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CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

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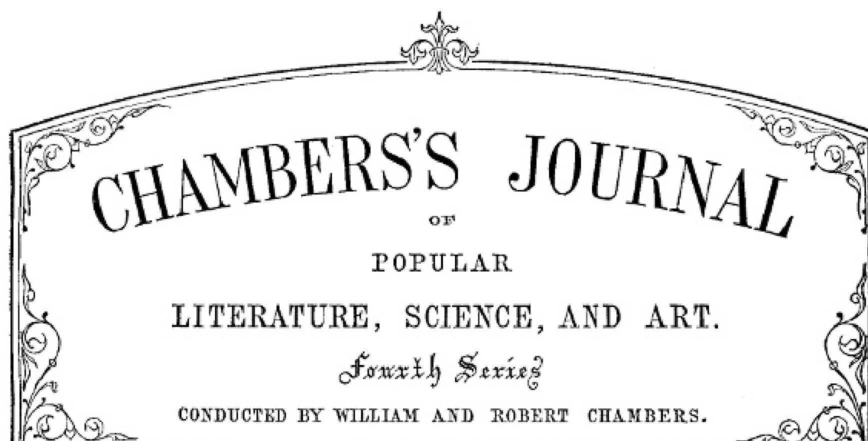

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CHARLES KINGSLEY AT HOME.

All who had the pleasure of knowing the Rev. Charles Kingsley, author of *Hypatia*, *Westward Ho*, and *Alton Locke*, will acknowledge that however great he was as a parish clergyman, poet, novelist, naturalist, sportsman, he was greater still at home. And how was this greatness shewn? By his self-denying efforts to give joy to his wife and children, and chivalrously to take away from them whatever was painful. No man ever excelled him in the quality of being 'thoroughly domesticated.' In actual life we fear this is a rare attainment, for it is nothing less than the flower that indicates perfectly developed manhood or womanhood. This flower beautified and sweetened Canon Kingsley's life. He *was* a hero to those who had greater opportunities of knowing him than have most valets. Whatever unheroic cynics may say of the disenchanting power of intimacy, there was an exception in his case. How much such an example should teach us all! Not one in ten thousand can hope to become the many-sided man Kingsley was, but none of us need despair of making that little corner of the world called 'home' brighter and happier, as he made Eversley Rectory. We can all make our homes sweet if, when company-clothes are doffed, we clothe the most ordinary and commonplace duties of home-life with good temper and cheerfulness.

Because the Rectory-house was on low ground, the rector of Eversley, who considered violation of the divine laws of health a sort of acted blasphemy, built his children an outdoor nursery on the 'Mount,' where they kept books, toys, and tea-things, spending long happy days on the highest and loveliest point of moorland in the glebe; and there he would join them when his parish work was done, bringing them some fresh treasure picked up in his walk, a choice wild-flower or fern or rare beetle, sometimes a lizard or a field-mouse; ever waking up their sense of wonder, calling out their powers of observation, and teaching them lessons out of God's great green book, *without their knowing* they were learning. Out-of-doors and indoors, the Sundays were the happiest days of the week to the children, though to their father the hardest. When his day's work was done, there was always the Sunday walk, in which each bird and plant and brook was pointed out to the children, as preaching sermons to Eyes, such as were not even dreamt of by people of the No-eyes species. Indoors the Sunday picture-books were brought out, and each child chose its subject for the father to draw, either some Bible story, or bird or beast or flower. In all ways he fostered in his children a love of animals. They were taught to handle without disgust toads, frogs, beetles, as works from the hand of a living God. His guests were surprised one morning at breakfast when his little girl ran up to the open window of the dining-room holding a long repulsive-looking worm in her hand: 'O daddy, look at this *delightful* worm!'

Kingsley had a horror of corporal punishment, not merely because it tends to produce antagonism between parent and child, but because he considered more than half the lying of children to be the result of fear of punishment. 'Do not train a child,' he said, 'as men train a horse, by letting anger and punishment be the *first* announcement of his having sinned. If you do, you induce two bad habits: first, the boy regards his parent with a kind of blind dread, as a being who may be offended by actions which to *him* are innocent, and whose wrath he expects to fall upon him at any moment in his most pure and unselfish happiness. Next, and worst still, the boy learns not to fear sin, but the punishment of it, and thus he learns to lie.' He was careful too not to confuse his children by a multiplicity of small rules. 'It is difficult enough to keep the Ten Commandments,' he would say, 'without making an eleventh in every direction.' He had no 'moods' with his family, for he cultivated, by strict self-discipline in the midst of worries and pressing business, a disengaged temper, that always enabled him to enter into other people's interests, and especially into children's playfulness. 'I wonder,' he would say, 'if there is so much laughing in any other home in England as in ours.' He became a light-hearted boy in the presence of his children, or when exerting himself to cheer up his aged mother who lived with him. When nursery griefs and broken toys were taken to his study, he was never too busy to mend the toy and dry the tears. He held with Jean Paul Richter, that children have their 'days and hours of rain,' which parents should not take much notice of, either for anxiety or sermons, but should lightly pass over, except when they are symptoms of coming illness. And his knowledge of physiology enabled him to detect such symptoms. He recognised the fact, that weariness at lessons and sudden fits of obstinacy are not hastily to be treated as moral delinquencies, springing as they so often do from physical causes, which are best counteracted by cessation from work and change of scene.

How blessed is the son who can speak of his father as Charles Kingsley's eldest son does. '"Perfect love casteth out fear," was the motto,' he says, 'on which my father based his theory of bringing up children. From this and from the interest he took in their pursuits, their pleasures, trials, and even the petty details of their everyday life, there sprang up a friendship between father and children, that increased in intensity and depth with years. To speak for myself, he was the best friend—the only true friend I ever had. At once he was the most fatherly and the most unfatherly of fathers—fatherly in that he was our intimate friend and our self-constituted adviser; unfatherly in that our feeling for him lacked that fear and restraint that make boys call their father "the governor." Ours was the only household I ever saw in which there was no favouritism. It seemed as if in each of our different characters he took an equal pride, while he fully recognised their different traits of good or evil; for instead of having one code of social, moral, and physical laws laid down for one and all of us, each child became a separate study for him; and its little "diseases au moral," as he called them, were treated differently according to each different temperament.... Perhaps the brightest picture of the past that I look back to now is the drawing-room at Eversley in the evenings, when we were all at home and by ourselves. There he sat, with one hand in mother's, forgetting his own hard work in leading our fun and frolic, with a kindly smile on his lips, and a loving light in that bright gray eye, that made us feel that, in the

broadest sense of the word, he was our father.'

Of this son, when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge, his father (then Professor of History) writes: 'Ah! what a blessing to be able to help him at last by teaching him something one's-self.' And to a learned 'F.G.S.' he says very seriously: 'My eldest son is just going off to try his manhood in Colorado, United States. You will understand, therefore, that it is somewhat important to me just now whether the world be ruled by a just and wise God or by 0. It is also important to me with regard to my own boy's future, