import of Cotton.	
	From Jan. 1 to	**From Jan. 1 to**

	March 5, 1849.	March 5, 1850.
Bales,	328,523	267,666
Sales of do.	464,070	368,950
Home consumption,	305,040	207,960
Stock at this date,	384,230	518,170

Here is a decline from 3 to 2 in all branches of the cotton trade, since the two first months of last year, *except in stocks*, in which there is an increase from 4 to 5¼. We recommend this to the attention of the gentlemen in Manchester who introduced the Free Trade System. We shall not imitate their example by saying it is a "Cotton Lord Question," with which the public generally has no concern.

In the close of the same Circular it is stated:—

> "General Remarks.—The month of February affords little matter for comment. It has been a particularly dull month in business, and, when contrasted with the energy and speculative excitement of January, the sudden change appears the more striking. There is probably no *one* cause to which this can be attributed, but principally, no doubt, from a reaction, the invariable consequence of over-activity. The old complaints of railway depression and Continental disquiet may have had some influence, but the large arrivals of some articles, Tea, for instance, of which *twenty-five* cargoes have come to hand in five weeks, and the near approach of the import season for Sugar, Coffee, and other produce, taken in connexion with the advance of prices at the opening of the year, have deterred the wholesale houses from operating beyond their immediate wants.
>
> "*Great complaints are made of the bad state of the country shopkeepers in the agricultural districts. We have closely questioned some of our wholesale grocers and tea-dealers, who assure us that there is no disguising the fact that such is the case, and that the general answer received from travellers is, 'they can get neither money nor orders.'* The serious falling off in the deliveries of sugar, coffee, tea, and cocoa, for the two months of this year, compared with those of the last, but too truly confirms these complaints, and are perhaps the most alarming features in our present prospects. As given in Prince's Public Prices Current of 1st inst. they stand as follows:—
>
> | | 1850. | 1849. | 1848. |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | Sugar, | 37,006 | 43,408 | 42,368 tons. |
> | Coffee, | 3,795,712 | 4,907,691 | pounds. |
> | Cocoa, | 450,774 | 558,888 | " |
> | Tea, | 5,375,648 | 5,502,931 | " |
>
> "The Chancellor's Budget is expected to be brought forward on the 15th instant, when some measure may possibly be proposed to check the unfair use of Chicory with Coffee; and to do this, it is thought by some that an equalisation of the Duties on Colonial and Foreign Coffee may be necessary; but, in the present relative position of prices here and on the Continent, the effect of such a change would not be much felt."

It is evident that squalls are approaching, which, indeed, under our present Free Trade and Monetary System, are the inevitable results of a brief period of prosperity; and let it be recollected, when another crisis does arrive, as arrive it will, the consequences will be far more disastrous than the last. *Then* the agricultural interest was prosperous, because the Corn Laws were not repealed; and the magnitude of the Home Markets sustained the nation during the dreadful commercial crisis which prostrated so large a part of the foreign manufacturers. Now the case is just the reverse,—distress is beginning with the home markets: and the agricultural population, so far from supporting the manufacturing in their difficulties, will be fain to recur to them for support in their distresses. Hundreds of thousands of agricultural labourers, thrown out of bread by the effects of Free Trade, will be crowding into the towns as they did into the great cities in the later periods of the Roman Empire, in the hope of finding that employment from the wealth of the urban population, or that relief from their charities, which they can no longer look for in their native seats.

A highly distinguished officer and writer, who will not readily be suspected of a leaning towards Tory principles, General Sir William Napier, the eloquent historian of the Peninsular War, has lately written a letter, which has appeared in the columns of the *Observer*, portraying the effects of Free Trade upon the fate and independence of the nation in future times, in such powerful and graphic colours, that we cannot resist the satisfaction of giving it additional publicity through the columns of this Magazine:—

"MAJOR-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM NAPIER'S OPINION OF FREE TRADE GENERALLY.

"Extract from a Letter to Mr Lloyd Caldecot.

"Free Trade means an unrestricted intercourse, and exchange of productions, natural

or artificial, amongst all the civilised nations of the world. Trace the effect of this general Free Trade, if such a thing could be attained. It must be that all nations, according to their skill and energy, will draw forth and make the most of their natural productions: one nation may be a little more skilful, a little more energetic than the rest; but, generally speaking, the amount of civilisation and consequent knowledge will be equal at first, or will be soon equalised by this free intercourse. Will not the result be, that each nation must take rank in the world according to the extent of its natural and artificial resources. What will that lead to? Why, that England will sink from the first rank in the world to the fifth or sixth rank, as it cannot be contended that her natural resources, though now more drawn forth, are really equal to those of North America, of Russia, of France, of Germany, or even of Spain and Italy; and we may look forward to the South American kingdoms, and independent Canada, and Australia, as countries destined to overtop her. It will be said, Englishmen are braver, more enterprising and skilful, than other people; more thoughtful and long-sighted. That would be a poor argument, and a presumptuous one, as regards Frenchmen and Americans, and would be no argument at all against Australians and Canadians, both being Saxon. But if it were a solid ground for hope, how is it that those superior qualities can be brought into play? Why, surely, by subtle contrivances of policy, which will give them free scope. What are those contrivances? Commercial treaties, supported by arms; that is the policy which has, and the only policy which can, raise a small country, like England, to be the head of the world. How else has she risen? Can it be supposed that a plain, unambitious policy of merely exchanging productions with other nations will raise her, or keep her, above her natural level? No! she must use her subtilty to overreach other nations, and her energy and courage to maintain her superiority; and then, with war and overreaching, away goes Free Trade. If courage, energy, and subtilty are laid aside, England sinks, as I said, to a fifth-rate power, because her natural resources are less than those of other nations; and, by Free Trade, she shall teach those who do not know their own resources how to find their value.

"The world is not now as it was two hundred years ago. There are no new countries to discover,—no new sources of riches that can be held in monopoly, or to be found out of the bounds of the civilised world. Look at California. Can the Americans keep it to themselves? All the world goes there. England must then give up her commercial policy, which for centuries, whether good or bad, has certainly been compatible with advancing greatness, and she must start in a new race, with nations superior to her in natural resources, and with the weight of £800,000,000 of debt on her back; and to obtain even a place in this race, proposed by herself, she must break up all her artificial system, with the social relations established under it; thus destroying the fortunes and happiness of multitudes, inviting revolution, and risking the extinction of her debt, which will add hundreds of thousands of miserable broken creditors to the multitude of revolutionists.

"Well, she may survive all this, and, perhaps, be happier within her natural bounds; but she cannot be a great nation; and she has to choose between her present greatness and an uncertain prospect of humbler content, to which she must wade amidst blood and social commotion. But will she be allowed to enjoy that humbler contentment? Will not ambition stir other nations, when they find their power to oppress her? What will her courage avail her then? Modern warfare depends entirely upon mechanical and manufacturing resources, in which her enemies will have a lead over her, because their natural resources are greater, and Free Trade will have taught them how to make the most of them.

"I do not give you all this dogmatically, but I cannot myself see that Free Trade will produce any other results; and I look upon it as certain, that if other nations do not adopt our Free Trade notions, that we cannot put them in practice without destroying the National Debt: in other words, a fatal struggle between the landed and moneyed interest.

"Free Trade for England is, I think, well illustrated by the story of the bear in Marryat's *Captain Violet*:—'Bruin being up a peach-tree, was vigorously shaking down the fruit for his own eating, but a hog was below very complacently eating the peaches as they fell, and expressing by grunts his satisfaction at the bear's generosity.'—Yours, &c.,

"Feb. 2, 1850. WILLIAM NAPIER."

This is ably and manfully spoken. That it is true, is now in the course of such clear demonstration to the nation, that it will ere long bring home conviction to the most prejudiced. But it is a curious fact, illustrative of the truth of the principles we have so long maintained in this Magazine, that such an exposition of the effects which Reform has produced, by vesting the government of the nation in the urban constituencies, should come from a gallant officer, the historian on Whig principles of the Peninsular War, and whose zeal for Reform was known to have been so ardent, that certain proposals were made to him from a certain quarter when "the Bill" was thought to be endangered, which he at once spurned, as might have been expected from a soldier and gentleman of his elevated character.

There is another Napier equally celebrated on another element, whose opinions have been recently as strongly expressed on the effects of Reform, and its offspring Free Trade, on our national defences. All the world is familiar with the energetic letter which Admiral Sir Charles 388
Napier has lately published, on the alarming decline of our naval forces. It may be that our Manchester politicians, and their disciples in the Cabinet, by studying their Trades' Circulars, and occasionally sharpening their intellects by declamations on the hustings on the extravagance of the national armaments, and the expediency of selling our ships of the line and disbanding our troops in anticipation of the millennium which is approaching, are better judges of the probable issue of a land contest than the Duke of Wellington, whose opinion has been equally strongly expressed on the subject, or the historian of, and actor in, the Peninsular War; and of the chances of maritime warfare, than the hero who saved the Turkish empire from dismemberment at Acre, and established the throne of Don Pedro by the victory of Lisbon. That is no doubt possible, though we can hardly regard it as very probable. But if such a catastrophe, as our immortal Field-Marshal and these two very eminent Liberals anticipate, does occur—if Great Britain, cast down to the rank of a fifth-rate power, finds its maritime superiority destroyed, and its colonies lost—if its fleets are blockaded in their harbours, and its manufacturing millions are thrown back on ruined landlords and bankrupt master-manufacturers for their daily bread, let it be always recollected it is no more than has been distinctly foreshadowed to them by those best qualified to form a correct judgment on the subject, and no more than they have brought upon themselves, by their blind adherence to a selfish policy.

To all these disasters, present and future, the Free-traders have one set-off to apply, and that is the increased consumption of food, which they suppose has taken place in the country in consequence of their measures. Sir R. Peel contended strongly that the five million quarters of wheat alone imported in 1849, afforded decisive evidence of the increased wellbeing of the working classes. If the right honourable Baronet will take the trouble to travel through any of the grain districts of the country, he will perceive at once how fallacious this argument is. The barnyards never were so full at this season in any former year. Every farmer has held his stock who was not forced to sell. The nation has, since the last harvest, been fed by foreigners to an unprecedented extent. Ten millions has been sent out of the country to buy foreign wheat, and, of course, lost to British industry. The five million quarters of wheat imported have been less an addition to the national consumption, than a *transference* of that consumption from British farmers to foreigners. At least a half of the present harvest will be rolled over to next year. If we are blessed with another fine harvest, there will be the crop of a year and a half, besides ten or twelve millions imported in 1851, to stock the market. Prices in all probability will be much lower than they are at present.

We are always reminded that in 1835 prices were 39s. 5d. on an average of the year for wheat. True, and why was that? Because we had had *four* fine harvests in succession; so fine that the importation of wheat, on an average of five years ending with 1835, had been only 398,000 quarters a-year. *Now* one fine harvest and the importation have done the whole. But we are indebted to the Free-traders for so often reminding us of the low prices of 1835. They demonstrate that the nation in good seasons can feed itself in the most affluent degree. Foreign importation, therefore, except in bad years, is unnecessary; and all the destruction of domestic industry it produces is as unnecessary as it is short-sighted.

It will appear the most extraordinary of all phenomena to future ages, that a nation which has, like the British, successfully resisted the attacks of external enemies, and incessantly grown and prospered, though with occasional disaster, during more than a thousand years—and which has in our own recollection repelled the attacks and overthrown the powers of the greatest coalition ever formed against a single state, directed by the most consummate ability which has appeared in modern times—should in this manner voluntarily descend from its high position, surrender its power, starve down its armaments, and drive headlong on the road to ruin, for the supposed 389
advantage of a limited class in its bosom. But the marvel ceases when the composition of its society, and the prevailing feelings of the section of the people in whom supreme power is now vested, is taken into consideration. That class is the mercantile, or rather shopkeeper class; and with them the money power is all powerful. Three-fifths of the seats in the House of Commons, let it ever be recollected, are for boroughs; and two-thirds of the constituents of every borough are shopkeepers or those whom they influence. This is the decisive circumstance, which has changed the whole policy of England, since the Reform Bill, and in its ultimate consequences is destined, to all appearance, to produce the national disasters which many of its warmest supporters now so feelingly deplore. To the modern rulers of the British nation, to the constituents of the majority of the House of Commons, to buy cheap *and to sell dear* is the great object of ambition. They have gained the first; let them see whether they will secure the last. Let them see whether, amidst the ruin of the agricultural interest, and the declining circumstances of all trades, which are exposed to the effects of foreign competition, they, the *sellers* of commodities, will make their fortunes. If they do, it will be a new era in society; for it will be one in which the trading class amass riches in consequence of the ruin of their customers.

On this account there are Protectionists who deprecate any attempt to displace the Government at this time, or force upon a reluctant majority in the House of Commons a change in the present commercial policy of the country. It is said that Free Trade, though it has been in operation for three years and a-half, has not had a fair trial; the Irish famine, the failure of £15,000,000 worth of produce out of £30,000,000 worth in a single year, did all the mischief. Be it so. Let Free Trade have a fair trial. Let the shopkeepers see what benefit they are likely

practically to gain by the ruin of their customers. They have the Government in their hands, because they have the appointment of a majority in the House of Commons. The agricultural interest, the colonies, the shipping interest, the small manufacturing interest, are to all practical purposes disfranchised. Let the trading classes, then, feel the effects of their own measures. These will be such that they *cannot* continue. Ere long a change of policy, and probably of rulers, will be forced upon Government by the universal cry of suffering. But let them recollect that it is *their* measures which are now on their trial; that theirs will be the responsibility if they fail; and that if the empire is dismembered, and the national independence lost, theirs will be the present loss, and theirs the eternal infamy.

BRITAIN'S PROSPERITY.

A NEW SONG, WHICH OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN SUNG BY THE PREMIER AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

I.

News for you, gentlemen! Here is prosperity,
Fat and fullhanded, arrived at our door:
Crashes, disaster, and famine's severity,
Never can harass or trouble us more.
No miching malecho!
Spin away calico!
Never saw man such a prospect before!

II.

All things are cheapened. Good sirs, in the galleries,
Pray bear this cheerful announcement in mind—
All things are down—except Ministers' salaries,
Taxes, and some little jobs of the kind.
Small trades are finishing,
Wages diminishing—
That is the way to be happy, you'll find.

III.

Wheat's at a price that won't pay for the growing it,
That is to say, if we cultivate here;
Why should we therefore persist, sirs, in sowing it?
Beautiful markets are plenty and near.
Hang the home labourer!
Buy from your neighbour, or
Any one else, so you don't buy it dear.

IV.

True pioneers of a better and brighter age,
We have diminished the charges for freight;
Some little dues there may still be for "lighterage,"[4]
But, on the whole, 'tis a moderate rate.
Wheat for a guinea a
Load from Volhynia
Comes to your shores, and is lodged at your gate.

V.

Huxtable's pigs, though replete with ammonia,
Never worked any such wonders as these;
Barley from Mecklenburg, grain from Polonia,
Butter from Holland, American cheese;
Bacon gratuitous,
Cargoes fortuitous,
Float to our coasts with each prosperous breeze.

VI.

What need we care though a desperate peasantry
Prowl round the stackyards with tinder and match?
Blandly we'll smile at such practical pleasantry:
Downing Street is not surmounted by thatch.
We're not prohibiting
Some gentle gibbeting
When the poor starving delinquents you catch.

VII.

Cobden, our oracle, swears it is vanity
Ever to dream of protection again:
Wilson declares it is downright insanity,
Also he proves it by figures and pen.
Sheets arithmetical,
Clearly prophetical,
Flow from the quills of these eminent men.

VIII.

Likewise M'Gregor, that brilliant Glaswegian,
Whom we desiderate always to speak,
Hath, by the aid of some second-sight Stygian,
Promised us shortly two millions per week.
"Whaur shall we pit it, sirs?"—
Wait till you get it, sirs!
Zooks! what a prospect of bubble and squeak!

IX.

As for you paltry persisting Protectionists,
Why should you prate of the labourer's cause?
Don't you observe you are mere Resurrectionists
Trying to get at the grave of the laws?
Honest Peel strangled them,
Then the Whigs mangled them,
Coffined, and sank them with Cobden's applause.

X.

Any such notions I think you had best bury
Deep in the grave where your idol is laid:
Then, from the lips of the member for Westbury,
Take a sound lesson in matters of trade.
List to his prophecies—
We'll keep our offices
Snug, till your final conversion is made.

XI.

Deuce take those breechesless rascals the Highlanders!
Let them go starve on their beggarly hills:
Irish impostors, and kelp-making Islanders,
Can't they find room in our poor-law Bastilles?
Or, for variety,
Though there's satiety,
Let them be packed to the calico mills!

XII.

Wages must tumble, like leaves in a hurricane,
Under this grand competition for work:
Britons shall toil for the Jew and American,
Chinaman, Spaniard, Mulatto, and Turk—
Each village Hannibal,
Fierce as a cannibal,
Eyeing his neighbour like Bishop or Burke!

XIII.

These are the triumphs of science political—
These are the views by the Whigs patronised.
Tories may scout them; but, ne'ertheless, it I call
Such a grand scheme as was seldom devised.
How is it robbery?
Cheapness and jobbery
Are the twin saints whom we've just canonised.

XIV.

Under the free-trading auspices, true it is
Some time or other taxation may pinch.
Then for a shy at the Funds and Annuities!
We'll take a yard since you gave us an inch.
Hush, Mr Newdegate!
Why not repudiate,
Just as was done by the pupils of Lynch?

XV.

Worthy Sir Robert, that statesman immaculate,
Doubled his fortune by doubling the pound:
Even the wisest may sometimes miscalculate—
Surely he will not object to refund?
"That were a merry go!
See you at Jericho!"
O—very well—I abandon that ground.

XVI.

Shortly—I say, with habitual *bonhomie*,
Everything's quite as we Ministers wish,
Plenty and peace are combined with economy,
Food is abundant—provide you the dish.
Pay to the foreigner,
Peasant and mariner,
All you can raise for your loaf and your fish.

XVII.

Banish all notions of British ascendency,
Let them be wiped from our memory quite;
Modern views have an opposite tendency,
As hath been clearly expounded by Bright.
Let us be sensible—
Britain's defensible,
Not by brute force, but by maxims of right.

XVIII.

We, for the voice of the populace amorous,
Willing to do anything they require,
Shall, if hereafter they chance to grow clamorous,
Yield just precisely the thing they desire:
We are quite ready to
March with a steady toe
Out of the frying-pan into the fire.

XIX.

Stink, like the inmates of Huxtable's piggery,
Up to the knees in an exquisite draff,
Stand the determined apostles of Whiggery,
Chewing the grain, and rejecting the chaff.
Ay, Mr Huxtable!
Not from your muck stable,
Issues so hearty a grunting or laugh!

XX.

This, I maintain, of our state is the very type—
Joseph's fat cattle and atrophied kine.
We, for the first, may be ta'en by Daguerreotype:
Who are the second, you well may divine.
Yea, of a verity!
Britain's prosperity,
Means nothing else than the measure of mine!

MY PENINSULAR MEDAL.

BY AN OLD PENINSULAR.

PART V.—CHAPTER XII.

On reaching the General's quarters, I thought it best not to report myself to his Excellency, till I had seen Captain Gabion again. While waiting in the street, I noticed a small shop, the open window of which exhibited not only a choice assortment of straw cigars, but bread, bacon, sausages, eggs, articles all equally attractive to travellers who had not dined. Reminded, by the sight, that this was precisely my own condition, I stepped in; hoping to find something that might support exhausted nature, during the awful interval that seemed likely to intervene, ere we could halt for the night, and think about cooking. The eggs, white, large, and pellucid, claimed a trial; and the yolk of the first I cracked went down whole like an oyster, with such a delicious gulp, that I was about to attack a second, when I was interrupted by a voice from the back of the shop, "Nó, nó, señor." Looking in that direction, I perceived six or eight persons crouching round a small fire on the hearth. On walking towards them, I found my two Capatazes, and a party of their muleteers, all on a broad grin at my recent exploit in egg-sucking. The Spanish Capataz arose; politely observed that roast eggs are better than raw; and, with equal politeness taking that which I held in my hand, cracked it at one end, and stuck it upright in the hot embers. Fully acquiescing in this arrangement, and determined to carry it out, I was returning to the counter for another egg; but was anticipated by the Capataz, who selected a couple, observing that he had great knowledge in choosing eggs. These he set in the embers, by the side of the former, first opening a safety-valve in each. Never having known, before, how to roast an egg, I did not regret

this lesson in the art of extempore cookery. And I beg to state that a roast egg—*so* roasted, *i. e.* done slowly in the embers, "ovum ad prunas cocked 'em" (you see, the Romans also set them upright)—not only is altogether a different sort of thing from a boiled egg, but beats it to sticks: especially if washed down, as mine were on the present occasion, with a cup or two of good sound Spanish wine out of a leathern bag. For the Capataz, insisting that eating without drinking was bad for the digestion, transferred the wine from the leather to the horn, with an air of benignity that was perfectly irresistible. In short, he would take no denial. I was also glad of this little rencontre in the shop, for another reason—because it tended to establish amicable relations between me and the muleteers, which was just what I wanted. Having chatted a few minutes with my polite entertainers, I thanked them for their *cortesia*, and walked towards the counter, to settle for the eggs. How now? There's nothing to settle! The eggs are paid for! This was a touch of high Spanish breeding, that quite took me by surprise—I demurred. The big jolly old Spaniard, though, stepped forward with his hand on his breast, self-congratulation twinkling in his eyes, and a profusion of very profound but silent bows. I really could not find it in my heart to break his, by saying anything more about the eggs. In short, I and all the muleteers gradually became very good friends; and as for my entertainer on the present occasion, had he known I was thinking of buying a mule, I have no manner of doubt he would forthwith have made me a *bonâ fide* offer of the best in his batch, and thanked me for accepting it.

Just as I emerged from the shop, Jones came pelting by on the pony—pulled up the moment he saw me—and owned himself conscience-stricken by rushing into self-vindication. "Please, sir, I jest only brought the poor hannibal here from the river, sir; 'cause why, sir?—'cause I thought you had done with him, sir. Been all about, looking for a stable, sir. Can't find no corner nowhere, not to shove the poor hannibal in, sir. Couldn't you be so kind and speak to that 'ere hofficer, sir? Have'nt had no time to think of cooking dinner, sir. Very long march we've had to-day, sir. Very bad thing sitch long marches for poor soldiers, sir. Got a bullet in my leg, sir."

"Well," said I, "you've no occasion to trouble yourself about dinner, nor yet about a stable. I expect we have at least two leagues more to cover, before we halt for the night."

Jones tuned as black as thunder. His look was perfectly savage.

"Well, Jones, it can't be helped, man. You yourself must see there's not room for us here."

"Please, sir," replied Jones, "I know there isn't, sir. Only I thought p'rhaps you'd speak to the hofficer, sir. And in course, as he's a friend, I thought he'd see to it, sir, and make room, sir."

"No, no—I tell you it won't do. As soon as the men have got their rations, we must move on."

The word "rations" wrought an immediate change in Jones's agonising visage. "Oh, very well, sir," said he—"then we gits our rations here, does we, sir? Please, sir, if I might make bold to aast the question—which is it, sir?"

"Which is it? I suppose beef as usual; bread if they've got any. I don't know what else it's likely to be."

"Beg your pardon, sir," replied Jones; "but I did'nt mean about the whittles, sir. What I means is the liquor, sir. 'Cause p'rhaps its that 'ere poor, nasty, green, hungry, skinny wine as we got in Spain, sir; that what giz the men the hayger, sir. Or p'rhaps, may be, its sperrits, sir; if so be we've come into the brandy, what the men gits here in France, sir. That's the liquor to march upon, sir. Fine rations thim is for poor soldiers, sir. Oh, be-youti-ful, sir! Takes the skin off the roof of your mouth, sir."

"Well; we shall soon see which it is."

"Yes, sir," said Jones in a lower voice, coming nearer, and touching his peak. "But please, sir, that isn't what I meant to hintimate, sir. Please, sir, wouldn't you have the kineness, sir, and jest speak a word to the hofficer for the fut-soldiers, sir. 'Cause p'rhaps the rations is only some on it sperrits, sir; not enough for all on us, fut and horse, sir. Please, sir, only because we poor fut-soldiers wants it more, sir; 'cause, ye see, we goes on fut, sir; which them fellers doesn't want it as doesn't go on fut, sir; 'cause they rides, sir."

"No, no; I'm not going to interfere in a thing of that sort; nor is it likely the Captain would. Besides, what could *he* do?"

"What could *he* do, sir?" said Jones. "Bless your heart, sir, if he chose to speak a word for me, sir, he could git me a horder to ride a mule all the way to headquarters, sir; one of the spare uns, sir. Got a bullet in my leg, sir."

"Well, Jones, *how* did you get it? You haven't told me that yet."

"Oh, nothing pertikler more than others, sir. Got it near Pampelona, sir. That 'ere Ginneral Soult thought he was too many for us, sir; but we soon let him see as we was too many for him, sir. Please, sir, I laid eighteen hours on the ground, sir, afore I was picked up, sir. The wolves came down in the night, and smelt to me, sir."

Our disquisition was interrupted by the approach of Captain Gabion.

"I've settled it for you," said the Captain. "Have you seen the General?"

"I wished to ask you about it first. Any particular etiquette?"

"Oh yes," said the Captain; "I forgot to tell you. Please mind. When you've reported yourself, if his Excellency remains silent, and takes no notice, bolt. If he remains silent, but looks up at you, back slowly towards the door, looking at him. If he looks up at his aide-de-camp, keep where you are, don't stir. Perhaps the aide will take you to the window, or into another room, and ask you a question or two."

The actual interview, though, did not terminate precisely as the Captain anticipated. I was ushered into a small parlour, and there found two military officers. One of them, the General in command of the British forces before Bayonne, Sir John Hope, was reclining on a sofa. He had not yet recovered from the severe wound in the ankle received in December, near Barrouilhet; and his countenance bore the marks of illness—perhaps it might be said, of suffering. Yet his aspect, even in the attitude of repose, at once arrested the eye. Tall, athletic, and dignified,

"He lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him."

I saw before me one of the bravest, the most distinguished, the most trusted of the Generals who fought and conquered under Wellington; him whom Wellington himself had pronounced the "ablest officer in the army." Little did I dream that, in less than five weeks from this very interview, when war was supposed to be at an end, and ere he had fully recovered from his present injury, he was to be roused—perhaps from that couch—by martial sounds at dead of night, to be wounded a second time, taken prisoner, and carried off in triumph into the city which he now besieged! The other person present was an aide-de-camp, who sat at a table writing. I reported myself and party.

"Yes, I have heard, sir," said his Excellency, speaking, apparently, with some degree of effort. "Should have been happy to have given you quarters here to-night; but it's impossible: we are quite full. You must proceed, with your convoy and escort, till you regain the high-road, then take the first quarters you can find. Every man's good wishes will attend you, for you bring what we are all in want of. To-morrow you will have all the easier march to Dax. Do not, on any account, go further than Dax to-morrow: that is where you are to be to-morrow night. I wish you to be particular in attending to this. Good afternoon, sir."

On returning to the street, I found our whole party far more reconciled than I had expected to the idea of proceeding. Mr Chesterfield had already remounted. The mules had now been kept standing, with their loads on their backs, more than half-an-hour; and the two Capatazes received the announcement with great equanimity, each after the manner of his own nation. The Spaniard, as gravely as though uttering some time-honoured adage of his race, observed that a long march to-day makes a short march to-morrow, and that travelling tires a loaded mule, but resting kills him; while the Portuguese contented himself with a shrug of the shoulders and a *paciencia*—the two great remedies of his countrymen for all the troubles that flesh is heir to. Jones stood close at my elbow, with a face as festive now as it was ruthful not long before. "Please, sir," said he, "it's sperrits for all the party, sir. The hofficer has done it very handsome, sir. Don't care now if we marches all night, sir."

Just as we were moving, I was joined once more by Captain Gabion, who came on with us a little way, walking by the side of my pony, and bearing in his hand a small parcel. "You can't imagine, Mr Y——," said he, "how *very* much I feel annoyed that we can't accommodate you."

"Pray, don't mention it," said I. "In two or three hours we shall be under cover."

"Yes," replied the captain, in a consolatory tone. "But then it's such a shocking bad evening. Why, you'll be drenched to the skin."

"Well, never mind that. I must change when I get in."

"Ah! but then you'll find it such a dreadful road," said he. "The lane is nothing but slush and quagmire from one end to the other."

"No matter. We must pick our way through it as well as we can, and get out of it as soon as possible."

"Yes," said he, "so you must. But then it's so dismally long—a league and a half, if not near upon two."

"No matter, no matter; we shall find the end of it, sooner or later, I hope."

"How unfortunate, though, you ride a pony!" said he. "Why, you'd get through a thousand times better on horseback. You'll be caked with dirt up to your middle."

"Oh, never mind that. Dirt will brush off."

"Ah! I only wish you could have started earlier," said the captain. "It's now just upon sunset; and, with such a night as this, in another half-hour or so you'll have it pitch-dark." 396

"Well, we must do the best we can, you know. If we can't see our way, we must feel it."

"Yes, that's just what I was thinking," said he. "You'll have to grope for it, no doubt. But then, unfortunately, from the present state of the road, you'll find that far from agreeable. One time you'll lay hold of a dead bullock; another, of a dead man."

"Never mind, never mind. Of course, in the dark, we shan't be able to tell the difference, so it won't matter which."

"Hang it all!" said Captain Gabion. "I can't express to you how vexed I feel on your account. Why, I came through this lane myself a day or two ago, and could hardly get along, though it was daylight. What will you ever do, with all this convoy at your heels, passing it by night? Why, it's darker already than when you started."

"Well, at any rate we shall have a hedge on each side of us. That will tell us where we are, if we have no other clue."

"Yes, yes," said he; "very true; so it will. It's dreadful slow work, though, feeling your way, after dark, through a long, puddly lane, knee-deep in mire, by the help of the hedge—especially if there happens to be a ditch between, which you'll find to be the case. In short, I'm so perfectly convinced you'll be stuck for the night, I shall make a point to-morrow of sending a working party, before noon, if possible, to dig you all out; that is, if you are to be found above the surface. If not, you know, we must bore for you, or sink a shaft."

"Thank you, thank you; much obliged. Hope you'll remember and send some breakfast at the same time."

"Why, Mr Y——," roared Captain Gabion, bursting into an incontrollable fit of laughter, "I really do think you'll make a good campaigner in time—that is, if you have practice enough. Well, now I must say good evening, and leave you to pursue your journey. My boots are thin, and the lane is getting soppy. By the bye, Mr Y——, I don't suppose I have anything to offer that you are not well provided with; but allow me to ask, how are you off for cigars?"

"Cigars? Of course, in France, cigars may be bought anywhere and everywhere. Haven't above a day's provision, if I have that."

"Oh! haven't you, though?" said Captain Gabion. "Then just do me the favour to accept of this small package. You'll find them capital—Spanish cigars. Here, let me stow them in your coat pocket. That's it. No fear of their getting wet. It's a small box, lined with metal. Let me advise you: never smoke a French cigar, except when you can't get Spanish: enough to make a horse sick. How do you suppose I obtained them? One of the staff was sent into Bayonne with a flag of truce: found the French officers living like princes: happened to say, no good cigars to be got outside. Didn't they laugh at him? Gave him a dozen little boxes, though; did them up for him in a wrapper of skyblue silk. Don't you call that handsome? I got two of the boxes: that in your pocket is one. Good night."

It soon became too evident, as we proceeded on our march, that Captain Gabion had given no exaggerated description of the route now before us. The surface of the soil, near the river, was a loose sand or rubble. But this gradually disappeared in the lane, and was succeeded by a subsoil of thick clay, equally soft, soppy, and tenacious—poached, too, by the passage of cavalry and commissariat bullocks, and trenched by waggons and artillery. There were, indeed, but few parts of the road, except where it was actually kneaded into slush, traversed by water-courses, or occupied all across by plashy inundations, where a careful walker might not have picked his way, without absolute danger of detention or absorption. But, with a party like ours, picking was not always so easy. Regularity there was none; each managed for himself as he was able. With all the disadvantage of her little feet, Nanny managed best; where she could not walk, she jumped. Next to her, in succession, the infantry and muleteers did tolerably well: the mules did better than could be expected. The riders got on worst of any. Our line became considerably extended. Here 397
there was a stoppage; there a break; and the length of road which we occupied far exceeded marching order. Superintendence became next to impracticable; for, in so narrow a space, with a hedge and ditch on each side, it was no easy matter to pass from one part of the line to another. Two or three times, I noticed, Corporal Fraser made his way to the head of the column; and, standing up when he found a place, allowed the whole to pass, counting the mules, as on our previous day's march. Seeing the impossibility of preserving strict regularity, Mr Chesterfield requested me to proceed in front with a few of the men, while he brought up the rear, that, at least, all might be kept together. I accordingly made my way forwards, and led the march, receiving occasional communications from Corporal Fraser. Our difficulties, however, increased as we advanced. Daylight rapidly declined—twilight was short—it fell dark. Fancy, under such circumstances, a party like ours, horsemen, footmen, mules, muleteers, floundering about in a narrow lane, which, in fact, was an elongated bog; the rain coming down in torrents; the muleteers now shouting, now screaming; the soldiers, horse and foot, making their way onwards, as best they could, in silence; with every now and then a stoppage, from a mule that had stuck fast, or fallen under its burden—objects not distinguishable, barely discernible—and, where the

road was overhung with trees, all gloom around; nothing visible but the faint, uncertain glimmer beyond. The behaviour of the soldiers, on the whole, I must say, was such as to do them credit. Now and then a fellow broke away through the hedge, in hope of finding a better road on the other side. But that was generally more toil than profit. They came upon unexpected obstacles, and had to return into the lane. In fact, this, I take it, is a maxim in marching: Unless you know the country, and know it well, however bad the road, keep it; don't straggle, or try short cuts.

Riding on at the head of the party, I attempted to pick my way as far as I could see it, by making Sancho go as I thought best. This led to frequent contests between Sancho and me. Sometimes he had his way, and we got on well. Sometimes I was positive and had mine, which generally led to a plunge and a splash. Tired of this, I dismounted and led him. Still it was troublesome work. Sancho thought he knew better than I did; and often, when I pulled one way, he pulled the other. At length I gave up the contest, led him with a slack rein, and pulled no longer. This was just what he wanted; and, left to himself, he picked his way admirably. I noticed, as we passed, several such obstructions as Captain Gabion had described; and, once or twice, came very disagreeably in contact with them. At length I stumbled over I knew not what, and almost fell; took hold of something on the ground: it was a cold hand that did not return my grasp! Are you a poor man? Do you shake hands with rich men? You will understand the kind of thing. Not relishing such salutations, I was induced to try a different dodge; and, finding that Sancho went very well with a slack rein while I walked, thought perhaps he might still do the same if I mounted. Turning for that purpose, I saw, close at hand, in the gloom of night, what looked very like a ghost!—the ghost of myself! Here was I, bridle in hand, standing at Sancho's head. And there was I, *alter ego*, mounted on Sancho's back! While I looked, my mounted double suddenly disappeared! The spectral evaporation was attended with a wallop in the mud; then, close behind Sancho's heels, arose the same dark figure from the earth—and as it rose it spoke! "Please, sir, I only got across him jest to keep him steady sir, going through the mud, sir. Hope no offence, sir. Got a bullet in my leg, sir." True to his principle, of never walking when he could ride, and, dark as it was, detecting an empty saddle, Jones had promptly occupied it; and, repressing his usual loquacity, had been riding close behind me, a silent spectator of all my pedestrian misadventures. On my turning to mount, conscious guilt, as it always did when he was taken *en flagrant delit*, threw him off his guard; and, too much flurried to alight in the usual way, 398
he had effected a retrograde descent, by a parabolic flight over the pony's tail. The impetus thus acquired carried him further than he intended. He fell soft; but he fell—not on his feet. Perceiving by my laughter that I bore no malice, he promptly stepped forward, rubbed his hands on his trousers, helped me to mount, and walked on by my side. "Please, sir," said he, "I'm afeared I've split 'em, sir. It did come so very cold when I squattered down in the puddle, sir."—(No reply.)

"Please, sir, I'm thinking we shan't want good quarters when we gits furder on, sir." (Pause.) "Nor yit nothing what soldiers wants, when we gits well on into France, sir." (Another pause.) "Please, sir, I'm thinking its very cruel on service, sir, when there's whittles and drink, plenty on it, close to hand, sir, as they won't let poor soldiers help themselves, sir."

"Oh, then I suppose the soldiers never do."

"Please, sir, I s'pose they don't; not never, sir. In course not, sir. But then it's this, sir. If the Provost comes and you're cotched, sir, why, it's a couple of dozen for only taking an old shutter to bile a kittle, sir."

"Tight hand, the Provost-marshal?"

"Once, I was inamost cotched myself, sir. Please, sir, it was three on us, as got into a farm-house, sir; an empty house, what wasn't inhabited, sir. Looked up the chimbly, sir; 'cause that's where they hangs up the yams to smoke 'em, sir. There they was, sir; oh, sich a lot on 'em, as you couldn't count 'em, sir. So I fixes bagonets, and forks down a pair on 'em, sir: and jest as I was a-going to fork down another for myself, sir, along come the Provost, sir. So he see the window open, sir; 'cause the door was fastened, sir; so we got in at the window, sir. So he got in too, sir. The other fellows was cotched, and got it, sir; but I wasn't, sir; so I didn't, sir."

"Turn king's evidence?"

"Please, sir, it wasn't not likely as I should do that, sir; 'cause I scorns any sitch low-lived ways, sir. Only when I heard the Provost a-coming, sir, I got up into the chimbly, sir; and when he was gone, sir, why then I got down agin, sir. Got safe back to quarters, sir, with a yam under my greet-coat, sir."

"Of course the inhabitants must be protected, and so must their property."

"Well, p'rhaps they must if they're frinds, sir; though I nivver see'd what frinds the Spaniards was to me, sir. But here in France, where us now be, sir, I doesn't see why poor soldiers shouldn't help themselves, sir; and men's bin scragged for it, sir, let alone the Provost, sir."

"I trust we shall find the people here, if we treat them well, better friends than you did the Spaniards."

"Please, sir, if two hofficers dines togither four or five times a-week, sir, that's what I calls

being friends, sir. Hope I shall find plenty sitch, and you too, sir. Hope no offence, sir." (Pause.) "Might I make bold to aast the question, sir? The men says, as soon as we jines, we shall move on aginst the hinnimy, sir."

"Shouldn't wonder."

"Please, sir, I should like to pick off that 'ere feller as put a bullet into me, sir; jest knock him over, sir, as he did me, sir."

"Sure you would know him again, though?"

"No doubt of that, sir. I know him by the way he cocks his eye down on his firelock, sir. Could pick him out of a whole ridgment on 'em, sir."

We had now been toiling on, through mire and puddles, for about a brace of hours; and I know not how much longer our conference might have continued; but, looking forwards, at a part where the lane was more than usually darkened by over-arching trees, I perceived, at the extremity of the vista, a light less dim than hitherto. Hurra! we had reached the main road. I passed the intelligence; a shout ran down the line, and came back to us from the rear; and, reaching at length the paved highway—it was like landing on *terra firma*, I took my stand to the right of the embouchure, while weary men and weary beasts slowly and successively emerged from the dark recess, and filed off to the left along the road. At this moment the rain began to 399
moderate; the clouds lifted in the east; the blowzy moon looked down on us from silver peaks, that crested the distant Pyrenees; and, favoured by her light, after an additional half-hour's marching we reached our halting-place. Mr Chesterfield and I established headquarters at a small *auberge*, stowed the money-boxes, saw to the accommodation of the party, and were fortunate enough to secure a couple of rooms, each with a comfortable bed.

Walking down into the lower part of the house, I found Jones already at work, busying himself, much to the amusement of the *ménage*, in unbidden preparations for my evening meal. He had cut the ration beef into large uncouth dabs, which he called beef-steaks, and was banging away at them with a rolling-pin on the dresser, in the vain hope of subduing them to tenderness. Alas, what could be done with beef, that had said "moo" that forenoon? While this operation was in progress, a smart *fillette* looked smiling on, as if anxious to take a lesson in cookery *à l'Anglaise*. Fancying that Jones had intruded on an office which she considered her own, I asked whether I could have anything else? "Anything Monsieur pleased." Bravo! I was now among the Gascons. Well but, what could I have?—"For example, a *poulet*, dressed any way Monsieur preferred —*potage*, in every variety—omelets—she made twenty-three different sorts. Her brother, who was cook to the hotel at Mont de Marsan, made twenty-nine." Very well, suppose we try all three, *potage*, *poulet*, omelet:—the *façon* of each at your discretion;—only, if you please, as soon as possible; to be ready with the biftek (which, I perceived, would be impregnable.) "All should be ready, in a solitary moment."—What wine could I have? She referred me to the landlord, a pleasant-looking old gentleman in a blouse, very pursy about the neck, chest, and chin, who sat in a corner of the hearth. "Any wine I liked, French or foreign." Go it again, Gascony!—Could I have a bottle of bordeaux? "Superb."—These weighty matters arranged, I returned to the first floor; and heard, on my way up stairs, the screams of a luckless hen, which my mandate had sentenced to prompt execution in the poultry-yard.

I had not ordered dinner, however, with an eye to self alone: and was thinking whether it would not be proper to wait on my fellow-lodger, and report proceedings, when Jones followed me to my door. "Please, sir," said he, "the hofficer's kit is left behind, sir. His man isn't come up, nor yet his mule, not nayther on 'em, sir." This intelligence was decisive: I knocked at the entrance of the Hon. Mr Chesterfield's apartment. Found him rather disposed, though, to live alone. "His man would be up ere long. He was much obliged to me." Well; perhaps I had taken a liberty. Almost before I had completed the twofold process of shifting and scrubbing, the cloth was laid. The bread and bordeaux were first on the table; then the potage.—Presently came the *poulette* and the beefsteak—then the omelet;—in short, I had dined. Suffice it to say, the bordeaux was very respectable; but the beefsteak impracticable, and the *poulette* questionable. It had been cut into small pieces, and broiled. The *potage* and the omelet were the staple of my meal. Obs. 1.—When travelling in France, should you order an omelet at a roadside inn, let it by all means be the *omelette au jambon*. They will offer you a choice of twenty or thirty sorts; but that's the kind you are most likely to get good, and that you may get everywhere. Obs. 2.—Though a fowl dressed as I have described is not very tempting in appearance, especially if you have been cognisant of its recent slaughter, give me leave to observe, the dish, in a general way, is by no means unworthy of your attention; indeed, is one of the best the rural *cuisine* of France has to offer. And, let me tell you, the rural *cuisine* of France far excels the civic *cuisine* that we sometimes meet with out of France. Obs. 3.—With regard to wine,—I asked for bordeaux. That, I admit, was flat. But make allowance; I was inexperienced; this was the first time I ordered dinner on Gallic ground. The fact is—and, if you travel in France and ramble about in country places, so you will find it—the 400
white wine at a given price is decidedly better than the red at the same price. Thus, say the price you choose to go to for a bottle of wine is three francs: and I call that quite enough—for, if you say six, seven, eight francs, it comes from the same bin. Well, order white; and you probably get, for your three francs, a bottle of good sound wine. Order red; and, ten to one, it's horrid. Perhaps, however, you choose to pay for colour; you prefer red. Well, as you please. Only in that case, remember: you are responsible for the consequences, not I.

As I sat on three chairs after dinner in dreamy repose, sipping the last of my bottle of bordeaux, and revolving the events of the day, Jones entered, licking his lips. Really he looked, already, ten per cent better than when we crossed the Bidassoa—his complexion fresher and more wholesome, his aspect decidedly less misanthropic;—I began to imagine some truth in his theory, that English soldiers, who had served in Spain, grew fat on entering France. He laid hands, without ceremony, on the garments which I had doffed before dinner, and walked away with them. Rain and mud, indeed, had horribly maltreated them; and Jones, holding out the coat at arm's length, inspected it in silence, as he moved towards the door.

How beguile the hours till bed-time? I looked out. What a lovely night! The silent moonbeams fell on the paved court at the entrance of our inn. Beyond, all was luminous, but indistinct. Below, there was an open doorway, with a seat—a curious old carved concern,—the very place, the very hour, for a cigar! A cigar? Why, I've a box-full! Come, Mons. Thouvenot; we'll see what sort of havannahs you smoke there in Bayonne.

The havannahs were prime—the forenoon had been fatiguing—I had dined. A pleasing languor repaid the toils of the morning. Soon, though, it was broken, by the sound of distant violins—not badly handled, neither. This part of France is the land of the violin: you find a decent performer in every village. The sound proceeded from the premises at the back of the *auberge*; and I had previously noticed some of the villagers gliding into the inn-yard by a side entrance. Impelled by curiosity, I took the liberty of following their example; and soon found my way, amongst stables and out-houses, to a small gate opening into a garden or shrubbery, at which gate sat my jovial friend the landlord, dispensing tickets of admission, refreshments included, at six sous each. It was a sort of rural *salon de danse*, where the villagers met nightly, to exhibit and cultivate their national nimbleness of toe. Much preferring these rural fêtes to a regular French ball, I have attended at many a *guinguette* since; but as this was the first, and had all the piquancy of a surprise, I beg leave to give you a short description. Passing on through an alley among the trees, and guided by the mellow note of the violin, I soon reached the ball-room, which was simply a large boarded square, with a roof above, but three sides open,—the fourth was the orchestra. There I found assembled the youth of the village, and not only the youth, but some of their elders —three violins in full operation—and the ball at its height. *Cotillons* were the order of the day, much like those which had been introduced into the aristocratic circles of England two or three years before, say 1811, or 1812, under the name of quadrilles. The dancing was good, really good —time admirable—no mistakes—no confusion—all could dance. The deportment of the dancers, too, was in perfect good keeping. Not a *gaucherie* did I witness, throughout the evening. With one thing I was struck: and that was, the attention, the seriousness, the almost solemnity, with which the whole party applied themselves to the important business of dancing. Dancing, if it be, among the higher classes of France, an amusement, with the rural population is a passion: and, in a nation so volatile, the earnest gravity of their village *assemblées* is the more observable. Of the three violins, one, I soon perceived, had the chief authority. With a voice of command, he directed the various movements, indicated changes of figure, regulated the whole proceedings. In fact, he was not only, as it turned out, leader of the orchestra, but dancing-master to the village —"*Vir gregis ipse* CAPER:" and, had he been Grand Turk, he could not have issued his mandates in a more imperious tone, or to more obedient subjects.—Never go to France again, without attending a village dance at a *guinguette*. If you have not seen that, you have not seen one most interesting phase of Gallic character.

Among the belles of the evening, there was one, you rogue! taller than the rest, that both attracted my attention, and fixed it. She not only danced well—they all did that—she danced with an air. Nay, shall I tell the whole truth? She bore a resemblance, or at least I fancied so, to the admired of all eyes, the lovely Juno, with whom I had crossed the Bay of Biscay. Near me danced a lusty Adonis of five-and-forty, who was decidedly the best male performer of the party. I had already made two or three acquaintances; and, as he swept by me in the whirl of his evolutions, I could not help saying, "You dance well, Monsieur." He, with the honest, open-hearted vanity of a Frenchman and a Gascon, danced with redoubled energy, to confirm my good opinion. Presently the set concluded; and the next moment he was at my side in a high state of exhilaration, mopping and breathless. "*Eh bien! Monsieur*—Our dancing—what do you think of it?"

"Excellent. The ladies dance admirably. Of the male performers, truth compels me to avow that you are incomparably the best."

"You dance?"

"Might a stranger presume—?"

"Ah, Monsieur, but what an honour to our ball! Hold! I shall find you a *vis-à-vis*."

"Might one select?"

"She's yours for the evening! Name her! I fly!"

"Her with the blue sash, large eyes, rather tall—"

"Ah! my cousin! Wait a little moment! 'Tis done!"

The violins struck up; again the sets were formed; with the partner of my choice, I stood up for

a *cotillon*. Had danced the same figures in England; so got on tolerably well.

I say, though, what's this? The time has changed! Half a second ago, it was one, two, three, four. Now it's one, two, three! The figure—that's different too! Why, what's come to them all? Two and two, swimming round and round! Gyration and rotation at once—the planetary system! I turned to my fair partner—she turned to me—I clasped a lovely arm-full—she dropped her hand upon my shoulder—I was fairly in for it. We whirled away with the rest. First it was to German strains, soft, equable, and mellifluous. Then, with a shout from Mons. Caper, the tune suddenly changed. It now was Spanish—soft and equable no longer—a mad, galloping *capriccio*, all tingling with life, point, and mettle. She entered into the spirit of it. I soon discovered that,—so kept her up to it, till she cried "enough!" in earnest. But oh! the difference between such a partner, and a bouncer! Oh! the difference between such a partner, and a bolter! Oh! the ease, the ductility, the lightness, the perfect airiness of her step! She waltzed like a zephyr!

Farewell, charming Gasconne! Farewell, bewitching partner of an hour! Farewell, too, energetic and laborious dancer, my partner's middle-aged fussy cousin! Farewell, at least, till we meet again, under somewhat altered circumstances. Before you, too, Monsieur Caper, before you, orchestral umpire! terpsichorean autocrat!—before you, on retiring for the night, I make, *en passant*, with all the company, a profound obeisance.—In short, I then and there literally fell in love with the Gascon character; and the more I saw of them afterwards, the more I liked them.

On the way to my apartment that night, I fell in with Jones, who informed me, with great apparent concern, that the servant and his kit had not yet come up; and that he "was afeared the hofficer had made his dinner off of bread and cheese."

CHAPTER XIII.

Jones entered my room early in the morning, with the garments which had so direly suffered, the day before, by spattering mud and pelting rain. They were now perfectly presentable; and not only that, but thoroughly dry. 402

"Well, Jones, I see you've given them a good brushing."

"Wouldn't have bin of no use, sir. Took and washed 'em, sir. Done it last night, sir."

"How did you get them dry, then?"

"Please, sir, I had 'em down to the kitchen fire the first thing this morning, sir—before daylight, sir."

"I say, Jones, how did you manage these gloves?"

"Please, sir, I washed 'em and put 'em on, sir. Walked about with them on my hands till they was dry, sir."

"Why did you turn out so early, man? Don't suppose we shall start before noon."

"Please, sir, 'cause I wanted to git forward with my wuk, sir; 'cause to-day I wants to turn out tidy myself, sir. Got a bit of tailoring to do, sir, 'cause of the haccident off the pony, sir. Thousand pities they don't cut the soldiers' jackits longer behind, sir."

"Why turn out tidy to-day in particular?"

"Please, sir, 'cause I understands we're like to meet the hinnimy, sir. Should wish to die dacent, sir."

"Well, get on, then. Here, stop. Take this; and see if you can't find somebody to do your tailoring in the village."

"Thank ye, sir; pertlickler obleeged to ye, sir; thank ye, sir." Then, having pocketed the francs, "Please, sir, though, with your pimmission, sir, I'd rayther do the job of tailoring myself, sir."

"Oh, very well, if you choose to turn tailor. Just as you please."

Jones was about to withdraw—but paused. There was a moment of internal struggle.

"Please, sir," said he, "it's what I ham, sir. Sarved my prentice, sir. Only I don't know what ivver I shall do for a goose, sir."

"I say, Jones, what's that you were saying just now about meeting the enemy? What enemy?"

"Please, sir, I don't know nothing about it, only this, sir. The fellers as is here told our fellers, sir, as a Frinch party sprised a Portygee party, sir, in a village not two leagues off, sir, only three days ago, sir. Took or killed them all, sir. Druv some on 'em into the stable of the inn, sir; and bagonetted them under the manger, sir."

"Oh, they did, did they? Then let me have my breakfast in about half-an-hour."

"Please, sir, I'll go at once and give Nanny her milking, sir. She wants it dreadful, sir."

While concluding my toilet, I noticed the merry chirp of children at play, which came in through the open window. Gradually it grew louder and more uproarious: there was evidently some unusual source of festivity. I looked out; the cause was manifest. Nanny, in the highest possible state of good humour, now making believe to butt, now running backwards, now stamping, now caprioling, now erect, with a languishing turn of her head and her fore-legs gracefully doubled down, was surrounded with a host of jocund juveniles, who broke forth into fresh shouts of mirth and marvel, at every variation in her attitude. In the midst of this hilarity, Jones rushed forth from the inn door, bearing in one hand a small three-legged stool, and in the other a can. Did you ever see a goat milked? Nanny at once became sedate—a fixture. Jones placed the three-legged stool *behind* her, and the can between her hind legs. Goats, my dear madam, are not milked *sideways*, like cows. The milking began. This process effected a total change of deportment in the small rabble that stood looking on. Before, all was noise and fun. Now, every tongue was still, every movement suspended. Twenty little urchins stood grouped in silent observation; twenty little pairs of eyes stood wide open. Curiosity had superseded frolic; each was receiving an idea! As the operation proceeded, a snow-white head of milky foam rose mantling in the can. Then rose, too, the shout of joyous surprise. However, the younkers soon discovered, with the intuitive tact of children, that nothing new remained to be seen; so their thoughts reverted to sport. Hand joined in hand, the toddling multitude, that, for facility of inspection, had gathered in Jones' rear, began to deploy. A circle was gradually formed, with Jones and Nanny in the centre. Two or three voices commenced a chant; the rest joined in; the circle began to move with measured tread; and Jones, ere he had finished his task, was encompassed with a ring of merry dancers and singers, who seemed resolved to make him pay toll, or keep him prisoner. Jones, however, was too much of a general for that. Watching his opportunity, he threw a warm jet of milk into the eyes of a flaxen-haired urchin; and, profiting by the temporary confusion and delight which ensued, broke the line of circumvallation, and made good his retreat into the house with stool and can, followed by a tumultuous throng, some pulling the skirts of his jacket, some punching, some shouting, some jumping and clapping their sides in an ecstasy of delight.

The missing servant, though—that was an awkward business. Night had passed—morning had returned; it was now eight o'clock—still no servant came. The whole party unaccounted for amounted to four; namely, 1, the servant himself, an English groom, very much disposed to have his own way, and quite green as a campaigner; 2, the horse which the servant rode; 3, the mule which carried the officer's baggage; 4, a Portuguese lad, the mule's driver. Mr Chesterfield was disposed to take a party of the dragoons, and go back himself in search of them. But, under all the circumstances of the case, I felt it my duty respectfully to intimate a doubt as to the advisableness of his separating from the party which he commanded, and from the treasure which we had in charge; and, on a moment's consideration, he saw the force of the suggestion. At length it was decided to send a corporal and four men, who started in search of the absentees, with a charge, whether successful or not, to be back before noon. We were bound to reach our next halting-place that night; and this was still more indispensable, after the strict injunctions I had received the day before. The detachment, therefore, set out; but our preparations proceeded for marching at the appointed hour.

These matters arranged, I bent my steps towards the shrubbery, intending to take a daylight view of the previous evening's ball-room. In the shrubbery I had not proceeded far, when, much to my surprise, I heard, lustily chanted, an old English stave—

"Oh, what a fine world, this we live in,
To lend in, to spend in, to give in!
But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man's own,
'Tis the very worst world that ever was known."

The songster of the grove, it soon became apparent, was Jones. I saw him before he saw me. On a line, stretched between two trees, he had suspended by far the greater portion of his wardrobe,—that part which he still had on being equally light and scanty,—and, while busily engaged in his preparations to "turn out tidy" and "die dacent," now inspecting, now polishing, in a high state of exhilaration, he was carolling away, very much to his own satisfaction, at the top of his voice. The next strain was different:—

"When last I attempted your pity to move,
  Your scorn but augmented my cares.
Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love;
  But why did you kick me down stairs?"

The last line he twanged out with great pathos, not forgetting the repeat:—

"But why did you—why did you—kick me down stairs?"

Then, stepping back a few paces, and complacently viewing his work, he suddenly threw himself into an attitude, extended one arm, and commenced a soliloquy:—

"What's life? A book; a pictur-book, a purty pictur-book! But, ah me, jest like other pictur-books! All the picturs at the beginning! Heavy reading's the rest on it; so I finds at least. Pertickerly when you've got a hempty backy-box, and can't git no good pigtail, not for love nor money, let alone shag. Thim straws, I considers, is renk pyzon."

A quick march, stoutly whistled, sufficed to dispel these melancholy thoughts. Then followed a touch of the comic. Jones, it was clear, had been a witness of the preceding night's ball. Holding out, with bowed arms, the corners of a not very presentable shirt, which—excuse me if I'm too particular—hung loose from his shoulders, and mimicking the airs of a dancing belle, he sang:— 404

"Hands across, back again, down the middle—
'Please to make room, for I'm going to faint.'
'Don't scream so loud, Miss; I can't hear the fiddle.'
'Ma'am, you're quite rude.'—'No, I'm sure I aint.'
The doctor's dancing quite contráry,
Holds his breath, and turns in his toes.
Ranting, prancing, capering Mary
Cocks her chin, and off she goes.

Cross over to Betsy Maginnis,
And foot it again to Major Shaw.
'Miss Molloy, your sweet mouth in a grin is.'
'Mister Mickey, keep off your paw.'
The doctor's dancing quite contráry,
Holds his breath, and turns in his toes.
Ranting, prancing, capering Mary
Cocks her chin, and off she goes.

'Down forty couple, I'm sure will fatigue us.'
'I told you it wouldn't, and here we're come.'
'Ma'am, shall I fetch you a tumbler of negus?'
'No, if you please, sir, a glass of rum.'
The doctor's dancing quite contráry,
Holds his breath, and turns in his toes.
Ranting, prancing, capering Mary
Cocks her chin, and off she goes."

Then, changing both dance and tune, Jones stuck his arms a-kimbo like a Welsh milkwoman, and struck up an aboriginal air of the Principality, footing it heel and toe—words unintelligible. I approached. Jones, as usual, the instant he saw me, fell to self-defence. "Please, sir, I got up into the hayloft, sir: took 'em off, and mended 'em there, sir; 'cause I didn't want none of the fellers to see me a-tailoring, sir. That's why I did it, sir."

"Well, put them on this instant, sir; it's disgraceful. Put them on, I tell you. Be quick."

Jones, seeing I was resolute, presently gave tokens of compliance. "Don't let me find you in that state when I come back," said I.

There was nothing now to wait for, save the absentees. About eleven o'clock, A.M., the dragoons returned. They had gone some distance down the lane, and found nothing. At length, one of them noticed, in the ditch, a trunk, which proved, on examination, to have been broken open and rifled. This they brought back with them; and it announced to us, in language but too intelligible, what had been the probable fate of the party missing.—The fact is, when Mr Chesterfield purchased a mule at St Jean de Luz, for the conveyance of his personal baggage, his servant had discarded the albarda or pack-saddle, determining to load in his own way. Hence, in fact, the loss of the party. The albarda, please to observe, is essential to the serviceableness of your mule. In appearance, no doubt, it is the awkwardest thing in the world. Imagine a hard straw mattress (for it comes nearer that than anything else,) fitted to the animal's back, and covering nearly the whole of it. "Quite absurd," you would say, "to oppress a beast of burden with such an extra load." But then this mattress answers a threefold purpose. First, it keeps the load from galling your mule's back: secondly, it cushions the packages, so that they do not shift: thirdly, and this perhaps is most important of all, it *distributes* the weight, so that the burden presses equally. Now Mr Chesterfield's *personelle* was stowed in large awkward black boxes, of the most approved London make, which hung over the mule's back by straps, and of course were continually getting wrong. The inconvenience of this outfit became apparent, ere we were clear of the town of St Jean de Luz. The mule got uneasy; the load shifted; something was continually requiring to be set right. Both mule and driver, horse and groom, soon fell into the rear: the groom blowing up the driver in English, which he didn't understand; the driver bothered with an arrangement, which he knew was all wrong. They came up when we halted, but soon fell behind again. The last time they were seen in the lane, which was just before it fell dark, they were come to a halt, and were all at sixes and sevens. Whether they were killed, or made prisoners, or escaped with the loss of the effects, we never heard or ascertained during the rest of our journey to headquarters.

The packing was now completed with all expedition. By noon we got fairly off; and a march, not quite so short as we expected, brought us to our resting-place for the night. 405

CHAPTER XIV.

I question if the Gascon character has been duly appreciated. A Gascon is a braggadocio; so we settle it. Now the Gascons are great in this line, it's undeniable. But that which really distinguishes a Gascon, is grandiloquence on all subjects. Whatever the topic of conversation, his style is exaggerated. Tell a Gascon any extraordinary fact, he instantly caps it—tells you something more extraordinary of the same kind. If he happens to be speaking of himself, he still employs the same style of amplification, but only as he would in discussing any subject besides. He possesses also, in an eminent degree, that—(what? frankness, shall I call it?)—at any rate, that peculiar quality, which at once makes you feel as much at ease with him as with an old acquaintance. All the French have this, but the Gascon has it pre-eminently.

My billet for the night was at a seedsman's. Five minutes after my arrival I felt domesticated. He puzzled me not a little though, by eagerly inquiring whether I had ever met in England with a plant called Chou d'Yorck. Its fame had reached him, but the long war had prevented his obtaining a sample. He rejoiced in the prospect of a peace, which would enable him to obtain some Chou d'Yorck. In form he was stiff and stumpy, but in speech and manner lively. To assist him in his shop, he had a youth—age eighteen or nineteen—whom he treated with considerable hauteur. My landlord, his assistant, and myself, all three took our evening meal together; but the youth was not permitted to sit down. Standing near his master, like Corporal Trim, with one foot before the other in an attitude, his head very upright, and his chest projected, he grasped in one hand a hunch of bread and a modicum of sausage, while the other flourished a pocket-knife. His master abruptly handed him a tumbler of wine, without asking him when he would have it; and he forthwith tossed it off, and set down the glass, as if so much and no more was his allowance.

I was amused with my landlord's oration, when I entered his shop and presented my billet. He first read it, then looked at me. "Ah," said he, "in *your* face, now, I see something, Monsieur, which tells me we shall find you an agreeable inmate. The last Englishman I had conducted himself so badly, I was forced to pitch him out of the window." My landlord had a great penchant, like other Frenchmen of that day, for conversing on the subject of duelling. Asked me if the English did not decide their duels with pistols—were they good shots? I told him the famous wager that had come off not long before, when a crack shot betted to hit with a pistol nineteen oranges out of twenty thrown up in the air—missed the first on purpose to increase the odds—hit the other nineteen. This brought out the Gascon. I had told something extraordinary, he must cap it. "But, Monsieur," said he, "we have, in this place, persons who can hit a butterfly on the wing." (*Qui tuent un papillon volant!*) He gave me some account of a partisan, who had been active against the English. "Monsieur, he's as brave as a lion; in one word, he's as brave as I am myself," (*à tout dire, il est brave comme moi.*) One difference between a Gascon and the rest of the world I conceive to be this—that, when other people utter an extravagant or bombastic speech, they generally utter it in a joke; but when a Gascon exaggerates or romances, he speaks with perfect seriousness, and so expects to be taken.

This evening, though, I made a most agreeable discovery. Jones had found stable-room for Sancho in the yard of an inn near my billet. After dinner I stepped out, feeling it necessary, from previous observation, to see that Sancho had his. On reaching the inn-yard, the first thing I saw was just what one often sees at home about suburban public-houses, a party holding an open-air compotation, standing. It was a party of three—an English soldier, an English groom, and a Portuguese youth of twenty, dressed as much like the groom as possible. They stood in a triangle, noses all pointing to the common centre of gravity. Each held a glass, and the English servant a bottle. He, I concluded, "stood it." The soldier was Jones. He was rhetorically holding forth; the other two were earnest listeners—his theme, the battle of Vittoria. My approach broke up the party. I walked direct into Sancho's stable; found his crib empty—no appearance of corn. This might have been accounted for, by supposing the corn already consumed; but Jones couldn't keep his own counsel. He soon put the matter beyond all doubt by rushing in with a sieve-full, which he shot out under the pony's nose, and sedulously dispersed with his hand. The other two went into their own stable: the English groom, I observed, touching his hat. I had seen him somewhere before, but didn't remember, at the moment, time or place.

"Please, sir," said Jones, "both on 'em is sarvant to a jeddleham, sir; a Hinglishman, what's a-going up along with us, sir, 'cause we've got a hescort, sir; 'cause he considers it's more safer than going by his-self, sir. One on 'em's his groom, sir, and the other's his help, sir." The corn stuck in my gizzard, and I made no reply.

"Please, sir, they've got two sitch be-youtiful horses, as nivver you see'd, sir."

"Please, sir, they've got a text-cart, with a kivver to it, sir; whot carries the jeddleham's baggage, sir."

I took my station at the stable-door, to be sure that Sancho not only had his corn, but ate it. The groom, in the adjoining stable, was addressing the help in a kind of perpetual blowing up, a mixture of Portuguese and English; voice deep and hollow. "You Joe King, (Joaquim,) onde está the tobacco-box?"

To this deep-toned bass responded a piping treble—"Ah, I tink you is got it in you brisch-pockit."

"You Joe King, dá cevada to the cavallos, chega the teapot, and don't bother me nada."

Having thus issued his mandate, the groom came forth from the stable. Catching sight of me, he stepped up, and I recognised him at once. Why, it was Coosey, Gingham's Cockney servant, whom I had seen at Lisbon, in the Castle. Glad was I to meet with the man for the sake of his master. Coosey again touched his hat, and respectfully inquired whether I wasn't the gentleman as vos goin hup with a hescort. A conversation ensued, in the course of which I learned, in reply to my eager inquiries, that Gingham was not aware who it was that had charge of the treasure. Gingham merely knew that a convoy was going up; and intended to go in company, for the sake of the guard.

Learning from Coosey that Gingham's quarters were in the suburbs, and not deeming it advisable to go any distance from my charge, I contented myself, for that evening, with sending Gingham a hearty salutation, with a confident hope that I should have the pleasure of his company in the morning. Before bed-time, Coosey brought me a note from Gingham, that he would join me next day just outside the town, and travel in company.

Before quitting the yard, though, I fell in with another acquaintance. The *garçon* popped out upon me from a side-door; begged to say there was a gentleman in the *cuisine*, who would be happy to speak to me.

"Who? What is he?"

"A courier, monsieur, employed on an important mission."

"Haven't the pleasure of knowing any gentleman in that line. Describe him."

The *garçon* laughed; held up one hand, with the forefinger crooked. "*Monsieur, voici son nez.*"

I entered. Ah, it was my friend Hookey. Hookey, you will remember, obtained a passage by the Falmouth packet, as bearer of despatches from Oporto to Lisbon. Probably he was not aware, that doubts were then entertained of his real character; for, on the present occasion, he again announced himself as a courier.

"I am now, monsieur, on my way to the British headquarters, with important despatches from Madrid. You are going there, too." (Who told you that, friend Hookey?) "I, as I travel post, shall arrive there first. Don't you see what an excellent opportunity, if you wish to announce yourself? I shall take charge of your letter, and deliver it with supreme felicity."

"Much obliged. They probably know all about me."

"But, monsieur," said Hookey, "headquarters are now advanced from St Sever to Aire, or soon will be." (Pray, Mr Hookey, how do you know, if you come post from Madrid?) "Why not cut right across, then, and go to Aire by the nearest road? Why go round by St Sever? Your route is by St Sever, I understand?"

Wondering how Hookey understood anything of the matter, and not choosing to convert his understanding into certainty, I merely replied, that wherever a man is going, of course he would wish to take the best road.

"Yes, monsieur," said Hookey, "that is incontestable. But the best road is, evidently, the most direct. Why march on the arc, when you can march on the chord? *Ecoutez, monsieur*—your road is by Hagetmau, direct to Aire."

Seeing he was so urgent, I began to suspect he had a motive, so resolved to humour him. "Really, what you say appears very just. But the road—I am totally ignorant of it. It may be good; it may be bad."

"I answer for the road; know every inch of it."

"By the bye, monsieur, an idea strikes me. Give me your opinion. What if I perform the remaining distance by water?"

"By water!" exclaimed Hookey; "a great thought! What a saving of time and labour!"

"Good. I impress all the boats on the river; embark my whole convoy and escort; and so, by the Adour, or by one of its tributaries, arrive within a day's march of headquarters. What a surprise for Milord Vilinton, and all his staff!"

"Excellent! Write that, monsieur. Commit your letter to me, and trust me for delivering it. You will excite a sensation. The whole army will be electrified."

Greatly doubting whether a letter intrusted to Hookey would ever come to hand, I asked for writing materials, and just wrote that I hoped to reach my destination by the day appointed. Then, closing the document, I addressed it in due form, and handed it to Hookey. Had I really departed from my written route, as Hookey exhorted, I should not only have incurred responsibility, but have disobeyed orders, gone off the line of English posts, and entered a district which just at that time, as I have since discovered, was the seat of a serious disturbance.

I now took leave of friend Hookey. That he was no courier, we had good reason for knowing ere long. He probably urged me to write, because doubtful whether my route was round by St Sever—hoping that something in my letter might help him to decide. This was evidently the point that he wished to ascertain; and on this subject I left him as wise as I found him.

Waiting a while at the door, ere I departed to my billet for the night, I heard a confab under the gateway, between Jones and Joaquim. Joaquim (Englished by Coosey "Joe King") was displaying to Jones his proficiency in the English language. Joaquim, I discovered, was ambitious to be English in everything—an English groom, like Coosey; took Coosey as his model. Coosey, by way of teaching him the language, had begun with the London cries. Joaquim was exhibiting his attainments; "Old clo'—old clo'."

"Quite naytral," said Jones; "better than the Jews does it themselves."

"Hinny yonnimints f'yer fire ... stooves?"

"Muinto buyng, muinto buyng," said Jones, whose Portuguese was second only to Joaquim's English. Jones, with an eye to Gingham, of whose well-stored cart he had already formed most magnificent conceptions, was assiduously striving to establish himself both with Joaquim and Coosey. Coosey at that moment came up.

"Hony you 'ear him do the donkey, though," said Coosey. "You Joe King, come, tip us the burro."

Joaquim brayed. Tommy Duncombe couldn't have done it better.

"There," said Coosey. "Now you listen." A donkey, somewhere within hearing, responded with a distant bray.

"That's vot I goes by," said Coosey. "I knows many young jeddlemen in Hingland, vot does it wherry like. But I never see not nobody, hony this 'ear Joe King, vot could make 'em 'oller."

Next morning, Jones again attempted to defraud Sancho of his corn. Jones, it was too evident, was a rogue in grain—detection did not reform him. As we issued from the town, proceeding on our day's march, I looked out for Gingham, right and left. At length, passing a cross-road, I heard a smart slap on Jones's musket; and, looking down the turning, I caught sight of Coosey returning the salute, hand to forehead, in military style, which Joaquim ditto'd. What Coosey did, Joaquim did; that was Joaquim's moral code. A little further down the lane, hurra! my eyes had now the pleasure of beholding Gingham; and not Gingham only, but Mr Staff-surgeon Pledget. Heartily should I have hailed the sight of either. What then was now my joy, in falling in both with Pledget, the solemn and the facetious, and with Gingham, the best of friends! Most cordial was the greeting on my side, nor less so on theirs. Gingham came forth in a new aspect. He turned out in a substantial great-coat, which covered everything from his spurs to his nose. This coat he wore upon the march in all weathers, rain or shine; but peeled at the end of the journey, and peeled white—came out clean as a nut—in *propriâ personâ—ipsissimus*—Gingham. The junction of these friends was a real accession to our party. Pledget was mounted on a good sensible mule. Gingham rode a handsome horse—Spanish—a really splendid fellow—all mettle and muscle—with fiery nostrils, flashing eye, delicate little ears, zebra legs, elastic motion—in short, a horse worthy of such a rider—a perfect gentleman. Coosey, also, was mounted on a showy Spanish stallion, whose advance was sideways, a perpetual zigzag. All in a quiver, he champed the bit, and came sidling up the road with arched neck, and foam churning from his jaws. The cart, drawn by a strong, large-boned French horse, was intrusted to the care of Joaquim, with the option of walking or riding. After our first greetings, the cart, being a novelty, became the subject of our conversation as we rode along. Gingham had built it at Passages. Had out the wheels from England; a pair, with a swivel wheel in front. The cart had for its covering a tarpaulin supported by hoops, closed at the back, and also closing, when requisite, in front—might be used, on an occasion, to sleep in—was so built that Gingham's boxes exactly fitted into it, making a level surface with their lids. In short the concern was well arranged, unpretending, and complete—altogether worthy of Gingham. Jones conned it with an admiring, but at the same time a critical eye; now walking in front and alongside, now dropping behind, to take a view in every direction; and, Coosey being Gingham's right-hand man, and Joaquim his help, would have tumbled head over heels to secure the favour of either.

I must here describe a little affair in which we were involved on this day's march; not as important in itself, but as standing connected with our subsequent adventures. While Gingham and I were still discussing the subject of the cart, we reached the river which we had passed the day before, and had now to pass again. A large and commodious ferryboat, which was to take us over, was lying on the other side; where we also saw assembled a concourse of people, apparently country-folks, who had come there with the intention of crossing. Expecting that a boat-load of them would soon pass to us, our party, as they came up, halted on the bank, waiting their arrival.

There seemed to be some delay. The people on the other side didn't get in, and the boat didn't come. We shouted across. They took no notice. Shouted louder. They answered with derisive jeers. Corporal Fraser stood by my side. "Some of the individuals have firearms," said he. I made a closer examination—saw it was so—and saw Hookey. Addressed him personally: "Have the kindness to get them to bring over the ferryboat." "This is not your road," sung out Hookey, with

much gesticulation; "go by Hagetmau. Press all the boats on the Adour, and go by water." The case was clear. They did not intend to let us pass; and, as they had got the boat on their side, we could not compel them. Mr Chesterfield and I held a council of war.

"We can easily disperse that rabble by a few shots," said he; "and then the ferrymen will no doubt come forward, and bring the boat over." 409

I, on the contrary, was for avoiding collision, if possible. A war with the peasantry, once commenced, might soon become serious; and, should they return our fire, one or two wounded men, even supposing nothing worse, would prove a serious incumbrance to our subsequent progress. "Well, then," said Mr Chesterfield; "what are we to do? We can't wait here all day; that's evident."

The river was low. Could we find no other crossing? Was there no ford? I looked up the stream, Gingham looked down. "See here," said he, with his usual sagacity; "the river bends below, and spreads in the bend. Beyond, I see it again. No doubt there is a considerable sweep; and, probably, in that sweep a shallow."

"Suppose we go and examine," said I. Gingham looked earnestly in the direction.

"Don't see any way of getting there," said he. "There must be some communication, though, between that farmhouse and the road. No doubt it is the lane we passed just now. Suppose we go and see."

Gingham and I rode off up the road, to find the lane. Pledget followed on his mule. The multitude on the other side, thinking, no doubt, we were of to the town for assistance, again raised a shout of derision. We found the lane; and arrived at the farmhouse, and the bend in the river, without being noticed by the enemy.

The character of the ground was here peculiar. The river swept round in a horse-shoe curve, as the Thames sweeps round the Isle of Dogs; but so that the convexity was towards us, and the peninsula on the other side. Just at the vortex of this curve, or at what may be called the toe of the horse-shoe, the stream widened out, and to all appearance shoaled. "Here's the ford," said Gingham, and rode in. Pledget and I followed. We crossed the river and re-crossed it—most part of the way not knee-deep. The ford, though, was not right across; a ledge of rock traversed the river obliquely. Down to that ridge there was a ripple, and the stream gradually shoaled. Below it, all was deep water, smooth, dark, and silent.

"The worst of it is, though," said Gingham, awaking from a fit of musing, "the moment we withdraw our party from the ferry to pass them over here, the fellows on the other side will discover our design. We shall then have the whole peninsula covered with them.

"No fear of that," said I. "Don't you see? The peninsula is our ground, though on the other side of the river. We can command the whole of it from this bank, and the approaches too."

"Of course we can," said Pledget. "Occupy the house with half-a-dozen muskets, and that knoll with as many more, and not a man of them can come on the peninsula."

In fact, a few words are necessary to explain the full amount of our advantages. The whole extent of the peninsula, round which the river swept, was not above two or three acres. At one extremity of the curve, or, if you like to call it so, at one heel of the horse-shoe, stood the farmhouse, at the other stood the knoll; so that, though both knoll and house were on our side of the stream, a line drawn from one to the other would cut right across the isthmus; and, these two points once occupied, no one on the opposite side could come on the peninsula, and approach the ford, without passing under our guns, and exposing himself to a cross fire.

We returned forthwith, and made our report to Mr Chesterfield, who at once saw the expediency of promptly occupying the house and knoll. Accordingly, our whole party withdrew up the road. The enemy, thinking they had defeated our project, and compelled us to return to our last night's quarters, now shouted with redoubled energy, "The other road! The other road!—To Hagetmau! To Hagetmau!" One little squeaking voice I distinguished above the yells—not Hookey's: "So sal you here ober komm, so sal I gib you someting." This was not the last time I heard that voice.

Mr Chesterfield now pushed forward with a party by the lane towards the ford, the convoy and the rest of the escort following. He occupied both the farm-house and the knoll, the former with infantry, the latter with dragoons. The rest of the escort then forded the river with the convoy. Twenty or thirty of the rabble now discovered us, and ran down towards the spot; but they were too late. A few carbine and musket shots, from the knoll and house, soon brought them to a halt, and sent them to the right-about. Meanwhile the multitude at the ferry made demonstrations of crossing in the boat, with shouts and menaces. But in the midst of the uproar, looking down the river towards the ford, they caught sight of our cavalry moving up the bank towards them on their own side, in order of battle. It was quite sufficient. Not wishing for a closer acquaintance, the yokels immediately dispersed and cut; we did not pursue them; and thus was effected the passage of the river without collision, and without loss too, save and except the loss of time. Nor did we meet with any further obstruction during that day's march, which brought us to the next halting-place indicated in our route. 410

Still the state of affairs was far from satisfactory. It was sufficiently clear, from the events of the morning, that a spirit of hostility was alive; and that the rural population were disposed to obstruct our progress; nay perhaps, if they saw a prospect of success, to attack us. Hookey, it seemed probable, was the prime mover; and I felt satisfied we should see him again. I was far from thinking he had the concurrence of the French authorities; nor do I think so now. He would doubtless have been delighted to ease us of part of our cash; and probably, like other distinguished agitators, he was agitating on his own account. However that might be, it was clearly incumbent on us to have our eyes open, and to be prepared, if needful, to take our own part.

Nor could we feel wholly satisfied in other respects. In our intercourse with the inhabitants generally, we did not, it is true, detect tokens of hostility, or even experience rudeness. Still there was unquestionably a great alteration of manner, since we had advanced beyond the immediate vicinity of the Allied forces before Bayonne. This I noticed in the morning. But at the close of the day's journey it was still more observable. Whatever we applied for, indeed, we obtained—billets, accommodations, in short everything usually required by troops on a march. But nothing was given with alacrity; we seemed to have got into a cooler climate. I suppose most of my readers know the difference between a Frenchman who wishes to please, and one who has no such amiable ambition. By the demeanour and looks of the younger branches, too, we may sometimes discover how the heads of a family really stand affected towards us; and here, in the houses which I entered, nothing struck me more than the deportment of the children. Their distant and suspicious glances seemed to perform the part of tell-tales; one could almost guess what kind of a conversation respecting *les Anglais*, had previously passed in the family. One plucky little fellow appeared dressed out as a soldier. I tapped his sword, and asked him what that was for. He gravely replied, "To kill you."

The occurrences of the day seemed to remind us, that we were not to regard our remaining journey to headquarters as a mere party of pleasure; and those of the morrow were quite in accordance with this impression.

THE DWARF AND THE OAK TREE.

A VISION OF 1850.

I.

Within the greenwood as I walked,
  Upon a summer's day,
I saw a vision wonderful,
  That filled me with dismay.
Beneath the spreading shadow
  Of a tall and stately tree,
Was a band of porkers gathered,
  Grunting fierce as fierce could be.
They were rough and bristly monsters,
  With an aspect most obscene;
And they trampled to a dunghill
  All the fair and comely green.
Hideous tusks, and sharply whetted,
  Did the savage creatures bear;
And their flanks were thick incrusted
  With the droppings of their lair.

II.

Above, the mighty branches spread
From out the parent stem;
And lo! I saw a Mannikin
High perched on one of them.
His face was pale, his cheeks were white;
He sate in utter woe;
It seemed he durst not venture down,
For fear of those below.
But anon he shook the branches,
And down the acorns fell,
And then the beasts rushed forward,
Each with a horrid yell.
Right sharp and savage was the grunt,
Though plentiful the food:
So sate the lonely Mannikin
Within the lonely wood.

III.

But as I tarried, wondering much
To see the little man,
A gleam of light came o'er his face;
It seemed some cunning plan
Rose up within him, for he grinned
And nodded to himself,
Then grinned again and chuckled,
Like a sly and naughty elf.
And then I marked him, stealthily
From out his belt withdraw
A weapon in the morning light,
That glittered like a saw;
And straight astride a heavy branch
Right nimbly clambered he,
And sawed away most busily,
Between him and the tree!

IV.

Then longer from accosting him
I could not well forbear—
"What, ho, thou foolish Mannikin!
What art thou doing there?
A little deeper, and 'tis plain
The branch must downward go,
And down with it the carpenter
Unto the beasts below!"
Then answered back the Mannikin—
"Aha! I'm light and strong:
You'll see me scramble higher up,
And higher yet ere long.
But first this branch I sever, just
To please the hungry swine;
And then I'll lop another off—
For that's a scheme of mine!"

V.

"Forbear, thou naughty Mannikin!"
'Twas thus again I spoke—
"Who was't gave thee the liberty
To lop that stately oak?
In strength and glory it hath stood
A thousand years and more,
Still spreading forth its mighty arms,
As proudly as of yore.
What tree hath ever matched it yet
For majesty of form?
Or yielded such a sure defence
From heat, or rain, or storm?
Though tempests often round it swept,
It still hath bravely stood,
Nor ever stooped its shapely crest—
That monarch of the wood!

VI.

"And *thou*, an ape-like atomy,
Perched up within the tree!
Shall its fair limbs be lopped away
By such a dwarf as thee?"
Yet chattered still the Mannikin—
"Down, down, the branch must go!
The pigs demand the sacrifice—
They're watching me below.
See—see! they're grunting upwards! ah,
They bare their tusks at me!
For rather than offend my swine
I would uproot the tree.
Hush—hush, my darlings! Hush, my dears!
Here's plenty food for you—
A moment's patience, and 'tis done;
The branch is nearly through!"

VII.

"Have done, thou wicked Mannikin,
And hold that hand of thine;
I marvel what Ulysses 'twas
Set thee to keep the swine!
If from that noble forest-tree
Thou loppest every shoot,
Where, when another autumn comes,
Will be the needful fruit?
'Tis well to feed thy bristly herd,
Ay, feed them to the fill;
But leave the oak-tree unprofaned
With all its branches still:
Lest, when the swine have eaten all
The food that thou canst send,
They take a horrid fancy next
To dine on thee, my friend!"

VIII.

'Twas thus I spoke in warning. Still
The Mannikin said, "Nay!"
But ever chattered busily,
And ever sawed away.
I marked the branch declining fast,
Its fibres creaking sore:
I heard the grunting of the beasts
Still fiercer than before.
High up into the air was thrown
Each grim uncleanly snout,
With wriggling tails and cloven hoofs
They galloped all about.
They flung the mire and pebbles up,
In their unholy glee,
And held a Satan's carnival
Beneath the fated tree!

IX.

But as I gazed in wonderment,
The sky grew dark above;
A whirlwind sharp and fitfully
Among the branches drove;
There was swaying, shrieking, groaning,
Throughout the forest wide,
And the hurricane came downward
With an angry angel's stride.
Then, right across the welkin, shot
The red and dazzling levin,
And the thunder brattled growlingly
Within the dome of heaven.
'Twere better in an hour like that
Far off at home to be,
Than watching silly Mannikins
Upon the greenwood tree!

X.

The first flash scared the porkers;
Their nasal snort grew still—
The second sent them cowering;
As low-bred monsters will—
The third with triple fervency,
And answering peal broke out;
Then helter-skelter from the tree
Rushed forth the filthy rout.
I looked up for my Mannikin—
I saw him clinging there
To branch and twig, to bark and bough, 414
The image of despair.
And ever as the gust blew strong,
He clutched with desperate paw,
And wildly chattered in affright—
"The foul fiend take the saw!"

XI.

By Tamworth town a hermit dwells,
Who riddles strange can read;
A wizard once of dreaded power,
And versed in many a creed.
Of Michael Scott no wilder tales
Have ever yet been told:
Men say he knew the wond'rous art
Of multiplying gold.
But now his magic wand is broke,
His tricksy spirits gone,
And on a backward bench he sits,
Forsaken and alone.
To him I went, and told him straight
The things that I had seen!
"O holy man, I pray thee say,
What may this vision mean?"

XII.

The hermit smiled—he stroked his chin—
Then quaintly answered he,
"There's something very singular
Connected with that tree!
Once on a time, when bark was dear,
The boughs I thought to peel,
But that same hurricane arose
And tossed me head o'er heel.
I think the oak will last my time—
But hark! I hear the bell!"
With his left hand he crossed himself,
Then slid into his cell.
But what the herd of porkers were,
He never told to me;
Nor who might be the MANNIKIN
Was sawing at the **T R E E**.

FESTUS.[5]

Those who are acquainted with the Faust of Goethe (and who is not?) cannot fail to have observed the influence which it has exercised over several of our contemporary poets. We do not infer that those poets have exhibited any signs of slavish imitation, or that any other than an honourable influence has been exerted over their minds. Before them also nature and thought lay open; they too have had their philosophy—their own mode of solving, or stating, the problems of human life; and of the great German himself, as perhaps of all men of genius, it can only be said that he felt more strongly, and reflected more vividly than others, the common spirit of his age—the spirit of bold inquiry, of discontent, of aspiration, and of doubt. We would merely infer that, in their writings, there is much, either in the tone and temper, or the structure of the composition, which irresistibly reminds us of the master-piece of Goethe.

In one respect, however, our poets have been far from imitating the great German. They share with him, more or less, in the daring spirit of philosophical speculation, and in those views of human life, which are expressed either in the poetic desperation of Faust, or the withering sarcasm of Mephistopheles. They have also adopted his admixture of various styles and metres, suited to a changeful theme discussed by various speakers. But in this apparent freedom and bold diversity of styles, whether ballad, or satiric couplet, or mournful blank verse, the German is always the consummate *artist*. His verse is, on each occasion, all that the verse should be—polished, refined, correct, according to its manner and its order. Native critics assure us, and a foreign ear feels the truth of the criticism, that the Faust is as remarkable for its mastery of language, and perfection of style, as for any other and higher qualities of poetry. But *this* merit some of our English bards seem to have despised, as utterly superfluous. They seem to contemn the labours of the artist. The control which the poet exercises over his own mind, in order that he may not allow the fervour of imagination to carry him wide beyond the pale of common-sense, or the frenzy of his passion to bear him far away from the sympathy of all other mortals; the survey and revisal in a calmer moment of what had been poured forth in the excited hour of original composition: the blotting out, the compressing together, the shading down, the removal of all stumbling-blocks to clear apprehension—all those labours, in short, by which language is made translucent and harmonious—made to serve its double purpose of use and luxury, of meaning and delight—they throw aside as an antiquated, absurd, unnecessary, and slavish toil. They will retain nothing, own nothing, but the "torrent rapture" of original composition. The consequence is evident and unavoidable. It is a very brief and imperfect rapture they afford their readers. Theirs is a very summer torrent, resembling what one often meets in a bright day, in the real landscape—very little stream, much stone, and a great scar in the earth left dry, glaring, and barren.

What are our "latter-day" poets dreaming of? Is the end of the world reckoned to be so near at hand that they think it folly to build for endurance?—idle to erect their "monument of brass," when it and the earth will so soon be swept away together? Or has the poet's old dream of an immortality of fame died out with the superstitions of a by-gone age, and no one in this philosophic era proposes to himself so visionary an object as a posthumous renown? We cannot think that poetic genius is wanting. Of all explanations, this is the last we should be disposed to admit. We could undertake to furnish from poems sinking rapidly into decay and oblivion, many a passage, and many a page, which would do honour to the highest names in the calendar of our 416
muse-inspired men. We seem to have amongst us good poets still, but they have ceased to produce good poems. We have much genuine poetry diffused through our literature, and not a new work of art added to our possessions.

But if our men of genius are contented to be known in future times (if known at all) by some brilliant extracts only from crude, hasty, and forgotten works, could they not contrive to write extracts—now—for us—and leave the works alone? If they have but a few finished pictures to give us, if this is all their patience or their talent enables them to bring to perfection, must they really build, each one of them, a huge, rambling, misshapen edifice, that they may paint them here and there upon the walls? It is not absolutely necessary to build a new house for every new picture; although, in the infancy of the arts, such an idea was probably entertained. Those never-to-be-forgotten Chinese, immortalised by Charles Lamb, who, in the earliest stage of the culinary art, thought it requisite to burn down a house every time a sucking pig was to be roasted, very likely entertained this kindred idea. No doubt the artists of that period always built a wall before they painted a landscape. Happily all these matters have been simplified, and our poets should remember this. They should remember that, in none of the arts is it necessary to alarm the whole country by a conflagration, in order that some dainty morsels may be gathered out of the ruins.

Of all the poems which have lately come under our notice, there is none to which these remarks are more applicable than to Mr Bailey's *Festus*. It is the most extraordinary instance which our times, or we think any times have produced, of the union of genuine poetic power with utter recklessness of all the demands of art, or indeed of the requisitions of common-sense. It is "chaos come again," but chaos, withal, with such lightning flashes of real genius as compel us to look into it. Were it not for these abrupt and brief, but undoubted displays of genius, we certainly should not be induced to notice a work which so often degenerates into a mere *poetic rant*, a mere farrago of distracted metaphors, and crude metaphysics, and bewildering theology; where

reasoning and imagination both run riot together; where the logic is as insane as the maniac fancy that is dancing with its flaring torch about it. Criticism, if it has any office, or duty, or voice left in the world, must protest against a species of literature which would set aside all the claims of good taste and good sense, in favour of a bold, original, reckless and unregulated imagination. Assuredly it ought not, in such a case, as it appears to have done, lavish unqualified encomiums.

Is the book worth reading?—is a summary question often put, and with some impatience, to the critic. Put here, we answer decidedly, Yes. Read it by all means, and with the pencil in your hand; for the probability is, that you will not work your way through it *twice*, and there are many things in it which you will not be content to have caught a glimpse of only once. Read it by all means. But this summary question, and its answer, do not decide the matter. If the author, by longer study and greater labour, could have made it worth preserving as well as reading, worth reading many times—if the state of opinion in the literary world is such that it encourages the publication of hasty and immature performances—there is something wrong here—something which ought, if possible, to be rectified.

In his poetic temperament, Mr Bailey will frequently remind the reader of Keats. He shares the same ardent imagination and uncontrollable fancy—the same, and perhaps stronger passion—the same breathless haste of composition which Keats manifested in his first production;—such haste, as if the writer feared to check himself a moment in his head-long career, lest the pause should be fatal to his inspiration. As Mr Bailey frequents a profounder region of thought than Keats had entered, he attains, in his happier moments, to a higher strain of poetry than his less reflective predecessor. On the other hand, his poetic sins are of a deeper dye, greater in number and in magnitude. That luxuriance of metaphor, that perpetual festival of the imagination, by 417
which Keats is distinguished, are classic purity and abstinence itself, compared to the excesses of this kind in which the author of *Festus* indulges.

Mr Bailey has the true poetic fervour in him. This, no one capable of enjoying the literature of imagination will hesitate to acknowledge. Mr Bailey is a poet. But this poem of *Festus*? Criticism looks aghast at it—cannot possibly give it welcome—looks at it with dismay and perplexity. Genuine gold in it, you say. Good. But what if a whole hogshead of the precious mud of the Sacramento, fresh from its native bed, unwashed, unsifted, is rolled to your door! Confess that the present is somewhat embarrassing. A single handful of the bullion would have been so much better.

In dissecting the plot, and analysing the materials of this poem, a critic might find innumerable occasions for satire and for ridicule. We shall not avail ourselves of any such opportunities. Perhaps we have no calling for this part, and are resisting no temptation in refusing to be satirical. But, indeed, the critic is not properly the satirist. The satirist is already there—in the outer world; he exists in every man of keen sense in whom judgment preponderates over those feelings to which the poet applies himself. The critic steps in between this satirist and the poet—steps in to mediate. He tells the shrewd and intelligent man of the world, prompt to detect the ridiculous aspect of things, that if he really has no sympathy with a class of feelings based much upon imagination—if he has no admiration, approaching to enthusiasm, for the beautiful in the visible, and for the tender and heroic in the moral world—the page of the poet is not for him: instead of sneering and condemning, he has but to shut up the book and depart. On the other side, he tells the poet that he does not write for his own solitary heart, or for the ears of two or three of peculiar and kindred temperament, who will forgive everything, so that some favourite chord be touched. He tells him that he will mould his verse to little purpose, if he fail to secure the attention of judicious, as well as gentle and imaginative readers; and that it is unwise in him wantonly to incur the ridicule of men whom a little more sobriety of thought would have added to his listening and admiring audience. He tells him that imagination ought not to be divorced from sense, and that distracted metaphors ought not to be seen wandering about, with nothing to illustrate; that it is not well to write with wilful obscurity; nor to torture the ear with discord; nor perplex, and weary, and unfit for the enjoyment of what is really excellent, by a perpetual exaggeration which borders, if it is not quite within, the region of hyperbole.

One must be pardoned for repeating the very rudiments of criticism to some of the headstrong writers of our day. A lucid, correct, harmonious, style—they have forgotten what it means—what virtue there is in it. They speak, or think, of it as of some matter of antiquated prejudice—of stale, conventional observance. It is no matter of convention; it is the living source of a calm perpetual gratification. It is the music of the printed book. It is that which makes reading a delight, as well as a necessary task. It is that which makes another's thought, to the mind, what the visible object is to the eye—seen without effort, and seen clad with beauty, as well as distinguished by form and position. Whether the subject of the poet be of a calm and gentle, or of a grand and sublime description, this charm of beautiful composition ought always to accompany it. The theory is false which separates beauty from sublimity. The wing of the eagle is not less graceful than that of the smallest bird which flutters from bough to bough, or from flower to flower; nor is his flight less smooth, in his stormy altitudes, than the slow sailing of unruffled swans in their peaceful element. And as the pleasure attendant upon distinct and melodious language is of itself of the calm and graceful order, so also some degree of calmness and self-possession should pervade the mind of the poet who is to produce it for us. Not always must the thought flow torrent-like. Let it gush with what precipitation it will from the smitten rock, but let the waters subside and 418
tranquillise a little before the prophet invites us to dip our thirsty lips into the stream. Let the hour of reflection follow at due interval. Not always is the poet to be in the full tempest of

original composition;—as, however, Mr Bailey seems to think, both by his practice and the advice he gives in his drama to the Student—

> "Once
> Begun, work thou all things into thy work,
> And set thyself about it as the sea
> About the earth, *lashing at it day and night*."

Poets who give and follow such advice as this, grow to have a horror of *distinctness* of thought. They shrink from examining their own ideas, lest these should turn out to be no ideas at all; or perhaps very good and sensible ideas, but shockingly true and commonplace. They leave them, therefore, with the bloom of obscurity upon them, and lapse into the conviction that a certain degree of indistinctness is inseparable from subtlety and refinement of thought. A great mistake. Your subtle and refined thinking, if it be worth anything, if it be really *thinking*, must be distinct to those who have the ability to perceive what is subtle and refined. The thinnest gossamer that floats upon the air, *if it is to be seen*, must have an outline as well defined as if it were part of a ship's cable. But it is in vain to preach this doctrine to such writers—vain to argue that the imagination, in its most ethereal exercise, should still have an alliance with sense—we do not say with *common* sense, but with some intelligible thought: they have a direct interest in believing the contrary. What! sacrifice this image!—silence all this thunder!—throw away this new word we have just coined to express our else unutterable conceptions!—impossible!

If these remarks of ours appear to be of a very elementary character, the fault lies with those who render their repetition necessary. Mr Bailey, in his composition, has contrived to commit all the oldest sins in the newest kind of way. He has not only, by the aid of German metaphysics, become transcendently obscure, but he also emulates Messrs Sternhold and Hopkins, in the baldness and ruggedness of his verse.

> "It is time that something should be done for the poor."

Who would imagine that this was a line of poetry? It is, however; and forms the commencement of a speech of Lucifer's. The whole speech follows in the same style of composition:—

> "*Lucifer*.—It is time that something should be done for the poor.
> The sole equality on earth is death;
> Now, rich and poor are both dissatisfied.
> I am for judgment: that will settle both.
> Nothing is to be done without destruction.
> Death is the universal salt of states;
> Blood is the base of all things, law and war.
> I could tame this lion age to follow me.
> I should like to macadamize the world;
> The road to Hell wants mending."

We give another specimen. It is a lyrical effusion delivered by the *Angel of the Earth*. We must give a lengthy and continuous sample, lest it should be said that it is we who, by omitting some portions, have made nonsense of the rest.

"*Angel of Earth.*—Stars, stars!
Stop your bright cars!
Stint your breath—
Repent ere worse—
Think of the death
Of the universe.
Fear doom, and fear
The fate of your kin-sphere.
As a corse in the tomb,
Earth! thou art laid in doom.
The worm is at thy heart.
I see all things part:—
The bright air thicken,
Thunder-stricken:
Birds from the sky
Shower like leaves:
Streamlets stop,
Like ice on eaves:
The sun go blind:
Swoon the wind
On the high hill-top—
Swoon and die:
Earth rear off her cities
As a horse his rider;
And still, with each death-strain,
Her heart-wound tear wider:
The lion roar and die,
With his eyeball on the sky:
The eagle scream,
And drop like a beam:
Men crowd and cry,
'Out on this deathful dream!'
A low dull sound—
'Tis the march of many bones
Under ground:
Up! and they fling,
Like a fly's wing,
Off them the gray grave-stones;
They sit in their biers— 419
Father and mother,
Man and wife,
Sister and brother,
As in life;
Lady and lover—
Love all over.
Their flesh re-appears—
Their hearts beat—
Their eyes have tears:
Woe—woe!
Do they speak?
Stir? No.
Tongues were too weak,
Save to repeat
'Woe!'
But they smile
In a while," &c.—(P. 84.)

In these days, when it is said that verse has hard matter to keep its ground, and is thought to be going altogether into disrepute, is it wise to give us such verse as this? Or was it well to conjure up angelical or supernatural persons to repeat it? Or, again, is it wise of one, who really has poetic power, to abuse it in such rant and hyperbole as the following? We quote from a part of the poem where the author is dealing with the most popular and favourable subject a reflective poet could select. Festus, under pretence of giving an account of another, describes his own early emotions at his first intercourse with nature and with life—those emotions which made a poet of him. Our extract leads off with a noble line, as happy as it is bold—"All things talked thoughts to him;" and we would wish to rescue from apparent censure the fine expression for the sky—"The blue eye of God." For the rest, it is what we have attempted to characterise as *poetical rant*—imagination grown raving and delirious.

"All things talked thoughts to him!—The sea went mad,
And the wind whined as 'twere in pain, to show
Each one his meaning; and *the awful sun*
Thundered his thoughts into him; and at night
The stars would whisper theirs, the moon sigh hers.
The spirit speaks all tongues and understands;
Both God's and angels', man's, and all dumb things,
Down to an insect's inarticulate hum,
And an inaudible organ. And it was
The spirit spake to him of everything;
And with the moony eyes, like those we see,
Thousands on thousands, crowding air in dreams,
Looked into him its mighty meanings, till
He felt the power fulfil him, as a *cloud*
In every *fibre* feels the forming wind.
He spake the world's one tongue: in earth and heaven
There is but one; it is the word of truth.
To him the eye let out its hidden meaning;
And young and old made their hearts over to him;
And thoughts were told to him as unto none,
Save one, who heareth, said and unsaid, all.
And his heart held these as a grate its gleeds,
Where others warm them.
Student. I would I had known him.
Festus.—All things were inspiration unto him:
Wood, wold, hill, field, sea, city, solitude,
And crowds and streets, and man where'er he was;
And the blue eye of God which is above us;
Brook-bounded pine spinnies, where spirits flit;
And haunted pits the rustic hurries by,
Where cold wet ghosts sit ringing jingling bells;
Old orchards' leaf-roofed aisles and red-cheeked load;
And the blood-coloured tears where yew-trees weep
O'er churchyard graves, like murderers remorseful."

The same most favourite subject—of the early feelings of a poet—he encounters in another scene of the drama, where he meets the very Muse herself. We prefer to select from these parts, because, though more extraordinary passages might be found elsewhere, yet on those occasions the extraordinary or unsuitable nature of his theme may be thought to have betrayed him into the *violent* style of writing we have to condemn. Festus meets the Muse in some one of the happy planets that he visits. She speaks in rhyme. We give a part of her address, and part of the answer of Festus. But first we must premise, that the Muse had that morning watched a particular ray of light, as it travelled from the sun to the earth—had "listened" to this ray, and reports what it said upon its unwilling journey downwards. She then sees this ray enter a cottage where a young poet is sitting, and in this original manner introduces her description:—

"*Muse.* A boyish bard
Sate suing night and stars for his reward.
The sunbeam swerved and grew, a breathing, dim,
For the first time, as it lit and looked on him:
His forehead faded—pale his lip, and dry—
Hollow his cheek—and fever-fed his eye.
Clouds lay about his brain, as on a hill,
Quick with the thunder thought and lightning will.
His clenched hand shook from its more than midnight clasp,
Till his pen fluttered like a wingèd asp;
Save that no deadly poison blacked its lips:
'Twas his to life-enlighten, not eclipse;
Nor would he shade one atom of another,
To have a sun his slave, a god his brother.
The young moon laid her down as one who dies,
Knowing that death can be no sacrifice,
For that the sun, her god, through nature's night,
Shall make her bosom to grow great with light.
Still he sat, though his lamp sunk; and he strained
His eyes, to work the nightness that remained.

Festus. Yes, there was a time
When tomes of ancient song held eye and heart—
Were the sole lore I reeked of: the great bards
Of Greece, of Rome, and mine own master land,
And they who in the Holy Book are deathless—
Men who have vulgarised sublimity,
And bought up truth for the nations—*parted it*
As soldiers *lotted once the garb of God*;
Men who have forged gods—uttered, made them pass;
In whose words, to be read with many a heaving
Of the heart, is a power, *like wind in rain*:
Sons of the sons of God, who, in olden days,
Did leave their passionless heaven for earth and woman,
Brought an immortal to a mortal breast;
And, like a rainbow clasping the sweet earth,
And melting in the covenant of love,
Left here a bright precipitate of soul,
Which lives for ever through the lines of men,
Flashing by fits, like fire from an enemy's front:
Whose thoughts, like bars of sunshine in shut rooms,
Mid gloom, all glory, win the world to light;
Who make their very follies like their souls;
And, like the young moon with a ragged edge,
Still in their imperfection beautiful;
Whose weaknesses are lovely as their strengths,
Like the white nebulous matter between stars,
Which, if not light, at least is likest light."

We do not attempt to analyse these passages, it would take up too much space; and the reader, if he thinks fit, can do it for himself. Neither have we, except on one or two occasions, resorted to the usual expedient of marking in italics all we would censure, for almost the whole of our extracts would then have been printed in italics. Of course there is something better than this in the poem, or we should not have given it such praise as we have; but there is also a great deal that is worse. The various specimens we have presented are no bad average of what constitutes a very large portion of the book. Yet this is the poem which, we are told, has been received with most applausive welcome, both by the public and the critics! In the edition we have before us—the third, and, we believe, the latest—there is appended at the conclusion a series of laudatory extracts from Reviews and Magazines, and also of opinions, most eulogistic, given by men of literary celebrity. In what shape these last were originally expressed, whether in print or in private letter, we are not informed. If extracts from private letters, though doubtless published with the writer's permission, their publication strikes us as a novelty, even in these advertising days. Mr Tennyson is set down as saying—"I can scarcely trust myself to say how much I admire it, for fear of falling into extravagance." Sir E. Bulwer Lytton speaks with more caution—"A most remarkable poem, of great beauty, and greater promise. My admiration of it is deep and sincere." Ebenezer Elliott exclaims—"It contains poetry enough to set up *fifty* poets." The ladies are still more enthusiastic. Mrs S. C. Hall outbids Mr Elliott. "There is matter enough in it to float a *hundred* volumes of the usual prosy poetry. It contains some of the most wonderful things I ever read." Eulogistic extracts from Reviews, and Magazines, and newspapers, follow in abundance; it is a universal clapping of hands and shout of triumph. The whole vocabulary of applause is exhausted. An American critic "classes it with the Iliad, and Macbeth, and Paradise Lost!"—a classification not quite so lucid as it is flattering. Our more sober and Dissenting brethren seem to have pardoned all its heresies, or not to have seen them, in the dazzling and unintermitting blaze of its genius. Its critics catch the tone of their applauded poem, and speak in hyperbolics, as the only language capable of expressing the intensity of their admiration. "Who," exclaims one, "that has ever read *Festus*, has forgotten that *prodigious* poem? You find in it all *contradictions reconciled*—all *improbabilities accomplished—all opposites paired*—all formulas swallowed—all darings of thought and language attempted"—a rapture of criticism, which took us with much surprise, when we saw the respectable authority attached to it.

Well, let the reader now turn back to the specimens we have given him—or look into the poem itself—he may take up whole handfuls of the same description. Has all sincerity, all truth and candour, died out of criticism? Or, because it stands on record that some judgments too severe were lately passed on the first efforts of youthful genius, has criticism become all at once exceeding timid, quite tame, humbled, and subdued? Are we so afraid of being thought blind to novel and original displays of genius, that we are all resolved to praise—to do nothing but praise—as the only safe course to pursue? Some have entertained angels, it seems, unawares, and entertained them but rudely; therefore, henceforth, let us do homage to every new comer—the more mysterious, the more homage. Such a stir, it appears, has been made about the obtuseness of reviewers to the more subtle or sublime beauties of poetry, that the poor critic dares not use his own eyes—nor tell what he sees with them—nor whisper what he does *not* see.

Hans Andersen, in one of his tales for children, tells an admirable story, how two rogues pretended to weave for the royal person a tissue of gold and silk, of a novel and most beautiful description. It had, however, this peculiar property—it was invisible to fools. Of course, it is needless to say that every one at court saw and was charmed with its surpassing beauty. The rogues had a pleasant time of it: pensions from the crown, applause from all the world. They

threw an empty shuttle through an empty loom, and the connoisseurs and critics looked on with intense delight, and out-rivalled each other in extolling the growing splendours of this exquisite fabric. Wonderful! Prodigious! Poetry for fifty! Poetry for a hundred! Prodigious! Wonderful!

But we have not, all this time, given any account of the plot or purpose of *Festus*. It is a hard task, but it must be undertaken. In imitation of the Faust of Goethe—or say, adopting, like it, the proem to the Book of Job—the drama opens with a scene in heaven, wherein Lucifer appears, and asks permission to tempt Festus. The mortal whom the Spirit of Evil here selects for his especial temptation, has the thirst for knowledge, and the contempt for human life, which distinguish the whole family of the Fausts. But whereas the German poet adopted a philosophical indifferentism as his position, or standing-point, from which to survey the scene of human life and of human thought, Mr Bailey has a positive and very intricate creed to enunciate, and has made his poem a vehicle for teaching a dogmatical system of theology, which, if not altogether orthodox, certainly does not fail from the paucity, or the too great simplicity, of its doctrines. Instead of doubt, we have a heresy. A most extraordinary medley of Christian tenets and transcendental or Hegelian metaphysics, is taught, and chiefly by the devil himself! Lucifer, who assumes at first something of the mocking vein of Mephistopheles, proves to be a learned professor of Göttingen or Berlin, and the preacher of a very refined and spiritual, though somewhat heterodox, Christianity. When we add that—interweaving, as it were, some scenes from quite a different drama, on the loves of the angels—Mr Bailey has represented his great Spirit of Evil falling desperately in love with a mortal maid, Elissa—"sighing like furnace"—outheroding mere human lovers—yet jilted, and suffering (as it seems in a most genuine manner) the pangs of despised passion—our readers will be prepared to agree with us that never was so strange a Satan conceived or delineated, either in prose or verse.

The drama opens, as we have said, in heaven.

> "*God.*—What wouldst thou, Lucifer?
> *Lucifer.* There is a youth
> Among the sons of men, I fain would have
> Given up wholly to me.
> *God.* He is thine,
> To tempt.
> *Lucifer.* I thank thee, Lord!
> *God.* Upon his soul
> Thou hast no power. *All souls are mine for aye.*"

This ultimate salvation of all mankind, and of all peccant spirits, is a conspicuous doctrine of Mr Bailey's. The law of universal necessity is another. One might suppose that this announcement of the decreed salvation of Festus would nullify the permission given to Satan to tempt him, and induce that spirit to relinquish his hopeless scheme. But the second doctrine of philosophical necessity assists us in explaining the conduct of Lucifer. He, being a consistent and enlightened Necessarian, knows that he must fail in his attempt, but knows also that he must make it—knows that he must act according to his nature, and incessantly strive to ruin, vitiate, and destroy.

The next scene brings us down to earth, and introduces us to Festus. And here the reader naturally expects a series of temptations on the part of the Evil Spirit, of struggles, lapses, and repentances on the part of the mortal. But no such thing. The strangest relationship imaginable is established between the two. The Spirit of Evil reveals to Festus all manner of profound knowledge, metaphysical and theological; carries him up into heaven, where he learns that his own name is written in the Book of Life; conveys him through all space, into the sun, the planets, hell, Hades, and even invests him with the privilege of ubiquity; performs, in short, every service which so potent a spirit could render to an ambitious mortal. With respect to moral delinquency, the only blemish in the character of Festus is a certain inconstancy in love. His passion is of a tender, imaginative, and ennobling character; but he transfers it from one beauty to another with unpardonable levity. He is a sort of poetical or sentimental Don Juan: Angela, Clara, Helen, Elissa, by turns kindle his amorous devotion. But this faithless and too redundant worship of woman's beauty, is not brought about in any manner, by the instigation or the aid of Lucifer. This inconstant temper he had already manifested, and given the worst example of, before his acquaintance with the great tempter. The saddest fault he is chargeable with, his abandonment of Angela, has been already committed. Nay, this inconstancy in love is manifested on the last occasion much to the annoyance of Lucifer, who is driven, by the superior attractions of his pupil, from the affections of Elissa. We hear Festus very magnanimously pardoning the Evil One for having tempted him; but it appears to us that Lucifer had more reason to complain of his friend Festus, than Festus of Lucifer. At the very close of the drama, Festus is placed, we know not how, on the throne of all the world!—an elevation dangerous enough. But he holds it only for a single day. He has no opportunity for the abuse of power, and his aspirations for possessing it have been of the purest description. Just before his elevation, he has most devoutly exclaimed—

> "Lord! Thou knowest that the power I seek
> Is but for others' good, and Thine own glory,
> And the desire for it inspired by Thee.
> So use me as I use it."

The Spirit of Evil has asked permission to tempt Festus, but he occupies himself with teaching a system of divinity, an improved and transcendental Christianity. He does all in his power to elevate the thoughts of his pupil, and to enlarge the bounds of his knowledge—enables him to explore the whole universe, and solve the most profound mysteries. His talk is wild at times; he retains a diabolic taste for conflagrations, and the burning up of worlds, which, in this civilised epoch, he might have laid aside, with his horns and tail; but, upon the whole, he appears in the light of a most edifying companion, and a most serviceable spirit. Any young gentleman who, not satisfied with seeing the world, should be desirous of travelling through the universe as well, might reasonably congratulate himself on such a guide and companion. The title of some of the *Scenes* will alone show what glorious revelations await those favoured mortals whom the Devil thinks proper to tempt. We have *Scene, the Surface*; *scene, the Centre*; *scene, Space*; *scene, Heaven*; *scene, Hell*; *scene, the Skies*; *scene, Elsewhere*; *scene, Everywhere!* These localities, if such they are, could not possibly be described with a more sublime contempt for detail.

One of the earliest scenes, however, of the drama, takes place in the humbler precincts of a *Country Town*, and strange enough is the part which Lucifer and Festus enact before a number of people gathered together in the market-place. Lucifer delivers a sermon to them in the style of Maw-worm; and Festus performs his part in this divine service, by delivering a long, and apparently a serious prayer, which, for aught we see, might be adopted by any Dissenting minister desirous of varying his extempore effusions. If there is any heresy, there is, at all events, no poetry in it which he would find it necessary to omit. But both these speakers soon ascend to higher regions of speculation, and to higher regions of the universe. They ascend into heaven—Lucifer still being able, it seems, to act here as master of the ceremonies.

"*Lucifer*. All-being God! I come to Thee again,
Nor come alone. Mortality is here.
Thou bad'st me do my will, and I have dared
To do it. I have brought him up to heaven.
God. Thou canst not do what is not willed to be.
Suns are made up of atoms, heaven of souls;
And souls and suns are but the atoms of
The body, I, God, dwell in. What wilt thou
with him who is here with thee?
Lucifer. Show him God.
God. No being, upon part of whom the curse
Of death rests—*were it only on his shadow*,
Can look on God and live.
Lucifer. Look, Festus, look!
Festus. Eternal fountain of the Infinite,
On whose life-tide the stars seem strewn like bubbles,
Forgive me that an atomie of being
Hath sought to see its Maker face to face,

Forgive me, Lord!
God. Rise, mortal! Look on me.
Festus. Oh! I see nothing but like dazzling darkness.
Lucifer. I knew how it would be. I am away.
Festus. I am thy creature, God! Oh, slay me not,
But let some angel take me, or I die.
Genius. Come hither, Festus.
Festus. Who art thou?
Genius. I am
One who hath aye been by thee from thy birth,
Thy guardian angel, thy good genius.
Festus. I knew thee not till now.
Genius. I am never seen
In the earth's low thick light; but here in heaven,
And in the air which God breathes, I am clear.
I tell to God each night thy thoughts and deeds;
And watching o'er thee both on earth and here,
Pray unto Him for thee, and intercede.
Festus. And this is heaven. Lead on.
Will God forgive,
That I did long to see Him?
Genius. It is the strain
Of all high spirits towards Him....
Come, I will show thee Heaven and all angels.
Lo! the recording angel.
Festus. Him I see
High seated, and the pen within his hand
Plumed like a storm-portending cloud which curves
Half over heaven, and swift, in use divine,
As is a warrior's spear!
Genius. And there the Book of Life which holds the names,
Formed out in starry brilliants, of God's sons—
The spirit-names which angels learn by heart
Of worlds beforehand. Wilt thou see thine own?
Festus. My name is written in the Book of Life.
It is enough. That constellated word
Is more to me and clearer than all stars,
Henceforward and for aye.
Genius. Raise still thine eyes!
Thy gleaming throne!—hewn from that mount of light
Which was before created light or night,
Never created, heaven's eternal base,
Whereon God's throne is 'stablished.—Sit on it!
Festus. Nay, I will forestall nothing more than sight."

The various scenes of which the drama is composed follow in no intelligible order; it is rarely that one seems to lead to the other. Festus, after this extraordinary visit into heaven, is the same Festus that he was before. He descends to earth to make rapturous love to Helen, or he wanders through all the worlds of space, the same discontented and mystified mortal. At length, after having explored the whole universe, and apparently escaped from Space itself, he is suddenly elevated by Lucifer to the throne of this planet earth.

"*Scene. A gathering of Kings and Peoples.*
Festus (*throned.*) Princes and Peoples!
Powers, once, of earth!
It suits not that I point to ye the path
By which I reached this sole supreme domain—
This mountain of all mortal might. Enough,
That I am monarch of the world—the world.
Let all acknowledge loyally my laws,
And love me as I them love. It will be best.
No rise against me can stand. I rule of God;
And am God's sceptre here. Think not the world
Is greater than my might—less than my love—
Or that it stretcheth further than mine arm.
Kings! ye are kings no longer. Cast your crowns
Here—for my footstool."

In this wonderful position he does nothing, nor has time to do anything. He has no sooner assumed his throne than his subjects all die off. The world has come to an end.

"*Festus.* Hark! thou fiend! dost hear?
Lucifer. Ay! it is the death-groan of the sons of men,
Thy subjects—King!
Festus. Why hadst thou this so soon?
Lucifer. It is God who brings it all about—not I.
Festus. I am not ready—and—it shall not be!
Lucifer. I cannot help it, monarch! and—it is!
Hast not had time for good?
Festus. One day—perchance.
Lucifer. Then hold that day as an eternity.
Festus. All round me die. The earth is one great deathbed."

Then follows a millennium, and, after that, Judgment Day. All mankind are saved, and not man only—Lucifer and all his host are re-admitted into Heaven. To Satan, his former throne—which has been preserved vacant for him—is restored, together with all his pristine glory. The drama ends in universal and eternal felicity.

Having said thus much of the plot, we may look a little closer at the philosophy and poetry of this strange performance. We shall touch as lightly as possible upon that admixture of Hegelian metaphysics and evangelical divinity, which, as we have said, constitutes the speculative portion of the work. It occupies, however, no inconsiderable space in the poem. On one occasion Festus pours into the ear of his mistress, in an unbroken harangue of about nine hundred lines, the profound knowledge he has acquired from his supernatural resources. Love is proverbially patient, and Helen listens—at least does not interrupt. Here are some fragments that will show how severely he must have tasked her apprehension. A spirit is speaking in one of the innumerable visions which everywhere obscure the poem.

"She spake, I said, the spirit, and at her word
Behold the heavens were opened as a book.
I am the world-soul, nature's spirit I,
Ere universe or constellation was,
System, or sun, or orb, or element,
Darkness, or light, or atom, I first lived;
I and Necessity, though twain in life,
Yet one in Being. Time and life are one.
But insomuch as nature is destroyed
In God's assumption to Divine estate
Of an especial soul, necessity
Ends in extreme original nothingness."

It is very tantalising to be so near the source of wisdom, and utterly unable to avail ourselves of it. How it fared with Helen we do not know; but for ourselves, it is in vain we are told,—

"Again the world-soul voiced itself, and I
Drank in the *fruitful glories* of her words
As earth consumes the golden skiey clouds."

These "fruitful glories" are to us mere darkness. We can just gather where some of these "clouds," by no means "golden" to our vision, came from. As, for instance, when we hear that—

"The actual and ideal meet but once,
Where pure impossibilities are facts."

Or, further on, when this world-spirit thus enlightens us:—

"She stood and spake intuitive of Heaven,
The World-divining Spirit whilom named.
Now such as man is to himself is His
Divine idea; but the God which is,
Is not the God men worship, not alone
Ineffable, but inconceivable;
How shall an atom comprehend the Heaven?
Two points men occupy in space and time,
And half exist of matter and in form:
Thus, His existence is their opposite;
And all is either God or nothingness,
Being with nonbeing identical."

And so we are landed in the Absolute of Hegel; and in that insufferable jargon of his, by which, (confounding *the laws of thought* with *the nature of things*,) he proves, because we cannot think of existence without a reference to non-existence, nor think of non-existence without the contrasted idea of existence, that therefore existence itself includes non-existence, and non-existence includes existence, and they are identical—(*sein* = *nicht sein*.)

We cannot compliment Mr Bailey on the skill he has displayed in his combination of Hegelian philosophy with his theological doctrines. In the following extract Lucifer is the spokesman:—

"*Lucifer.—All creature-minds*, like man's, are fallible:
The seraph who in Heaven highest stands
May fall to ruin deepest. God is mind—
Pure, perfect, sinless. Man imperfect is—
Momently sinning. *Evil thus results*
From imperfection.

God hath no attributes, unless To Be
Be one: 'twould mix him with the things He hath made.
Festus. Can imperfection from perfection come?
Can God make aught defective?
Lucifer. How aught else?
There are but three proportions in all things—
The greater—equal—less. God could not make
A God above himself, nor equal with—
By nature and necessity the highest;
So if he make it must be lesser minds—
Little and less from angels down to men,
Whose natures are imperfect, as his own
Must be all-perfect."

Here we have it stated that evil results from, or is synonymous with, imperfection; and all creature-minds are necessarily imperfect, inasmuch as they are inferior to God. But in the lines printed in italics, God is represented as having "no attributes;" for that would mix or liken Him with what He creates. There is, therefore, no room for comparison between the creature and the Creator, there can as little be inferiority as equality. He first finds an argument, such as it is, in the inalienable perfection of God's attributes, and then—embracing the Absolute of Hegel, (to us a mere shadow)—denies that God *has* attributes.

The contradictory doctrines taught in this poem, by different speakers, or the same speaker at different times, are to be explained, we presume, by the dramatic exigencies of the piece. We throw out this supposition, as a possible ground of defence or explanation; but to us it seems that we are taught the most contradictory dogmas by speakers of equal authority. The generally received doctrine of future rewards and punishments is asserted at one time, and exploded, very positively, and with very little reverence, at another. The Scriptural tenet of redemption is generalised into a law of the universe, and the Son of God is always suffering to redeem guilty planets. Nay, as he bore suffering for man, we are told that he bears sin for the salvation of fiends:—

"*Son of God.* For men
I bore with death—for fiends I bear with sin;
And death and sin are each the pain I pay
For the love which brought me down from Heaven to save
Both men and devils."

Yet, if all *creature-minds* are necessarily imperfect, and therefore necessarily evil, it is difficult to understand in what the action of redemption can consist; or how any creature can be redeemed from evil, since evil belongs essentially to it, as a creature.

Though regretting what to us must seem the errors of Mr Bailey, we have no disposition to censure him very severely for any heterodox opinion he may have ventured to express. As times go, and as poets write, Mr Bailey is remarkable for the plenitude of his faith, and the piety of his verse. We would only, if it were possible, take from his hands certain edged tools which he is playing with too fantastically, and the due command of which he does not seem to have acquired. We would merely express our regret that views which have been dictated by, or are in accordance with, the highest sentiments and aspirations of the human mind, should not have been rendered more harmonious with themselves—more distinct, consistent, and intelligible.

We extricate ourselves as soon as possible from these thorny discussions, and turn from the philosophy, to some concluding remarks on the poetry, of *Festus*. And here we can now vary our task, and relieve our page, by selecting some of those brilliant fragments and admirable passages which, as we have said, abundantly prove the genius of Mr Bailey, and which make us regret that an imagination so bold and original has not been allied to a more disciplined intellect. Nor is it only in the more daring efforts of imagination that he displays his power; occasionally there are

touches of true pathos; and from time to time a charming picture, the product of a playful and tender fancy, will flit past us in the dreary mist which too often hangs over the scene.

There is much beauty and passion scattered through the love passages of the drama. Clara says —

"I wish we had a little world to ourselves,
With none but we two in it.
Festus. And if God
Gave us a star, what could we do with it
But what we could without it? Wish it not!
Clara. I'll not wish then for stars: but I could love
Some peaceful spot, where we might dwell unknown,
Where home-born joys might nestle round our hearts
As swallows round our roofs, and blend their sweets
Like dewy tangled flowerets in one bed.
Festus. The sweetest joy, the wildest woe is love;
The taint of earth, the odour of the skies
Is in it. Would that I were aught but man!
The death of brutes, the immortality
Of fiend or angel, better seems than all
The doubtful prospects of our painted dust.
And all Morality can teach is—Bear!
And all Religion can inspire is—Hope!"

Then changing his mood, with a very natural versatility, Festus says—

"Here have I lain all day in this green nook,
Shaded by larch and hornbeam, ash and yew;
A living well and runnel at my feet,
And wild-flowers dancing to some delicate air;
An urn-topped column and its ivy wreath
Skirting my sight, as thus I lie and look
Upon the blue, unchanging, sacred skies:
And thou, too, gentle Clara, by my side,
With lightsome brow and beaming eye, and bright
Long glorious locks, which drop upon thy cheek
Like gold-hued cloud-flakes on the rosy morn.
Oh! when the heart is full of sweets to o'er-flowing,
And ringing to the music of its love,
Who but an angel or a hypocrite
Could speak or think of happier states?"

The name of the fair one changes—it is Helen instead of Clara that he now idolises; but the passion is the same—the intense love of beauty. There is a festival; he crowns Helen queen of the festive scene, with these gay and joyous lines:—

"*Festus.* Here—wear this wreath! no ruder crown
Should deck that dazzling brow.
I crown thee, love; I crown thee, love;
I crown thee Queen of me:
And oh! but I am a happy land,
And a loyal land to thee.
I crown thee, love; I crown thee, love;
Thou art Queen in thine own right!
Feel! my heart is as full as a town of joy;
Look! I've crowded mine eyes with light.
I crown thee, love; I crown thee, love;
Thou art Queen by right divine!
And thy love shall set neither night nor day
O'er this subject heart of mine.
I crown thee, love; I crown thee, love;
Thou art Queen by the right of the strong!
And thou did'st but win where thou might'st have slain,
Or have bounden in thraldom long.
I crown thee, love; I crown thee, love;
Queen of the brave and free;
For I'm brave to all beauty but thine, my love;
And free to all beauty by thee."

As this displays the bounding gaiety of love, so the following extract reveals some of the delirium of the passion:—

"I, too, could look on thee until I wept.—
Blind me with kisses! Let me look no longer;
Or change the action of thy loveliness,
Lest long same-seemingness should send me mad!—
Blind me with kisses!"

There are many songs introduced in this, which may be described as the more terrestrial portion of the drama. They are not, in general, commendable. The substance of them is no better nor higher than love songs and drinking songs are very properly composed of, whilst the verse is destitute of that polish, grace, and harmony, which trifles of this description ought to possess. We select one stanza, as the happiest specimen which occurs to us of this kind of composition. Helen is singing:—

"Like an island in a river,
  Art thou, my love, to me;
And I journey by thee ever
  With a gentle ectasie.
I arise to fall before thee;
  I come to kiss thy feet;
To adorn thee and adore thee,
  Mine only one! my sweet!"

In his description of nature, and especially of night, the stars, the moon, the heavens, our poet often breaks upon us with a truly noble and poetic imagination:—

"How strangely fair,
Yon round still star, which looks half-suffering from,
And half-rejoicing in its own strong fire;
Making itself a lonelihood of light."

Of the moon he is a most permissible idolator:—

"See,
The moon is up, it is the dawn of night.
Stands by her side one bold, bright, steady star—
Star of her heart— ...
Mother of stars! the Heavens look up to thee:
They shine the brighter but to hide thy waning;
They wait and wane for thee to enlarge thy beauty;
They give thee all their glory night by night;
Their number makes not less thy loneliness
Nor loveliness."

This is of the full moon: what follows is addressed to her when she passes as the young moon, and brings her fresh bright crescent of light into the sky:—

"Young maiden moon! just looming into light—
I would that aspect never might be changed;
Nor that fine form, so spirit-like, be spoiled
With fuller light. Oh! keep that brilliant shape;
Keep the delicious honour of thy youth,
Sweet sister of the sun, more beauteous thou
Than he sublime. Shine on, nor dread decay.
It may take meaner things; but thy bright look,
Smiling away on immortality,
Assures it us——God will not part with thee,
Fair ark of light, and every blessedness!"

Here are some scattered fragments which pleased us very much, but which cannot be introduced under any formal classification. Describing his desertion of his first love, Angela, Festus says,—

"It was thus:
I said we were to part, but she said nothing.
There was no discord—it was music ceased—
Life's thrilling, bounding, bursting joy."

Of books, he says,—

"Worthy books
Are not companions—they are solitudes;
We lose ourselves in them, and all our cares."

Here is a charming picture,—

"Before us shone the sun.
The angel waved her hand ere she began,
As bidding earth be still. The birds ceased singing,
And the trees breathing, and the lake smoothed down
Each shining wrinklet, and the wind drew off.
Time leant him o'er his scythe, and, listening, wept."

Speaking of men of genius, he says,—

"Men whom we built our love round, like an arch
Of triumph, as they pass us on their way
To glory and to immortality."

The vague aspirations of one living in his ideas is thus expressed,—

"I cannot think but thought
On thought springs up, illimitably, round,
As a great forest sows itself; but here
There is nor ground nor light enough to live.

But the hour is hard at hand
When Time's gray wing shall winnow all away
The atoms of the earth, the stars of Heaven;
When the created and Creator mind
Shall know each other, worlds and bodies both
Put off for ever."

He says finely,—

"We never see the stars
Till we can see naught but them. So with truth."

Of a young poet,—

"He wrote amid the ruins of his heart,
They were his throne and theme; like some lone king
Who tells the story of the land he lost,
And how he lost it.
... It is no task for suns
To shine. He knew himself a bard ordained."

These two following quotations may be also put very well together, though taken from different parts of the poem,—

"It is fine
To stand upon some lofty mountain-thought,
And feel the spirit stretch into the view:
To joy in what might be, if will and power,
For good, would work together.

But while we wish, the world turns round
And peeps us in the face—the wanton world,
We feel it gently pressing down our arm—
The arm we had raised to do for truth such wonders;
We feel it softly bearing on our side—
We feel it touch and thrill us through the body—
And we are fools, and there's an end of us."

The following are some of the expressions of the mingled tide of passion, and of thought as it flows through the troubled bosom of his hero,—

"And if I love not now, while woman is
All bosom to the young, when shall I love?
Who ever paused on passion's fiery wheel?
Or trembling by the side of her he loved,
Whose lightest touch brings all but madness, ever
Stopped coldly short to reckon up his pulse?
The car comes—and we lie—and let it come;
It crushes—kills—what then! It is joy to die.

Woman! Old people may say what they please,
The heart of age is like an emptied wine-cup.

Oh for the young heart like a fountain playing!
Flinging its bright fresh feelings up to the skies
It loves and strives to reach—strives, loves in vain:
It is of earth and never meant for Heaven.
Let us love—and die.

And when we have said, and seen, and done, and had,
Enjoyed and suffered, all we have wished and feared—
From fame to ruin, and from love to loathing—
There can come but one more change—try it—death.
Oh! it is great to feel we care for nothing—
That hope, nor love, nor fear, nor aught of earth
Can check the royal lavishment of life;
But like a streamer strown upon the wind,
We fling our souls to fate and to the future.
And to die young is youth's divinest gift—
To pass from one world fresh into another
Ere change hath lost the charm of soft regret,
And feel the immortal impulse from within
Which makes the coming life cry alway—On!
There is a fire-fly in the southern clime
Which shineth only when upon the wing;
So is it with the mind: when once we rest
We darken."

We have not yet given any favourable specimen of those more hardy and adventurous flights of imagination—those shadowy grandeurs—which may be said to be peculiarly characteristic of *Festus*. Selection is not easy. As, in illustrating the exaggerations and deformities of the work, it is difficult to quote many lines together without encountering something really fine, and which would be *felt* as such, if it could be removed from its unfortunate neighbourhood; so also it is equally difficult to cite any moderately long passage, for the purpose of justifying admiration, without being suddenly arrested by something very grotesque and absurd. We shall, however, make two selections from these bolder portions of the drama: the first shall be his description of Hell; the second, one of those dreams or visions in which our poet so much delights:—

"*Lucifer*. Behold my world! Man's science counts it not
Upon the brightest sky. He never knows
How near it comes to him: but, swathed in clouds
As though in plumed and palled state, it steals
Hearse-like and thief-like round the universe,
For ever rolling and returning not—
Robbing all worlds of many an angel soul—
With its light hidden in its breast, which burns
With all concentrate and superfluent woe.
Nor sun nor moon illume it, and to those
Which dwell in it, not live, the starry skies
Have told no time since first they entered there.

Be sure
That this is Hell. The blood which hath imbrued
Earth's breast, since first men met in war, may hope
Yet to be formed again and reascend,
Each drop its individual vein; the foam bubble,
Sun-drawn out of the sea into the clouds,
To scale the cataract down which it fell;
But for the lost to rise to or regain
Heaven,—or to hope it,—is impossible."

The *Dream* is one which Elissa relates—relates to her lover, Lucifer. It must be acknowledged to be very like a dream in a certain vague horror which pervades it. The image of Decay is a grand conception:—

"*Elissa.* Methought that I was happy, because dead.
All hurried to and fro; and many cried
To each other—'Can I do thee any good?'
But no one heeded: nothing could avail:
The world was one great grave. I looked and saw
Time on his two great wings—one, night—one, day—
Fly moth-like, right into the flickering sun;
So that the sun went out, and they both perished.
And one gat up and spoke—a holy man—
Exhorting them; but each and all cried out—
'Go to!—it helps not—means not: we are dead.'

'Bring out your hearts before me. Give your limbs
To whom ye list or love. My son, Decay,
Will take them: give them him. I want your hearts,
That I may take them up to God.' There came
These words amongst us, but we knew not whence.
It was as if the air spake. And there rose
Out of the earth a giant thing, all earth;
His eye was earthy, and his arm was earthy:
He had no heart. He but said, 'I am Decay;'
And as he spake he crumbled into earth,
And there was nothing of him. But we all
Lifted our faces up at the word, God,
And spied a dark star high above in the midst
Of others, numberless as are the dead.
And all plucked out their hearts, and held them in
Their right hands. Many tried to pick out specks
And stains, but could not: each gave up his heart.
And something—all things—nothing—it was Death,
Said as before, from air—'Let us to God!'
And straight we rose, leaving behind the raw
Worms and dead gods; all of us—soared and soared
Right upwards, till the star I told thee of
Looked like a moon—the moon became a sun:
The sun—there came——"

But here we must break off. What follows is too wild to be excused even by the privileges of a dream. A hand comes and tears off—Yet we may as well, perhaps, continue the quotation; it will show as fairly as any other instance how ungovernable, and all but delirious, the excited imagination of our poet is apt to become:—

"The sun—there came a hand between the sun and us,
And its five fingers made five nights in air.
God tore the glory from the sun's broad brow,
And flung the flaming scalp off flat to Hell.
I saw Him do it; and it passed close by us."

We had something more to say of the many wild extravagancies which with Mr Bailey have become habitual, but we will not fatigue the reader by a recurrence to this topic. He has probably seen enough of the glaring faults of this poem—faults which, with us, he must have learnt to regret, from the examples we have given of the great genius which is here undoubtedly combined with them. 429

After what has been said and exemplified of the poetic licenses in which the author of *Festus* indulges, it seems a very little matter to add that he coins new words at discretion, as "bodies soulical," and the like; and sometimes uses old ones in a new sense, to the complete baffling of our apprehension, as when he speaks of a "dream of dress" and a "tongue of dress." He also revives obsolete words, without any apparent reason. Is there any peculiar pathos in the word "nesh?" Does it signify some exact degree of moisture which our familiar expressions cannot convey? Or does it add to the gratification of a reader to be sent to his dictionary?

In the use of metaphorical language, we are not disposed to lay down any strict canons of criticism. But there are certain general rules, which, even without stating them to himself, every man of taste adheres to. The great use of metaphorical language is to convey, or to aggravate the impression or sentiment which an object creates. If one has to praise the locks of a fair lady, one does not hunt all nature through for an exact match, settling at once their precise colour. Mr Bailey speaks of

"Locks which have
The golden embrownment of a lion's eye."

Just that shade of brown! Still less, in describing circumstances or feelings of a pathetic nature, does any one use a metaphor decidedly grotesque. Yet Mr Bailey, in alluding to the most pathetic of all topics, the hour when two lovers parted for ever, can describe it as—

"Making a black blank on one side of life,
Like a blind eye."

We hope we shall not be accused of putting fetters upon genius, by refusing to admire this use of metaphorical language. Neither can we approve of a very manifest incongruity of ideas, as when night "blushes" to hear her praises, or when "clouds" are endowed with "fibres." We protest, too, against that class of cases where the metaphor becomes a species of conundrum. We are told that one thing is like another, and have to puzzle ourselves, as in a riddle, *why* it is like: as when, in a passage already quoted, the words of men of genius are said to be "like wind in rain," and we ask ourselves why like wind in rain, any more than like rain in wind? In the same passage we are told that men of genius, *disseminating* truth, are like the soldiers who "lotted the garb of God." Here the simile seems to be as *unlike* as possible, for the lot could fall only upon *one*.

We require, also, that when the metaphor is extended into an allegory, that the meaning of the allegory be apparent; and this we more particularly insist upon, when the allegorical detail or circumstance, viewed by itself, without reference to the meaning it typifies, is monstrous and absurd. As, for example, when Mr Bailey marries the sun and the moon, and, for what hidden purpose we know not, conducts them through the wedding ceremony.

"In golden he,
In silver car came she, down the blue skies,
But on return they clomb the clouds in one."

And we are told—

"It was the world's All-sire gave the bride."

We have already alluded to the strange caprice and incongruity of representing Lucifer at one time as the grand Personification of the Principle of Evil, and, at another, confining him down, a very slave to the passions of an amorous swain. Here, too, there may be some profound meaning symbolised. But we see it not. To the reader it seems as if Mr Bailey had here brought upon the scene all the powers and prerogatives of Satan, merely to emblazon the triumph of love; just as Dryden, and the French tragedians whom he imitated, delighted to represent an amorous monarch, because they could throw him, with his crown and kingdom, at the feet of beauty. Those who have not read the poem will scarce credit our account of this portion of it, without 430

seeing some extracts. They are the last we shall give to show the extreme wildness and extravagance which deface the drama of *Festus*.

We first see Lucifer as the happy lover, speaking to his Elissa just as other happy lovers:—

"*Lucifer.* To me there is but one place in the world,
And that where thou art; for where'er I be,
Thy love doth seek its way into my heart,
As will a bird into her secret nest."

There is a great deal of this delighted rapture. He departs, however, leaving Elissa in charge of his friend Festus. When he returns, he finds that Festus has supplanted him. His agony is quite piteous; if we could believe there was any sincerity in this love-afflicted devil, it would be impossible not to compassionate him. He calls up all his grandeur, and reveals all his power, only to add weight and dignity to his reproach. He even hints at the reformation that would have taken place in his character, had Elissa been but true. Elissa faithful, and Lucifer would have become the very saviour of mankind.

"*Lucifer.* Hear me now!
Thou knowest well what once I was to thee:
One who, for love of one I loved—for thee,
Would have done *or borne the sins of all the world*:
Who did thy bidding at thy lightest look;
And had it been to have snatched an angel's crown
Off her bright brow as she sat singing, throned,
I would have cut these heartstrings that tie down,
And let my soul have sailed to heaven, and done it—
Spite of the thunder and the sacrilege,
And laid it at thy feet. I loved thee, lady!"

And again, in another scene, he says, reproaching her for her inconstancy—

"I am the morning and the evening star,
The star thou lovest and thy lover too;
I am that star! as once before I told thee,
Though thou wouldst not believe me, but I am
A spirit and a star—a power—an ill
Which doth outbalance being. Look at me!
Am I not more than mortal in my form?
Millions of years have circled round my brow
Like worlds upon their centres;—still I live;—
And age but presses with a halo's weight.
This single arm hath dashed the light of Heaven;
This one hand dragged the angels from their thrones;
Am I not worthy to have loved thee, lady?"

Certainly a most noble Paladin. But here we quit Mr Bailey—repeating again our sincere admiration of his poetic genius, and our regret, equally sincere, that it has not been united with better judgment and with better taste; and that he had not waited till his own opinions, theological and philosophical, had settled into *something approaching* to consistency and harmony, (in a poem we ought perhaps to require no more,) before he had planned this elaborate drama, in order to promulgate them. Those who seek for the beauties, and those who are in search of the monstrosities of literature, may both apply themselves with success to Festus: we wish we could say that the former would be likely to reap the more abundant harvest.

CASH AND PEDIGREE.[6]

It will hardly be disputed that if the French are more subject than any other nation to fits of political lunacy, upon the other hand no people in the world are prompter to recognise and deride their own temporary folly; although, unfortunately, neither recognition nor derision have hitherto sufficed to prevent recurrence of the paroxysms. The echoes of February's fusillade and of Provisional revelries still filled the air, when satire and caricature began their work, assailing the new order of things with those shafts of ridicule which in France, if skilfully directed, rarely fail to be fatal. It was no fleeting shower of squibs by which the follies of 1848 were assailed, but a steady, well-sustained discharge of missiles much more formidable. M. Louis Reybaud is a pyrotechnist of no ordinary power, and his paper projectiles had the destructive effect of a flight of congreve rockets. We believe that the home-truths, pungent wit, and fearless sarcasm of *Jérome Paturot* had no small share in convincing the new republicans how monstrous was the folly they had so hastily perpetrated, and which they since have had such abundant reason and

leisure to repent. Bloodier pages there have been in the history of France, but scarcely one more pitiable than that on which the events of the last two years are inscribed, and posterity will gaze in amazement, almost with incredulity, on the record of vanity and mischief. The French have not waited till now to discover how completely they have stultified themselves, and to regret the head-long precipitation that bid a ruinous price for a questionable reform, a reform far more effectually obtainable by less violent means. In short, the February Revolution has long been held as legitimate game for ridicule in France as in any other European country. Numerous as are the jests of which it has been the object, the satirists have not yet exhausted themselves, and the year 1850 finds them still improving the text.

M. Jules Sandeau is not usually a favourite of ours. Those of his works that have come under our notice are for the most part tame and insipid. It was, therefore, with agreeable surprise that we read the very smart and lively opening of his last novel, in which he has abandoned sentiment for satire, and risen above his usual monotonous level. We cannot say that the book is altogether an agreeable one, as most persons understand the word. Similar, in this respect, to a recent well-known satirical novel of English society, it contains no characters with which the reader can heartily sympathise. The motives of all the characters are more or less sordid and selfish, at least till quite the close of the tale, when two of them exhibit more generous impulses. The book has a double aim: to satirise French society generally, and to ridicule the February Revolution. As far as we can discover, M. Sandeau's leanings are Orleanish; but he does not intrude his friends upon us, contenting himself with ridiculing their enemies. A certain epigrammatic vivacity of style and expression, occasionally amounting to wit, and an ingenious plot, fully sustain the reader's attention. The types presented of certain important classes of Frenchmen are certainly not flattered, but neither must they be looked upon as mere caricatures. Legitimacy finds little favour with M. Sandeau, or at least he presses hard upon its partisans, those denizens of the noble faubourg who to the last held aloof from the monarchy of July. The republicans, whether of the eve or of the morrow, are painted in not very attractive colours. The pivot of the tale is the misplaced ambition of a wealthy Parisian burgess, whose heavy purse and huge vanity render him the target of a host of intriguers, and especially of a dowager marchioness, more proud of her pedigree than scrupulous in her manœuvres. The first four pages of the book are perhaps as good a specimen as it affords of the author's *piquant* and animated style. They introduce and describe four of the principal actors in the comedy; a purse-proud citizen and his daughter, a democratic notary and an impoverished nobleman, a compound of the fortune-hunter and the *chevalier d'industrie*. The chapter is too long to extract unabridged, but we will endeavour so to condense it as to give a faithful idea of its style, premising that we aim at rendering the spirit rather than the letter of the original.

Monsieur Levrault was an honest citizen who had grown rich by selling cloth near the Market of the Innocents. When he retired from trade, the vapours of pride and ambition rose suddenly to his brain. Wealth, like wine, has intoxicating fumes. On beholding himself the possessor of three millions of francs, honestly and laboriously amassed in the shop handed down to him by his father, the worthy man, seized with a vertigo, discovered that money, which he had long looked upon as the goal of his desires, was in fact but the starting-post; he experienced a vehement longing to cast his slough, quit the obscure regions in which he had hitherto dwelt, and soar, like a butterfly escaped from its chrysalis, toward the brilliant spheres for which he felt himself born. Vague at first, timid and unavowed even to himself, these ideas slid furtively into his mind; and once there, quickly assumed formidable proportions. We were then at a considerable distance from the democratic cravings of July, and although the aristocracy of finance generally showed itself rather disdainful towards its elder sister, there yet were a tolerable number of persons for whom titles of nobility still had a charm. M. Levrault aspired, moreover, to the dignity of statesmanship. Elevations of all kinds had peculiar attractions for him. To encourage himself, he complacently reverted to recent citizen records. Provoking phantoms everywhere pursued him, even in his sleep—ministers, peers of France, newly-made nobles, some of whom he recognised as having discounted his bills, and others as having sold him the Kerseymeres of Elbeuf and Louvièrs. By dint of using such expressions as these:—"We great manufacturers, we great capitalists," he came at last to forget that he had made his fortune, penny by penny, in a retail trade. He loved to call to mind the lists formed for the recruiting of the peerage. One night he dreamed that his porter brought him a large letter with this address:—"M. le Baron Levrault." With trembling hand he broke the seal, and found in the envelope his nomination as peer. The next morning, still quite excited, he gave a five-franc piece to the porter, who never knew to what to attribute this munificent act. At a time when money might aspire to everything, the millionaire's dreams had nothing very exorbitant. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that his wife would have taken him severely to task with all the frank unceremoniousness of Madame Jourdain. "Levrault, you are but a fool," would she have said, without mincing the matter. "Do me the favour to keep quiet. We have nothing to do with honours and dignities. Wealth is no bad prize in the lottery of life; let us enjoy it modestly. Money is not everything, whatever people may say; and we have found means to earn three millions without adding an iota to our personal value. Let us keep in our own trade, and remember what we were. Let us continue to live amongst people who esteem us, and not thrust ourselves into society that would laugh at us. The more I look at you, the more certain am I that you would impose upon nobody. For my part, the more I examine myself, the less do I discover materials for a woman of quality. On the other hand, as retired shopkeepers, we pass muster very well, and may present ourselves with advantage in all the drawing-rooms in the neighbourhood. Put aside those follies. Buy a good estate, and look after it. Since you are ambitious, get yourself chosen mayor and churchwarden. Go a-fishing: it was formerly your ruling passion. You like dahlias: grow them. Give dinners to your friends and alms

to the poor. And finally, marry your daughter to some honest fellow who will not be ashamed of his wife's children, or blush to say some day to his family: 'Your grandfather was a worthy man who sold cloth in the Rue des Bourdonnais; if you are comfortably off in the world, it is to him especially that you owe it.'" Such is the language Madame Levrault would not have failed to use 433
to her husband, and perhaps she might have succeeded in putting him in the right path; unfortunately she had been ten years in her grave, and had taken with her all the good sense of the family. M. Levrault knew very well that honours and dignities would not seek him in his *entresol* of the Rue des Bourdonnais. He had already turned his back on all his friends; he only waited to begin a new existence, till his daughter should have left school. Not knowing on what side to seek entrance into the great world, the object of his ardent desires, he reckoned on the inspirations of Miss Laura Levrault, who worthily replied to his expectations.

Miss Laura Levrault had been educated at one of the most aristocratic of Parisian schools. She might have proved a charming person, had she been brought up conformably to her condition in life. Transplanted into a flower-bed of seedling countesses and budding marchionesses, she had early lost her natural grace and perfume: like a sparrow in an aviary of goldfinches, she had learned, before all things, to smart for her origin. The jests and sly allusions of her young companions were a constant source of irritation. Young girls are merciless to each other; in that respect they are already women. Instead of exercising reprisals on the arrogant and silly creatures who made it their sport to humiliate her, she conceived a sullen and profound hatred for the shop where she was born, and for the entire Rue des Bourdonnais. The very name of Levrault exasperated her. When this odious name (almost always affectedly pronounced) resounded in the school-room or play-ground, she shuddered painfully, and felt overwhelmed with shame. One day she had put on a cloth gown. Little de B—— said to her, "That gown only costs you the making." Every one laughed except Laura, who swallowed her tears. Another time they asked her if one of her ancestors was not at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. On another occasion, Miss de R—— and Miss de C——, already versed in heraldry, took a fancy to compose her coat-of-arms. These were canting heraldry—a field sinople, with a gold metre in a bend, supported by two silver leverets courant. Laura took to her bed. Thus was it, that at every opportunity, and even without pretext, they enlarged and envenomed her wounds. Needless to say what mysterious sympathies and secret intelligence such an education bade fair to establish between M. Levrault and his daughter. At the age of eighteen, Miss Levrault was what is usually called a pretty girl—red and white, abundant brown hair, eyes well opened, smooth, clear forehead, and an elegant figure. In the *tout-ensemble*, however, there was an indescribable something rather common—the original shop mark—which would hardly have been noticed but for the affectation employed to conceal it. Her character was positive, and her imagination sedate: her heart was sure of itself, and had never rambled in the region of dreams and chimeras. In her the cold breath of vanity had withered all the flowers which bloom in the spring-time of life. Had her mother lived, doubtless she would have succeeded in developing the precious germs that pride had stifled. Left too early to herself, Laura had neglected, as useless plants, all her good qualities, and had cultivated only her defects. It were unjust not to add that she had more accomplishments than most young girls of her age. Constantly depreciated by her companions, she had neglected nothing that might raise her above them. She was a good musician, and painted landscapes with as much skill as can he expected from an artist who has never studied nature. She had taken lessons of Frederick Chopin and Paul Huet. All through vanity. When once she had left school, and was fully aware of her fortune, Laura took in with an eager gaze the dazzling perspective that opened before her. She had wit enough to know that, with a dowry of a million, and two millions more in anticipation, she must not expect to be married for her own sake. Love by no means engrossed her thoughts. Her ideas on the subject of marriage were very positive and distinct. Well convinced that the man who should ask her hand would do so with an 434
eye to her wealth, she decided, for her part, to be guided in her choice by her ambition, and resolutely declared to her father that she would marry none but a man of title. M. Levrault pressed her to his heart: he recognised his blood. Besides, for him it was the surest and most rapid means of access to that society into which he ardently longed to penetrate, but from which he well knew that he was separated by an abyss. He resolved to cross the chasm upon the shoulders of his son-in-law.

All that remained to be done was to seek this son-in-law, who assuredly was not to be found in the neighbourhood of the market of the Innocents. M. Levrault had heard say that of all the provinces of France, Brittany was the richest in old and noble families, and that castles were there as plentiful as cottages. He would willingly have believed that in Brittany loop-holed towers shot up like mushrooms. It was in Brittany, then, that he would establish himself; there he would lead an opulent existence, and spread the golden nets destined to capture the phœnix of sons-in-law. This plan decided upon, M. Levrault wrote to a notary at Nantes, whom he had known as head clerk in a Paris office.

"My dear Mr Jolibois,—The time has at last arrived for me to repose myself amongst a class of persons whose tone and habits agree with my tastes. Amidst the cares of business I have often dreamed, for my ripening years, of an asylum hallowed by the great names of our history. Brittany has always attracted me by its heroic associations. Laura, to whom I have given, as was my duty, the most brilliant education, an education worthy of her rank, has more than once spoken to me of that chivalrous land. You will learn, then, without astonishment, that it is my intention to acquire a rich domain in Brittany. Only, to use an expression borrowed from the vocabulary of the lower classes, I would not buy a pig in a pock. Before deciding, I must visit all parts of that beautiful country; become acquainted with its sites, and study its manners. Well, my

dear Mr Jolibois, I address myself to you with perfect confidence. Hire in my name, for one year, in the environs of Nantes, a chateau whose position may permit me to become familiar with the nobility of the district. When I have explored the neighbourhood for a year, it will be easy for me to make a choice. It is unnecessary for me to add that I intend to live in great style, and to keep my house on a lordly footing. You will be good enough to organise everything, accordingly,—from the ante-chamber to the kennel, from the cellar to the stable, from the poultry-yard to the drawing-room. Excepting my daughter's maid, I shall take no servants from Paris. It would be agreeable to me, I confess, to see around me some of those old domestics, models of devotion and fidelity, who live and die where they were born: try to recruit four or five such. Let everything be ready to receive us: spare no expense; I have three millions. The new life that I intend to lead will be a life of festivity and princely hospitality. Let the country know beforehand who I am. Tell of my labours, of my wealth—in a word, let me be expected. Although I am quite decided to mix only with people of the first quality, you will, nevertheless be welcome, my dear M. Jolibois, and from time to time you shall come and hunt a stag with me. I rejoice beforehand at the idea of ending my days in the county of Clisson and Duguesclin. Laura has so often spoken to me of those gentlemen, and of their great feats of arms, that I shall be happy to know their descendants, and to receive them at my table. Above all, forget not that I wish to be in the immediate neighbourhood of the flower of the aristocracy, and to behold from my windows a dozen loop-holed castles, with tower, ditch, and drawbridge.

"Adieu, my dear M. Jolibois. I reckon on your punctuality, as you may reckon on my patronage.

LEVRAULT."

It so happened that Jolibois the notary was a shrewd fellow, with a turn for humour. Head clerk at Paris, and on the point of purchasing a provincial practice, he had prowled round M. Levrault's millions, and had one day ventured to ask the hand of Laura. He said to himself, that, after all, if the Duke of Lauzun had been on the point of wedding with Henry IV.'s granddaughter, Stephen Jolibois might very well marry the daughter of M. Levrault. M. Levrault, with superb disdain, proved to him he was mistaken. Stephen Jolibois retreated, with a discomfited countenance, and little expecting one day to find an opportunity of showing his gratitude. Master Jolibois, who, notwithstanding his present official character, had not yet forgotten the tricks of his clerkly days, rubbed his hands as he read the letter of the father-in-law he had coveted. Its impertinence and folly might well have provoked the raillery of the most inoffensive. Young, gay, and fond of a joke, Master Jolibois seized with avidity the opportunity offered him of avenging a slight, and putting money into his pocket. A week later, he wrote the following answer to M. Levrault:— 435

"I hasten to inform you, Sir, that I have hired for you a dwelling adapted, as I hope, to all the requirements of your rank, and all the delicacy of your tastes. It is a pretty chateau of modern architecture, standing on the banks of the Sevres, between Tiffauge and Clisson, eight leagues from Nantes. I am proud, I confess, to have so soon and so happily justified the confidence you are pleased to accord me. Without loss of a moment, I have busied myself in arranging your establishment on a footing consistent with your position. I have neglected nothing, and am glad to think you will be satisfied. In a fortnight all will be ready for your reception. I comprehend all the elevation of your thoughts: you desire to live with your equals. With that quick and unerring glance which marks you as one of the eagles of the manufacturing world, you have fixed upon the very province which alone is worthy of possessing you. You will find at your door the chosen society you desire. The castles of Tiffauge, of Mortagne, and of Clisson, open their arms to you. Agreeably with your desire, I have spoken of your coming. The nobles of the neighbourhood know who you are, and will dispute the honour of welcoming and entertaining you. They are well aware that industry is now the queen of the world, and already they feel a respectful sympathy with you. Think not that your immense fortune has anything to do with their prepossession in your favour. Your merit alone is the cause of their impatience. Since I announced your approaching arrival, you are the subject of universal conversation; whithersoever I go, I am overwhelmed with questions as to the day and hour of your coming. Miss Levrault's beauty will revive the most amiable traditions of chivalry. I lack time to name to you to-day all the great families whose castles are grouped round yours. The least illustrious date from the second crusade. Miss Laura, whose memory is so richly stored, will hardly meet without pleasure and emotion, at a few paces' distance from your park, a descendant of Godfrey of Bouillon, a noble old man, whose conversation is a treasure of reminiscences. Farther on, you will find the last survivor of a family allied with the Baudouins and the Lusignans: Viscount Gaspard do Montflanquin, young, handsome, chivalrous, perhaps too disinterested, he has but to express his willingness to receive: the new dynasty, proud of his adhesion, ask but to reward it. Viscount de Montflanquin will serve you as a guide in your excursions, and in the choice of your friends. Hasten, then, to the shades of La Trélade, (it is the name of your chateau,) there to forget the noble toils that have occupied your career. Be assured of my moderation in availing myself of the welcome you so graciously promise me. I well know the distance that separates us; but I reckon on the pleasure of hunting a stag with you. A year hence, if you decide to settle in Brittany, I hope to number you amongst my clients: your name will be the glory of my office.

"Accept, sir, the assurance of my highest consideration,

JOLIBOIS."

The same post that carried this epistle, conveyed another, equally flattering and sincere, to a dissipated viscount of ancient name and broken fortunes, who was then eking out a precarious

and disreputable existence amongst the bouillotte and lansquenet tables of Paris. Respectful sympathy, a disinterested desire to see Gaspard de Montflanquin regild his shield, redeem his lands, and rebuild the tumble-down Breton tower, in which, Jolibois declared, the needy viscount reminded him of the Master of Ravenswood, alone induced the benevolent notary to inform him of the expected arrival of the heiress of three millions, and her tuft-hunting father, and to advise him of the best means of propitiating the one, and appropriating the other. After the wedding, a postscript intimated, there might be some question of the reimbursement of 80,000 francs, and ten years' compound interest thereon, due from the viscount to the estate of the deceased Jolibois *Père*; but this was a minor consideration to the unselfish notary, who dwelt much more urgently on the necessity of keeping the Levraults from becoming acquainted with the Marchioness of La Rochelandir, who, with her son, a handsome young man of five-and-twenty, resided at no great distance from the clothier's mansion of La Trélade.

A fortnight later, four smoking posters whirled M. Levrault and his daughter along the road to Clisson. After passing Nantes, the worthy Parisian was somewhat surprised not to see a greater abundance of turrets and loopholes, and to find that, even in Brittany, castles were not found, like hedge alehouses, by the road-side. An hour after sunset, a loud flourish of the post-horn was replied to by all the dogs and echoes in the neighbourhood, a park gate flew open as by enchantment, an avenue was suddenly illumined with coloured lamps, and the horses dashed up to the front of the chateau of La Trélade, whose steps Jolibois, in full dress, was seen gravely to descend, by the light of torches held by a double row of footmen. The notary himself opened the carriage-door, and put down the steps.

"'Tis well, Jolibois—'tis well," was the negligent remark of M. Levrault, whose skin could hardly hold him, but who would fain have given himself the airs of a great man, accustomed to such receptions; and leaning on his daughter's arm, he slowly ascended the stairs. "Good day to you, my friends—good day to you," said he, in a patronising tone, to the lacqueys, who bowed to the very ground, whilst two or three of them exclaimed, "Long live M. Levrault!" Preceded by Jolibois, whose gravity was imperturbable, he entered a richly decorated dining-room, where a splendid supper was laid out on a table laden with glass, wax-lights, and flowers. Seated between the notary and his daughter, M. Levrault mastered his emotion with difficulty; in spite of himself, he admired the decoration of the apartment, and the order of the feast. The most exquisite dishes, the raciest wines, rapidly succeeded each other. Three attendants, in white gloves, yellow plush breeches, blue liveries, and green lace, glided like shadows around the table. Laura herself felt agitated. As to Jolibois, he ate and drank like a man who did not expect such another chance for the next ten years. The repast at an end, they walked out into the park, where Jolibois had prepared a fresh surprise. Whilst strolling on a vast lawn, a rocket rose suddenly into the sky, and at fifty paces in his front, M. Levrault beheld a wall of fire. A dozen wheels whirled round, vomiting torrents of sparks, whilst Bengal lights illuminated the darkest recesses of the avenues, and Roman candles shot out of the shrubberies like luminous serpents, and fell again in showers of stars. This was too much for M. Levrault; he grasped Jolibois' hand, and in a voice of undisguised emotion, "Jolibois," he said, "it is the happiest day of my life."

Laura, although secretly flattered, yet could not help smiling at the reflection that it was her father who paid for the powder, and that in reality the entertainment was given to M. Jolibois.

As the party returned to the house, they beheld, by the final gleams of the fireworks, a little groom, about the height of a top-boot, advancing to meet them.

"What is it? who wants me?" said M. Levrault, with the air of a minister-of-state, whom some one interrupts, and who has not a moment to himself.

"It is Galaor," said Jolibois.

"Galaor!" cried M. Levrault, opening his eyes very wide.

"M. Levrault?" inquired Galaor, approaching the group with consummate assurance.

"What is your pleasure, my man? I am M. Levrault."

Galaor took a letter from his pocket and presented it to M. Levrault, whose gaze was instantly arrested by the armorial bearings on the seal. It was the first of the kind he had ever received. After examining the arms as if to recognise them, he broke the wax and read as follows in a loud voice, whilst the young slave presented an enormous nosegay of roses and jessamine to Laura, who blushed with pleasure.

"Viscount Gaspard de Montflanquin is impatient to learn how M. Levrault and his daughter have got through their journey. He solicits permission to present himself to-morrow, at two o'clock precisely, at the chateau of La Trélade, and takes the liberty to place a few roses from his garden at the feet of Miss Levrault."

"You see, sir," said Jolibois, "you have but just arrived, and already the greatest names in the country throng around you."

"I am touched by the attention, I do not deny it. Galaor, present our thanks to your master, the Viscount Gaspard de Montflanquin. Tell him we got through the journey in a carriage-and-four, and that to-morrow, at whatever hour he likes, we shall be happy to receive him."

Galaor bowed respectfully; his cloth gaiters, laced hat, and coroneted buttons, presently disappeared round the curve of the avenue.

To pave the Viscount's way to the good graces of father and daughter, both already well disposed in his favour, the generous Jolibois began to chant his praises, and to explain how it was that, from the most disinterested motives, the influential representative of the house of Montflanquin had recognised, a few years previously, the monarchy of Louis Philippe. His first appearance at the court of the Citizen-King, so the notary assured M. Levrault, was an incident that would be read of in history.

"The presentation," continued Jolibois, "took place in the throne-saloon, in presence of the queen, the princes, the princesses, and all the great dignitaries of state. 'Sire,' said the Viscount, without arrogance and without humility, 'I adhere frankly to your dynasty. Let your majesty deign to permit me, however, to stipulate one condition.' At these last words the king frowned, and the faces of all present assumed in an instant a stupified expression. 'Viscount Gaspard de Montflanquin,' said the king in his turn, 'we impose conditions, but accept them not. Nevertheless, speak! to set so bright a gem in our crown, there is nothing we would not do.' 'Sire,' replied the Viscount, 'I adhere to your dynasty on condition that your majesty will do nothing for me, and that I may be permitted to remain poor as heretofore.'"

"How noble!" cried Laura.

"Too noble!" added M. Levrault. "What said the king?"

"The king opened his arms to the Viscount de Montflanquin, and held him long to his heart. I need not add that his eyes were suffused with tears. 'We will do nothing for you,' he at last kindly said; 'since you desire it, you shall be nothing, not even peer of France. But bear in mind that, whatever you ask, whether for your relations or your friends, you shall obtain it, noble young man, from our royal gratitude.'"

Great was the admiration of M. Levrault, when Jolibois proceeded to inform him that more than one high-placed personage owed his position to a word of the influential Viscount, by whom he, Jolibois, had himself been offered a prefecture, which his republican principles prevented his accepting. And when, in addition to this interesting information, the ex-clothier learned that Montflanquin was unmarried, he made up his mind that this was the son-in-law who should help him to a peerage. Nor was he shaken in this resolution by a romantic story told by the astute man of parchments, from which it appeared that the Viscount had made a vow of celibacy over the corpse of his first and only love, Miss Fernanda Edmy de Chanteplure, drowned some years previously, on the eve of her wedding-day, before her bridegroom's eyes, and in spite of his heroic efforts to save her.

We must pass rapidly over this earlier portion of the book, which is not altogether essential to the principal plot, but is in some degree complete in itself, and has a *dénouement* so far as the viscount is concerned. That worthy duly makes his appearance at La Trélade, and, as duly, starts, trembles, and is violently agitated on beholding and hearing Miss Levrault, between whom and his lost love, the very noble and eternally regretted Mademoiselle de Chanteplure, a most extraordinary resemblance exists. He succeeds in ingratiating himself with both father and daughter; undertakes to do the honours of the province, and to introduce them to its most illustrious inhabitants. Notwithstanding this assurance, after three months' residence the visitors at La Trélade are limited to a gouty old count, a creditor of Montflanquin's—on whose marriage he, like Jolibois, reckons for reimbursement, and who, in the meantime, condescends to take the air in M. Levrault's carriage—and to a greedy chevalier and self-styled descendant from Godfrey of Bouillon, who would give his entire genealogical tree for a good dinner, and whose gratitude for the succulent repasts to which the viscount is the means of his admission, precludes his own speaking of that adventurous individual, otherwise than in terms of the very highest eulogium. As to Gaspard himself, he lives at La Trélade, leaving it only at night for his ruinous chateau, where the faithful Galaor keeps watch—that youthful and depraved Balderstone being compelled, owing to the extreme penury of his noble master's exchequer, to subsist himself on the plunder of the neighbouring hen-roosts and rabbit-warrens. All things progress favourably for the Viscount's schemes. The ex-clothier, convinced of his unbounded influence at court, is impatient at his not proposing, and ready to throw his daughter into his arms. Laura herself, although but moderately fascinated by the very ordinary frontispiece of the last Montflanquin, and somewhat surprised that Brittany can produce no better specimen of its hereditary nobility, yet, seeing no choice, and burning with impatience to abdicate her plebeian patronymic, has made up her mind to accept the viscount, when one morning, in the course of a long and solitary ride, she stumbles upon the castle of La Rochelandier, from which Gaspard has hitherto carefully kept her by the interposition of imaginary morasses, and other dangers equally unreal. Her suspicions already roused by finding that an easy canter along a pleasant valley leads her to the dilapidated but still stately edifice which had been depicted to her as of such perilous approach, a single interview with the adroit dowager opens her eyes to the viscount's manœuvres, and when she again reaches home, escorted by the handsome Marquis de la Rochelandier, it is with the full determination to discard the aspirant, whom a few hours previously she had been resolute to accept. Discarded the unlucky Montflanquin accordingly is, the downfall of his hopes being accelerated by the treacherous Jolibois, who, finding his debtor's chance gone, gives him the last kick by arresting him, and the viscount is trotted off to Nantes in a taxed cart, in charge of a leash of bailiffs, whilst the devoted and disconsolate Galaor remains on the threshold of the

ruined tower, wringing his hands and mourning for his wages.

From the incarceration of Gaspard de Montflanquin dates a new epoch in the chronicle of the Levrault family. The gouty count and the *gourmand* chevalier having shared his disgrace, La Trélade is for a while desolate, and the man of millions moodily paces its solitary halls. Jolibois, whilst declaring himself the dupe of the Viscount, whom he now loudly proclaims an adventurer, has thought proper, for purposes of his own, to speak disparagingly of the Rochelandiers. He has a notion that by persuading M. Levrault that France is on the eve of a republic, he may still obtain the hand of Laura. In this he is totally mistaken. He certainly succeeds in making the man of cloth miserably uneasy and undecided, but not in persuading him of the approaching downfall of that privileged order of which he so ardently desired to become a member. Nevertheless, M. Levrault's recent experience has considerably lessened his admiration of the Breton nobility. On 439
all hands he beholds traps for his millions, baited with coronets by pauper aristocrats. Furious at the intriguing viscount, he yet deplores the downfall of the edifice of which that individual was the keystone.

"In M. Levrault's eyes, Brittany was now no better than a vast den of thieves. He especially mistrusted the castle of La Rochelandier, which he persisted in considering as the haunt of *chouans*, a focus of conspiracy—of Legitimist intrigues and stratagems. It will be remembered that, when Gaspard, dismissed and discomfited, was crossing the court-yard of La Trélade, Levrault called out in a voice of thunder to get the carriage ready—that he was going to the castle of La Rochelandier. This was merely an ingenious mode of giving the death-blow to Gaspard. Right or wrong, he could not tell why, M. Levrault detested the Rochelandiers. It is hard to say by what peculiar process of reasoning this clever citizen had come to look upon them as the cause of all his misfortunes. All his deceptions dated from the hour that his daughter had crossed their threshold; the departure of peace and happiness from La Trélade coincided with the first visit of the young Marquis. M. Levrault almost brought himself to believe that, without the Rochelandiers, the Viscount would have really been all he wished to appear—a model and mirror of chivalry. If Gaspard was a scamp, it was the fault of La Rochelandier."

Miss Levrault, however, was of a very different way of thinking from her father. The Marchioness, too, had her designs on the plebeian's millions; and, by a sort of instinct, without concerted plan, the two women played into each other's hands. No wonder, then, that in less than six weeks from the Viscount's disgrace, the La Rochelandiers were welcome and frequent guests at La Trélade, and that the skilful attentions of the Marchioness had again put M. Levrault on the best possible terms with himself.

"Nevertheless, the great manufacturer was not happy. Something was wanting to his felicity: it was a son-in-law in perspective. Gaston did not replace Gaspard. M. Levrault well knew that an alliance with a Legitimist could lead to nothing for himself. In vain did Laura tell him of the approaching return of Henry V.—of the honour of being received, in the meanwhile, by the Duchesses of the faubourg St Germain: M. Levrault was deaf in that ear. He cared nothing for the drawing-rooms of the noble faubourg, and felt that his only chance of expanding into blossom was by favour of the vivifying rays of the sun of the *bourgeoisie*. Besides that, the attitude of the young Marquis was not encouraging. If Gaston coveted the manufacturer's millions, he still seemed little disposed to stoop to pick them up. Too proud himself to mount to the assault, he left the conduct of the siege to his mother, quite determined, however, to enter the fortress so soon as the gates were opened. At heart loyal and honourable, he was not one of those poetical and purely intellectual beings who are utterly careless of the good things of this world. Still young, he had already tasted of the realities of life. The whole of his youth had not passed under his ancestor's roof. Without making any great display, he had lived at Paris in an elegant, frivolous, and dissipated, but honourable circle, where his name, wit, and good looks had been made much of. After a few years, perceiving that the remnant of his patrimony was insufficient to enable him to maintain his rank in those golden regions, condemned to idleness by the traditions of his family, and too honest to accept the existence of a Montflanquin, he heroically retired to his ruined castle, where he and his mother were literally dying of ennui, when the Levraults arrived at La Trélade, and the whole province resounded with reports of the father's wealth and folly. For some time past Madame de la Rochelandier—whose pride, weary of wrestling with poverty, had consented to bow its head, well resolved to rear it again at a future period—had meditated for her son a lucrative mis-alliance, which might mend the fortune of their house, and enable them to await, with tolerable patience, the return of their legitimate sovereign. Miss Levrault appeared to her like the dove announcing the end of the deluge. What followed may easily be guessed. When 440
his mother proposed to him to marry the heiress, Gaston, shocked at first, hesitated afterwards, and finally consented. His visits to La Trélade sharpened his appetite for riches. He was not in love with Laura; but he easily persuaded himself that love was not an essential condition of marriage with a young and pretty person afflicted with a dowry of a million. He did not deceive himself as to Miss Levrault's sentiments, and said to himself, that as she sought only his title, he, on his part, was fully justified in seeking only her wealth."

We do not often meet with a novel to which it is less easy to do justice within the limits of an article, than to the clever and amusing one now under examination. Without a complete analysis of the plot—rendered difficult by its complication, and by the numerous minor incidents and scenes, of which some mention is essential to its clear intelligence—it is difficult to select extracts that shall have interest when detached, and at the same time give a fair idea of the really very considerable merit of the book, which abounds in sly touches of satire, often defying both

extraction and translation. In the early portion of the work, where Montflanquin is a prominent character, the pencilling is sometimes so broad as to border on caricature; but when the bailiffs remove him from the scene, Jolibois at the same time falling temporarily into the background, and the Marchioness, attaching herself to their intended victim, in her turn spreads her web for the millions, M. Sandeau comes out in his very best style, depicting, with great skill, the cautious and tortuous approaches by which the attenuated dowager-spider proceeds to the appropriation of the bulky, well-conditioned fly. For a time, her machinations are fruitless. In vain does she coax, caress, and insidiously flatter; the millions hold out. But she knows how to turn the delay to profit, by using it to acquire a thorough knowledge of the weak points of the fortress. With her astuteness, she is not long in penetrating the inmost recesses of the cloth-merchant's little soul. This done, she distributes her snares accordingly. And soon a day comes when, at the close of a long and interesting *tête-à-tête*, in the cool shrubberies of La Trélade, the spider and the fly go upon their several ways rejoicing. M. Levrault has agreed to give his daughter to the Marquis, whose mother undertakes that after the marriage his father-in-law shall have the satisfaction of seeing him pay his homage, for the first time, at the footstool of the Citizen-King. The rich plebeian cannot, for an instant, doubt of the high reward reserved for the man who is thus the means of rallying to the dynasty of July the head of an ancient and illustrious house.

An hour after this interview, the Marchioness was on the road back to her manor; and M. Levrault, beaming with triumph, entered his daughter's apartment.

"'Madame la Marquise!' he exclaimed, 'embrace your father!'

"'My son!' said the Marchioness, on reaching home, 'embrace your mother; you are master of millions!'"

The wedding over, a move is made to Paris. The clever dowager, who has not married her son to an heiress with the intention of herself vegetating in Brittany, has the address to make M. Levrault solicit her company. In his mind's eye, the absurd old citizen already beholds himself occupying a prominent place in the Chamber of Peers: he has heard say that all eminent statesmen have their Egeria, and in that capacity he desires to retain the invaluable services of Madame de la Rochelandier, who, after a due show of reluctance, makes one of the party to Paris. Poor Levrault soon has reason to repent his invitation. Before departing, the Marchioness insists upon making him a present of her feudal residence of La Rochelandier. Accordingly, its name is changed to Castle Levrault; and to it are transferred the handsome furniture, sumptuous hangings, dogs, horses, and equipages that had rendered La Trélade so luxurious a habitation. But, on reaching Paris, the Marchioness shows herself determined to recompense her own generosity. A magnificent hotel is taken in the Faubourg St Germain, where she reigns paramount, ingeniously making it appear that her life is a succession of sacrifices, and that she has regretfully quitted her rural seclusion, to assist her dear friend Levrault in climbing to the pinnacle to which his talents cannot fail to raise him.

"To embellish the abode of so eminent a man, whose destiny was so lofty, she found nothing sufficiently sumptuous and magnificent. She was resolved the cage should be worthy of the bird, the frame suitable to the portrait, and constantly regretted she had not at her disposal a fairy's wand or Aladdin's lamp. At each of these fine speeches, the great manufacturer opened his beak wide, and let fall something better than a bit of cheese. The Marchioness herself had superintended the decoration of the famous saloon in which was to be consummated the union of the nobility and the *bourgeoisie*. The servants of La Trélade, with their pistachio-coloured lace and yellow plush breeches, had been replaced by dignified domestics in black, to whom M. Levrault was continually on the point of taking off his hat. His coachman wore powder and a cocked hat; his *chasseur* was six feet high. By one of those delicate attentions which the Marchioness was never weary of lavishing on her amiable friend, all the plate was engraved with the La Rochelandier arms, which were to be found even upon the knives and china. M. Levrault's own chariot bore a marquis's coronet. He could not but be touched by all these marks of consideration. The Marchioness received him at all hours of the day, drove out with him to the Bois do Boulogne, and, still more frequently, to make purchases. She had renewed old intimacies, sent out invitations which had been eagerly accepted; already the saloons of the Hotel Levrault were peopled with aristocratic physiognomies. The work of conciliation was proceeding; the winter set in under favourable auspices. A few months more, and it was not only the marquis his son-in-law, but the entire Fauxbourg St Germain, that the ex-clothier would rally at one blow around the dynasty of 1830; yet a few months and legitimacy would not retain a single partisan on the left bank of the Seine. Who would then be the dupe? Truly M. de Chambord in his German castle."

The real dupe was the unlucky Levrault, who soon found himself a mere cypher in his own house. The Marchioness, having firmly established her despotic sway over the entire establishment, changed her tactics, and gradually pushed him more and more into the background. Servants, horses, carriages, were hers, not his; it was she who invited guests, received and returned visits. At first M. Levrault rejoiced to see fifteen or twenty persons daily assemble round his dinner table; but soon he discovered that the host is not always that person in whose house one dines. He himself was but a guest the more, the entertainer was the Marchioness. At night she was enthroned in the drawing-room, whilst M. Levrault, whom no one heeded, wandered mournfully through the crowd, and had sometimes the satisfaction of hearing praises of the luxury and elegance of the Hotel *La Rochelandier*, a name which the Marchioness at last had the assurance to inscribe in gilt letters above the entrance to his house. Meanwhile

there was no talk of going to court. Month after month elapsed, and the event on which were based all Levrault's ambitious dreams was still deferred, or, it should rather be said, was never referred to either by the Marchioness or her son. At last, losing patience, M. Levrault spoke to his son-in-law on the subject. Gaston repudiated with indignation the idea of recognising the usurping dynasty by presenting himself at the Tuileries, declared he should incur his mother's malediction by so doing, and was disposed to look upon his father-in-law as insane, when that worthy gentleman alleged the Marchioness's promise. A visitor interrupted the conversation at this point, and M. Levrault, furious, hurried to the Marchioness to seek an explanation. This leads to one of the best situations in the book. After a sharp verbal duel, M. Levrault rises from his chair, pale with anger.

"Madame la Marquise, you have made a fool of me. To-day, this very morning, I have seen your son and put the question to him plainly. He has never entertained the intention you attribute to him. He has neither said nor done anything to mislead you. You well know his views upon the subject, and I know now what your fine promises are worth. You were perishing of ennui in your ruined castle. To restore the fortunes of your family, to be able to reappear in society, you condescended to court and flatter the plebeian you now disdain. I hate your party; I never disguised that fact. I have always detested your political sect; there is no sympathy possible between the Levraults and M. de Chambord. If you had not assured me—if I had not believed, that your son would give in his adhesion to the present dynasty, I would never have given him my daughter and a third of my fortune. I relied on your good faith, and you have shamefully deceived me."

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Whilst M. Levrault pronounced these last sentences, Gaston, who had come in from his ride, was standing at the open door of the drawing-room, pale, motionless, and silent. The Marchioness was about to reply, but, on beholding her son, the words died away on her lips.

"Mother," said Gaston coldly, advancing towards her, "I understand everything: you have trafficked with my name. Better, a hundred times, had it been to submit to our poverty, or to permit and teach me to work to reconstruct our fortune. You have passed a contract which I did not subscribe, but which I nevertheless will fulfil."

Then, turning to M. Levrault:

"Make yourself easy, sir: we will go to court."

And without another word Gaston quitted the room, leaving the Marchioness overwhelmed with consternation, and M. Levrault intoxicated with joy.

In spite of the Dowager's threatened malediction, Gaston persists in his resolution. The court-dresses are ready; M. Levrault, in whose roseate dreams a count's coronet nightly recurs, and who has more than once alarmed the house by rehearsing in his sleep the maiden speech that is to electrify the Chamber of Peers—has passed two entire days majoring before his mirror in white cassimere smalls, embroidered coat, and steel-hilted rapier. It seems as if nothing short of an earthquake could prevent the consummation of his long-cherished hopes. Yes, one other thing can, and cruel fate decrees that thing shall come to pass. Fortune, long favourable to the plodding shopkeeper, frowns upon the aspirant to court honours. Engrossed by anticipation of his expected happiness, M. Levrault is inattentive to the signs of the times, and persists in turning a deaf ear to the alarming reports that circulate abroad. Thus it happens that when, on the eve of the day appointed for his presentation, he strolls towards the Tuileries, repeating, for at least the thirtieth time, a carefully rounded phrase intended for the ear of royalty, he is not only shocked, but perfectly astounded, on beholding a number of ill-looking persons throwing the furniture out of the palace windows. We must try to make room for a final extract.

"The purlieus of the Tuileries were the scene of indescribable tumult and confusion. Armed bands traversed the bridge and the quay. Shots fired in the air increased the intoxication of the victors. From the windows of the palace there issued, like the roar of the waves upon the beach, the hoarse voices of the mob. Cuirassiers' chargers, mounted by children, were galloping through the crowd. The people all had weapons; the soldiers only were unarmed. Groups of persons with curious, anxious, alarmed countenances, told each other the news; the royal family had fled, and of all the courtiers, all the councillors, all the men of war who surrounded them, not one had been found to draw a sword or flash a cartridge. M. Levrault was looking and listening with a stupified air, when a hand was laid upon his shoulder: turning quickly about, he found himself face to face with Jolibois. The Radical notary was armed to the teeth. In his girdle were two pair of holster pistols, a dragoon sabre dragged at his heels, a double-barrelled fowling-piece was on his shoulders. His face, begrimed with powder, might have belonged to a soldier who has done nothing all day but load and fire. But his innocent weapons were blood-guiltless; like a prudent warrior, he had waited till all was over before making his appearance on the scene of action. He was now marching upon the Chamber of Deputies, at the head of a score of men equipped like himself. On recognising him, M. Levrault was struck with consternation. "Well!" cried Jolibois, "what did I tell you? Who was right? You would not believe me; do you believe me now? I have a good nose; I smelt to-day's banquet long ago. The people triumph, the monarchy is down, the infamous bourgeoisie is dead. I and my men are off to the Chamber to proclaim the Republic."

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"The Republic!" stammered M. Levrault in a stifled voice.

"Yes, my boy, the Republic! In an hour you shall have it." And taking him aside, as if fearful of being overheard by his followers: "Here you are in a nice mess, my good friend," he continued. "I would not be in your skin. A notary would not do for your son-in-law; you must needs have a marquis. Your millions were not enough to make you a mark for the anger, the justice of the people. Your hotel is a nest of Legitimists; to-night perhaps it will be a heap of ashes. Take warning, and get out of the scrape as you can."

Thereupon Jolibois broke away from M. Levrault, who clung to his garments, and hurried of to the Chamber. It were idle to attempt to depict M. Levrault's consternation and terror. The mere word "Republic" suffices to bewilder his brain and freeze his blood. In his dictionary, Republic signified fire, murder, and pillage. To these causes of alarm were to be added his wealth, his son-in-law, his connexion with the Legitimist party. Distracted, despairing like a drowning man, he fancied he heard his name murmured around him, and read threats and vengeance on every face. It seemed to him that the sum-total of his fortune and his son-in-law's title was inscribed on his hat. He dared not go home, for fear of being followed, but wandered to and fro, pale, trembling, and with haggard eyes, seeking a means of protecting his hotel from popular fury, when he saw a workman carried by upon a stretcher. A bright idea flashed across him. By a gesture he stopped the stretcher.

"Whither do you bear this brave fellow?" he asked in a loud voice.

"To the hospital."

"To the hospital? a child of the people, a hero who has shed his blood for liberty, for the Republic! To the hospital! It were a disgrace to us, my friends. Let him come home with me; my house belongs to him. I too am a workman. Let him come to William Levrault's. Follow me, comrades; rely upon it he shall want for nothing."

"Long live William Levrault," cried the mob, clapping their hands.

"My friends, cry Long live the Republic!"

And putting himself at the head of the procession, amidst uproarious cries of "Long live William Levrault! Long live the Republic!" he bravely took the road to his hotel.

The noise without had at last made itself heard in the apartment of the Hotel Levrault. The Marchioness and Laura were together in the drawing-room. Laura, uneasy, agitated, watched at the window for the arrival of her father or husband. The Marchioness was triumphant. In her eyes the events of the day could have but one signification, the return of the Count de Chambord. The *bourgeoisie* was put back to its place, the nobility resumed possession of their privileges. There was something providential in the catastrophe: Heaven would not suffer a Rochelandier to perjure himself. In her intoxication, the Marchioness pardoned Laura, and even M. Levrault; she forgot her resentment, and thought only of her approaching good fortune. She was about to resume at the Tuileries the position she occupied under the Restoration.

"Calm yourself, my dear daughter," said she, affectionately. "What do you fear? What do you lose? You wished to go to the Tuileries, we will go together; I will present you myself. What a difference between the court to which I will conduct you and that to which you would have gone! In the palace of our young king you will not be exposed to meet intruders, people sprung none know whence. Do those who now depart merit a regret? What was that court? a mob. Only yesterday, the Tuileries was but an inn. A fine honour, truly, to frequent saloons through which everybody passes! To-morrow, Henry V. will clear the house and choose his own guests. Console yourself, my dear child; the young king has nothing to refuse to the La Rochelandiers."

Gaston entered the room. "Well! my son, we triumph!" proudly exclaimed the Marchioness.

"What do you hope then, madame?" Gaston gravely asked.

"We shall behold the child of our hopes; our dear Henry will ascend the throne of the Béarnais."

"But, mother, you know not then what is passing?"

"France utters a cry of deliverance, and extends its arms to its legitimate sovereign," continued the Marchioness with enthusiasm. "Why do you delay, my son? Is it not your duty to go and meet him? Depart; oh! that I could give you wings!"

"You are strangely mistaken," replied Gaston, shaking his head. "This is not the resurrection of the monarchy of St Louis, but the installation of the republic."

"The republic!" cried the Marchioness. "What an insane dream! It is impossible!"

"The republic!" exclaimed Laura: "then there will be no court?"

"Impossible!" repeated the Marchioness. "Reassure yourself, my daughter. You are mad, Gaston. The republic! How can you think of such a thing? France has tried it already, and knows too well what it is worth."

As she spoke the word, the door opened, and M. Levrault appeared, sustaining with his arm the

faltering steps of the wounded workman, and followed by a dozen armed men who had escorted him to his hotel. Gaston, Laura, and the Marchioness beheld this strange scene with the utmost astonishment. The wounded man was about thirty years of age. Hurt in the shoulder with a musket-ball, his face, encircled with brown hair and a reddish beard, was still animated, in spite of pain, with all the ardour of the combat. It was one of those countenances characterised by a savage energy, which seem to rise out of the earth on the occasion of any popular movement.

"Bow your heads!" cried M. Levrault on entering—"salute with respect this hero who has given his blood to protect us from tyranny." Then, addressing himself to the wounded man; "My friend, you are at home, and your brave comrades shall not leave you. My friends, this house is yours. All that you here see I have earned with the sweat of my brow. I am too happy to share with you my little fortune, the modest fruit of my humble labours. Here is my son-in-law, a workman in the fields of thought, a republican like me, like yourselves.

"Say the Marquis de la Rochelandier," sternly interrupted Gaston. "Yesterday I held my title cheap; to-day that it is proscribed, I insist upon my right to it."

In vain did M. Levrault make signs to Gaston to hold his tongue; in a firm voice Gaston finished what he had to say, and left the room with haughty step, casting a look of pity on his father-in-law. The Marchioness, indignant, followed her son, and Laura was about to follow her when she was detained by a supplicatory gesture of her father's.

"A marquis!" said the wounded man, with a mistrustful glance round the room. "Comrades, I cannot stop here—take me to the hospital."

"My friends, you are in the house of William Levrault, formerly a weaver at Elbeuf. Do you know Jolibois? he is my dearest friend. I was on my way to the Chamber with him, when I met you. Here is my daughter, one of the people, a heart of gold. Here everything belongs to you. You have fought like lions; we must drink together."

Just then, the wounded man was seized with sudden faintness, and repeated, in a feeble voice —"Take me to the hospital!"

M. Levrault pulled the bell, a servant appeared, and soon afterwards a hamper of wine. M. Levrault filled glasses round to his new friends, gave a full one to the wounded man, and exclaimed, in an agitated voice:

"Let us drink, my friends, to the strength and grandeur of our young republic. No more kings, no more nobility, no more middle classes! Let us drink to the levelling of all classes, that we may form but one family, a family of workmen. Each for all, and all for each!" And the glasses clashed together to cries of "Long live William Levrault!"

"Long live the people of Paris!" cried William Levrault, raising his glass.

"Friends," said the wounded man in a gloomy voice, after licking his mustaches, "beware! This is rich man's wine."

Notwithstanding this sinister warning, the democrats again filled their glasses, emptied them at a draught, and looked at each other with an air of incredulity. The wounded man fainted away. M. Levrault had him carried into a comfortable room, warmed his bed, and put him into it himself, sent for a surgeon to dress his wound, and put a wing of the hotel at the disposal of his new brothers, who needed little entreaty to install themselves there. On returning to the drawing-room, he found Laura pale and terrified.

"Wretched girl!" he cried, "see what your silly vanity has done! I wanted to marry you to Jolibois. You would be a Marchioness. And now God only knows what will become of us!"

Having said this, he crept stealthily down stairs, ran to the coach-house, painted over with his own hand the arms upon the carriages, stole up stairs again, took the plate boxes from the sideboard, hurried to the cellar, concealed his treasure in a cask, and went out to buy a few dozen forks and spoons of the best electro-plate.

We must hurry to a conclusion. Solon Marche-toujours (the name of the wounded man) is recognised, during his convalescence, as a son of M. Levrault, lost in his infancy, and to whom occasional reference has been made in the course of the novel. On discovering a rich father, he abjures communism, turns his comrades out of doors, and demands three hundred thousand francs to found a newspaper; but before he can extract them from the paternal purse, M. Levrault's entire fortune and Laura's dowry are swallowed up in one of the failures consequent on the revolution. Whereupon Solon reverts to his old principles, and finally emigrates to Icaria. The incident of the loss of the fortune, which, under ordinary circumstances, might seem forced, is rendered natural enough by the revolution, of which M. Sandeau has so ably availed himself. The moral of the tale is evident and good. All parties are punished where they have sinned. The political convulsion that abolishes the titles for which Levrault bartered his daughter, and Laura sold herself, sweeps away the money which the Marchioness lied and flattered, and Gaston misallied himself, to obtain. These four persons return to Brittany, the intriguing dowager being fain to accept M. Levrault's hospitality in what was once her own castle, but which she transferred to him in full expectation of appropriating in exchange his Parisian mansion. The

cloth-merchant's tribulations are not yet at an end. He is arrested by Jolibois, who has been appointed commissioner of the Republic in Brittany. The Radical ex-notary, who has more mischief than malignity in his composition, relents and releases him, abandoning him on a desolate road in the middle of a stormy night, and at several miles distance from Chateau Levrault. There are some humorous scenes towards the end of the book; and hard knocks, richly deserved, are administered to the democrats. The most pleasing feature at the close of the narrative is the change that takes place in Gaston and his young wife, whose better qualities, dormant in their more prosperous days, are brought about by adversity, and who find compensation in mutual affection for loss of rank and wealth. The novel closes with their departure for Paris, where Gaston is resolved to work out, by toil and the exercise of his talents, the means of an honourable and independent existence. M. Levrault and the Marchioness remain 446
in Brittany, where they beguile their weariness by keeping up their old feud. Jolibois, after sitting in the Constituent Assembly, subsides into private life, having in the meantime lost all his clients. Gaspard de Montflanquin, released from durance vile by the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and appointed consul to the Republic in Polynesia, passes his time teaching lansquenet to the savages.

Sacs et Parchemins is one of the best French novels that has appeared since the February revolution. Its tone and tendency are alike unobjectionable; and whatever its reception in France, we are quite sure that with English readers it will be a general favourite. It is fully time that the better class of French writers should exert themselves, and not suffer their novel reading countrymen to be reduced, for an idle hour's amusement, to the perusal of the contemptible and unwholesome trash of which the light literature of France has for the last two years principally consisted. It would be most agreeable and refreshing to behold the names of Foudras, Féval, Dumas junior, Montégrin, and all vain pretenders of the same sort, replaced in the catalogues by those of de Bernard, Reybaud, Mérimée, Karr, and others of whom we have occasionally made honourable mention. In the ranks of the latter and worthier body, M. Jules Sandeau's last novel fairly entitles him to a place. 447

CAIRD'S HIGH FARMING HARROWED.

"Tarry woo', O tarry woo',
Tarry woo' is ill to spin;
Caird it weel, O caird it weel,
Caird it weel ere ye begin."
Old National Song.

[With reference to the following friendly letter from Cato the Censor to Mr Caird, we must explain to our readers that the author of *High Farming under Liberal Covenants, &c.*, has published a second pamphlet, entitled *High Farming Vindicated*, being a letter addressed to us, and professing to answer the article in our January number, on "British Agriculture and Foreign Competition." Mr Caird is a clever fellow in his way, but hardly the style of man to whom, under ordinary circumstances, we should feel called upon to devote so many of our pages. We shall therefore briefly explain our reasons for publishing the old Roman's letter in our columns.

We were aware that the gentlemen who, in a manly straightforward way, gave us the privilege of publishing their names as drawing up and attesting facts consistent with their knowledge and experience of agriculture, might be exposed to impertinence and cavil, and we were resolved to punish any assailant in the slightest degree worthy of notice. These witnesses of ours were selected by us from their high reputations as farmers, and in very few instances were we acquainted with their opinions, political or other. We appealed to them as the highest court of authority that we could find in matters agricultural; and since their names were published, what we have heard from others confirms us in our estimate of them. There are farmers as good as they; but the history of farming in Scotland, for the last thirty years, proves that they stand second to none in their profession; and it is most absurd and indiscreet in any man to rush into print, proclaiming that they are behind the age; ignorant, it would seem, of the uses of oilcake and guano. Mr Caird has done this, and must therefore undergo condign punishment. The fortuitous importance of Mr Caird lies in the circumstance that his mode of stating an exceptional case in farming has been seized hold of by the whole troop of enemies to British agricultural industry, as a handle for insult to his brother farmers, and a specimen of what might be effected throughout the country under the blessings of Free Trade. We do not think that Mr Caird even dreamed of this when he wrote his first pamphlet; on the contrary, we feel satisfied that his intentions were good. In our January paper we were purposely tender to him—most unwilling to say anything that might hurt his feelings—and it was only the clatter that had been made about his pamphlet, that induced us to mention him at all. Our excellent and kind-hearted friend Mr Stephens at first declined to come forward personally, and expose the fallacy of the Auchness system of husbandry, and only did so when we explained our reasons for thinking that it ought to be done. We are greatly surprised at the unbecoming tone of Mr Caird's remarks about Mr Stephens, and did not suppose that any man at all acquainted with Scottish agriculture would

have presumed so to speak of the author of the *Book of the Farm*.

When we saw "Donald Caird come again," in the shape of a vindication from an imaginary attack, we felt much pained that he had forced himself upon us. He does not attack us directly, but—what is much more unpardonable in our eyes—he attacks and foolishly sneers at the gentlemen who furnished us with undeniable facts, none of whom, with the exception of Mr Stephens, ever mentioned his name, or were thinking of him at all.

We have still a regard for the yeoman of Baldoon, as there are many good points about him. He possesses capital pluck; and had the right honourable Baronet, who has made a cat's-paw of him, been gifted with half as much of the same excellent quality, the Corn Laws would never have been repealed. Will he take a suggestion at our hands, to beware lest boldness degenerate into temerity?

Without further preamble, we leave him in the hands of that austere veteran, Cato the Censor, 448
author of *De Re Rusticâ*, &c., who has kindly come forward to protect us. We recently had one of the Censor's family, "Porcius," analysing with playful irony the pigs and ammonia of the amiable Rector of Saffron-Waldon, Mr Huxtable. Those acquainted with the treatise *De Re Rusticâ* will be delighted to see that the aged head of the Gens Porcia is still writing with undiminished vigour.]

CATO THE CENSOR *to* MR JAMES CAIRD.

COLUMELLA LODGE, *March 1850*.

SIR,—I need not tell you that I have always taken a deep interest in your prosperity and welfare, and have watched your progress onwards to your present elevation. Not without trembling anxiety did I hear of the publication of your first pamphlet. Many a man has been spoiled by attempting literature; and I have known one or two whose whole future lives were rendered useless by the mere fact of their having indited a pamphlet. However, the perusal of your *High Farming under Liberal Covenants, the Best Substitute for Protection*, somewhat quieted my fears. The thing was plausibly done; and I had a hope that nothing very calamitous would come out of it. I supposed it possible, even, that the pawky compliment so adroitly ministered to Sir R. Peel in the opening paragraph of your essay, and repeated yet more adroitly in the peroration, might not be without its fruits. If the doctor, in this age of political quackery, ever recovered the premiership, I was hopeful that he would remember you. This was no doubt what you intended, and it was praiseworthy. But oh, my dear sir, what poignant and unfeigned pain have I experienced in perusing your second agricultural essay, which you entitle *High Farming Vindicated, and further Illustrated*! The tone and execution of this performance is all bad. It is written in bad temper. It is brimful of an over-weening vanity. After an exordium sufficiently egotistical, it affects to be a reply to "the Editor of *Blackwood*." You fly at high game. Your vanity surely cannot go the length of fancying that the veiled Editor of Ebony will step out of Buchanan Lodge to answer your summons in person. It is possible, but not probable, that he may devote a little bit of margin to you, and enshrine you in a foot-note, like a fly in amber. Such immortality may be your inheritance—I hope not. You are scarcely the kind of Dalgetty whom he would take the trouble of engaging either as an opponent or a retainer; and it is this conviction which moves me, in the present instance, to address you. You require advice; and although it is very much against the grain with me to take up the pen, yet, out of my regard for you, and for those that went before you, I am constrained to address you on the topics touched upon in your *High Farming Vindicated, and further Illustrated*. Be thankful, my dear sir, that the operator is not the Editor of *Blackwood*. I will handle you tenderly, and, if the cautery is indispensable, will remember the quaint and gentle old Izaak's instruction to the angler, when directing him how to fix the frog on the hook—"In so doing, use him as though you loved him."

There are some delusions under which you are labouring, that I must, in the first instance, set myself to remove. In your introductory paragraph, you express your astonishment that your first pamphlet, of some thirty pages, should have formed the subject of so much discussion, and have originated violent controversies, and been productive, to use your own awkwardly-rustic metaphor, of "a whole sheaf of pamphlets," (p. 3-4.)

Well, I wonder too: but it is not the first time that dire events have sprung from trivial causes; and you seem strangely blind to the real origin of the popularity that attended your first essay. In your *High Farming Vindicated*, you describe its predecessor as "chiefly a narrative of the system pursued by a practical farmer in your neighbourhood, which that gentleman had found highly remunerative." Had this been all, the *brochure* would have attracted little notice, and caused no discussion. But this is not a correct account of its object and scope. The titlepage—*High Farming under Liberal Covenants, the best Substitute for Protection*—is a true exponent of the object of 449
the author. The very titlepage acted like magic. For mark at the moment when you launched your bantling into the world. The agricultural depression was grievous; prices were sinking daily; the farmers saw their capital disappearing, and ruin apparently staring them in the face; and, in the emergency, you step forward, and offer them an infallible panacea in your *High Farming the best Substitute for Protection*. There never was anything so opportune. The suffering farmers flew to you, read you greedily, and arose from the perusal angry that they were so trifled with, and with a conviction that your *High Farming* as a substitute for protection, and a cure for their sufferings, was a mere quackish nostrum.

But this was not all. There was another numerous class, also *in extremis*, for whom you had

good news—I mean the free-trade press and the free-trade proprietors. This powerful but distressed community hailed your appearance, and hugged you to their bosoms. They were beginning to see that all their predictions regarding the effects of Free Trade on the agricultural interest were to be falsified; one moiety of them feared that their rents would topple; and at the critical moment you advertise *High Farming a Substitute for Protection*. You were a perfect godsend to the Free-traders; and for them it is undeniable you chiefly wrote, and not for the behoof of your brother farmers. If that had been your object, you never could have commenced with comparing the Scotch farmer to a melancholious cripple, nor have talked of the "prejudices" of those who have been bred to the agricultural profession. Indeed, an under-current of foolish sneering at your brethren pervaded your first pamphlet, which, in your *High Farming Vindicated*, has come to the surface, and rushes along in a head-long and angry torrent. The result has proved the correctness of this view. The free-trade press are playing you off against your fellow-farmers, and bespattering you with praise. Sir R. Peel has patted you on the back, and deluded you into a roving commission; and the free-trade proprietors, catching your note, are denouncing the farmers for want of enterprise, skill, and capital. To you your brother farmers are indebted for these free-trade compliments. I hope, then, that you will hereafter understand the real cause of the discussions that followed the publication of your first lucubration. The tempting title you gave your thesis, and the solace you offered the farmers, and the pleasant prescription you presented to panic-struck free-trade lairds, and the seasonable moment you selected for publication, sufficiently explain your popularity. The little urchin that throws a spark amongst gunpowder causes smoke and an explosion; and yet there may have been nothing singularly meritorious in his performance. Your lucifer-match fell among combustible materials, and had it not been so, it would have proved noiseless and innocuous. I am anxious to expound the true origin of the noise you have made. It is painful to me to notice the extent of your hallucination. You are quite inflated with the idea of being famous; and it will be real kindness to puncture you, were it only to let the wind out. The "*hoven*" in cattle, when at its height, can only be cured by acupuncturation.

You say that, from *Blackwood's* statistics, "it appears that an impression has been created on the south side of the Border, that the agriculture of Scotland has long been in a decaying condition; and it is as much to vindicate the credit of his country from an aspersion on its agriculture, as to support the views which he formerly promulgated, that the writer takes this mode of replying," (p. 5.) That the Southrons should infer from *Blackwood's* statistics that the agriculture of Scotland is on the decline, seems incredible. Sir R. Peel leads us to infer that his tenants only grow from 18 to 20 bushels per acre. Mr Huxtable's hypothetical mark, arrived at by the use of no one knows how much ammonia, is 32 bushels per acre. As a sample of *Blackwood's* statistics, take Mr Dudgeon's. He grows, *on an average of years*, 33 bushels wheat per acre, 40 bushels barley, 48 bushels oats. Could the Tamworth baronet take this as a proof of decaying husbandry? As an average produce for a series of years, on a farm of 500 acres "of useful land," would Mr Huxtable himself think this evidence of an agricultural decline? But how are the Auchness statistics to dispel the gloomy impression regarding the moribund state of agriculture in North Britain, which, you say, has been created by *Blackwood's* statistics? On comparing the detailed account of annual produce of Auchness, in the fifth edition of your first pamphlet, with the number of acres under crop, as given in p. 15, we find that Mr M'Culloch grows 36 bushels wheat per acre, and 45 bushels oats: that is, the Auchness factor grows 3 bushels wheat more per acre than Mr Dudgeon, and Mr Dudgeon grows 3 bushels oats more per acre than the factor. This is the mighty difference. How is it possible, then, that the Auchness statistics can counteract the evil impression made on John Bull's mind by *Blackwood's* statistics? At Auchness, indeed, you can present John with a watery potato; but to a man in low spirits, as John is about Scotland, that would only increase his flatulence. As for a drop of malt, the thing is unknown at Auchness, barley being an extinct cereal there; and if a horn of wholesome home-brewed can clear off from John's mind the ugly impression, and give him brighter views of Scottish agriculture, he must go to Mr Dudgeon for that.

And yet you are the man who are to "vindicate the credit of your country!" When I read this, I laughed aloud. Poor old Scotland! I saw her reviled and misrepresented by *Blackwood's* troop of statists, and her agriculture exhibited as in a *dwining* condition. And I saw you, fire in your eye, and in "your nostril beautiful disdain," sallying forth, armed *cap-à-pie*, a devoted and gallant chevalier, to do vengeance on the enemies of your native land. And methought I heard you exclaim in a heroical ecstasy—"I will vindicate the credit of my country!" My dear sir, you may be ambitious to live in Caledonian story as the champion of Scotland; but it is more probable that you may be only recollected as the Don Quixotte of Baldoon. Dr Johnson tells us of a patriotic butcher, who was haunted with the idea that his country was on its last legs, and whose continual exclamation was—"My heart bleeds for my country!" 'Tis said that the butcher grew fat, and the country yet exists.

Blackwood's statistics were expressly put forward as embodying the average produce for a term of years of the average soil in the different districts selected for illustration, and farmed according to the best modes. Extraordinary and exceptional produce and profits were properly avoided, as well as extraordinary failures or losses in crops; and surely the average was high enough, if we may infer anything from the reports of the *Times'* own commissioner, to convince our friends on the south side of the Border that our agriculture was not absolutely in a decaying condition; and therefore I am constrained to believe that you are misinformed regarding this "impression." And even if it were otherwise, and, supposing that *Blackwood* had injured your country, should you not have modestly asked whether you were the man fit to avenge your

country's wrongs? There is another most singular delusion in which you seem to be immersed. You fancy that the surpassingly able and striking article in *Blackwood*, which has excited a deeper and more general sensation in the kingdom than perhaps any article that ever appeared in any British periodical, has been got up solely and exclusively for the purpose of refuting and overthrowing your pamphlet! "And finally, the Editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*, backed by the whole influence of the Protectionist party in Scotland, has brought up a heavy troop of yeomanry to extinguish the opinions I advanced, by an overwhelming exhibition of authority. Acknowledging the compliment implied in the necessity for this array, I think my readers will now feel that it is not the advocate, but the cause, which is inextinguishable," (p. 30.) The whole Protectionist party, you fancy, have entered into a wicked league to expose you! Nor is this all. Plainly, your idea is that the Editor of *Blackwood*, and his learned ally, the author of *The Book of the Farm*, were afraid to encounter you; and, conscious of their weakness, that they summoned to their assistance Messrs Watson, Dudgeon, Gibson, and the thirty agriculturists who certiorate their statements. What a host!—gathered together from the south and north, and east and west, all marshalled in warlike array, to put down Mr James Caird, farmer, Baldoon! Was there ever such a hallucination? or did human vanity ever take such a flight before? You think it proved, by the mustered troops that have been brought to bear upon you, that it is not the advocate but the cause which is inextinguishable. The cause, doubtless, is as inextinguishable as the Auchness potatoes. But who ever dreamed of the advocate as being indestructible? I never heard of you as the inextinguishable Mr Caird—the unconsumable Phœnix of the West. You are very distinguished, but not inextinguishable. Oh! dismiss the vain fancy, or intolerable ridicule will dog you all the days of your life. Can a man not write on British agriculture, and illustrate the depression of agricultural produce flowing from the invasion of Free Trade, without having Mr Caird in his eye? Or if I utter the words "high farming," must you instantly prick up your ears, and ask me snappishly, "Do you bite your thumb at me?" The idea of high farming being the substitute for protection was your own—but you neither invented, nor do you practise, the Auchness modes of husbandry. You were not the discoverer of the Auchness wonders; you were the cicerone, the mere narrator of them. You were not the man that caught the lion, but the gentleman with the long pole who describes to the gaping *gobemouches* the qualities of the king of the beasts. Johnson had his Boswell, Addison his Tom Tickell, and Robinson Crusoe his man Friday; and there seems no reason why Mr M'Culloch should not have his Caird. But you quite over-estimate the importance of your position. *Blackwood* spoke of you with a studied gentleness, as if unwilling to hurt your feelings; and *Blackwood's* farmers make not the remotest reference to you, *and never once mention your name*. And yet, in your *High Farming Vindicated*, you pour out on these gentlemen an inky flood of petulant impertinence. You speak of their statistics as "counter-statements" (p. 7.) to yours. Your vanity makes you think so. They never once allude to you; and if the article in *Blackwood* brought them to bear on the high farming theory, it might surely be the high farming of Mechi or Huxtable, as well as of Caird.

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There is yet another kindred delusion to the preceding, which you are fondly cherishing. You evidently fancy yourself a martyr! "I have often," you say, "both in public and private, been attacked for my advocacy of the cause of my brother tenants. I have been upbraided, and have suffered in the estimation of men of rank, for doing so. An interested portion of the press have distorted my arguments, to prove to their readers that I am an enemy to the farmer," (p. 30.) Oh, unhappy man! Your immortal labours unappreciated—your words distorted—your character attacked, and, to consummate your sufferings—your reputation injured in the estimation of men of rank! From the bottom of my heart, I pity you. You have been a very ill-used man. But let us be calm, and inquire into the cause of your persecution. You see, my dear sir, in the opening sentence of your first pamphlet, you personified your brother farmers under the image of a poor hypochondriac cripple, the victim of imaginary ailments; and you afterwards insinuated that the agriculturists of the country, who had been trained and bred up to their profession, were cropful of "prejudices:" that the gentleman who so wrote might be an "enemy to the farmer," was a natural enough mistake for people to fall into. Moreover, your representation of high farming as the substitute for Protection, and as sufficient to uphold the tottering rent-rolls under the regime of Free Trade, must have been considered insidious and dangerous doctrine, in the estimation of all those who looked upon the Auchness crutch as rotten and treacherous timber, and us calculated to injure tenants by ministering delusive expectations to the landlords. Have not the Free-trade newspapers, "the interested portion of the press," made this very use of your arguments, and are not Free-trade proprietors acting upon it? On this ground have you not proved an enemy to the farmer, and are those greatly to blame who think so?

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But, indeed, although it be, I would not have you too deeply to distress yourself; although you have proved, unwittingly perhaps, an enemy to the farmer, it is not certain that your brother tenants will suffer irremediable ruin from the productions of your pen. Consider that the assaults of such an enemy British farmers may possibly withstand. To have forfeited the good opinion of your brother farmers is very unfortunate, but to have lost the approving smiles of men of rank is a sorer evil still. You seem utterly destitute and forsaken, and my sympathetic nature prompts me, therefore, to suggest to you another source of comfort. Remember that all really great men have been persecuted. Such is the way of this wicked world. Milton fell "on evil days and evil tongues," and yet his Tetrachordon "walked the town awhile numbering good intellects;" and most heartily did the "old man eloquent" denounce "the asses, apes, and dogs," that with barbarous noise environed him. This is your very case. The parallel is complete. Galileo, a great discoverer, although in a different department from yours, had his arguments distorted by an interested priest, and twice suffered the tortures of the Inquisition. You may be the agricultural Galileo of the nineteenth century. It may be that, like all men of genius, you are only before the

age. In your present persecutions you may be only paying the penalty of your genius, and what the greatest benefactors of the human race have ever had to endure. Posterity will be more just, and give you your award when the ephemeral *Blackwood* shall have perished and been forgotten. In the distant future you will be famous: consider this, and be no longer inconsolable.

What reason have you for saying, (p. 4,) that the Protectionists employed the leading organ of their party in North Britain to write down this system? Does not the insinuation indicate a pitiful misrepresentation on your part, or an extraordinary ignorance? Has *Blackwood* proved himself venal? have the writers of that periodical indicated mercenary tendencies? At the era of the late memorable tergiversation, which inflicted such a disgraceful wound on the political morality of our nation, did *Blackwood* trim and temporise? On the contrary, did he not maintain his integrity, and nail his colours to the mast, and fight the battle which he had always fought? Are not the views and opinions advocated in the article to which you refer, the very views and opinions which *Blackwood*, with unswerving consistency, has always maintained? All the world knew this to be the fact, and what necessity was there for the Protectionists "employing" the leading organ to do what it had always done, and would infallibly continue to do?

But worse, and more unwarrantable, if possible, are your reflections on the character of the gentlemen who furnished *Blackwood* with his agricultural statistics. "The farmers of *Blackwood* are content to be held up, for a political purpose, in an aspect discreditable to the national character as Scottish agriculturists," (p. 21.) You describe these gentlemen as venal subservient tools, ready to do a discreditable job for a political purpose. I must be permitted to tell you that this is a false and childish calumny. Many of these parties I know, and they are incapable of such baseness. More honourable or independent men are not in the kingdom, and that they should sell themselves to serve a purpose is a charge sufficiently malignant, but too absurd to meet with credence. What unprincipled purpose could their statistics serve? Their statistics seemed to class them with the political minority in Parliament at least. This did not indicate selfishness: commissioner-ships they were not courting. Some of them might be opposing the Free-trade theories of their proprietors: this does not look like servile meanness. You must have known that, on the question of politics generally, these farmers did not all agree with *Blackwood*; that on many points they differ with one another, and that yet they unite in testifying to the disastrous 453
effects of Free Trade on the agriculture of the nation. The evidence of their integrity and conscientiousness is irresistible, and it has been felt to be so. And yet here are you, with foolish recklessness, insinuating that about thirty of the best known, most eminent, and best-informed agriculturists in the kingdom, who never once mentioned your name, are capable of conduct mean and dishonourable, and content to be held up for a political purpose. If your gratuitous and unprovoked accusation should lower you henceforth in the estimation of the tenant-farmers of your native land, you have yourself alone to blame. It has ever been reckoned the proof of meanness, and the evidence of quackery, in any member of a profession to revile his brethren, and to disparage the well-won reputation of its most distinguished members. In this unenviable position you have placed yourself. The native insignificance of the accuser renders his accusation harmless, but it cannot shield him from the consequences of his rash and presumptuous folly.

I am sorry to write with such severity—but, indeed, I confess that I have felt deep indignation that some of the most respected and distinguished agriculturists of the kingdom should have been insulted by such a *novus homo* as you are. I can scarcely trust myself to speak of the manner in which you have written of Professor Low and Mr Stephens. There are no two authors in the kingdom who have contributed more largely to advance the cause of agriculture, both as a science and an art, than these two gentlemen have done by their writings. They are universally respected. And yet you write of them with a puerile and vulgar rudeness, discreditable at once to your feelings as a gentleman, and to your position as a farmer. Your plucking out solitary expressions from Professor Low's *Appeal to the Common Sense of the Country*, and attaching a meaning to them which, in their original position, they did not bear, is sufficiently unscrupulous, and marks your candour as a controversialist. I believe nothing in your pamphlet has excited deeper disapprobation than the manner in which you have presumed to speak of Mr Stephens.

You entitle your last pamphlet *High Farming Vindicated*. High farming vindicated against the attacks of whom? A vindication presupposes an assault, and injury inflicted. By your titlepage, you affect to insinuate that high farming has been depreciated. In the name of the tenant-farmers of Scotland, I repel the insinuation. If by high farming you mean good farming, (that is, a liberal treatment of the soil and of stock, and an earnest application of the discoveries of science to the practice of husbandry,) I believe there never was a time when agriculturists were more alive to the advantages of high farming, or more desirous of adopting it, as far as their circumstances will allow. You seem foolishly to fancy that there is no high farming, saving at Auchness; and because the system there, as exhibited by you, has been subjected to some criticism, you rush to its defence, as if high farming were in the abstract attacked; and you indite a pamphlet, presumptuously entitling it *High Farming Vindicated*!

You set forth the Auchness system as the substitute for Protection. That crude and undigested fancy you appear to have been compelled to relinquish. But, indeed, there are specialties at Auchness which must ever render the system there incapable of being generally adopted. Not to speak of the enormous additional capital required by landlords and tenants—not to mention the liberal covenant and the low rent—there are the five hundred cartloads of sea-weed for manure; there is the memorable moss, not only fertile itself, but the cause of fertility to the adjacent fields, and benevolently submitting to transportation for the good of the commonwealth; there is

the capricious potato, exciting suspicion and entailing loss everywhere else, but pouring immense treasures into the Auchness coffers; there is the proximity (two miles) to a seaport, "where produce can be shipped for Glasgow or Liverpool, and manure, &c., imported," (first pamphlet, page 8;) there is the fine climate, so favourable to the culture of green crops, and permitting wheat to be sown almost at any time during the winter months: these advantages, not one of 454
which is enjoyed by Messrs Watson and Dudgeon, and which, in combination, I venture to affirm, do not exist on any other farm in the kingdom, must entirely prevent the general adoption of the Auchness model. The whole of your speculation on this subject is visionary, and the slightest reflection should have convinced you of this, as it has convinced every one else.

Let us, however, now look at your vindication of *High Farming*. "Any one," you say, "who has read my pamphlet without prejudice will have seen that *mutual co-operation between landlord and tenant, with sufficient capital and skill, encouraged in their application by moderate rents and liberal covenants*, are the points urged by me as indispensably requisite to insure success under reduced prices. I illustrated these positions by the admirable practice of my friend Mr M'Culloch," (p. 6.) Now the truth is, that, in your first pamphlet, you said very little about the liberal covenant. The "liberal covenant" was a subsidiary part of your titlepage; and to this branch of your subject you only devoted a very few unsatisfactory sentences in your pamphlet. You illustrated the successful application of sufficient capital and skill by the practice of Mr M'Culloch—but not certainly the liberal covenant and the moderate rent, which were the boons of the proprietor. For the benefit of the tenant-farmers, you have more fully illustrated the subject of the liberal covenant in your *High Farming Vindicated*. On this subject you now deliver yourself with great enthusiasm. The following "impediments" to the more general adoption of liberal covenants you require to be removed,—(1) The law of entail must be abrogated or altered. (2) The tenant must have a legal right, at the close of his lease, to repayment for unexhausted manures. (3) The tenant must be released from paying a full rent, in a season where his potatoes are tainted, or his stock decimated. (4) The law of hypothec, which promotes a fictitious competition for land, must be repealed, (p. 22.) And you proceed to write as follows—"Some of these have been pointed at by a body of intelligent farmers who met sometime ago at Glasgow, and who further suggest that every tenant should be entitled to have his rent commuted into grain, (5) *at the average prices* which prevailed when he entered on his farm; giving the landlord a right (if the tenant claims commutation) to take up the farm if he pleases, on paying the tenant for his actual improvements." Here, then, five acts of Parliament, or one very comprehensive measure, seems indispensable to facilitate the adoption of liberal covenants, and to render justice to the farmer under the reduced prices. A code of new legislation is called for, whereby the present rights of landowners are to be subverted and altered, and whereby important advantages are to be communicated to tenants—and who, besides, must have unlimited powers to crop or miscrop their farms as they see fit—and all for the purpose of insuring the adoption of the Auchness liberal covenant! Of course, the new agricultural code must have a retrospective effect, not only by nullifying all existing leases, but by granting compensation for unexhausted improvements—not at their present deteriorated value, but at the value which they would have been worth had the measures of the Legislature not diminished the profits of agricultural investment. A more revolutionary change, a more sweeping reform of the law of landlord and tenant, I do not think was ever mooted.

The measures proposed I do not at present mean to consider; I notice just now the immensity of the change—"These, I would say to my brother farmers, these are practical questions, which have a direct bearing on the condition of tenants, and are worthy of our attentive consideration. Happily, they have not yet been appropriated by any political party." These questions certainly have a direct bearing on the condition of tenants; but it humbly appears to me that they have *a more direct bearing on* landlords, and *are well worthy of their very attentive consideration*. These questions have not been appropriated by any political party, and I fear will not soon be. It is an appropriation which I believe the Free-Trade legislators of Parliament, who own landed property, 455
will most religiously shun. It would seem that there is nothing for it, but that you should enter Parliament yourself, and plead the cause of the liberal covenant. Parliamentary enactments, even to the extent indicated, will not secure all the conditions of the liberal covenant. The enlarged and improved farm-buildings are not provided for in any of the above measures, and yet without these, for the object in view, the liberal covenant is wholly abortive and incomplete. But you tell Messrs Watson and Dudgeon "that there is nothing to prevent them, *with the assistance of their landlords*, to have equal accommodation for their stock and their manure," (p. 13.) You make no doubt of the assistance of the landlords. On this subject you speak with a prompt and easy assurance. But that assistance may not be given. I have not heard of one proprietor tendering the Auchness covenant. Not without reason, the proprietor may refuse. In this case, you will allow that another act of Parliament becomes requisite, to render it compulsory upon landlords to rebuild or remodel and enlarge farm-buildings, so as that the necessary accommodation of the liberal covenant may be secured. We begin now to see some of the conditions of the liberal covenant, and to understand the extent of legislation requisite to pave the way for its adoption. You tell us, in large letters, that the liberal covenant is to the farmer an element "indispensably requisite, to insure success under reduced prices." High farming by itself won't do; and you justly contend that the several conditions prescribed by you must be fulfilled, before it can be proved that your remedy has failed, (p. 7.) Be it so. But you know that your liberal covenant at present is a nonentity—that it exists nowhere but at Auchness, and perhaps one or two other favoured localities. Nay, you seem to allow that absolutely it cannot, and will not, be got without the intervention of Parliament. In that I believe you to be right. And, of course, until it is got, upon your own principles the farmers of the kingdom are not to be blamed for not practising the high

farming of Auchness. In their present position, you dare not even recommend that to them, your several conditions not being granted—a circumstance which would prove utterly destructive to the profits of the Auchness mode.

But will Parliament legislate to the extent and in the way necessary? Some half-dozen of statutes, would be required; a mass of legislation on interests supremely delicate, vastly momentous, and infinitely extensive in their bearings on, the structure and welfare of society. The boldest legislator might well boggle at the extent of your demand for Parliamentary interference. Protection may be an *ignis fatuus*, but your demands on Parliament are inconceivably more fantastic, visionary, and chimerical. You do not seem to be aware that your copious exposition of the liberal covenant, as now given, nullifies any useful or practical lesson that could have been drawn from your first pamphlet on high farming as *the substitute* for protection. Your two essays are antagonistic, and destructive of each other. You have chalked out as much work for Parliament as would fully occupy the House of Commons for three or four years, at the rate at which business is now carried on in our national assembly. In the mean time, and until the liberal covenant is got, what is to be done? With admirable coolness, you look forward to the time when "some legislation or conventional provision" for unexhausted improvements will come to the farmer's relief. The farmers of the nation are suffering deeply; their capital is rapidly vanishing: with three years of the present prices, rents, and leases, the majority of them will be ruined. And you look forward to the remote future, when the possible legislation of Parliament, or some conventional arrangements enacted by some little college of agriculturists that may meet at Glasgow, will cure the evil. Was there ever such trifling with one of the gravest questions that ever engaged the attention of men? and was there ever such mockery of your brother farmers, in the suffering and perilous position in which Parliamentary treachery has placed them? 456

Admitting to its fullest extent the efficacy of high farming, it was evident, from your first pamphlet, that the Auchness husbandry could not be reduced to practice, from, amongst other causes, the lack of the immense additional capital required both by landlords and tenants; and it only remained for you to give some clear notions of the liberal covenant, and to show how unobtainable it was, which you have now done in your second pamphlet, to consummate the impracticable, visionary, and utopian character of your whole theory. The Free-trade proprietor was delighted with your first pamphlet, and hawked it about amongst his tenants. He hung with rapture over its high farming. It was acceptable to him as provision to a besieged and starving city. But he has been rudely shocked by your late lecture on the liberal covenant. He is appalled at the extent and multiplicity of your demands, and he has dismissed you from his counsels as a most dangerous and revolutionary practitioner. The farmer approves of some of the provisions of your liberal covenant, as fair and equitable; but he sees very well that, before your prescriptions can be compounded, and procured, and administered, the poor patient will expire.

Before inquiring whether the liberal covenant, in conjunction with the Auchness husbandry, will meet the emergency, we must look a little at your further illustrations of high farming. You seem, now, not so very confident of the propriety and prudence of devoting such a disproportionate extent to the culture of potatoes. It is notorious that the potato has been for many years the most uncertain and precarious of all crops; that again and again, in all kinds of soil, and under all kinds of treatment, it has utterly perished in the earth, and entailed a grievous loss upon the farmer. Accordingly, the cultivation of it was very properly all but abandoned; and it only now is being resumed upon a limited scale, and with the caution that reiterated and dear-bought experience inculcates upon all but inveterate and incurable speculators. While, then, in reference to the potato, such was the feeling and practice of the whole body of British agriculturists, flowing from an experience irresistibly cogent, and founded on the dictates of the commonest prudence, we find Mr M'Culloch, on a farm of 260 acres, devoting 60 acres in 1848, and 92 acres in 1849, to the cultivation of potatoes. There never was such a purely gambling speculation in agriculture! The experiment was condemned by all but universal experience. No calculation of probabilities warranted the trial; and prudence repudiated the attempt. Nevertheless, the factor at Auchness bravely runs the risk, and stakes his £1200 upon the throw. The capricious root finds some peculiar virtue in the antiseptic moss of Auchness, to be found in no other soil, and flourishes in all its pristine vigour. The factor adventures again and again, and fortune smiles upon him. Well, then, what is to be said? Why, merely that Mr M'Culloch is a lucky fellow. That is all. He had potatoes untainted when there were few in the land, and he got the high price for them which scarcity caused. Here is the source of his profits. Had he lost his potato crop this season, as in past seasons thousands have done, instead of being a theoretical gainer by the farm of Auchness to the extent of £718, 6s., he would have been a practical loser to the extent of £481, 14s. In 1848, had the potatoes failed, there would have been a loss of £419. What then, in this department, are the merits of the Auchness system? Did Mr M'Culloch grow more potatoes per acre than Messrs Watson and Dudgeon did, when nature permitted them to grow them? Quite the reverse. Mr M'Culloch had no merit, unless a perilous love of speculation be meritorious, or the fortunate accident of holding a large extent of moss, of unparalleled potato-growing virtue. Is it a proof of want of skill and enterprise in Messrs Watson and Dudgeon, and Scottish farmers, that they do not happen to possess such precious moss? or is Scottish agriculture to assume generally the character of an immense gambling speculation? Unless this doctrine is meant to be inculcated, it is worse than idle to hold up the high farming of Auchness as a model, and it is ridiculous in the last degree to speak of it as a substitute for Protection. Relinquish the potatoes, as other farmers have been obliged to do, and the Auchness profits are obliterated. 457

Blackwood, in his January number, (p. 106,) says that he had "been informed, on the best authority, that disease has attacked the potatoes at Auchness this very year." You stoutly deny the statement, and reply, you *have been imposed upon*. Mr M'Culloch has at this moment 400 tons of perfectly sound potatoes, the produce of his own farm, for which he would not accept £1200; and seed besides, to plant his next year's crop. Well, he has on 92 acres 400 tons, and enough for seed according to your own allowance. He ought, with an average good crop, to have had 800 tons. Competent judges, who saw these potatoes when growing, estimated them at 12 tons per acre; and, in this view, it would appear that nearly two-thirds of them have disappeared. As far, then, as the potato crop at Auchness is concerned, there has, in 1849, been either miserable farming, or there has been something else. Your own figures prove this. You speak of 400 tons *sound potatoes*. Were there any unsound? Why not have stated that Mr M'Culloch had lost about half of his potatoes this season, by the taint? This would have homologated *Blackwood's* statement that disease had attacked the Auchness potatoes. But surely the cause of high farming, and the interests of agriculture, cannot be promoted by a suppression of the truth, and by such a lack of controversial candour. However, the scanty crop of potatoes, or the loss by disease, curtails materially the huge profits at Auchness. In 1848, when potatoes were much higher priced than now, Mr M'Culloch was content to take £2 per ton; and although he marks them down in his Balance-sheet for 1849 at £3 per ton, you tell us that he would not accept that for them. Not, indeed, that he has got the £3 per ton, or been offered it. But he thinks that they are worth that money; and according, not to the purchaser's estimate, but to the seller's, they stand for £1200 on the receipt side of the Balance-sheet. This is, upon the whole, the simplest, most convenient, and felicitous mode of keeping up the profits that we remember of; and proves, incontestibly, how sensible Mr M'Culloch is that everything at Auchness turns upon the potato speculation. And yet, with 400 tons only on 92 acres, let us inquire if this was really a profitable crop. Let us see what was the expense of growing them. In your first pamphlet you state that 50 carts of dung and 4 cwt. guano are allowed per acre, (p. 18.) Let us say that the dung is worth 5s. per load, and the guano 9s. 6d. per cwt; there will then be—

For dung to the 92 acres,	£1150	0	0
For guano, to the 92 acres,	174	16	0
For seed at 7 cwt., (p. 33,) at £2 per ton,	64	8	0
Rent,	92	0	0
Cost of production,	£1481	4	0
Produce raised,	1200	0	0
Loss,	£281	4	0

I do not calculate the value of the horse and manual labour, which in the cultivation of potatoes is by no means trifling. Let that go to meet the seed potatoes reserved, and the unexhausted manure in the soil: and yet the factor at Auchness seems a loser in 1849, by his potato crop. And yet it is undeniable, nevertheless, in consequence of the extremely depreciated price of grain, that the sale even of this potato crop does add a *larger present return* in money to the profit side of the Balance-sheet than a crop of wheat would have done. But as the potato, when sold off the farm, leaves no *pabulum* for future manure, the prosperity is more apparent than real. Unless a much larger quantity than 400 tons, even at £3 per ton, can be raised on 92 acres, the crop must ultimately entail loss, which the Balance-sheet will not be able to conceal.

You sneer at Mr Gibson of Woolmet's potato cultivation. Why he, as you yourself stated the case, after allowing for manures, seed, and rent, left himself a profit of £15 on 50 acres of potatoes; while at Auchness, on 92 acres, as above shown, the profit, after allowing for manures, seed, and rent, is £281, 4s. *less than nothing*! Moreover, you keep out of sight that, on the four-course rotation of farming, which Mr Gibson must follow in the neighbourhood of a large town, it is not alone to the profit from the very expensively manured green crop of the first year that the farmer looks alone for a return of his outlay, but chiefly to that from the produce of the three succeeding years, which can be raised after the preparation the land has undergone for the green crop, without farther manuring. You are very violent about Mr Gibson's growing beans. Had you examined Mr Gibson's statements carefully, you would have perceived that the difference in the result, consequent on his substituting 25 acres of beans and turnips for the same quantity of land in potatoes, is only £31, 17s. 6d., instead of the much larger sum which you mention. Did you ever see Mr Gibson's farm of Woolmet? I have, and beg to inform you that I know no better specimen of well manured and highly cultivated land in the county of Mid-Lothian. There is no farmer in Scotland who has received so many prizes for the finest specimens of seed-corn of all kinds, from the Highland and other agricultural societies, as Mr Gibson. This is the gentleman whose farming you ignorantly sneer at.

But you are ready to abandon the peculiar position that you had taken up in reference to the exorbitant cultivation of the potato, and to meet your opponents upon their own ground, as you believe. "Suppose, however," you say, "that nature had, (as you asserted,) annihilated the potato, would Mr M'Culloch not be able to draw any other kind of produce from his 90 acres of highly manured land?" (p. 7.) Why, certainly not, in the same year. Had nature annihilated the potato at Auchness in 1849, Mr M'Culloch would have lost, by his own calculation, £1200, and could have had no other crop—unless, indeed, there be two summers at Auchness within the year. "Had these 90 acres been sown with wheat, they would, at Mr Stephens' own estimate, have produced no less than £810." Mr Stephens did not meditate growing wheat on the moss. Do you mean to say that you can grow wheat on the moss, and profitably, year after year in succession, as was

done with the potatoes? But suppose the 90 acres in wheat—that, added to the 55 acres already in wheat, would make 145 acres in wheat on a farm of 260 acres; and this must continue, if there is anything in your theory, and if your annual profits are to be maintained. If these positions you do not mean to maintain, your case falls to pieces. In the mean time it is a mere hypothesis, untried and unproved; and all agricultural experience and science, as far as known, compels us to believe that it would turn out a total failure. But, admitting the hypothesis, still the tenant's profits (seed deducted) would be reduced from £718, 6s., to £328, 6s. You propose another suggestion, however—to allocate the 90 acres partly to an extension of green crop, and partly to an increased breadth of wheat. Will turnips and clover grow, year after year successively, on the moss? This is another hypothesis about as visionary as the preceding. But allow 45 acres of the 90 on turnips and grass for house-feeding, at your nett profit of £6, 11s. 6d. per acre, (p. 12,) this will give £295, 17s. 6d.; and the other 45 acres in wheat, at 38 bushels per acre, and at 5s. per bushel, (*your own quantity and price*,) and, seed deducted, they give £393, 15s., being, *in cumulo*, £689, 12s. 6d.—*i. e.* less than the profit of the potatoes by £510, 7s. 6d., and bringing down the tenant's remuneration from £718, 6s. to £207, 18s. 6d. But this is very far from exhibiting the realities of the position which you have ventured to take up. You assume 5s. per bushel as the price of the wheat. The Wigtonshire fiars, as lately struck, make wheat only 4s. 4d. per bushel. To that price you cannot object. You court a comparison with Messrs Watson and Dudgeon, and in that case you will allow us to raise the rent of Auchness to 32s. per acre, (the rent given in their statistics,) more especially as you contend that it is now worth £2 per acre, (p. 41, 4th edit.) Upon these equitable premises, let us see how the Auchness balance-sheet for crop 1849 will stand.

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	Bushels.				
55 acres wheat, 38 bushels per acre,	2090				
Off seed,	168				
	1922	at 4s. 4d.	£416	8	8
45 acres wheat, additional,	1710				
Off seed,	135				
	1575	at 4s. 4d.	341	5	0
45 acres additional green crop, at £6, 11s. 6d. nett profit,			295	17	6
1 acre Italian ryegrass, per balance-sheet,			5	0	0
90 acres green crop, per balance-sheet,			884	6	0
Income,			£1942	17	2
Expenditure, as per balance-sheet,			1851	10	0
Income at present rent,			91	7	2
But a rent of 32s. per acre adds to the expenditure,			156	0	0
Tenant's loss,			£64	12	10

But even yet we are allowing you advantages which are inadmissible. The supposititious price put upon the cattle, so far beyond the current profit, ought to be largely reduced, and an average of 38 bushels wheat over 100 acres, a portion of these being moss, is certainly much too high. Nevertheless, giving you the benefit of these unusual demands, and the advantages of a superior climate, admirable accommodation, and an annual bonus of 500 loads of sea-weed, it appears, that when your new mode of farming Auchness (the potato being abandoned) is put to the test, that instead of having a remuneration of £718, 6s., Mr M'Culloch loses £64, 12s. 10d. Shuffle the land as you please—crop it as you please—speculate as wildly as you please on the patience and powers of the soil, and grant the most perfect success to attend your speculations, yet it is as certain as arithmetic can make it, that, the moment you depart from the potato culture, the pecuniary marvels at Auchness wholly vanish. It was rash to throw down the gauntlet as you have done. You ought to have "stuck to your text," (the potato,)—as long as the text will stick to you. According to your new mode of arranging the culture at Auchness, there must annually, on a farm of 260 acres, be 100 acres wheat, and 110 acres green crop. How long the land will endure this remains to be proved. I have not a shadow of a doubt that not very many years would elapse before the reduced quantity of wheat per acre, and the reduced value of the turnip crop, would place the factor at Auchness in a worse category than Messrs Watson and Dudgeon; and that he would awake to the conviction that, as he has found there is something in the potato rot, so there may be something, too, in a rotation of crops.

Still, upon your new hypothesis, at the present rent, there would be a margin of profit. Let us examine into this matter somewhat more narrowly. "Deducting Mr M'Culloch's 92 acres of potatoes, 55 acres of wheat, and 22 acres of oats, we have 91 acres left; 50 of which are in turnips, and 41 in clover and grass. The nett produce yielded by the stock fed on these 91 acres, (besides the keep of the farm-horses,) this very year, in the midst of all this depression, will not be less (after deducting purchased food) than £600, which is equal to £6, 11s. 6d. an acre, besides the valuable stock of manure which has, at the same time, been accumulated," (p. 12.) In this statement there are sundry slips of the memory. If the keep of the horses at Auchness consisted solely of turnips and the succulent clover, as you seem to say, they must be peculiarly constituted animals, and endowed with most singular peristaltic powers. On such liquescent diet they might, perhaps, at one and the same time, work their work, and thoroughly manure the fields. There would be some difficulty in so timing the conjoined operations, one would think, as to avoid waste as well as danger. Mr Huxtable's pigs, I fancy, would be pleasant and savoury

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company compared to the Auchness horses. However, you forget that, by the 17th January last, these horses had consumed 1100 bushels of oats, and that £105 worth more of oats had been bought to supply their wants, and those of the servants. (See Auchness Balance-sheet, pp. 46, 47.) Moreover, the horses must surely have been allowed the larger proportion of the oat-straw, (there is no hay,) if not the whole of it. The feeding-stock had the whole straw and chaff grown upon the farm, with the exception of what fell to the share of the horses: and thus £600 *was not* the nett produce of these 91 acres of green crop, but along with that of the greater part of the fodder grown upon the farm. Again, you deduct "the purchased food;" but why not deduct the purchased manures, before you speak of "the nett produce yielded by the stock?" Still, with these qualifications, £6, 11s. 6d. per acre, for the green crop and fodder, is a remarkable profit; so remarkable for 1849-50, in my estimation, as to be unparalleled. Let us look at the memorable Balance-sheet for a little: 44 cattle bought in June are sold out at £5, 5s. of an advance per head; 208 wethers are sold at 9s. per head advance;—all this before 17th January last. We are not told what the animals were bought in at. We are not told what they brought per stone. Mystery envelops the whole transaction, and we are left to grope and guess at the mode in which this remarkable result was arrived at. An average of £5, 5s. per head upon 44 cattle, and of 9s. per head upon 208 wethers, is so extraordinary a profit in these times, that I doubt if two other agriculturists in the island could record a similar experience. The fact is, that everywhere the elements of incredibility are apparent on this part of the Auchness Balance-sheet. None would question it more lustily than Mr Mechi. Bullocks which cost him £249 gave him a profit of £37, and sheep which cost him £332 a profit of £95, during the past season! No wonder that he describes bullocks as "ungrateful fellows;" and that in spite of Porcius and his Attic salt he is in love with the Rector's pigs. But indeed Mechi seems to differ with you *toto cælo*. So far from advocating, along with you, a more extensive cultivation of green crops, he is "quite satisfied that they must be made secondary and subservient to the larger consumption of corn or cake."—(See his live-stock account for 1849, of 2d Feb. in *Gardeners' Chronicle*.) How are such "discordant utterances" to be reconciled? Methinks you high-farming gentlemen should agree more nearly with one another, before you dictate so dogmatically to others. Certain it is that the result at Auchness could not arise from the exquisite quality of the animals; for it is demonstrable that oxen and wethers, as fine and fat as any ever fed there, or as ever were led to the shambles, have this season produced to their owners no such profit. Had 8 or 10 of the 44 cattle brought such a profit, the thing would have been intelligible. It is the immense profit per head, over such a lot of cattle and sheep, that has excited the universal scepticism. But if we remember that these 44 cattle may have been fed during a period of seven months, then the profit per head is more intelligible. But if so, of how many months does the agricultural year at Auchness consist? Looking at the two Balance-sheets rendered, they seem to run into one another in an inextricable fashion; and I suspect that, in a cycle of three or four years, one year with its profits will have disappeared and been absorbed. If this does not explain the mystery, we must suppose that the stock was bought in at an unusually favourable rate, and that they were sold out fat, at a larger sum per stone than any other feeder has got. This would indicate that the factor at Auchness is a market-man of unrivalled dexterity—the luckiest wight in driving a bargain that ever handled *nowt*. In fact, his good luck here seems as singular as it was in the matter of the moss and its potatoes. But what has this to do with high farming? Is the success of agriculture to depend upon happy accidents, and the possession of a genius for marketing operations unrivalled and unapproachable?

But something more astonishing remains. Look at this item of income,—"86 cattle *in course of feeding*, at £5, 5s. per head advance." The cattle are not fed—they are in course of feeding. They are not sold—no price has been offered for them. They may be "decimated" by the murrain; prices may fall—they have fallen; the factor's good luck as a seller may leave him; but the sanguine Mr M'Culloch has resolved that the profit per head shall be £5, 5s., and down he puts to the income side of the balance-sheet the neat aditament of £451, 10s. He has 400 tons of potatoes; they may perish in the pits, as in many places they are doing. It matters not. Mr M'Culloch has made up his mind that they are worth £3 per ton, and he transfers to his profits, as received, the sum of £1200. We wonder if the factor's books are kept in the same fashion as the farm books? If so, they must contain some pleasant entries—such as, A. B.'s rent, £1200—not paid—intended to be paid—gave him a discharge in full. Why, the balance-sheet at Auchness is *avowedly supposititious*—a magnificent Californian fiction. Mr M'Culloch seems one of those blessed visionaries who riot in the prospect of profits to be realised, and whose strong imagination gives existence and reality to the possibilities of ideal gain. Upon the authority of its framer, we see now that the Auchness balance-sheet is professedly pictorial and factitious; and it is upon this stable foundation that the farmers of Britain are asked to invest more capital in their business, and to practise the Auchness mode of husbandry. Are you and Mr M'Culloch in earnest? I can scarcely believe it. Cicero tells us that one augur meeting another could scarcely help smiling; and one can scarcely help thinking that you and Mr M'Culloch must have many a quiet laugh at the boundless gullibility of the Free-trade press and the Free-trade proprietors, swallowing your high farming as the substitute for Protection, and the remedy for the sufferings entailed on the kingdom by Free-trade legislation.

You tell us, however, that you have "plenty more" of as profitable instances of high farming, "for the instruction of Messrs Dudgeon and Watson, and the edification of the author of the *Book of the Farm*. From Ireland even, I could instance a small farm within my own knowledge, where, by the practice of house-feeding, an annual return, in dairy produce, of at least £400 is obtained from less than 60 imperial acres;" (p. 11.) When, in your first pamphlet, (see prefatory note, fifth edition,) you wrote that you had selected for exhibition a single example in the case of Auchness,

implying that you had many more such cases to pick and choose from, I confess that I felt, at the time, that the statement was disingenuous. I utterly deny that you can produce one other case similar to Auchness, and that can parallel it in its advantages and in its profits, unless, indeed its balance-sheet is framed after the Auchness model. If you have plenty more such cases, why not mention them? Why keep them secret—a *terra incognita*—when the agricultural world is panting for information? You are like the cruel alchemist who discovered the philosopher's stone, but who, in sulky obstinacy, resolved to die without divulging the invaluable secret, and did so accordingly. Your present vaunt, I am inclined to look upon as idle braggadocio. In your gallop through Ireland, a case is reported to you of £400 being obtained from less than 60 acres in dairy produce. Are you quite sure that this was not a bit of blarney dropped into your credulous ear? It is not in the nature of an Irishman to refrain from "humbugging a Saxon bosthoon;" and that you were sometimes crammed and humbugged by the "wild Irish," is undeniable. (See *Dublin Evening Mail* of 6th February last.) £400 was the annual return: you do not tell us what was the annual expenditure. The profit, whatever it might be, was only for one year. And it is by such isolated, unsupported, and apocryphal illustrations, that you now vindicate your high farming so called! Individual instances of extraordinary profit are within the knowledge of every farmer. In two several cases, I have known £100 sterling being got for one acre of carrots. The 260 acres at Auchness, at this rate, would give a grand annual result of £26,000. There is a balance-sheet for you!—there is a brave speculation. Try it, and never fear the worm. 462

In the mean time, there is only the one solitary case of Auchness which you have exhibited, and on this narrow basis you build your theory, and denounce all who question its authenticity, and who, if accepted as given, deny its fitness for universal adoption. You have "plenty more," you say, but, with a relentless taciturnity, you decline to tell us where they are to be found. And thus you fancy that you have met and overthrown the agricultural statistics published by *Blackwood* in January last. You misunderstand or misrepresent the value of these statistics. *Blackwood's* statistics are applicable to the farming of the districts to which they severally refer, and not for one, but for the average of years of an ordinary lease, and *under existing covenants*. If they had been the literal results and experience of the reporters on their own farms, as you, with reckless inattention, persist in representing them all to be, they would have been of little value, and they never could have been attested as they have been; and, on the other hand, they would have possessed as little value had they not been drawn up from the results of their own experience and practical knowledge. They have all the force of those tabular accounts of sales which mercantile men are in the habit of transmitting to their correspondents—containing not the exact dealings of any one merchant, which would be in a great measure useless, but communicating the actual state of the existing market. The tables in *Blackwood* were not intended to exhibit generally the highest ascertained capabilities of the best qualities of the soil, not to depict "the possible of agricultural development;" but to show how much agricultural knowledge, capital, and skill had actually accomplished on average soils, in an average of years. In this very fact consisted the value of their results: otherwise, they never could have proved the effects of Free Trade on Scottish agriculture generally. And then, the respective reports in *Blackwood* are examined by others in the same districts. The examinators—gentlemen of known capacity and undoubted honour—having tested the reports by their own knowledge and experience, certify them as correct. We need not be surprised at the vast importance which has been attached to *Blackwood's* statistics, and at the countless and futile attempts which have been made, by those hostile to the interests of British agriculture, to contradict and deny their accuracy. How very different is your case! You give a solitary instance of a farm farmed by the factor of the estate, under a covenant so unboundedly liberal that it leaves the tenant to do anything he pleases, if he pays a moderate, in fact, a low rent for the ground. The lease was probably drawn by the factor himself; and, if it were not, the farmer could not wish it more liberal and indulgent. The relative position of the parties throws suspicion and doubt upon the whole case. Every one feels this. When the proprietor expended so large a sum of money in improving the farm of Auchness—receiving no rise of rent, but bare interest for his outlay—did he not mean to make it a suitable residence for his factor, and to constitute it a kind of experimental farm in the district? In the liberal covenant, is the factor's remuneration in part not included? Is the Auchness liberal covenant the exception, and not the rule, amongst the tenant-farmers of Wigtonshire? And then, while many have borne their testimony to the excellence of the crops, and to the management of the stock, not one has certiorated the Auchness balance-sheet, but yourself. In this branch of the case you are a *testis singularis*. You seem to hint that Mr Stephens might certify to your competency as a witness. But that gentleman maintains an ominous silence. The whole rests upon your *ipse dixit*. And when the inquirer drops a gentle surmise, you turn round in a rage, and storm and stamp, proclaiming, at the top of your voice, "I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark."

With regard to *Blackwood's* statistics, you again and again admit their unchallengeable correctness. Their "facts," you say, "are too well vouched to be disputed; they will be admitted at once by any candid mind," (p. 5.) If it be so, then, in their position, the conclusion from the facts is inevitable. When you ask them to meet the altered times by growing wheat every year on the same ground—or, at least, biennially, over nearly the half of their farm—and by extending their quantity of green crop, and feeding off six times the quantity of stock, their answer is, that they cannot and dare not. The ordinary conditions of a lease, and the principles of any known system of rotation, are set at utter defiance at Auchness. When the moss sickens of the perpetual potato, its rebellion is punished by scarification. It is skinned of its cuticle to the depth of "a few inches," which is transported to the red-land fields, (p. 7, first pamph.) If it does not mend its manners, the invaluable moss will, after a period, disappear bodily, and the rent of the generous Col. 463

M'Douall will be left to repose on the "lower silurian formation."

Blackwood's farmers are tied up by leases which they dare not violate—under penalties which the Auchness profits would not cover—and they have no accommodation for feeding the enormous quantity of stock which you prescribe for them. But if they could farm their land as they please, I question much if they would think it expedient to adopt the incessant cropping and the excessive stirring and stimulating of the soil by enormous and rapidly renewed doses of manure, as exemplified at Auchness. This system does admirably *for a few years* on untried soil, having all its rude virgin vigour in it, like the Auchness farm, when it came into the hands of Mr M'Culloch. But, after a certain time, the infallible result, as far as the cereals are concerned, is a mass of rank vegetation and miserable grain, in respect both of quantity and weight. When the ultimate profits of the nineteen years' lease are regarded, and the desire to grow for a series of years true, and, at the same time, prolific corn crops is entertained, a prudent and skilful agriculturist may well pause before he plunges into the Auchness experiment. Mr M'Culloch may find, ere long, that his vexed and wearied land will demand more rest and repose than Mr Caird, by his further illustrations of high farming, would give it.

Nor is this all. Messrs Watson and Dudgeon, unlike Mr M'Culloch, are breeders of stock as well as feeders. Mr Watson, particularly, is one of the most eminent breeders in the kingdom. Although you may never have heard of them, his polled Angusshire cattle are somewhat celebrated. They have excited universal admiration over all the island, on the pastures at Windsor Castle, in Smithfield, and in the show-yards of the Highland and Agricultural Society. Most probably Mr Watson, like most men who have devoted much money and time to the improvement of our various breeds of stock, may not have profited largely by his enterprise: but who, yourself excepted, can doubt that he has, in this department, conferred more important benefits on the agriculture of the kingdom than a hundred such experiments as the Auchness potato culture can possibly effect? But if there is a breeding stock upon a farm, then the stock-feeding system, to the extent that is carried on at Auchness, is impossible. The young stock which are to be bred from, if they are to have healthy and sound constitutions, must be allowed the range of the open field for many months in the year. You boast of the stock fed at Auchness; I venture to say that more admirable specimens of cattle and sheep can be produced at Keillor or Spylaw—animals of more exquisite symmetry, size, and quality—than Mr M'Culloch ever has exhibited, or ever will exhibit, if he adheres to his present system. Cattle must be bred by some other party, or the Auchness feeding-system must stop for want of animals. Mr M'Culloch subsists upon the breeders of the country. He requires several farms, of the same extent as his own, to supply him with animals. It is highly unwise of you to urge upon this class the adoption of a different system, for, without their aid, there would be empty stalls at Auchness.

But in the production of grain you try to demonstrate that Messrs Watson, Dudgeon, and Gibson have sadly degenerated from their predecessors. In proof of this, you adduce the evidence of Messrs Brodie, East-Lothian, and Turnbull, South Belton, Dunbar, as given before a committee of the House of Commons, and quoted in the *Farmer's Magazine* for 1814. You have given, however, a partial and one-sided sample of the evidence taken by this Parliamentary Committee. There are five gentlemen who gave evidence regarding the average produce of wheat per acre, two of whom only depone to the quantities of oats and barley grown per acre. It is in the article of wheat alone that the evidence can enable us satisfactorily to ascertain whether, since 1814, there has been an agricultural progress or an agricultural declension. Five of the agricultural tables in *Blackwood* state the average produce of wheat. Wheat is the great staple article of the nation's farinaceous food—that grain upon which the Free-traders repose all their calculations, and to the selection of which you cannot object, as it is the only grain you grow at Auchness for the people. Well, let us put the five agriculturists quoted by *Blackwood* in juxtaposition with the five agriculturists whose evidence appears in the Parliamentary Report of 26th July 1814.

1814.

	Bushels Wheat per Acre.
Mr E. Wakefield, Devonshire, improved husbandry,	24
Mr J. Bennet, Wiltshire, do.,	24
Mr J. Bailey, Northumberland, rent £2 per acre,	30
Mr Brodie, East-Lothian,	32
Mr Turnbull, do.,	30
Produce of five acres,	140
On an average of years previous to 1848.	
Mr Watson, *Forfarshire*,	32
Mr Dudgeon, *Roxburghshire*,	33
Mr Roberton, do.,	33
Mr Sadler, Mid-Lothian,	32
Mr Gibson, do.,	32
	162
	140
	22

That is, the farmers quoted by *Blackwood* have on an average of good and bad years, on average land, been growing nearly 4½ bushels wheat more per acre, than the farmers, on the most fertile soils in the country, quoted in the Parliamentary Report of 1814. It is quite true that Messrs Brodie and Turnbull grow more oats and barley per acre than Messrs Watson and Dudgeon, on their average of years; and, you might have added, more than Mr M'Culloch did with his boasted high farming in the abundant crop of 1849. You say that the figures of Messrs Brodie and Turnbull give "their average produce for a series of years, and elaborate extracts from their books are adduced to corroborate them," (p. 14.) Now, in giving his evidence, Mr Brodie pointedly states that he had taken his farm "two years ago;" and therefore it could not be "for a series of years" that he gave the average produce of his farms. Mr Brodie *produced no extracts from his books*, and altogether you misstate his case. Mr Turnbull's evidence is more copious. To the question—"What is your course of cropping?" his answer is—"My heavy land in a rotation of six—remainder, of about 80 acres, is in a rotation of four; 334 acres are under the plough; the remainder (20 acres) always in grass." And he describes his six-shift course, which applies to 250 acres of the whole arable land, to be—"Fallow, wheat, grass, oats, beans, and wheat." Mr Turnbull did grow more corn crops than Messrs Watson and Dudgeon; but you forget to tell your reader that, during your "cycle of thirty years," he had three-fourths of his farm, for five several years, in fallow, absolutely barren, and not producing a mouthful of bread or anything else, for the people. If the loss incurred during these five years of bare fallow is considered, and if regard is had not only to cereal produce, but to the cattle grown and fed on their pasturage, it may be safely concluded that Messrs Watson and Dudgeon are at least as large benefactors, in supplying food to the people from inferior soils, as Messrs Brodie and Turnbull were, on the very best lands in Scotland. You seem to fancy, because Mr Brodie valued his clover at £6, 6s. per acre, and his turnips at from £8 to £10 per acre, that, in the department of stock, he greatly excelled Messrs Watson and Dudgeon. You forget, again, to tell your reader that it was the *Scotch acre* that Mr Brodie spoke of: was this accident or ignorance? If this error is corrected, and if the exorbitant prices of butcher-meat at the period referred to are remembered, the value of the green crop, as assumed by Mr Brodie, will surprise no one.

Your whole case is based upon a garbled and partial collation of the evidence taken by Parliament; and independently of this, you totally misconceive and misinterpret the case, as quoted by you. The two farms referred to by you are about the very best in North Britain. Nor is this all: they were among the earliest and oldest cultivated soils in Scotland, according to the improved methods of husbandry then in practice. Previous to 1814, they were let at three times the rent of Keillor or Spylaw. There is a point beyond which you cannot raise the productiveness of the soil—when it revolts, and visits your avarice with sharp reprisals. This you admit in your first pamphlet, (p. 17.) The real question is this, had not Messrs Brodie and Turnbull raised the productive powers of their farms nearly or altogether to the maximum of the soil's fertility?—or, as you say, could they have insured a larger bulk of crop without the danger of lodging it? In the articles of barley and oats, most unquestionably they could not. Mr Brodie grew 48 bushels barley, and 57 bushels oats, per imperial acre; and Mr Turnbull 45 bushels barley, and 54 bushels oats, per imperial acre. On the very best soils, and by any kind of culture, and with as large an application of manure as you please, I defy you to grow, on an average of years, larger quantities than these.

Look now at the farms with which you compare Messrs Brodie's and Turnbull's. Take Spylaw. Previous to 1814, that farm was well-nigh in a state of primitive sterility: although ploughed, it was a quagmire; and the agriculture was what you poetically call according to "nature, which has no rotation of crops." Mr Dudgeon entered on the farm in 1824; and since that time he has doubled the produce of the grain, and quadrupled the quantity of the stock. Call you this nothing, young man!—nothing in the way of providing food for the million? Since 1814 or 1824, has the produce of grain been doubled, and the quantity of stock quadrupled, on the farms of Messrs Brodie and Turnbull? Nay, has there been any perceptible advance in the quantity of grain grown? Has the produce of the grain not remained stationary—and not from any want of skill or enterprise upon the part of the farmer, but simply because the soil, previous to 1814, had about reached the limit of its productiveness? By an enormous outlay, and by admirable skill and management, Mr Dudgeon has thus raised the productive powers of a soil naturally of a very inferior description—and not in abundant seasons, but on an average of years—up very nearly to the highest mark of the best land in the kingdom previous to 1814. The very same, I have no doubt, is the history of the agricultural progress that has taken place upon Mr Watson's farm; and, on the question of agricultural progress generally, the evidence, fortunately, is accessible to all inquirers. The volume of the *Farmer's Magazine* for 1814, which you refer to, might have instructed you on this subject. An apparently well-qualified writer in that volume, states "22½ bushels wheat per acre as a high enough average for clay land in the best cultivated counties of Scotland," (p. 151.)

Your contrasting two of the choicest farms in all Scotland with the average soil of Forfarshire and Roxburghshire, indicates a want of fairness, and destroys the value of your criterion. Intending to depreciate, you unwittingly have pronounced a panegyric on the farming of Messrs Watson and Dudgeon. You have the hardihood to say, "that the annual produce reaped by Messrs Watson and Dudgeon has actually fallen off nearly a third from what it was in the days of their grandfathers!" This is a ridiculous blunder, and we have seen that your whole speculation on this subject is constructed on a series of wild errors, and illustrated by a Gothic ignorance of the past history of Scotch husbandry. Your poor taunt recoils upon yourself.

In summing up results, you tell us "that Mr Watson, at present prices, derives a gross return of £920 from 340 acres under wheat, grass, and turnips. Mr Dudgeon has £1087, 10s. from 360 acres under the same crops. And Mr M'Culloch has £1369, 16s. from 146 acres," (p. 17.) Now, supposing the hypothetical balance-sheet is to be received into court, there yet lurks under this summary a gross misstatement. Mr M'Culloch had no such return from his wheat, grass, and turnips on the 146 acres: £284 was expended for purchased food for the stock, and this contributed largely to the result, but reduces the return from the 146 acres to £1065, 16s. As well might the distiller who rents 40 acres, but who annually fattens hundreds of cattle upon the feeding stuffs furnished by his distillery, put down the immense sum of profit received from his cattle, as the return from the portion of the 40 acres under wheat, grass, and turnips. The error may be unintentional, but a more loose or fallacious statement of the fact is scarcely conceivable. You are guilty of a similar dereliction in p. 43, where you say that Mr Christopher, "from 270 acres under grass and green crops, derived under Protection a return in money of £710, much less than Mr M'Culloch's return under Free Trade from 91 acres of grass and green crop." In fact, Mr M'Culloch's return from the 91 acres *may* be, (for it is not realised,) £600.

In this veracious fashion you illustrate the "results of high farming under Free Trade, and ordinary farming under Protection." A most extraordinary simpleton will he be who receives without hesitation the Auchness balance-sheet, and your rose-coloured illustrations of high farming. "What would have been the position," you ask, "of the country, if the food of the people had depended exclusively on such exertions as those of Messrs Dudgeon, Watson, and Low? By their rules, the half of the population ought to have been starved long ago; and if the produce of the country has in any degree kept pace with the increase of its population, we are not indebted for it to them," (p. 16.) To whom, then, are you indebted? Not to the Auchness husbandry, which is a prodigy of yesterday's growth—not to Mr M'Culloch and his attendant satellite; for it is only six months since these luminaries appeared in the western hemisphere. You are indebted, and could be indebted, for the result, to no other parties but *Blackwood's* farmers and their contemporaries. The people ought to have been starved, you say; yes, but they have not been starved, and that fact demonstrates the falsehood of your premises, and renders their refutation unnecessary.

But, not content with thus stultifying your own allegation, you deliver yourself a few pages after, in a happy forgetfulness of what you had just written, in the following terms,—"Here, then, were some remarkable phenomena. A population doubled, the demand for food vastly increased, the foreigner practically excluded, and yet a steady fall in the price of our produce. How is this explained?" (p. 23.) Most inexplicable phenomena, indeed! Scottish farmers of the present generation growing a third less food than their grandfathers, (p. 15;) and yet, with a doubled population, there is an abundance of home-grown food, and a "steady fall in the price of our agricultural produce," (p. 23.) You proceed then manfully to refute yourself, to demolish your own theory, and to rebut and expose what you had written a few pages before; and all this you accomplish with a very creditable success. This proceeding on your part was in the highest degree kind, clever, and considerate. There can be no doubt, as you show, (p. 24,) that it has been in consequence of the progressive improvement in domestic agriculture, that the supply of food has kept pace with the increasing population; and there can be no doubt that this would have continued to be the case, without making us dependent on foreigners for our daily bread, had not Free-trade legislation laid a fatal arrestment on the progress of British agriculture.

You talk wisely on the advantages attending the introduction of bones and guano, and contemptuously of Messrs Watson and Dudgeon, as adhering slavishly to some obsolete system of farming, "stereotyped for them years ago in the books of Professor Low or Mr Stephens." You write this in great ignorance, or in unhappy perversity of temper. Nearly thirty years ago, Mr Watson erected costly machinery for crushing bones, and was at great trouble and expense in testing their value as a manure, and recommending them to his brother farmers; and, in appreciation of his services, they presented him with a valuable piece of plate. (See *Journal of Agriculture*.) Mr Dudgeon was the very first to report practically to the Highland and Agricultural Society, in 1842, upon the value of guano as applied to the turnip crop, and in the following year had nearly 100 acres of this crop manured with guano, when otherwise the whole breadth of turnips, in the county of Roxburgh, raised with this manure did not reach to this extent. In fact, the very parties whom you affect to sneer at, and their compeers, are the very parties who have raised the character of Scottish farming, and rendered it famous over the world. It is no common trial of the patience to hear them reviled by an inexperienced adventurer, whom the ferment of the times has thrown upon the surface of society.

You disparage the amount expended by *Blackwood's* farmers on labour, but you forget that they give it as an average expenditure over a series of years, and not for a year or two during the course of expensive improvements; and you expatiate on the tendency of the high farming at Auchness to give employment to an increasing population; and yet you tell us that, at Auchness, "machinery has been applied to every purpose in which labour can be economised about the steading," (p. 11.) The tendency to economise manual labour, and the tendency to increase employment for the agricultural labourers, seem somewhat contradictory and self-destructive features in the Auchness system.

From the account which you have given in your first pamphlet, of the agricultural condition of Auchness when it first fell into the hands of Mr M'Culloch, it appears to have been in a state of the most primitive and unparalleled barbarity. Receiving unwonted encouragement from the

proprietor, he commenced a process of vigorous improvement, which he is accomplishing regardless of expense. By and by he will have achieved his object, and the outlay will be greatly diminished. We are not left to conjecture on this subject, for, in a note appended to his balance-sheet, Mr M'Culloch tells us, that, "next year the large sum for purchased manures will be reduced at least one-half;" and that he "will be able, in a year or two, to dispense altogether with the expenditure for purchased manures." The plain truth seems to be, that Mr M'Culloch is in course of doing what *Blackwood's* farmers, Mr Dudgeon, and thousands of other farmers, have already done. What is the meaning, then, of all this ridiculous rant about the high farming at Auchness? If, at the end of twenty years, Mr M'Culloch can grow the crops which *Blackwood's* farmers are now growing, and gets his facts attested as they have got theirs, it will prove very creditable management.

You ask what *Blackwood's* farmers have done to multiply bread-stuffs for a growing population? That is a most singular question for the eulogist of the Auchness potato-husbandry to have hazarded. Towards the production of cereals there are only 55 acres set apart at Auchness—a smaller proportion than, perhaps, on any farm of similar extent and soil in the kingdom. The potato is the sheet-anchor of your wealth, and the staple food you grow for the people; and to this fickle root you devote more than a third of the whole farm. And yet is not the potato, as the main source of a people's food, which your system makes it, the very root of physical degradation, and the very type of moral wretchedness? Was not the excessive cultivation of the potato the main cause of Ireland's misery, and of the famine that desolated her shores? And was not the lesson derived by every thoughtful man, from the dread visitation, a conviction of the folly and peril of making this precarious root the mainstay of a people's food? and was not the hope cherished that the Great Ruler, whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, might over-rule the pestilence 468
and the famine to advance the improvement of Irish husbandry, and the comfort of the Irish people? But, in infatuated defiance of the warnings of Providence, and the stern lessons proclaimed by famine, you hold up, as a model for British farmers, a system of agriculture in which the most prominent feature is an excessive cultivation of the potato. Had British farmers, the growers of the nation's food, persisted after 1846, and in face of Parliamentary instructions, in growing the potato—not to the extent grown at Auchness, but to the extent to which they themselves grew it formerly—they would have deserved to have been cognosced and sent to Bedlam. Your agricultural economy is undeniably, in this respect, retrogressive; and its tendency, if generally adopted, is to plunge our country into the abyss of Irish misery. And yet you write magniloquently about the production of bread-stuffs and food for the people! You wonder that Mr Gibson of Woolmet, "commanding a metropolitan market, so little appreciates the advantages and necessities of his position that, instead of raising vegetable produce for that market," he persists in growing grain. Your wonder is the daughter of ignorance. You seem not to be aware of what is notorious, that there is already more ground cultivated by market-gardeners than is required to supply the citizens of Edinburgh. No class of the community feel the effects of Free Trade more than they do, as their early crops, on which they principally relied, are entirely forestalled by supplies from Hamburg, Rotterdam, and other foreign ports. Forgetting your advocacy of "bread-stuffs," you are high in your praises of "edible roots;" and vegetable productions must now, it appears, be the source of agricultural prosperity. Where could a market be found for table roots, if generally cultivated by the farmers of the kingdom? Man does not belong to the herbivorous tribes. Cabbages and colewort won't sustain him. Bread, to him, is the staff of life. Roots are a windy, watery diet; they breed melancholy and send vapoury fumes to the brain. We must have "cakes and ale" in spite of you.

You have favoured the world, in your present pamphlet, with some singularly original views on the subject of rent, which throw a flood of light on your theory of high farming and the liberal covenant, and which I think dissipate all the mystery and difficulty in which otherwise you had left these subjects surrounded. *Blackwood's* farmers, you say, "give us estimates of what they lose by Free Trade; and it is a remarkable circumstance that, in every case, the estimated loss might be converted into a profit, simply by changing the figure which they put down for rent!" (p. 28, 29.) Most notable discovery! Instead of being 32s. per acre, had Messrs Watson and Dudgeon's rent been 12s. or 2s. per acre, all would be right, says the new agricultural oracle. Who ever doubted this? And so, after much idle chaffering, and most wearisome circumlocution, the truth at last leaps to the light—the loss which the farmer incurs by Free Trade is to be converted into a profit simply by *changing the figure of the rent*. The idea is admirable, and it is enunciated with exquisite coolness; and it possesses the sublime simplicity that distinguishes all the happy discoveries of genius. Lower the rent—bring it down to zero, if need be—and thus convert the tenant's loss by Free Trade into a profit. Most preposterous is it for the nation to be pestered with these Protection meetings, and to be disturbed by the agricultural depression, with so ready a remedy lying at the door. Agricultural distress flies the kingdom, simply by changing the figure of the rent. When once divulged, we wonder that we did not ourselves discover the grand truth. I am not exaggerating your prescription for agricultural difficulty—nor has it dropped from your pen *per incuriam*—you reiterate the same view in your remarks upon Mr Munro's pamphlet, to indicate the importance you attach to it. Mr Munro, you write, "of course had to use his own discretion only as to the rotation of cropping, and might exterminate every head of game on his estate. He could have reduced the rent to please himself. Yet, possessing all these advantages, Mr Munro was unable to farm at a profit," (p. 31.) Mr Munro had fixed a rent 469
on his land, such as he could have easily got from a competent tenant; but the intervention of Free Trade annihilated his profit. You are astonished at his simplicity. He could reduce his rent to please himself; and, by changing the figure, transmute his loss into a profit. Being both proprietor and tenant, he could play with impunity the game of "change the figures." He never

could lose, for what the laird lost the tenant gained. *Blackwood's* farmers, in their unsophisticated simplicity, never seem to have dreamed of changing the figure. They may have been prevented by qualms of conscience. They may have questioned the morality of the proceeding, or doubted the propriety even of its political economy. 'Tis a pity you did not sooner publish this part of the Auchness specific. It would have saved much profitless discussion. It is by far the most vital element in your liberal covenant, and completes its perfect development. It happily explains and illustrates the Auchness balance-sheet. By this time the proprietors of the kingdom will understand the pleasant position in which you are to put them. With the right of hypothec abrogated, a rotation of crops exploded, and their rent lowered until it meets the depreciated prices, and converts the tenant's loss into profit, they will fall into a very enviable predicament. I sympathise with the Free-trade lairds. Sad and dismal are their meditations, and deep and bitter their murmurs. They say they are betrayed, and that they have reared up and cherished an enemy in their camp.

There is another question, however, which your philosophy does not seem to embrace. You never seem to have inquired whether the immense reduction of rents which must take place to meet the present prices, (which are yet daily falling,) so as to convert the farmer's loss into a profit, is to be a national benefit. It is certain that the reduction of rent requisite to effect your avowed object, must infallibly effect a revolution in the structure of society, and entail upon our country a train of sufferings unheard of and unparalleled. It is most creditable to the discernment and patriotism of your brother farmers, that they reject, as a permanent cure for their difficulties, the lowering of rent, so as to turn their present loss into profit. They know that, over a large proportion of the arable soil of the kingdom, rent cannot so fall without being insufficient to meet the present burdens on land, and the great outlay required to maintain the farm-buildings, and to liquidate the other innumerable demands made on the proprietor of the soil. You call loudly for liberal covenants, for expensive buildings, and for more drainage, and at the very time you are depriving the proprietor of the means, and crippling him in his finances. Falling rents, farmers may well know, are the certain index of a retrograde agriculture; and, whatever you may fancy, you cannot reduce rent to the extent you have now pointed out, without inflicting misery, not only on the tenant-farmers and agricultural labourers, but sooner or later on every class in the community. The certain tendency of your agricultural speculation, and by no long circumduction, is to sink the agriculture of Britain to the condition of Irish husbandry, and to overrun the nation with pauperism. The landed interest will not suffer with impunity; and between it and the moneyed interest an internecine war will ensue. There is a set of pestilent demagogues and pretended patriots, flourishing at this moment in the kingdom, who are busy instilling into the masses the revolutionary idea that the landlord's rent is a robbery of the community, and that it may be dealt with as conveniency requires. In your latest essay you have pandered to this pernicious delusion. I do not blame you for so doing. I believe that you write in a childlike innocence, and with total blindness to the necessary consequences of your own doctrines.

I have been exceedingly edified and amused with the manner in which you have expounded the theory of rotation. "The slavish adoption of fixed rules of rotation are suited only to a comparatively low state of agriculture. Nature has no rotation of crops—the plant bursts from the earth, grows, bears its produce, and drops the matured seed to reproduce itself beside the root of the parent stem. The skilful gardener lays none of his land to rest in grass," (p. 17.) This may be fine writing, but it is unmitigated nonsense. Nature *has* a rotation of crops; and from nature the agriculturist took the hint, and got his teaching. The distribution of that part of the indigenous flora of a country which constitutes its annuals, is ever liable to vary. Nature's annual weeds flourish for a while in the same spot; but, having exhausted the peculiar nutriment in the soil which sustained them, they degenerate and migrate to a fresh locality. The plants which the farmers grow are chiefly annuals. But, in fact, two crops of the same kind of wood on the same soil is not according to the arboriculture which nature teaches. "The plant bursts from the earth, grows, bears its produce, and drops the matured seed to reproduce itself." Well, and what then? Can the farmer take the lesson? Is it not with this very habit of nature that his art must wage an incessant warfare? The skilful gardener has a rotation of crops, although he grows none of the cereal tribes, which especially rejoice in the alternative system of husbandry; and if the skilful gardener does not lay down "his land to rest in grass," his costly substitute is to trench his plot every fourth or fifth year to the depth of three or four feet, and thus to invigorate the wearied soil, by amalgamating it with fresh mould. The exhausted surface, the Auchness experimenter is compelled to remove. It is not very accurate to speak of the farmer "laying his land *to rest* in grass." He puts it under grass as an improving crop, and one which a *system* of agriculture cannot dispense with—a crop, too, which in many situations yields a larger free profit than he could otherwise raise from the land.

I do not remember of ever meeting with more ignorance of botany, vegetable physiology, and horticulture, condensed into a shorter space than you have succeeded in cramming into the few sentences just quoted. But, in a brave contempt of what you had written, you tell us, on the very next page, that you "do not mean to say that the system of rotations has been without its use." And you add, that "the average agriculture of Scotland has undoubtedly been improved by it." And it is with such absurd and solemn see-saw that you enlighten the agricultural world. If a rotation of crops has improved the average agriculture of Scotland, that demonstrates the excellence and necessity of the system. It is average results that anything deserving the name of a system can alone secure. Agricultural reformer as you are, I would respectfully suggest that you must, if you wish to effect any good, legislate for an average measure of agricultural character and skill. The farmers of the kingdom are an immensely numerous body, and you

cannot expect them to be all men of genius. Let your philanthropy prompt you to stoop for a time from your transcendental height, that you may minister to the wants of average humanity.

I am not surprised that you are angry with Peter Plough. This is very excusable. You had said in your first pamphlet, (p. 28,) that it was demonstrable that, if all the arable land in the same parish were cultivated as the Auchness farm was, immense benefits would accrue to the people. Mr Plough's expansive patriotism was not to be limited by the parochial boundaries, and he determined, if possible, to give the benefits of the system to the whole of the kingdom. With this view, he instituted an inquiry, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the Auchness system was capable of general adoption. Nothing could be more fair. You had, in fact, challenged the inquiry, by representing high farming as the substitute for Protection. Peter Plough, by a cogent and crushing demonstration, proved the utter inapplicability of the Auchness system for general adoption. He has impaled you on the horns of a dilemma, and no wonder that you are writhing in anguish. You try to smile, but, alas! it is too evident that your laugh is like that of the third ruffian in the melodrama, when the skeleton is discovered in the closet, and supplies the last link in the chain of circumstantial evidence. Manifestly the salt tears are seen to trickle over your abashed countenance. 471

Peter Plough understated his case. Include Ireland in his calculation, and adopt the more recent statistics of Porter, giving the increase in the mercantile navy, and Mr Plough's demonstration remains intact and impregnable. He had shown that, to apply the Auchness system to British husbandry, thirty-eight millions of additional capital would be required by British farmers, for the feeding stuffs and artificial manures; and he naturally asked where this "sum of money was to be got?" "And pray, good Peter, where is it to go?" you respond. Why, certainly, the first question in order of time and of prudence is, where is the money to be got?—unless, indeed, it be part of your system to make your money go before it be got! When you tell us that every ounce of the feeding stuffs used at Auchness was raised on British soil, you forget and misstate. The lintseed, (p. 21, first pamphlet,) and the oilcake, (p. 23, second pamphlet,) are not of British production. The bruised oats and bean meal for the cattle, and the supplemental quantity of oats for the servants and horses, may be indeed of British production—although not grown on the farm of Auchness. But how long, think you, are farmers to grow these grains at a loss, to benefit the Auchness factor? He is dependent upon others for his supplies of these feeding stuffs.

Peter Plough has, in fact, compelled you to eat your leek, for you now tell us that the high farming at Auchness is, "as an example, to be taken in the spirit more than in the letter." What! have you forgotten that you set it forth "as the Substitute for Protection?" and that, if your language had any meaning, you intimated that its virtue would be equipollent and co-extensive with that of the plundered crutch? And now, forsooth, you veer about, with slippery versatility, and tell us that you are to be "read in the spirit more than in the letter." When such grave interests are at stake, this seems to me intolerable trifling, although no doubt it provides a door of escape for you, whatever disaster may attend the adoption of your expedient. In every such case the model will have been copied with a servility too literal, or a liberality too latitudinarian; and there seems nothing for it but that the bewildered husbandman, before he embarks on the career of high farming, and runs the risk of mistaking the letter for the spirit, shall make a pilgrimage to Baldoon and consult the oracle, and ask the author to interpret his impenetrable text.

Whether it pleases you or not, this question must be agitated and tested, and sifted and probed to the very bottom—namely, Is the mode of farm management pursued by Mr M'Culloch upon Auchness capable of being adopted in the general cultivation of the land of the country? This is the only question at all interesting to the agriculturists of the kingdom—the only question at all germane to their present position. If this is not meant, your high farming is a childish bauble. Its value, not only as a substitute for Protection, but as an instructive lesson in husbandry, must be determined by a correct solution of the preceding query. We find, then, upon a farm of 260 acres, that crops 1848 and 1849 give an average extent of 81 acres under grain, 48 acres in grass, and 131 acres in green crops; and of the latter, 78½ acres are potatoes all to be sold off.

We also find that 130 cattle, and about 190 sheep, are annually fattened upon the farm. The large extent of the green crop, and the quantity of cattle fed, are the salient and prominent features of the system. This you admit, I am therefore taking you in the spirit more than in the letter. Is a system, embracing such a disproportion between its root and grain crops, adapted for extension? Try its effects upon a small scale—extend it over a district of the average extent of Scotch counties, and inquire what would be the result. You will find that there would be a produce of about 301,417 tons of potatoes, 114,845 fat cattle, and 167,788 sheep—a produce more than equivalent to supply every town in Scotland with potatoes and butcher meat. Or, to indulge your parochial partialities, let us inquire what would be the results if *one farm* in *every parish* in the kingdom were farmed according to the Auchness fashion. In England, Wales, and Scotland, there are 11,583 parishes. We would have of "edible roots" *i. e.* potatoes, 4,633,200 472
tons, after allowing an equal quantity to be destroyed by the rot, as apparently happened at Auchness last year. Of wheat, 2,782,816 qrs. Of fat cattle, 1,505,790. Of fat sheep, 2,409,264—and a snug little money profit from hoggets and cows, young horses and ewes, of some ten millions. A small model farm in each parish of the island can supply its present population with beef and potatoes, and leave of the latter a liberal supply to the Rector's "generous pigs." Double our population, and add another model farm to each parish, and the wants of "the million" are forthwith supplied. Avaunt Malthus! all hail, Caird! "A plethora of beef, a plethora of vegetables,"

you facetiously exclaim. You have not considered that there may be a plethora of food, with concomitant destitution, nay starvation, amongst the poor and unemployed. Read the Irish correspondence of the *Morning Chronicle*, and the *Clare Journal* for February, and you will find that the two things actually co-exist at this moment in some parts of Ireland. But the next inquiry is, Would there be a plethora of profit as well as of food? Would the balance-sheet do, and would "change the figure" not be the instant cry? Suppose the potato epidemic to pass away, or allow even the present supplies of that root and of butcher-meat from other sources to be continued, would potatoes bring 30s. per ton, and beef 4d. per lb? It is not in the least degree probable. Is it not certain, too, that there would be such a demand for foreign manures as would raise their price beyond the possibility of profitably using them?

But perhaps this is copying the model too servilely. Well, modify it to such an extent as to preserve in operation the leading principles of the system—which is based upon cattle-feeding and potato culture to an extent wholly out of proportion with the other products of the farm—and the system will still prove self-destructive, inasmuch as its tendency must be to increase the cost of production, and to lower the value of the produce raised. With regard to the cost of production, Table ii. in your "addition" (4th ed. p. 40,) enables us readily to test the question. It appears that Mr M'Culloch's "expenditure per acre for labour, artificial manures, purchased food, and expenses of management," exceeded the average expenditure of Messrs Watson, Dudgeon, and Christopher by £3, 11s. 7¾d. Now you tell us from Porter that, of garden and tillage lands in Great Britain, there are 13,637,320 acres. To bring up these—which, however, include Auchness—to the mark of the Auchness system at a farther expenditure of £3, 11s. 7¾d. per acre, an additional capital of £48,852,857, would be required by British farmers. And this is "High Farming farther illustrated!" and you correct Peter Plough by adding eleven millions to his estimate of the new capital required! I am here stealing a leaf from the book of Peter Plough; but, if you will not allow us to look at your case in this light, it is not worth a moment's notice. If the system cannot be reduced to practice, why tantalise the farmer by bringing the cup to his lips, but denying him the power of slaking his thirst?

You seem to think that you have communicated new and invaluable information to the practical farmer, and you "challenge Mr Stephens, within the whole compass of his two thousand pages of letterpress, to exhibit an instance equally instructive," (p. 27.) What is it that is so new? Is it the value of manure and its extensive application that constitutes the novelty, now for the first time made known? The ancient Romans anxiously collected their manure from as many sources as the moderns do. They liberally employed liquid manure and pigeons' droppings, (your guano,) then esteemed of inestimable value. Or, is it the stall-feeding system that you publish as something so new and instructive? Why, the *Metayers* of Lombardy have long fed their cattle in a somewhat similar fashion, but with more extraordinary care. They feed them in stalls—they bleed them—they brush them twice a-day, whether with "a dandy brush" or not is not recorded, and they rub them over with oil. The oleaginous application is something more exquisite than the Auchness system administers. There is, in truth, nothing new in what you have written, as every educated agriculturist knows; and you might have found your "instructive instances" almost in any history of agriculture in any one of our Cyclopedias. When I consider this, I have been forcibly reminded of the valorous exploits of the immortal hero of one of Sir Walter Scott's best poems, which the bard thus commemorates,— 473

> "Donald Caird finds orra things,
> Whare Alan Grigor fand the tings."

You apparently now stand alone and unsupported in your advocacy of high farming, foolishly so called, as the substitute for Protection, and as a source of profitable investment under the depressed prices of agricultural produce. "The leading organ of the Protectionists," is so heterodox in your estimation, that one cannot expect you to imbibe wisdom from such a source. But perhaps you may listen more benevolently to the other powerful and accredited organ of political opinion in North Britain on the question of high farming, and the possibility of its adoption as a *present remedy* for the clamant evils under which the agricultural community now labours. You will do well, before you write again, to ponder over and inwardly to digest the following pregnant sentences, which embody an admirable synopsis of the truth. The italics are mine.

"It is true, that high farming can maintain a large labouring population; but high farming requires, not only that high scientific knowledge which is of *slow growth*, but also a *large expenditure of capital*. It is the possession of *great skill*, *habitual energy*, and *vast capital*, which alone renders possible such a system of farming, horticultural rather than agricultural, as has grown up in Belgium in the midst of abundant markets, wealthy towns, and flourishing manufactures,—a system the *origin and growth of which has been favoured by every circumstance that can promote industry and protect its fruits*."—*Edinburgh Review*, January 1850, (p. 18.) Mr Mechi speaks problematically of the profit of high farming; that amiable experimenter, Mr Huxtable, ingenuously confesses his losses, and allows that last year he was *minus* £32 of his rent; Mr M'Culloch even seems half disposed to leave you in the lurch. He is reported, in the *Scotsman* of the 13th February last, to have said at a public meeting in Newton-Stewart, on the 1st February,—"That, before the improved system could be properly carried out, the landlords must give encouragement particularly in draining and buildings." Millions of money, which the proprietors have not, must be expended; and millions of additional capital must

be at the command of the farmers, which they have not, before the system can be carried out. Enthusiast although he be, Mr M'Culloch begins to see the impracticable nature of the scheme. Moreover, before the improvements could be effected, supposing the requisite capital to be had, and before any profit could accrue from them, years would elapse. For the improvements and profits of agriculture, unlike those in manufactures, cannot be realised in a few months. The farmers, with a continuation of the present prices, will in the mean time be ruined, unless rents are diminished one-third, and, on the poorer soils, extinguished altogether—in which event, again, two-thirds of the proprietors of the kingdom would be ruined. These are the immediate accompaniments attending your cheap food for the people, your plethora of potatoes, and your plethora of beef. The ultimate issue will speedily reach the people whom you delude, and the Manchester Free-traders whose sweet voices you court.

But you have further shown us, that there is a necessity for the compulsitor of an act of Parliament to nullify existing leases, and to establish the conditions of the liberal covenant, and that a change of the figure in the rent is imperiously called for. In other words, you prescribe not for the existing condition of agriculture, but for an imaginary case of your own construction. Your views are based on hopes and contingencies vague and visionary. Your theory, as further illustrated, avowedly contemplates a possible case, which not only does not exist, but which is a moral impossibility. That such views should have attracted any notice, and raised any serious discussion, the critical emergency of the times, as already stated, sufficiently explains. Drowning 474
men catch at straws; and, during the prevalence of an inscrutable pestilence, the afflicted and excited sufferer, loth to relinquish the hope of life, flees to any doctor, however quackish and empirical. The practical agriculturists of the kingdom have made up their mind upon the practicability and general utility of your schemes; and, while frankly allowing that much remains to be done for the further advancement of agriculture, and that high farming, in any profitable or practicable sense, is indispensable, they unanimously repudiate the utopianism of your theory as a cure for the dire evils into which, by no fault of their own, they have been plunged. The Perthshire farmer, the only brother tenant of whom you have spoken in the language of civility, and who, in his judicious pamphlet, had shown that Mr M'Culloch, in 1848, must have lost by his farm, repels your advances, and scorns your supercilious compliments. He writes, that "he would far rather have received Mr Caird's buffet than his embrace." (*Stirling Journal*, 15th February.)

You are now "left alone in your glory;" but that glory is neither small nor contemptible. By that portion of the press who are fired with a hatred of landlordism, and who have taken a vow to sacrifice the agricultural classes to the cupidity of the master manufacturers, you are praised and flattered as the only man of mark and likelihood in North Britain. Although Adam Smith, and more recently M. de Tocqueville, have given it as their opinion that the agricultural classes are more intelligent and intellectual than the manufacturing, yet there is a section of "the fourth estate" in the realm, who cannot speak of farmers without employing insulting epithets derogatory to their intelligence and education. With this fraternity you are an especial favourite; and not without cause. They are wise in their generation, and they see well enough that your speculations, as those of a farmer, serve their purpose better than any of their own could possibly do. They perceive that your Georgical essays are raising delusions in the minds of the ignorant, and bolstering up the vain hopes of Free-trade proprietors, and pandering to the agrarian passions of the unprincipled, and are thus admirably calculated to divert attention from the clamant sufferings of the agricultural community, and to stifle any attempt to devise a real remedy for them. I am sure that, in your heart, you mean none of these things; but it is surprising that the fulsome praises of such parties, and their enlistment of you into their ranks, have not raised a suspicion in your mind regarding the tendency of your writings, and the somewhat dubious and equivocal position which you now occupy.

That powerful print, the *Times*, disparages the intelligence of farmers, and writes with levity on the subject of their present sufferings. If landlords and tenants cannot prosper under present prices, it tells them cavalierly to sell off, and to emigrate. Surveying them and their fields, it kindly intimates—

"Hæc mea sunt; veteres migrate coloni."

Seated beside the Thunderer, you are to dispense the award to agricultural mortals. Have pity on your frail and erring brethren, and wield not the giant's strength tyrannically. But your faculties are as great as your fame; and as Julius Cæsar, in the midst of preparations for battle, marked the revolutions of the stars, so you, in the interval that elapses betwixt the publication of your high farming essays, take a glance at Ireland, and solve the enigma that had puzzled all preceding statesmen, and prescribe the cure for the chronic ailments of our unhappy neighbour. With a few flourishes of your pen, you have slain *Blackwood* and all his allies. The mind is proud of its triumphs in proportion to the reputed greatness of what it has overcome. Plutarch, in his life of Artaxerxes, tells us of a soldier who wounded King Cyrus in battle, and who grew thereupon so arrogant that in a short space after he lost his wits. I fear for you, even in the midst of your triumphs, for you are manifestly perturbed. At a time when every one had treated you with unexampled gentleness and courtesy, you complain of being upbraided, and of having lost the smiles of men of rank. Can it be that the monitor within is pricking you for your left-handed 475
advocacy of the farmers' interest? The taint of a *green* and yellow melancholy is on you. That curious old writer, Felix Plater, tells us, with high humour, of a certain one who fancied that he had some of Aristophanes' frogs in his belly, and who studied physic seven years, and took the

tour of Europe, with a view of relieving himself. Your itinerancy may be salubrious, and tend to evacuate the croaker. But if not, happy are you to have such a doctor—the crutch-destroyer, I mean—as your "guide, philosopher, and friend." By his nimble manipulations, he will easily effect the happy exorcism of every obstruction; and, having him as your Mæcenas, well may you feel

"Divinity within you breeding wings,
Wherewith to scorn the earth."

If I have contributed in any degree, by this agreeable epistle, to abate and dissolve your present flatulency, it will be a source of delightful reflection to me in the evening of life.

CATO.

THE CLEARING OF THE GLENS.

I.

They'll speak of him for many a year,
In Britain's sad decline,
In other lands, perchance, than this,
Across the weltering brine.
They'll speak of him who drove them forth
In alien fields to toil,
Who forced them from their fathers' hearths,
The children of the soil!

II.

Amidst the deserts of the West
When evening shadows fall,
Around their aged grandsire's knees
The babes will gather all—
And "Tell us, grandsire," thus they'll speak,
"O tell us yet again,
Of that dear native land of yours
That lies beyond the main.

III.

"Why did you leave that happy land,
And seek a shelter here,
Where keenly sweeps the northern wind
Through frozen forests drear?
And why forsake the purple hills
Where Scotland's heather grows,
To shudder in this dreary waste
Of cold Canadian snows?"

IV.

"Ah, children—Ye recall the time
When I was young and strong;
When never roebuck on the brae
More swiftly raced along.
I dwelt within a bieldy hut
Far up a Highland glen,
With forty more, our name that bore,
All true and loyal men.

V.

"We sowed the seed, and reaped the grain,
With thankful hearts and kind;
Our cattle grazed upon the hill
That rose our homes behind.
Each Sabbath-day we worshipped God
Within the homely fane,
All circled by the blessed graves
I ne'er shall see again.

VI.

"Our chief—ah, me! how proud were we
That honoured name to hail,
Was, like his fathers, true and just—
In heart and soul, a Gael.
His lands were narrowed in their range
Since dark Culloden's day,
But o'er our hearts the ancient name
Still bore its ancient sway.

VII.

"He loved us: Ay! he did not leave
His old ancestral home,
As many did, with stranger friends
In foreign lands to roam.
God's blessing rest upon his head,
Alive or dead, say I;
For 'midst his clan, though dwindled sore,
He looked to live and die!

VIII.

"And so we dwelt, in peace and rest,
For many a changing year:
Not rich; but riches never made
A home so doubly dear.
From kindly earth, from verdant hill,
From river, loch, and wood,
We drew the stores that kept us still
In raiment and in food.

IX.

"One year—I know not which it was,
For it was long ago,—
The summer had been cold and wet,
And early fell the snow;
A heavy blight came down from heaven
On plant, and root, and grain,
And what the pestilence had touched,
Ne'er rose to life again.

X.

"It was an awful winter. Want
And famine raged around;
Yet little felt we of their power,
Within our master's ground.
Our debts were few, our rents were small,
And these were all forgiven—
No heavier burden did we bear
Than that which fell from heaven!

XI.

"The spring came round—the primrose bloomed
Upon the bank and brae,
And blythesome looked the bonny glen
Within the light of May.
The lowing of a hundred herds,
The voices of the rills,
The bleat of flocks, the glad bird's song
Rang o'er our Highland hills.

XII.

"The blade was springing in the field
Right healthily and green,
With promise of the fairest yield
That eye had ever seen.
And joy rose up within our hearts,
We feared no more decay,
But thanked our Maker—who had ta'en
The grievous curse away.

XIII.

"O little knew we of the men
Who ruled within the land;
The days were gone when Scottish hearts
O'er Scotland held command.
The days were gone when valiant souls,
Who knew their country's right,
Stood foremost at the council board
As they were first in fight.

XIV.

"The spirit of the olden time,
That blazed so bright of yore,
Had died away, and no one spoke
Of faith or honour more.
They deemed this glorious earth was made,
And vaulted with the sky,
For nothing but to gather gold—
To traffic, fawn, and lie!

XV.

"And so they reared the chimney-stalk,
And so they laid the keel,
And trampled on the labouring poor
With hard and heavy heel.
A cold and crafty Southron carle
Was lord and master there:
No gentle blood had he who stood
Beside the monarch's chair.

XVI.

"He made his laws—I wot not how—
But this I know full well,
That ruin like a biting frost
Upon the country fell.
It mattered not how bright the sun,
How bountiful the rain,
The wickedness of man had made
The gifts of God in vain.

XVII.

"These were sore days. Within the towns
Was naught but foreign bread;
By foreign serfs beyond the seas
The people now were fed.
No work was there for us to do,
No labour far or near;
We dared not render thanks to Him
Who sent a fruitful year.

XVIII.

"The plough lay rusting in the field:
We drove our cattle down,
We sold them—'twas our last resource,
Within a distant town.
The poor dumb creatures! when they went
I knew the hour must come
For the like woeful journey next,
To those that were not dumb.

XIX.

"And so it fell. One weary day
The bitter news was told,
That the fair land we loved so well
Was to a stranger sold.
The race that for a thousand years
Had dwelt within the glen,
Were rudely summoned from their homes,
To beg as broken men.

XX.

"Some would not leave—the ruffians tore
The crumbling thatch away;
They plucked the rafters from the wall,
And bade them starve and stay!
The old, the bedrid, and the sick,
The wife and new-born child—
I thank my God I did not strike,
Although my heart was wild!

XXI.

"We parted—kinsfolk, clansmen, friends,
With heavy hearts and sore;
We parted by the water-side,
To meet on earth no more.
The sun was sinking to his rest
Amidst a lurid sky,
And from the darkening hill above
We heard the falcon's cry."

XXII.

"O wicked deed, O cruel men!
O sad and woeful day!
But, grandsire, tell us of your friends
And kinsfolk, where are they?"
"They lie within the festering heaps,
Among the city dead—
Scant burial had they for their bones,
No gravestone marks their head;

XXIII.

"Some died of want, of sorrow some,
And some of broken age:
They who lived on were sad as birds
Cooped in a narrow cage.
O children, with the savage beasts
I'd rather lay me down,
Than dwell among the stifling lanes
Within a factory town!

XXIV.

"Sharp hunger forced us to the mills;
We slaved for scanty food
'Midst flashing looms, and buzzing wheels,
And strangers rough and rude.
From morn to night we toiled and spun
Like beasts to labour driven,
And only through the dingy panes
We saw the light of heaven.

XXV.

"Ay, there was room for all! The child
That scarce could walk alone,
The little ones we loved so well,
The stripling and the grown;
The modest maiden forced to bear
The coarse and scurril jest;
The old man with his silver hairs—
The wife with babe at breast.

XXVI.

"All, all might work—for England ne'er
Had borne so high a name,
Though not for Christian chivalry
She strove to keep her fame.
No longer streamed Saint George's cross
The foremost in the air,
Her glory lay in cotton bales
And yards of flimsy ware.

XXVII.

"For this we toiled, for this we span;
For this all round and round
Ten thousand chimney-stalks were reared
Above the blackening ground.
For this they made the reaper's song,
The ploughman's whistle cease;
And 'midst the clanking of the chains
Proclaimed the reign of peace!

XXVIII.

"But we—the Highland-born, the free,
How could we struggle there?
Still in our hearts we felt the breath
Of our fresh mountain air—
We saw the shadows of the hills
Hang in the waters clear,
The purling of the distant rills
Was sounding in our ear.

XXIX.

"We sang the old familiar songs—
We sang them at the loom;
We sang of light, and love, and joy,
When all around was gloom.
O then, O then—the bitter tears
Rose to each aching eye—
O were we but once more at home,
Though only there to die!

XXX.

"Death came, but came not quickly. Pale
And weak my sister grew;
With sharpened pain and wasting sobs
Her heavy breath she drew.
At last I laid her in her bed
When she could work no more.
I kissed her poor, thin, wasted cheek—
I prayed—and all was o'er!

XXXI.

"I laid her in a stranger's grave.
And then I turned and fled,
I cared not whither—anywhere—
To earn my honest bread;
In any land where flesh and blood
Were reckoned more than gain—
Where tyrant masters did not wring
Their wealth from woe and pain."

XXXII.

O England—England! many a heart
Is sad and sore for thee,
Though basely, meanly, falsely driven
To dwell beyond the sea.
O England! if the bonny Rose
Was drooping on your crown,
Why did you stretch a cruel hand
To pluck the Thistle down?

XXXIII.

There's many a name of noble fame
Writ in your ancient roll;
There's many an honest statesman yet
Of free and generous soul:
Why stoop to those who cannot walk
With high and upright head,
Whose living souls no kindred own
With thy time-honoured dead?

XXXIV.

The worst of all—the thrice-forsworn—
The gamester of thy fame—
How dares he deem that aftertimes
Will give him aught but shame?
Let monuments be reared above—
Of marble heap a hill—
The peasant's curse upon his head
Shall weigh the heavier still!

Díes Boreales.

No. VI.

CHRISTOPHER UNDER CANVASS.

Camp at Cladich.

Scene I.—*The Wren's Nest.*

Time—*Six* a.m.

North—Talboys—Seward.

NORTH.

You recollect the words of Edmund in Lear—

> "A credulous father, and a brother noble
> Whose nature is so far from doing harm,
> That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
> One's practices ride easy."

This is exactly Iago with Othello—believing in virtue, using, despising it. These idolators of self think the virtuous worship imaginary, unreal Gods. But they never doubt the sincerity of the worship; and therein show a larger intelligence, a clearer insight, than those other idolators who, shut up in their own character, ascribe their own motives to all; and in virtues can see only different shapes of hypocrisy.

TALBOYS.

The Devil himself knows better, sir. He knows that Virtue exists; only he flatters himself that he can undermine its foundations. "And ofttimes does succeed"—seeking Evil "as contrary to His High Will whom we resist!"

NORTH.

The Evil Principle at war with the Good.

TALBOYS.

In what war soever, sir, you are once engaged, you soon feel yourself pledged to it. A few blows given on both sides settle you fast, and you no longer inquire about the cause.

NORTH.

To an evil soul all good is a reproach; therefore he wars on it. To the self-dissatisfied the happiness of the good is a reproach; therefore, if he be thoroughly selfish, he pulls it down.

TALBOYS.

Every one's impulse is to throw off pain; and if no pity, no awe, no love be there to stay him, he pulls down of course.

NORTH.

My dear Talboys, believe me, that, for a moment, every man has motives fit for a fiend. Perhaps he obeys—perhaps rejects them. The true fiend is constant.

TALBOYS.

Every man has motives fit for a fiend! I beg you to speak for yourself, my dear sir.

NORTH.

I speak of myself, of you, and of Iago. What is the popular apprehension or theory of the malice disclosed in "mine Ancient"—not the Old One, but the Standard-bearer?

TALBOYS.

Why, the prompt, apt, and natural answer will be, he is a Devil.

NORTH.

And pray what is a Devil?

TALBOYS.

Iago.

NORTH.

Don't reason in a circle, sir.

TALBOYS.

I'd rather reason in a circle, sir, than not reason at all. I like reasoning in a circle—it is pleasant pastime in a cold, raw morning—far preferable to ascending Cruachan; for you are never far from home, and when tired can leap out at your own pleasure, and take some reasoning in a straight line.

NORTH.

You are always so pleasant, Talboys, circular or ziz-zag. Whence is the malice in the heart of a Devil?

TALBOYS.

I want data, sir. Milton has given some historical elucidation of it; but the People reason less, and are no philosophers.

NORTH.

Hate in a devil is like Love in an Angel—uncaused, or self-causing; it is his natural function—his Essence, his Being. Herein the seraph is a seraph—the fiend is a fiend.

TALBOYS.

> "Evil! be Thou my good! By Thee at least
> Divided Empire with Heaven's King I hold,
> By Thee, and more perhaps than half will reign."

Reason—Motive—Cause.

NORTH.

Prospero calls Caliban a devil—a born Devil.

TALBOYS.

Also, a demi-Devil—as Othello calls Iago.

NORTH.

The Philosopher knows—*in humanity*—of no born devil. He follows, or tries to follow, the causes which have turned the imperfect nature into the worst. The popular sense takes things as it finds them, and acknowledges "born devils," Iago being one, and "of the prime." The *totality* of monster in the moral world seems to that unphilosophical, sincere, and much-to-the-purpose intuition, expressed under the image of *a nativity*. The popular sense recognises a temper of man which elects evil for evil's sake—which inflicts pain, because it likes to see pain suffered—which destroys, because it revels in misery.

TALBOYS.

Coleridge calls Iago's "a motiveless malignity." He hated Othello for not promoting him, but Cassio. That seems to me the real, tangible motive—a haunting, goading, fretting preference—an affront—an insult—a curbing of power—wounding him where alone he is sensitive—in self-esteem and pride. See his contempt for Cassio as a book-warrior—and "for a fair life"—simply like our notion of a "milksop." Why Othello, who so prizes him for his honesty as to call him ever "honest Iago," keeps him down, I have not a guess—

NORTH.

Haven't you? And pray what right have you to interfere with the practice of promotion in the army of the Venetian State?

TALBOYS.

I cannot approve of this particular instance—it looks like favouritism. Othello fancied Cassio—Cassio was the genteeler young fellow of the two—the better-born—Iago had risen from the ranks—and was a stout soldier—

NORTH.

You don't take your character of Cassio, from Iago?

TALBOYS.

I do. Iago was a liar—but here I think he spoke truth—there is nothing in the Play indicating that Cassio had seen much service—he had never been at Cyprus—nor anywhere else—he had never seen a Turk—he had never—

NORTH.

Hold your tongue.

TALBOYS.

A more disgraceful Brawl—

NORTH.

Hold your tongue, I say.

TALBOYS.

Don't keep pouring out your excuses for him, sir, with such overwhelming volubility—it won't do. He knew his own wretched head. "I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking," yet drink he would,—"I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too"—worse than shirking—"behold what innovation it makes here,"—and yet he would not join the Teetotallers. Out on such a Lieutenant! Iago *was* an ill-used man.

NORTH.

Talboys—

TALBOYS.

O that ceaseless volubility! Shakspeare afterwards makes Iago say that Cassio "has a daily beauty in his life." Where do we see it? In his *liaison* with that "fitchew?" From pleading with the Divine Desdemona on a question to him of life or death, to go straight to sup—and sleep with Bianca!

NORTH.

Othello's "Now thou art my Lieutenant," shows the importance meant by Shakspeare to be attached to the previous oppression—or "holding down" of Iago. Alas! how that allocution instigating Iago to murder by more than a promise of promotion, sadly lowers Othello to me—I hardly know why. I feel a descent from his own passion to a sympathy with Iago's desire to step into his superior officer's shoes. I can fancy that Shakspeare meant this. Ay, that he did; for I believe that turbulent passion, in some of its moods, lowers—degrades—debases a great and generous nature.

TALBOYS.

Iago, was jealous of Othello. He says he was, and either believes it, or tries to believe it. His own words intimate the doubt, and the determination to believe. Malignity and hate indulge in giving acceptance to slight grounds—such he says, in his own coarse way, was the rumour—and perhaps it was true—

NORTH.

Certainly it was false. High characters, as Coriolanus, Hotspur, Othello, are, by a native majesty of spirit, saved and exalted from the pursuit of illicit pleasure.

TALBOYS.

They are. But let his jealousy of Othello—sincere or assumed—or mixed or alternating—enter as an element into the hatred.

NORTH.

Let it. Iago was, you said truly, a stout Soldier—and I add, a hard, unfeeling, unprincipled Soldier. Of all trades in the world, that of a Soldier is the worst and the best—witness an Iago—an Othello. The same trade helped to make both. In Othello we almost see Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*—in Iago one—

> "Yet ill he lived, much evil saw,
> 'Mongst men to whom no better law
> Nor better life was known;
> Deliberately and undeceived,
> Those bad men's vices he received
> And gave them back his own!"

You are convinced, without a hint, that he is infidel—atheist: everything shaped like religion, like moral conscience—his mind shakes off and rejects with scorn. He does not, however, as I said, disbelieve in Virtues. He believes in them, and uses them to the destruction of the havers. What he disbelieves is the worth of Virtues. To that savage Idol, Self, the more bleeding and noble victims, the more grateful the sacrifice.

TALBOYS.

A singular combination in him, sir, is his wily Italian wit—like Iachimo's—and his rough—soldierlike—plain, blunt, jovial manners—the tone of the Camp, and of the wild-living, *reckless* Camp—plenty of hardihood—fit for toil, peril, privation. You never for a moment doubt his courage—his presence of mind—his resources—he does not once quail in presence of Othello at his utmost fury. He does not stir up the Lion from without, through the bars of his cage, with an invisible rod of iron—that is, a whip of scorpions; he lashes up the Wild Beast, and flinches not an inch from paw that would smite, or tusk that would tear—a veritable Lion Queller and King.

NORTH.

I cannot but believe that the Othello of Shakspeare is black, and all black. I cannot conceive the ethnography of that age drawing—on the stage especially—the finer distinction which we know between a Moor and a Blackamoor or Negro. The opposition, entertained by nature, is between White and Black—not between White and Brown. You want the opposition to tell with all its

power. "I saw Othello's visage in his mind" is nothing, unless the visible visage is one to be conquered—to be accepted by losing sight of it. I say again, that I cannot myself imagine the contemporary audience of Shakspeare deciding colour between a Moor and a Negro. The tradition of the Stage, too, seems to have made Othello jet black. Such, I opine, was the notion of the Moor, *then*, to the People, to the Court, to the Stage, to Shakspeare.

TALBOYS.

Woolly-headed?

NORTH.

Why, yes—if you choose—in opposition to the "curled darlings."

TALBOYS.

Yet Coleridge has said it would be "something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl failing in love with a veritable Negro."

NORTH.

Coleridge almost always thought, felt, wrote, and spoke finely, as a Critic—but may I venture, in all love and admiration of that name, to suggest that the removal which the stage makes of a subject from reality must never be forgotten. In life you cannot bear that the White Woman shall marry the Black Man. You could not bear that an English Lady Desdemona—Lady Blanche Howard—should—under any imaginable greatness—marry General Toussaint or the Duke of Marmalade. Your senses revolt with offence and loathing. But on the Stage some consciousness that everything is not as literally meant as it seems—that symbols of humanity, and not actual men and women, are before you—saves the Play.

TALBOYS.

I believe that Wordsworth's line—

"The gentle Lady married to the Moor,"

expresses explicitly the feeling of the general English heart—pity for the contrast, and a thought of the immense love which has overcome it.

NORTH.

White and Black is the utter antithesis—as, at intensity, Night and Day. Yes—Talboys—Every jot of soot you take from his complexion, you take an iota from the signified power of love.

TALBOYS.

As you say, sir, the gap which is between the Stage and Reality must prevent, in our hearts, anything like loathing of the conjunction.

NORTH.

The touch of such an emotion would annul the whole Tragedy. A disparity, or a discrepancy, vast as mysterious—but which love, at the full, is entitled to overlook—overstep! Whether Fate dare allow prosperity to a union containing so mighty an element of disruption, is another question. It seems like an attempt at overruling the "Æterna fœdera rerum."

TALBOYS.

For half an hour after her death, Othello believes her guilty. You must take it for a representation of what his feelings would have been, if she had really been guilty.

NORTH.

Unless the fact of her innocence have a secret potency that reaches, through all appearance

and evidence of her guilt, into his innermost soul. Be that as it may, he is, after the deed, perplexed and unmanned, totally unlike a man who has performed a great sacrifice to the offended gods. You may say that the convulsion of uptorn love is too fresh, and that he would in time have regained his strength—that had she been guilty, the first half-hour must have been just what it was. All I know is, that his mind first becomes clear, when he knows her innocent. Then he is, in a measure, himself, and sees his way. Had she been guilty, he would have lived two years with a stern, desolate soul—not harsh, perhaps, to honest folks, though—and have then fallen in battle.

TALBOYS.

But how is Iago affected by the blackness? No doubt, with more hate and aversion at being commanded by and outshone by him. High military rank and command—high favour by the Senate—high power and esteem in the world—high royalty of spirit—happiness in marriage—all these in Othello are proper subjects of envy, and motives of hate in Iago. The Nigger!

NORTH.

Antipathy of bad to good—of base to noble—exacerbated by physical antipathy of colour! But I never could fathom the hate and malice and revenge of Iago.

TALBOYS.

It is unfathomable—and therefore fit agent in Tragedy.

NORTH.

Even so. I don't believe that Shakspeare always means you to be able to lay motives in the balance and weigh them. Far otherwise.

TALBOYS.

Ay—Think how the Murder of Duncan leaps up, Hell-born, into the heart of Macbeth—at the breath of the Weird Sisters!

NORTH.

Perhaps. Poetry shaping out an action, distinguishes herself, amongst other points of distinction herein, from History, that while she shows lucidly, and of her own clear knowledge, the concatenation of Cause and Effect, yet passion and imagination require the indefinite. There is then a conflict of claims and powers; and the part of logic is hence imperfectly rendered. You see the river sweeping by you, without knowing all the springs that have fed it.

TALBOYS.

Say that again, sir.

NORTH.

There IS the hatred—a tragical power, which the Poet is principally concerned to use—less to explain.

TALBOYS.

You said, sir, the noble Moor must have been much disennobled ere he could have cried to Iago, "Now thou art my lieutenant."

NORTH.

I did, and you think so too.

TALBOYS.

I do. Othello and Iago, are joint conspirators to two double murders. Can you conspire to a

murder—a private assassination—without lowering yourself—even on the Stage? Othello takes on himself the murder of Desdemona—act, responsibility, consequences; but does he not seem to hire Iago to assassinate Cassio?

NORTH.

What did Othello intend to do—after all was accomplished? Consequences indeed! He was stone-blind to the future. What does he expect? that when he has killed his wife, everything is to go on as smoothly as before? That no notice will be taken of it? or that he will have to make another speech to the Senate? He has told them how he married her—the counterpart will be to relate "a plain unvarnished tale of my whole course" of smothering and stabbing her with bolster and dagger. "Now thou art my lieutenant"—shows—if not stone-blindness—a singular confidence in the future.

TALBOYS.

The Personages who come in at the End look at the matter contrariwise. Othello exalts the killing of his wife into a sacrifice to Justice. But Cassio? That is mere—pure Revenge. "O that the slave had forty thousand lives,—one is too poor, too weak for my revenge."

NORTH.

Upon what pedestal does Othello stand *now*—engaging another to kill Cassio in the dark, for his own revenge? I repeat it, surely the Noble Moor is now very much disennobled.

TALBOYS.

I rejoice, my dear sir, that you have so completely got rid of that nasty cough—your voice is as clear as a bell. Lungs sound—

NORTH.

As those of a prize bagpiper. Talboys, I cannot help thinking that Shakspeare shows up in Othello, foul passions—that you see in him two natures conjoined—the moral Caucasian White, and the animal tropical Black. In the Caucasian, the spiritual or angelical in us attains its manifestation. In the offspring of the tropics, amongst the sands, and under the suns of Africa, the animal nature takes domination. The sands and suns that breed Lions, breed Men with Lion's hearts in them. The Lion is for himself noble, but blood of the Irrational in the veins of the Rational is a contradiction. The noblest moral nature and the hot blind rage of animal blood!

TALBOYS.

Ay, the noblest moral nature, and high above every other evidence of it, his love of HER—which, what it was, and what it would have remained, or become—and what he was and would have been, had Iago not been there—we may imagine! With all the power of a warrior, and a ruler, he has the sensibility of a Lover—with all spontaneous dignity and nobility, he has the self-mastery of reason—before his overthrow.

NORTH.

Wherefore, my dear Sheriff, I prefer Othello as a specimen of the *Ethical Marvellous*. Like, as in another kingdom, a Winged Horse or a Centaur—the meeting of two natures which readily hold asunder. All this has under the Æthiop complexion its full force—less if you mitigate—if not mitigate merely, but take away, where are we all? The innate repugnance of the White Christian to the Black Moorish blood, is the ultimate tragic substratum—the "*must*" of all that follows. Else—*make* Othello White—and, I say again, *see* where we are!

TALBOYS.

Shakspeare, sir, is not one to flinch from the utmost severity of a Case.

NORTH.

Not he, indeed—therefore I *swear* Othello is a Blackamoor.

TALBOYS.

And I take it, sir, that Othello's natural demeanour is one of great gravity, to which the passionate moods induced are in extremity of contrast. I conceive that, by these mixtures and contrasts, he is rendered picturesque and poetical.

NORTH.

I swear Othello was a Blackamoor—and that Desdemona was the Whitest Lady in Europe.

TALBOYS.

Had he lived to be tried for murder, I think his counsel might have successfully set up the plea of insanity.

NORTH.

They might have successfully set it up—but I, the Judge, would have successfully put it down. Honestly, I don't think Othello mad; and for this reason, that the thought never before came into my head. An incident that appears to me most wonderful in dramatic invention is—the Swooning. Look at the precise words preceding his falling down. To me it has no other effect or sense, than that of the blood being driven up into the head, and oppressing with physical pressure that bodily organ—the brain. The soul strikes the body like a hammer, and knocks it down.

TALBOYS.

Ay, how his words waver—"That's not so good now"—from a man believing, or on the point of believing. There is to me a physical faintness in these words, and in the play upon the words "lie with her," &c., intellect reeling to fall.

NORTH.

Good. But I believe body and soul of Othello—or the relation between body and soul—to be physiologically right and sound. The swooning goes soon off—the accident of an hour—the mind is else in full vigour, sound, and misled. You must recollect that a mind of supereminent physical (may one say so?) and moral power—a mind that would have been strong and calm through the Russian Campaign of Napoleon—is not in a day stricken into a state which requires the medical skill and attention of Dr Willis. Othello had an immensely strong physical constitution undoubtedly—had he not, the adventures related would long ago have extinguished him. This is one meaning of that sudden and strange narrative which children are taught by rote, and which men may not have quite fathomed; but a strong body and strong soul conjoined, do not lightly admit of disjunction. Madness, properly so called, is a disjunction, in some way or kind, of the natural union between soul and body. A few days disrupt the ties in the aged Lear. You may think that in Othello—I suppose Ætat. 40 or 45—the ties would bear some wrenching of the rack, ere snapping. I think that they held firm.

TALBOYS.

True, sir, insanity would even detract from the moral majesty and splendour of Othello.

NORTH.

It would. The time comes back to me when I did *not care for the Play or the Man*. The Play now seems to me wonderful, more even than Hamlet or Lear—and the Man, in poetical invention, a match for Achilles or Satan.

TALBOYS.

Sir—sir.

NORTH.

Passion in the blood like that of a Negro—and right in the soul as of Socrates or Epaminondas. Yes, Talboys, the Majesty of the Moral soul in Othello seems to me the most prophetic, or divining, or inconceivable of Shakspeare's conceptions.

TALBOYS.

Nay—nay—my dear sir.

NORTH.

Everything else might seem to offer its own reason— 488

TALBOYS.

Nay—nay—my dear sir. Compare the gross Hamlet of Saxo Grammaticus with Ours.

NORTH.

Well, do—but Othello—you don't know whence he is derived. He is a tropical animal—kindred to the lion—the tiger—the dragon—and, on the other hand, he has the rational equipoise of the faculties that stamp the Philosopher—and he is everything between the two.

TALBOYS.

An Eloge, indeed—perhaps a *leetle* too eulogistic.

NORTH.

No. What a simple sincerity colours the narrative of his love-making! Is your *imagination* bewitched by the wild story of his adventurous life? Hers, doubtless, was fascinated. But your *soul*, methinks, is won to approving the Venetian Maiden's choice by a profounder, a more legitimate charm. Who ever heard Othello relate, and hung back from believing him? He is honest, and she is honest. That is the bond whereby the Parcæ united their souls and their threads. Why they disunited both—how that infernal intervention of Lachesis and Atropos crossed their pure souls in their pure conjunction, let Clotho—if she can—tell.

TALBOYS.

Let's be more cheerful.

NORTH.

Ay—let's.

TALBOYS.

Othello shows that our Good—our excellence—our capacity of happiness—lies all in Love. That our light in which we walk—our light which we give forth—is Love. He declares this, by cleaving to this Good—by having it—by losing it—by recovering it. The self-consciousness of Othello returns to its unison with universal being—with heaven's harmony of the worlds. Iago denies this Good—never acknowledges it—although he serves involuntarily to demonstrate the truth—of which Othello perishes the self-sacrificed witness. It is great, sir, in the Tragedy, but in him the House of Love is divided against itself. His jealousy, child of his love, lifts up a parricidal hand, wounds and is wounded—but only unto its own death. And what is the feeling left by the catastrophe?

NORTH.

Say, my friend, say.

TALBOYS.

Peace—rest—repose—depth of tranquillity—like the sea stilled from storms.

NORTH.

The charmed calm that reflects heaven.

TALBOYS.

Peace grounded in this proved thought—that LOVE IS BEST. Of all the Persons, whose stars will you accept to be your own? If you are a man, Othello's; if woman, the wronged and murdered Desdemona's. Study for ever the two closing and summing up verses—"I *kissed* thee ere I *killed* thee; no way but this—Killing myself to die upon a kiss!" To gather up all the terror that is past, as if not only the winds were upgathered like sleeping flowers, but upgathered into the sleeping flowers. I don't know how to avoid comparing—all unlike as the characters are—the end of Romeo and Juliet—Lear and Cordelia—Othello and Desdemona. I never can separate them. LOVE the mightiest torn asunder in life—reunited in death. Love—the solace of lapsed and mortal humanity.

NORTH.

Lend the Old Hobbler your arm. 489

SCENE II.—*Pavilion.*

TIME—*After Breakfast.*

NORTH—TALBOYS—SEWARD—BULLER.

NORTH.

NOW FOR THE GRAND INQUIRY.

How long, think you, was Othello Governor of Cyprus, and Desdemona the General's wife?

TALBOYS.

How long? Why, some weeks, or some months; quarter of a year, half a year, a year.

NORTH.

A most satisfactory answer indeed to a simple question. How long have I been Commander of the Forces at Cladich?

TALBOYS.

Tents pitched on the 14th May 1849—This is the 24th of June Ditto. You, like Michael Cassio, are "a great arithmetician"—and can calculate the Days.

NORTH.

That's precise. Let's have some small attempt at precision with respect to the time at Cyprus.

TALBOYS.

Well then—a Month—TWO MONTHS.

NORTH.

And you are a Student—a Scholar—in Shakspeare!

TALBOYS.

What the ace do you mean?

NORTH.

JUST TWO DAYS.

TALBOYS.

What the deuce do you mean? THE MAN has lost his Senses.

NORTH.

Who? Shakspeare?

TALBOYS.

Really, sir, you are getting daily more and more paradoxical—and I begin to tremble for your wits.

NORTH.

See that your own have not gone wool-gathering, Talboys. Two Months! For two Months read two Days—I insist on it.

TALBOYS.

Gentlemen, the case seems serious. What would you propose?

SEWARD.

Let's hear the Sage.

NORTH.

Open Shakspeares. Act II.—Scene I.

BULLER.

All ready, sir.

NORTH.

A Sea-port Town in Cyprus—not Nicosia, the capital of the Island, which is inland—thirty miles from the Sea—but Famagusta.

TALBOYS.

So says in a note Malone—what's that to the purpose?

NORTH.

I wish to be precise. Ship ahoy!

TALBOYS.

"The ship is here put in,
A Veronese; Michael Cassio,
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor, Othello,
Is come on shore"—

NORTH.

"A sail—a sail—a sail!
My hopes do shape him for the Governor."

BULLER.

"'Tis one Iago, Ancient to the General."

TALBOYS.

"The riches of the ship is come on shore!"

BULLER.

"Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.

NORTH.

The Moor! I know his trumpet."

There's the power of poetry for you—I do pity poor prose. The sea-beach—town—fortifications—all crowded with people on the gaze-out—*for hours*. For ships on the stormy sea. But not a ship to be seen. Obedient to the passion of the people, one ship after another appears in the offing—salutes and is saluted—is within the Bay—inside the Breakwater—drops anchor—the divine Desdemona has landed—Othello has her in his arms—

"O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest comes such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high; and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven!"

all *in five minutes*—in three minutes—in one minute—in no time—in less than no time.

TALBOYS.

What's your drift?

NORTH.

Handle Shakspeares! Scene II.—A Street—On the day of Othello's arrival—the Proclamation is issued "that there is full liberty of feasting for this present hour of *Five*, till the bell has told Eleven"—for besides the mere perdition of the Turkish Fleet, it is the "celebration *of his nuptials*."

TALBOYS.

We all know that—go on.

SEWARD.

His nuptials! Why, I thought he had been married at Venice!

NORTH.

Who cares what you think? Scene III.—a Hall in the Castle—and enter Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and attendants. Othello says—

"Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to outsport discretion."

And before retiring for the night with Desdemona, he says—

"Michael, good night: *To-morrow, with our earliest,*
Let me have speech with you."

TALBOYS.

Why lay you such emphasis on these unimportant words?

NORTH.

They are not unimportant. Then comes the Night Brawl—as schemed by Iago. Othello, on the spot, cashiers Cassio—and at that very moment, Desdemona entering disturbed, with attendants, he says—

"Look if my gentle love is not rais'd up.—
Come, Desdemona; 'tis the soldiers' life,
To have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife."

Iago advises the unfortunate Cassio to "confess himself freely" to Desdemona—who will help to put him in his place again—and Cassio replies—"*betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me*: I am desperate of *my fortunes, if they check me here*;"—and the Scene concludes with these words of Iago's— 491

"Two things are to be done,—
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;
I'll set her on;
Myself, the while, *to draw the Moor apart,*
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife; Ay, that's the way;
Dull not device by coldness and delay."

"By the mass, 'tis morning," quoth Iago—and Act II. closes with the dawn of the Second Day at Cyprus. You don't deny that?

TALBOYS.

Nobody denies it—nobody ever denied it—nobody ever will deny it.

NORTH.

Act Third. Now for Act III.

TALBOYS.

Our six eyes—and our six ears are all wide awake, sir.

NORTH.

It opens before the Castle—as the *same morning* is pretty well advanced—and Cassio is ordering some Musicians to play "Good-morrow, General."

TALBOYS.

On the same morning? I am not so sure of that, sir.

NORTH.

Nobody denies it—nobody ever did deny it—nobody ever will deny it.

TALBOYS.

Not so fast, sir.

NORTH.

Why, you slow Coach! Cassio says to the Clown, who is with the Musicians, "There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the Gentlewoman that attends the General's wife be stirring, tell her, there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech;"—and as the Clown goes off, Iago enters —and says to Cassio—

"*You have not been a-bed, then?*

And Cassio answers—

> Why, no; *the day had broke*
> *Before we parted*. I have made bold, Iago,
> To send in to your wife. My suit to her
> Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
> Procure me some access.
>
> *Iago.* I'll send her to you presently;
> And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
> Out of the way, that your converse and business
> May be more free."

Emilia then enters, and tells Cassio that all will soon be well—"the General and his Wife are talking of it—and she speaks for you stoutly."—

TALBOYS.

All this does not positively imply that the preceding night was the night of the Brawl. Cassio, though originally intending it, on reflection may have thought it too precipitate to apply to Desdemona the very next day; and there is nothing improbable in his having been with Iago till daybreak on some subsequent night. It is not quite clear, then, that the Third Act commences on the morning after Cassio's dismissal.

NORTH.

O rash and inconsiderate man!

TALBOYS.

Who is?

NORTH.

You. It is not quite clear! I say 'tis clear as mud or amber. Iago has with such hellish haste conceived and executed his machinations, that Cassio has been cashiered some few hours after landing in Cyprus. In the pride of success, he urges on Cassio to apply without delay to Desdemona in the morning. We see the demi-devil determined to destroy—"By the mass, 'tis morning—pleasure and action make the hours seem short." Iago may have gone to bed for a few hours—Cassio had not—"You have not been a-bed, then."—"Why, no; the day had broke before we parted." The Time of the end of Second Act, and of the beginning of Third Act, are thus connected as firmly as words and deeds can connect. You say there is nothing improbable in Cassio's having been with Iago till daybreak on some subsequent night! Why, who the devil cares to know that Cassio had not been to bed on some other night? His not having been to bed on *this* night is an indication of *his* anxiety, and Iago's question is a manifestation of *his* malevolence cloaked with an appearance of concern. In each case an appropriate trait of character is brought before us; but the main purpose of the words is to fix the time, which they do without the possibility of a doubt. They *demonstrate* that the Third Act opens on the morning immediately subsequent to the night on which Act Second closes. This morning dovetails into that night with an exactness which nothing could improve.

TALBOYS.

Why so fierce, my good sir?

NORTH.

Fierce! I may well be fierce. What! Cassio's desire to see Desdemona cool before morning—Iago's desire to drive him on to his destruction cool too—and both walk away without further heed—and when next seen, after an interval of some weeks or months, talking about not having been in bed during some other night on which nothing particular has happened! Bah!

TALBOYS.

Sir, I do not like to see you so much excited. You mistake me—I was merely, at your bidding, assisting you in your expiscation of the Time—we are at one about it—

NORTH.

My dear Talboys, forgive me—my irascibility is a disease—

TALBOYS.

Health—health—exuberant health of mind and body—May you live a thousand years.

NORTH.

The Third Act, then, you allow, opens on the morning of the day following the night on which the Second Act closes?

TALBOYS.

I not only allow, my dear Sir, I insist on it. Let me hear any man deny it, and I will knock the breath out of his body! Proceed, Sir.

NORTH.

Obstinate? I never called you obstinate, my dear Talboys. Well—let me proceed, with you for an ally. In this same scene, First of Act Third, Cassio says to Emilia,

> "Yet, I beseech you,
> If you think fit, or that it may be done,
> Give me advantage of some brief discourse
> With Desdemona alone."

And Emilia says to him,

> "Pray you, come in;
> *I will bestow you where you shall have time*
> *To speak your bosom freely*.
> *Cassio.* I am much bound to you."

And off they go to sue to the gentle Desdemona.

TALBOYS.

Alas! somewhat too gentle.

NORTH.

Then follows Scene II. of Act III.—a very short one—let me read it aloud. 493

"*A Room in the Castle.*

Enter Othello, Iago, *and Gentlemen*.

> *Othello.* These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;
> And, by him, do my duties to the State;
> That done, I will be walking on the works;
> Repair there to me.
> *Iago.* Well, my good Lord, I'll do't.
> *Othello.* This fortification, gentlemen,—shall we see't?
> *Gent.* We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*"

That this Scene is on the same day as Scene Second—and with little intermission of time—is too plain to require proof. Othello here sends off his first dispatches to Venice by the pilot who had brought him safely to Cyprus, and then goes out to inspect the fortification. That is in the natural course of things—such a scene at any subsequent time would be altogether without meaning.

TALBOYS.

I cannot see that, sir.

NORTH.

None so blind as they who will not see.

TALBOYS.

There again.

NORTH.

What do you want, Talboys?

TALBOYS.

Have the goodness, my dear sir, to pause a moment—and go back to the close of the Scene preceding this short one. Then and there, Cassio, as we saw, goes into the Castle with Emilia, "*to be bestowed*" that he may have an opportunity of asking Desdemona to intercede for him with Othello. But "to be bestowed" may mean to have apartments there—and he may have been living in the Castle for several days, with or without Othello's knowledge, before that short Scene which you have just now quoted.

NORTH.

Living in the Castle for several days! With or without Othello's knowledge! Prodigious! All that Cassio asked was, "the advantage of some *brief discourse*;" and, that he might have that advantage, Emilia gave him apartments in the Castle! And there we may suppose him living at rack and manger, lying *perdu* in the Governor's House! Emilia was a queer customer enough, but she could hardly have taken upon herself the responsibility of secreting a man under the same roof with Desdemona, without the sanction of her Mistress—and if with her sanction, what must we think of the "gentle Lady married to the Moor?" Talboys, you are quizzing the old Gentleman.

TALBOYS.

I give it up.

NORTH.

The short Scene I quoted, then, *immediately* follows the preceding—in time; and that short Scene is manifestly introduced by Shakspeare, merely to get Othello out on the ramparts with Iago, *that* Iago may bring the Moor "plump on Cassio soliciting his wife." Scene Third of Act III.! Unfurl.

TALBOYS.

Ay, ay, sir. *Scene Third of Act III.* That is the Scene of Scenes.

NORTH.

Scene Third of Act III., accordingly, shows us Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia before the Castle—and while Cassio is "soliciting his wife"—"enter Othello and Iago at a distance."

"*Emilia.* Madam, here comes
My Lord.
Cassio. Madam, I'll take my leave.
Desdemona. Why stay,
And hear me speak.
Cassio. Madam, *not now; I am very ill at ease*—
Unfit for mine own purposes.
Desdemona. Well—well—
Do your discretion. [*Exit* Cassio."

Down to this exit of Cassio, we are on the morning or forenoon of the Second Day at Cyprus. Every word said proves we are. Cassio's parting words prove it. "Madam, *not now*—I'm very ill at ease—unfit for my own purposes." He had been up all night—had been drunk—cashiered. He sees Othello coming—his heart sinks—and he retreats in shame and fear—"unfit for his own purposes."

TALBOYS.

Eh?

NORTH.

In Scene First of Act III., Emilia tells Cassio that she will do a particular thing—do it of course—*quam primum*—as a thing that requires no delay, and demands haste—and in Scene III. she appears having done it. In Scene First she tells Cassio that she will bring him to speak with Desdemona about his replacement—and in Scene Third, before the Castle, we find that she has done this. The opportunity came immediately—it was made to her hand—all that was necessary was that Othello should not be present—and he was not present. He had gone out on business. Now was just the nick of time for Cassio to bespeak Desdemona's intercession, and now was just the nick of time on which that intercession was by him bespoken. Nothing could be more nicely critical or opportune.

TALBOYS.

Between us, sir, we have tied down Scene III. of Act Third to the Forenoon of the Second Day at Cyprus.

NORTH.

We have tied down Shakspeare thus far to SHORT TIME AT CYPRUS—and to Short Time we shall tie him down till the Catastrophe. OTHELLO MURDERED DESDEMONA THAT VERY NIGHT.

TALBOYS.

No—no—no. Impossible.

NORTH.

Inevitably—and of a dead certainty.

TALBOYS.

How—how, sir?

NORTH.

Why will an Eagle be an Owl?

TALBOYS.

A compliment and a banter—

NORTH.

Why, you Owl! we have just seen Cassio slink away—all is plain sailing now—Talboys—for Iago by four words seals her doom.

"*Ha! I like not that!*
Othello. What dost thou say?
Iago. Nothing, my lord: or if—I know not what.
Othello. Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?
Iago. Cassio, my Lord? No, sure; I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so *guilty-like*
Seeing you coming."

Mark what follows—there is not a moment of intermission in the Action down to end of this Scene Third of Act Third, which you well call the Scene of Scenes, by which time Othello has been convinced of Desdemona's guilt, and has resolved on her Death and Cassio's.

TALBOYS.

Not a moment of intermission! Let's look to it—if it indeed be so— 495

NORTH.

See—hear Desdemona pleading for Cassio—see, hear Othello saying—"Not now, sweet Desdemona;" and then again—"Prythee, no more: let him come when he will—I will deny thee nothing." And again—

"I will deny thee nothing;
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.
Des. Shall I deny you? no: Farewell, my lord.
[*Exit with Emilia.*"

Turn over leaf after leaf—without allowing yourself to read that dreadful colloquy between the Victim and his Destroyer—but letting it glimmer luridly by—till Desdemona comes back—and Othello, under the power of the Angel Innocence, exclaims—

"If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!—
I'll not believe it."

TALBOYS.

I behold her! I hear her voice—"gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman."

"Why is your speech so faint? are you not well?
Oth. I have a pain upon my forehead here."

She drops that fatal handkerchief—

"I am very sorry that you are not well."

What touching words! They go out together—ignorant she that her husband hath heartache, worse than any headache—

NORTH.

Both to be effectually cured *that night* by—bleeding.

TALBOYS.

By bleeding?

NORTH.

You Owl—yea.

TALBOYS.

A sudden thought strikes me, Sir. Desdemona has said to Othello—

"Your dinner, and the generous Islanders
By you invited, do attend your presence."

How's this? This looks like long time—

NORTH.

It may look like what it chooses—but we have *proved* that we are now on the forenoon of the Second Day at Cyprus.

TALBOYS.

Would it not have been treating them too unceremoniously to have sent round the cards of invitation only the night before? As far as I have been able to learn, they have long been in the habit of giving not less than a week's invitation to dinner at Cyprus. In Glasgow it is commonly three weeks. And why "*generous*?" Because they, the Islanders, have given a series of splendid entertainments to Othello and his Bride.

NORTH.

No nonsense, sir. Othello had done what you or I would have done, had either of us been Governor of Cyprus. He had invited the "generous Islanders," immediately on his landing, to dine at the Castle "next day." Had he not done so, he had been a hunks. "Generous," you know, as well as I do, means high-born—men of birth—not generous of entertainments.

TALBOYS.

True, too. But how comes it to be the dinner hour?

NORTH.

People dined in those days, all England over, about eleven A.M.—probably they dined still earlier in the unfashionable region of Cyprus. You are still hankering after the heresy of long time—but no more of that *now*—let us keep to our demonstration of short time—by-and-by you shall see the Gentleman with the Scythe—the Scythian at full swing—as long as yourself.

TALBOYS.

I sit corrected. Go on.

NORTH.

Othello and Desdemona have just gone out—to do the honours at the Dinner Table to the generous Islanders. He must have been a strange Chairman—for though not yet absolutely mad, his soul was sorely changed. Perhaps he made some apology, and was not at that Dinner at all—perhaps it was never eaten—but we lose sight of him for a little while; and Emilia, who remains behind, picks up the fatal handkerchief, and, with a strange wilfulness, or worse, says—

"I'll have the work ta'en out.
And give't Iago."

Iago snatches it from her—and in soliloquy says—

"I will in Cassio's lodgings lose this napkin,
And let him find it."
"This may do something,—
The Moor already changes with the poison:
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons,
Which at the first, are scarce found to distaste;
But, with a little, act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur.—I did say so:—
Enter OTHELLO.
Look! where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine *thee to that sweet sleep*
Which thou ow'dst yesterday."

Then follows, without break, all the rest of this dreadful Third Scene. The first dose of the poison—the second, and third, and fourth—are all given on one and the same day. The mineral has gnawed through all the coats of the stomach—and *He has sworn to murder Her*—all in one day. We have Iago's word for it. *Yesterday* his sleep was sweet—how happy he was then we can imagine—how miserable he is *now* we see—"what a difference to *him*," and in him, between Saturday and Sunday!

Now by yond' marble heaven,
In the due reverence of a sacred vow,
I here engage my words.
Iago. Do not rise yet. [*Kneels.*
Witness, you ever-burning lights above!
You elements, that clip us round about!
Witness, that here Iago doth give up,
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody work soever."

TALBOYS.

Thou Great original Short-Timeist! Unanswerable art Thou. But let us look at the close of this dreadful Third Act.

Othello. I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to't:
Within *these three days* let me hear thee say,
That Cassio's not alive.
Iago. My friend is dead; 'tis done at your request:
But let *her* live.
Othello. Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
To the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.
Iago. I am your own for ever.

In three days—at the longest—for Cassio;—but Iago understood, and did it that very night. And swift means of death for the fair devil were in Othello's own *hands*—ay—he smothered her that night to a dead certainty—a dead certainty at last—though his hands seem to have faltered. 497

NORTH.

In the next Scene—Scene IV.—we find Desdemona anxious about the loss of the handkerchief, but still totally unapprehensive of the Moor's jealousy—

"Who—he? I think the sun, where he was born,
Drew all such humours from him."

Othello enters, saying, "Well, my good Lady,"—and mutters aside, "Oh! hardness to dissemble"—and very ill he does dissemble, for he leaves Desdemona and Emilia amazed at his mad deportment, the latter exclaiming—"Is not this man jealous?" Iago had told Othello of Cassio's possessing the handkerchief in the previous Scene, and Othello takes the first opportunity, *that same afternoon*, to ascertain for himself whether she had parted with it. Would he have let an hour elapse before making the inquiry? Can it be for a moment imagined that he passed days and nights with Desdemona without attempting to sound her regarding this most pregnant proof of her guilt? This Scene concludes the Third Act—*and the time is not long after dinner*.

TALBOYS.

All this being *proved*, it is unnecessary to scrutinise the consecution of the Scenes of Acts Fourth and Fifth—*Iago's work is done—one day* has sufficed—and what folly to bring in long time after this—when his presence would have been unsupportable—had it not been impossible. Death must follow doom.

NORTH.

Death must follow doom. In these four words you have settled the question of time. Long time seemed necessary to change Othello into a murderer—and all the world but you and I believe that long time there was; but you and I know better—and have demonstrated short time—for at

the end of the "dreadful Third Act" Othello is a murderer—and what matters it now *when* he really seized the pillow to smother her, or unsheathed the knife?

TALBOYS.

It matters not a jot. But he did the deed that same night—or he had not been Othello.

NORTH.

There again—*or he "had not been Othello."* In these four words, you have settled the question of time—now and for ever.

TALBOYS.

It would be a waste of words, sir, to seek to prove by the consecution of the Scenes in Acts Fourth and Fifth—though nothing could be easier—that he *did* murder her that very night.

NORTH.

Very few will suffice. Act IV. begins a little before supper-time. Bianca enters in Scene I. inviting Cassio to supper—"An you'll come to supper to-night, you may." If anything were wanting to connect the closing Scene of Act III. with this opening Scene of Act IV. it is fully supplied by Bianca, who at the end of Act III. gets the handkerchief, in order that she may copy it, and in the scene of this IVth Act, comes back in a fury. "Let the devil and his dam haunt you—what did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me *even now*? I was a fine fool to take it." Cassio had given it to her a little after dinner, and Bianca, inviting him to supper, says he had given it to her EVEN NOW. This Scene I. of Act IV. ends with Othello's invitation to the newly arrived Lodovico—"I do entreat that we may sup together." Scene II. comprehends the interview between Othello and Emilia; Othello and Desdemona—Desdemona, Emilia and Iago. The whole do not occupy an hour of time—they follow one another naturally, and the action is continuous. Scene III. shows Lodovico and the Noble Venetians still at the Castle—but now it is *after* supper. Lodovico is departing—

> "I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no farther.
> *Othello.* O pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk. 498
> O Desdemona!
> *Desdemona.* My Lord?
> *Othello. Get you to bed on the instant, I will be returned forthwith.*"

Desdemona, obeys—the bed-scene follows—and *she is murdered*. What say you, Seward?

SEWARD.

"I say ditto to Mr Burke."

NORTH.

Buller?

BULLER.

I say ditto to Mr North.

NORTH.

Why have both of you been so silent?

SEWARD.

I knew it all before.

TALBOYS.

What a bouncer!

BULLER.

I never speak when I am busking Flies. There's a Professor for you—(six red and six black)—pretty full in the body—long-winged—liker eagle than insect—sharper than needle—and with, barb "inextricable as the gored Lion's bite." Lunch-gong. To the Deeside.

NORTH.

Verdict: Desdemona Murdered by Othello on the Second Night In Cyprus.

Scene III.—*Deeside.*

Time—*At and after Lunch.*

North—Talboys—Seward—Buller.

NORTH.

Having demonstrated Short Time at Cyprus, let us now, if it please you, gentlemen, show forth Long Time at Cyprus.

TALBOYS.

With all our heart. We have *demonstrated* the one, let us *show forth* the other.

NORTH.

And as, in our Demonstration of Short Time, we kept Long Time out of sight—excluded him from the Tent—

BULLER.

Pardon me, sir. I for one was beginning to feel his influence.

NORTH.

How?

BULLER.

In that contraction and expansion of the jaws denoted by that most expressive and characteristic word Yawn; for Seward and I were but listeners.

NORTH.

I don't believe you heard one word.

BULLER.

I did—several; and spoiled a promising Palmer in idly trying to audit your discourse at the interesting point of quarrel—just as you, sir, threw yourself back on your Swing, with an angry jerk, and Talboys started up, "like Teneriffe or Atlas removed," endangering the stability of the Tent.

NORTH.

My dear Talboys, I was saying to you, when rudely interrupted by Buller, that as in our demonstration of Short Time at Cyprus, we, purposely and determinedly, and wisely kept Long Time out of sight, on account of the inextricable perplexity and confusion that would otherwise have involved the argument, so now let us, in showing forth Long Time at Cyprus, keep out of sight Short—and then shall we finally have before our ken Two Times at Cyprus, each firmly

established on its own ground—and imperiously demanding of the Critics of this great Tragedy—Reconcilement. Reconcilement it may be beyond their power to give—but let them first see the GREAT FACT which not one of the whole set have seen—HAND IN HAND ONE DAY AND UNASSIGNED WEEKS! The condition is altogether anomalous—

TALBOYS.

A DAY OF THE CALENDAR, AND A MONTH OF THE CALENDAR! No human soul ever dreams of the dreadful sayings and doings all coming off IN A DAY! till he looks—till he is made to look—as we have made Seward and Buller to look—for they heard every word we said—and finds himself nailed by Act and Scene.

NORTH.

To some FIFTEEN HOURS.

BULLER.

I thought you were going to show forth Long Time at Cyprus.

NORTH.

Why, there it is, staring you in the face everywhere—you may see it with your eyes shut—and as most people read with their eyes shut, they see it—and they see it only—while—

BULLER.

Why, sir, since you won't get on a little faster, Talboys and I must be Ushers to Long Time.

NORTH.

Be—do.

TALBOYS.

Long Time cunningly insinuates itself, serpentwise, throughout Desdemona's first recorded conversation with Cassio, at the beginning of Scene III., Act III.—the "Dreadful Scene." Thus—

> "Assure thee,
> If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
> To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
> I'll watch him tame, and talk him out of patience;
> His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
> I'll intermingle everything he does
> With Cassio's suit: Therefore be merry, Cassio;
> For thy solicitor shall rather die
> Than give thy cause away."

This points to a protracted time in the future—and though announcing an intention merely, yet somehow it leaves an impression that Desdemona carries her intention into effect—that she does "watch him tame," does make his "bed seem a school"—does "intermingle everything she does with Cassio's suit." The passage recurred to my mind, I recollect, when you first hinted to me the question of time; and no doubt it tells so on the minds of many—

NORTH.

Inconsiderate people.

TALBOYS.

All people are more or less inconsiderate, sir.

NORTH.

True.

TALBOYS.

Then Desdemona says—

"How now, my lord?
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man *that languishes in your displeasure*."

I cannot listen to that line, even now, without a feeling of the heart-sickness of protracted time —"hope deferred maketh the heart sick"—*languishes!* even unto death. I think of that fine line in Wordsworth— 500

"So fades—*so languishes*—grows dim, and dies."

SEWARD.

Poo!

NORTH.

Seward, the remark is a fine one.

TALBOYS.

Far on in this Scene, Othello says to Iago—

"If more thou dost perceive, let me know more:
Set on thy wife to observe."

Iago has not said that he had perceived anything, but Othello, greatly disturbed, speaks as if Iago had said that he had perceived a good deal; and we might believe that they had been a long time at Cyprus. Othello then says—

"This honest creature, doubtless,
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds."

In all this, sir, we surely have a feeling of longish time.

SEWARD.

Poo!

NORTH.

Heed him not—English manners. We have—

TALBOYS.

"O curse of marriage!
That we can call those delicate creatures ours—
And not their appetites."

This is the language of a some time married man—not of a man the morning after his nuptials.

NORTH.

The Handkerchief.

TALBOYS.

Ay—Emilia's words.

"I am glad I have found this napkin;
This was her first remembrance from the Moor—
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,
(For he conjur'd her, she would ever keep it,)
That she reserves it evermore about her,
To kiss, and talk to."

Here we have long time, and no mistake. Iago has wooed her to steal it a hundred times! When and where? Since their arrival at Cyprus.

SEWARD.

I don't know that.

TALBOYS.

Nor do I. But I say the words naturally give us the impression of long time. In none of his soliloquies at Venice, or at Cyprus on their first arrival, has Iago once mentioned that Handkerchief as the chief instrument of his wicked design—and therefore Emilia's words imply weeks at Cyprus,—

"What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief?
Iago. What handkerchief?
Emilia. Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal."

NORTH.

Go on.

TALBOYS.

"What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?
I saw it not—thought it not—it harm'd not me—
I slept the next night well—was free and merry;
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips."

Next night—night after night—many nights—many *wedded* nights—long time at Cyprus.

NORTH.

And then Cassio's dream.

TALBOYS.

"I lay with Cassio—*lately*." Where, but at Cyprus? "Cursed fate! that *gave thee to the Moor*."

SEWARD.

Of that by-and-by.

TALBOYS.

Of that now. What?

SEWARD.

By-and-by.

NORTH.

Better be a dumb dog, Seward, than snarl so.

TALBOYS.

And on Othello going off in a rage about the handkerchief—what saith Desdemona?—

"*I ne'er saw this before.*"

These few words are full charged with long time.

NORTH.

They are. And Emilia's—"'Tis not a year or two shows us a man." True, that is a kind of general reflection—but a most foolish general reflection indeed, if made to a Wife weeping at her husband's harshness the day after marriage.

TALBOYS.

Emilia's "year or two" cannot mean one day—it implies weeks—or months. Desdemona then says,—

"Something, sure, of state,
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practice," &c.

Does not *that* look like long time at Cyprus? Unlike the language of one who had herself arrived at Cyprus from Venice but the day before. And in continuation, Desdemona's

"Nay, we must think, men are not gods;
Nor of them look for such observances
As fit the bridal."

And that thought brings sudden comfort to poor Desdemona, who says sweetly—

"Beshrew me much, Emilia,
I was (unhandsome warrior as I am,)
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
But now, I find, I had suborn'd the witness,
And he's indited falsely."

That is—why did I, a married woman some months old, forget that the honey-moon is gone, and that my Othello, hero as he is, is now—not a Bridegroom—but a husband? "Men are not gods."

NORTH.

And Bianca? She's a puzzler.

TALBOYS.

A puzzler, and something more.

"*Bianca.* Save you, friend Cassio!
Cassio. What make you from home?
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
I'faith, sweet love, I was coming *to your house*.
Bianca. And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What! keep a week away? seven days and nights?
Eight score eight hours? And lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning!
Cassio. Pardon me, Bianca;
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd;
But I shall, in a more continuate time,
Strike off the score of absence."

Here the reproaches of Bianca to Cassio develop long time. For, besides his week's absence from her house, there is implied the preceding time necessary for contracting and habitually carrying on the illicit attachment. Bianca is a Cyprus householder; Cassio sups at her house; his intimacy,

which has various expressions of continuance, has been formed with her there; he has found her, and grown acquainted with her there, not at Venice. I know it has been suggested that she was his mistress at Venice—that she came with the squadron from Venice; and that her last cohabitation with Cassio had taken place in Venice about a week ago—but for believing this there is here not the slightest ground. "What! keep a week away?" would be a strange exclamation, indeed, from one who knew that he had been but a day on shore—had landed along with herself yesterday from the same ship—and had been a week cooped up from her in a separate berth. And Bianca, seeing the handkerchief, and being told to "take me this work out," cries—

"O Cassio! whence came this?
This is some token from a newer friend.
To the felt absence now I feel a cause."

"To the felt absence," Eight score eight hours! the cause? Some new mistress at Cyprus—not forced separation at sea.

NORTH.

Then, Talboys, in Act IV., Scene I., Othello is listening to the conversation of Iago and Cassio, which he believes relates to his wife. Iago says—

"She gives it out that you shall marry her;
Do you intend it?
Cassio. Ha! ha! ha!
Othello. Do you triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?
Iago. Faith! the cry goes, *that you shall marry her*.
Cassio. Pr'ythee, say true.
Iago. I am a very villain else.
Othello. Have you SCORED ME? Well."

That is, have you marked me for destruction, in order that you may marry my wife? Othello believes that Cassio is said to entertain an intention of marrying Desdemona, and infers that, as a preliminary, he must be put out of the way. This on the first day after marriage? No, surely—long time at Cyprus.

TALBOYS.

Iago says to Cassio,

"My Lord is fallen into an epilepsy:
This is his second fit: *he had one yesterday*.
Cassio. Rub him about the temples.
Iago. No, forbear;
The lethargy must have his quiet course:
If not, he foams at mouth; and, by-and-by,
Breaks out to savage madness."

This is a lie—but Cassio believes it. Cassio could not have believed it, and therefore Iago would not have told it, had "yesterday" been the day of the triumphant, joyful, and happy arrival at Cyprus. Assuredly, Cassio knew that Othello had had no fit *that* day; that day he was Othello's lieutenant—Iago but his Ancient—and Iago could know nothing of any fits that Cassio knew not of —therefore—Long Time.

NORTH.

"For I will make him tell the tale anew,
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when,
He hath—and is again to—"

He does so—and Othello believes what he hears Cassio tell of Bianca to be of Desdemona. Madness any way we take it—but madness possible only—on long time at Cyprus.

TALBOYS.

Then, sir, the trumpet announcing the arrival of Lodovico from Venice, at the close of Iago's and Othello's murderous colloquy, and Lodovico giving Othello a packet containing—his recall!

"They do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government."

What are we to make of that?

NORTH.

The Recall, except after considerable time, would make the policy of the Senate frivolous—a thing Shakspeare never does, for the greatness of political movements lies everywhere for a support to the strength and power of his tragical fable. Half that we know of Othello out of the Scenes is, that he is the trusted General of the Senate. What gravity his esteem with you derives hence, and can we bear to think of him superseded without cause? Had Lodovico, who brings the new commission, set off the day after Othello from Venice? No. You imagine an intercourse, which has required time, between Othello, since his appointment, and the Senate. Why, in all the world, do they thus suddenly depose him, and put Cassio in his place? You cannot well think that the very next measure of the Senate, after entrusting the command of Cyprus, their principal Island, to their most tried General, in most perilous and critical times, was to displace him ere they hear a word from him. They have not had time to know that the Turkish Fleet is wrecked and scattered, unless they sit behind Scenes in the Green-room.

TALBOYS.

We must conclude that the Senate must give weeks or months to this New Governor ere interfering with him.—To recall him before they know he has reached Cyprus—nay, to send a ship after him next day—or a day or two following his departure—would make these "most potent, grave, and reverend Signors," enigmas, and the Doge an Idiot. What though a steamer had brought tidings back to Venice that the Turks had been "banged" and "drowned?" That was not a sufficient reason to order Othello back before he could have well set his foot on shore, or taken more than a look at the state of the fortifications, in case the Ottoman should fit out another fleet.

NORTH.

Then mark Lodovico's language. He asks, seeing Othello strike his wife—as well he may—"Is it his use?" Or did the letters "work upon his blood, and new-create this fault?" And Iago answers, "It is not honesty in me to speak *what I have seen and known*." Lodovico says, "The noble Moor, whom our Senate call all in all sufficient." Then they have not quarrelled with him, at least—nor lost their good opinion of him! Iago answers, "He is much changed?" What, in a day? And again —"It is not honesty in me to speak what I have seen and known." What, in a day? Lodovico comes evidently to Othello after a long separation—such as affords room for a moral transformation; and Iago's words——lies as they are—and seen to be lies by the most unthinking person—yet refer to much that has passed in an ample time—to a continued course of procedure.

NORTH.

But in all the Play, nothing is so conclusive of long time as the Second Scene of the Third Act.

"*Othello.* You have seen nothing, then?
Emilia. Nor ever heard; nor ever did suspect.
Othello. Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.
Emilia. But then I saw no harm; and then I heard
Each syllable, that breath made up between them.
Othello. What, did they never whisper?
Emilia. Never, my Lord.
Othello. Nor send you out o' the way?
Emilia. Never.
Othello. To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?
Emilia. Never, my Lord.
Othello. That's strange."

If all this relates to their residence at Cyprus, it indicates many weeks.

SEWARD.

Ay—If.

NORTH.

What wicked whisper was that? Did you whisper, Buller?

BULLER.

No. I have not once whispered for a quarter of a century—My whispering days have long been over.

NORTH.

Then a word about Emilia. "I prythee, let thy wife attend on her," says Othello, going on board at Venice, to Iago. In the slight way in which such arrangements can be touched, this request is conclusive evidence to Emilia's being then *first* placed about Desdemona's person. It has no sense else; nor is there the slightest ground for supposing a prior acquaintance, at least intimacy. What had an Ensign's wife to do with a Nobleman's daughter? and now she is attached as an Attendant. Now, consider, first, Emilia's character. She seems not very principled, not very chaste. She gives you the notion of a tolerably well-practised Venetian Wife. Hear Iago's opinion, who suspects her with two persons, and one on general rumour. Yet how strong her affection for Desdemona, and her faith in her purity! She witnesses for her, and she dies for her! I ask, how long did that affection and that opinion take to grow? a few days at Venice, and a week while they were sea-sick aboard ship? No. Weeks—months. A gentle lady once made to me that fine remark,—"Emilia has not much worth in herself, but is raised into worth by her contact with Desdemona—into heroic worth!" "I care not for thy sword—I'll make thee known, though I lost twenty lives." And that bodeful "Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home"! what does it mean? but a dim surmise, or a clear, that what she will disclose will bring the death upon her from his dagger, which it brings. The impure dying a voluntary martyr for the pure is to the highest degree affecting—is the very manner of Shakspeare, to express a principal character by its influence on subordinate ones—has its own moral sublimity; but more than all, for our purpose, it witnesses time. Love, and Faith, and Fidelity, won from her in whom these virtues are to be first created!

SEWARD.

Very fine. My dear sir, you are not angry with me?

TALBOYS.

Angry? Not he. Look on his face—how mild!

NORTH.

Othello, in his wrath, calls Emilia "a closet-lock-and-key of villanous secrets: and yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do't." Where and when? It could only have been at Cyprus; and such language denotes a somewhat long attendance there on Desdemona.

SEWARD.

Ingenious—and better than so.

NORTH.

"Some of your function, mistress," renewed to Emilia—when, after conversing with Desdemona, Othello is going out—is his treatment of one whom he supposes to have been serviceable to his wife's and Cassio's amour. Where? There, only there, in Cyprus, by all witnessing, palpably. *She* could not before. He speaks to her as *professional* in such services, therefore long dealing in them; but this all respects this one intrigue, not her previous life. The wicked energy of the forced attribution vanishes, if this respects anything but her helpfulness to his wife and her paramour, and at Cyprus—there—only there. Nothing points to a farther back looking suspicion. Iago's "thousand times committed" can only lengthen out the stay at Cyprus. Othello still believes that she once loved him—that she has fallen to corruption.

BULLER.

Antenuptial?

NORTH.

Faugh! Could he have the most horrible, revolting, and loathsome of all thoughts, that he wedded her impure? and not a hint given of that most atrocious pang? Incredible—impossible! I can never believe, if Shakspeare intended an infidelity taking precedency of the marriage, that he

would not by word or by hint have said so. Think how momentous to our intelligence of the jealousy the *date* is; not as to Tuesday or Wednesday, but as to before or after the nuptial knot—before or after the first religious loosing of the virgin zone. That a man's wife has turned into a wanton—hell and horror! But that he wedded one—Pah! Faugh! Could Iago, could Othello, could Shakspeare have left *this* point in the chronology of guilt to be argued out doubtfully? No. The greatest of Poets for pit, boxes, and gallery, must have written intelligibly to pit, boxes, and gallery; and extrication, unveiled, after two hundred and fifty years, by studious men, in a fit of perplexity, cannot be the thunderbolt which Shakspeare flung to his audience at the Globe Theatre.

TALBOYS.

You remember poor, dear, Sweet Mrs Henry Siddons—*the* Desdemona—how she gave utterance to those words

> "It was his bidding—therefore, good Emilia,
> Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu;
> We must not now displease him.
> *Emilia.*—I would you had never seen him!
> *Desdemona.*—So would not I; my love doth so approve him,
> That even his stubbornness, his checks, and frowns,—
> Pr'ythee, unpin me,—have grace and favour in them.
> *Emilia.*—I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.
> *Desdemona.*—All's one: Good father! how foolish are our minds!
> If I do die before thee—pr'ythee shroud me
> In one of those same sheets."

The wedding sheets were *reserved*. They had been laid by for weeks—months—time long enough to give a saddest character to the bringing them out again—a serious, ominous meaning—disturbed from the quietude, the sanctity of their sleep by a wife's mortal presentiment that they may be her shroud.

NORTH.

> *Long time established at Cyprus.*
>
> *Verdict*—Desdemona murdered by Othello heaven knows when.

Scene IV.—*The Grove.*

Time—*After Lunch.*

North—Talboys—Seward—Buller.

SEWARD.

On rising, sir, to——

NORTH.

Sit down—no gentleman speaks on his legs before, at, or after meals in a private Party.

SEWARD.

Except in Scotland. On sitting down, sir, to state my Theory, I trust that I shall not lay myself open to the im——

NORTH.

Speak with your natural tone as if you were sitting, Seward, and not with that Parliamentary sing-song in which Statesmen, with their coat-tails perked up behind, declaim on the State of Europe—

SEWARD.

I IMAGINE, SIR, THAT SHAKSPEARE ASSUMED THE MARRIAGE TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE SOME TIME BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PLAY—SUFFICIENTLY LONG TO ADMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF A COURSE OF GUILT BEFORE THE PLAY OPENS. I imagine that, with this general idea in his mind, he gave his full and unfettered attention to the working out of THE PLOT, which has no reference to the time, circumstances, or history of the Marriage, but relates exclusively to the Moor's Jealousy. Therefore the indications of past time at Venice are vague, and rarely scattered through the Dialogue.

TALBOYS.

A more astounding discovery indeed, Seward, than any yet announced by that Stunner, Christopher North. Pardon me, sir.

NORTH.

We have said our say, Shirra; let the Lord-Lieutenant of his County say his—

TALBOYS.

And the Chairman of the Quarter-Sessions, and President of the Agricultural Society of the Land's End say his.

BULLER.

I can beat you at Chess.

TALBOYS.

YOU!!!

NORTH.

Gentlemen, let there be no bad blood.

SEWARD.

Supposing that this was Shakspeare's general idea of the Plot, I would first beg your attention to the fact that the marriage has taken place—none of us know how long—*before the beginning of the Play*.

TALBOYS.

The same night—the same night.

SEWARD.

I said—none of us know how long; and as you are a Lawyer, Mr Talboys—

TALBOYS.

For goodness' sake, my dear Seward, don't mister me—

SEWARD.

The only evidence, my dear Talboys, as to the history of the marriage is that given by Roderigo in the First Scene. He, with the most manifest anxiety to prove himself an honest witness, declares that now, at midnight, Desdemona had eloped—NOT WITH *the Moor*, but with no "worse nor better guard, but with a knave of common hire, a gondolier, *to*," &c., &c. She has fled *alone* from her father's house; and Roderigo, being interrogated, "Are they married, think ye?" answers, "Truly I think they are."

TALBOYS.

What do you say to Iago's saying to Cassio—

"Faith he *to-night* has boarded a land Carrack:
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.
Cassio. I do not understand.
Iago. He's married."

SEWARD.

It cannot be inferred, from these words, that this was the first occasion on which Desdemona and Othello had come together as man and wife. The words are quite consistent with the supposition that their marriage had taken place some time before; also quite consistent with Iago's knowledge of that event. It was not his cue or his humour to say more than he did. Why should he? 507

TALBOYS.

It cannot be inferred! It can—I infer it. And pray, how do you account for Othello saying to Desdemona, on the day of their arrival at Cyprus,

"The purchase made—the fruits are to ensue;
That profit's yet to come 'twixt me and you."

SEWARD.

"The purchase made"—refers to the price which Othello had paid for connubial delight with Desdemona awaiting him at Cyprus. That price was the peril which he had undergone during his stormy voyage. In his exuberant satisfaction, simply expressing a self-evident truth, that his happiness was *yet* before him. Had Desdemona been then a virgin bride, Othello would hardly have used such language. Iago speaks in his usual characteristic coarse way—so no need to say a word more on the subject.

TALBOYS.

Very well. Be it so. But why should such a private marriage have been resorted to; and if privacy was desirable at first, what change had occurred to cause the public declaration of it?

SEWARD.

Othello had been nine months unemployed in war—the Venetian State was at peace—and he had been in constant intercourse with the Brabantios.

"Her father lov'd me—oft invited me;"

and he "took *once* a pliant hour" to ask Desdemona to be his wife. That "once" cannot refer to the day on which the Play commences; and that their marriage took place some time before, is alike reconcileable with the character of the "gentle Lady," and with that of the impetuous Hero.

TALBOYS.

Truly!

SEWARD.

Still, a private marriage is, under any circumstances, a questionable proceeding; and our great Dramatist was desirous that as little of the questionable as possible should either be or appear in the conduct of the "Divine Desdemona;" and therefore he has left the private marriage very much in the shade.

TALBOYS.

Very much in the shade indeed.

SEWARD.

Her duplicity must be admitted, and allowance must be made for it. It was wrong, but not in the least unnatural, and perfectly excusable—

TALBOYS.

No.

SEWARD.

And grievously expiated.

TALBOYS.

It was indeed. Poor dear Desdemona!

SEWARD.

It is, you know, part of the proof of her capacity for guilt, that she so ingeniously deceived her father.

TALBOYS.

But why reveal it now?

SEWARD.

Circumstances are changed. The Cyprus wars have broke out, and Othello is about to be commissioned to take the command of the Venetian force.

> "I do know, the State
> Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embarked
> With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
> Which even now stand in act, that for their souls
> Another of his fathom have they not
> To lead this business."

It was therefore necessary that the marriage should be declared, if Desdemona was to accompany her husband to Cyprus. And the elopement from her father *to* her husband did take place just in time. 508

TALBOYS.

Is that what people call plausible?

SEWARD.

All the difficulties of Time are thus removed in a moment. In a blaze of light we see Long Time at Venice—Short Time at Cyprus.

BULLER.

Long Time at Venice—Short Time at Cyprus. That's the Ticket. You Scotsmen are not wholly without Insight; but for seeing into the heart of the bole—or of the stone—

TALBOYS.

Give me a Devonshire Cider-swiller or a Cornish Miner.

NORTH.

What! Can't we discuss a Great Question in the Drama without these unseemly personal and national broils. For shame, Talboys.

TALBOYS.

You Scotsmen indeed!

"Nay, but he prated,
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against YOUR HONOUR."

NORTH.

My dear Seward, let's hear how you support your Theory.

SEWARD.

A great deal of weight, my dear Mr North, is to be attached to the calm tone—the husbandlike and matronlike demeanour of Othello and Desdemona when confronted with the Senate. That scene certainly impresses one with the conviction that they had been man and wife for a considerable period of time.

NORTH.

Very good, Seward—very good.

SEWARD.

I do indeed think, sir, that the bride and bridegroom show much more composure throughout the whole of that Scene, than is very reconcileable with the idea that this was their nuptial night. Othello's "natural and prompt alacrity" in undertaking the wars was scarcely complimentary to his virgin Spouse upon this supposition; and Desdemona's cool distinguishings between the paternal and marital claims on her duty seem also somewhat too matronly for the occasion.

NORTH.

Very good—very good—my dear Seward, I like your observation much, that the demeanour of the married pair before the Senate has a stamp of composure. That is finely felt; but I venture to aver, my dear friend, that we must otherwise understand it. The dignity of their spirits it is that holds them both composed. Invincible self-collectedness is by more than one person in the Play held up for a characteristic quality of Othello. To a mind high and strong, which Desdemona's is, the exigency of a grand crisis, which overthrows weaker and lower minds, produces composure; from a sense of the necessity for self-possession; and involuntarily from the tension of the powers—their sole direction to the business that passes—which leaves no thought free to stray into disorder, and the inquietude of personal regards. Add, on the part of Othello, the gravity, and on that of Desdemona the awe of the Presence in which they stand, speak, and act; and you have ennobling and sufficing tragical, that is loftily and pathetically poetical, motives for that elate presence of mind which both show. Now all the greatness and grace vanish, if you suppose them calm simply because they have been married these two months. That is a reason fit for Thalia, not for Melpomene.

TALBOYS.

Let any one English among all the two of you answer that.

SEWARD.

The Duke says—

"You must hence to-night.
Desdemona. To-night, my Lord?
Othello. With all my heart."

This faint expression of Desdemona's slight surprise and reluctance, and no more—is I allow—natural and delicate in her—whether wife, bride, or Maid—but Othello's "with all my heart" is—

TALBOYS.

Equally worthy of Othello. You know it is.

NORTH.

My dear Seward—do the Doge—Brabantio—the Senate understand and believe what Othello has been telling them—and that he has now disclosed to them the fact of a private marriage with Desdemona, of some weeks' or months' standing? Is that their impression?

SEWARD.

I cannot say.

NORTH.

I can. Or has Othello been reserved—cautious—crafty in all his apparent candour—and Desdemona equally so? Are they indeed oldish-married folk?

TALBOYS.

Shocking—shocking. That Scene in the Council Chamber of itself deals your "Theory!" its death-blow.

SEWARD.

I look on it in quite another light. I shall be glad to know what you think is meant by Desdemona's to the Duke

"If I be left behind,
The rites for which I love him are denied me."

What are the *rites* which are thus all comprehensive of Desdemona's love for Othello? The phrase is, to the habit of our ears, perhaps somewhat startling; yet five lines before she said truly "I saw Othello's visage in his mind"—a love of spirit for spirit. And again—

"To his honour and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate."

I think they had been married some time.

TALBOYS.

The word *rites* is the very word most fitting the Lady's lips—used in a generous, free, capacious sense—as of the solace entire which the wife of a soldier has, following him; as to dress his wounds, wind his laurel, hear his counsels, cheer his darker mood, smile away the lowering of the Elements—

SEWARD.

You won't understand me.

NORTH.

No—no—no. It won't go down. I have opened my mouth far and wide, and, it won't go down. Our friend Isaac Widethroat himself could not bolt it. The moral impossibility would choke him—that Othello would marry Desdemona to leave her at her Father's House, for which most perilous and entangling proceeding, quite out of his character, no motive is offered, or imaginable. The love-making might go on long—and I accept a good interval since he drew from her the prayer for his history. The pressure of the war might give a decisive moment for the final step, which must have been in agitation for some time—on Desdemona's behalf and part, who would require some persuasion for a step so desperate, and would not at once give up all hope of her, father's consent, who "loved" Othello.

TALBOYS.

If they were married, how base and unmanly *to steal one's wedded Wife out of one's Father-in-law's house*! The only course was to have gone in the middle of the day to Brabantio and say, "this we have done"—or "this I have done. Forgive us, if you can—we are Man and Wife." Men less kingly than Othello have often done it. To steal in order to marry was a temptation with a circumstantial necessity—a gallant adventure in usual estimation.

NORTH.

The thing most preposterous to me in a long marriage at Venice, is the continued lying position in which it places Othello and Desdemona towards her father. Two months—say—or three or four—of difficult deception! when the uppermost characteristic of both is clear-souledness—the most magnanimous sincerity. By that, before anything else, are they kindred and fit for one another. On that, before anything else, is the Tragedy grounded—on his unsuspicious openness which is drawn, against its own nature, to suspect her purity that lies open as earth's bosom to the sun. And she is to be killed for a dissembler! In either, immense contrast between the person and fate. That These Two should truckle to a domestic lie!

TALBOYS.

No. The Abduction and Marriage were of one stroke—one effort—one plot. When Othello says, "That I have ta'en away—that I have married her"—he tells literally and simply that which has happened as it happened, in the order of events.

SEWARD.

Why should not Othello marry Desdemona, and keep her at her father's, as theorised?

NORTH.

It is out of his character. He has the spirit of command, of lordship, of dominion—an *animus imperiosus*. This element must be granted to fit him for his place; and it is intimated, and is consistent with and essential to his whole fabric of mind. Then, he would not put that which belonged to him out of his power, in hostile keeping—his wife and not his wife. It is contrary to his great love, which desires and would feed upon her continual presence. And against his discretion, prudence, or common sense, to risk that Brabantio, discovering, might in fury take sudden violent measures—shut her up in a convent, or turn her into the streets, or who knows what—kill her.

TALBOYS.

Then the insupportable consideration and question, how do they come together as man and wife? Does she come to his bedroom at his private Lodgings, or his quarters at the Sagittary? Or does he go to hers at her father's, climbing a garden wall every night like Romeo, bribing the porter, or trusting Ancilla? You cannot figure it out any way without *degradation*, and something ludicrous; and a sense of being entangled in the impracticable.

NORTH.

The least that can be said is, that it invests the sanctimony of marriage with the air of an illicit amour.

TALBOYS.

Then the high-minded Othello running the perpetual and imminent risk of being caught thieving—slipping through loop-holes—mouse-holes—key-holes. What in Romeo and Juliet is romance, between Othello and Desdemona is almost pollution.

NORTH.

What a desolating of the MANNERS of the Play! Will you then, in order to evade a difficulty of the mechanical construction, clog and whelm the poetry, and moral greatness of the Play, with a preliminary debasement? Introduce your Hero and Heroine under a cloud?

TALBOYS.

And how can you show that Othello could not at any moment have taken her away, as at last

you suppose him to do, having a motive? Mind—he knows that the wars are on—he does not know he shall be sent for that night. He does not know that he may not have to keep her a week at his quarters. 511

NORTH.

My dear Seward—pray, meditate but for a moment on these words of Desdemona in the Council Chamber—

> "My noble Father,
> I do perceive here A DIVIDED DUTY:
> My life and education both do learn me
> How to respect you; you are the LORD OF DUTY,
> I am hitherto your Daughter: BUT HERE'S MY HUSBAND;
> And so *much duty as my mother showed*
> *To you*, preferring you before her Father,
> So much I challenge that I may profess
> Due to the Moor, my Lord."

These are weighty words—of grave and solemn import—and the time has come when Desdemona the Daughter is to be Desdemona the Wife. She tells simply and sedately—affectionately and gratefully—the great primal Truth of this our human and social life. Hitherto her Father has been to her the Lord of Duty—the Lord of Duty henceforth is to be her Husband. Othello, up to that night, had been but her Lover; and up to that night—for the hidden wooing was nothing to be ashamed of or repented—there had been to her no "divided Duty"—to her Father's happiness had been devoted her whole filial heart. But had she been a married woman for weeks or months before, how insincere—how hypocritical had that appeal been felt by herself to be, as it issued from her lips! The Duty had, in that case, been "divided" before—and in a way not pleasant for us to think of—to her Father violated or extinct.

TALBOYS.

I engage, Seward, over and above what our Master has made manifest, to show that though this Theory of yours would remove some difficulties attending the time in Cyprus, it would leave others just where they are—and create many more.

NORTH.

Grant that Othello and Desdemona must be married for two months before he murders her—that our hearts and imaginations require it. The resemblance to the ordinary course of human affairs asks it. We cannot bear that he shall extinguish her and himself—both having sipped only, and not quaffed from the cup of hymeneal felicity. Your soul is outraged by so harsh and malignant a procedure of the Three Sisters. Besides, in proper poetical equilibration, he should have enjoyed to the full, with soul and with body, the happiness which his soul annihilates. And men do not kill their wives the first week. It would be too exceptional a case. Extended time is required for the probability—the steps of change in the heart of Othello require it—the construction and accumulation of proofs require it—the wheel of events usually rolls with something of leisure and measure. So is it in the real World—so must it seem to be on the Stage—else no verisimilitude—no "veluti in speculum." "Two mouths shall elapse between marriage and murder," says Shakspeare—going to write. They must pass at Venice, or they must pass at Cyprus. Place Shakspeare in this position, and which will he choose? If at Venice, a main requiring condition is not satisfied. For in the fits and snatches of the clandestine marriage, Othello has never possessed with full embrace, and heart overflowing, the happiness which he destroys. If an earthquake is to ruin a palace, it must be built up to the battlements and pinnacles; furnished, occupied, made the seat of Pleasure, Pomp, and Power; and then shaken into heaps—or you have but half a story. Only at Cyprus Othello *possesses* Desdemona. There where he is Lord of his Office, Lord over the Allegiance of soldier and civilian—of a whole population—Lord of the Island, which, sea-surrounded, is as a world of itself—Lord of his will—Lord of his Wife.

TALBOYS.

I feel, sir, in this view much poetical demonstration—although mathematical none—and in such a case Poetry is your only Principia. 512

NORTH.

Your hand. But if, my dear Seward, Shakspeare elects time at Venice, he wilfully clouds his two excellent Persons with many shadows of indecorum, and clogs his Action with a procedure and a state of affairs, which your Imagination loses itself in attempting to define—with improbabilities

—with impracticabilities—with impossibilities. If he was resolute to have a well-sustained logic of Time, I say it was better for him to have his Two Months distinct at Cyprus. I say that, with his creative powers, if he was determined to have Two Calendar Months, from the First of May to the First of July, and then in One Day distinctly the first suspicion sown and the murder done, nothing could have been easier to him than to have imagined, and indicated, and hurried over the required gap of time; and that he would have been bound to prefer this course to that inexplicable marriage and no marriage at Venice.

BULLER.

How he clears his way!

NORTH.

But Shakspeare, my dear Boys, had a better escape. Wittingly or unwittingly, he exempted himself from the obligation of walking by the Calendar. He knew—or he felt that the fair proportionate structure of the Action required liberal time at Cyprus. He took it; for there it is, recognised in the consciousness of every sitting or standing spectator. He knew, or he felt, that the passionate expectation to be sustained in the bosoms of his audience required a rapidity of movement in his Murder-Plot, and it moves on feet of fire.

SEWARD.

Venice is beginning to fade from my ken.

NORTH.

The first of all necessities towards the Criticism of the Play, Seward, is to convince yourself that there was not—could not be a time of concealed marriage at Venice—that it is not hinted, and is not inferable.

BULLER.

Shall we give in, Seward?

SEWARD.

Yes.

NORTH.

You must go to the Tremendous Double Time at Cyprus, knowing that the solution is to be had there, or nowhere. If you cast back a longing lingering look towards Venice, you are lost. Put mountains and waves between you and the Queen of the Sea. Help yourself through at Cyprus, or perish in the adventure.

TALBOYS.

Through that Mystery, you alone, sir, are the Man to help us through—and you must.

NORTH.

Not now—to-morrow. Till then be revolving the subject occasionally in your minds.

TALBOYS.

Let's off to the Pike-ground at Kilchurn.

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1 See article on Parliamentary Reform, May 1, 1831; reprinted in *Alison's Essays*, vol. i. p. 32, 40.

2 See Free Trade at its Zenith: *Blackwood's Magazine*, Dec. 1849.

3

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Apart, in the three Kingdoms, from rents of houses, which amount to about £45,000,000 more.

4 *Vide* the *Economist, passim*; more especially that amusing and delectable series of articles, penned for the purpose of demonstrating that Free Trade enhances the value of grain.

5 *Festus, a Poem.* By PHILIP JAMES BAILEY. Third Edition: with Additions.

6 *Sacs et Parchemins.* Par JULES SANDEAU. Paris, 1850.

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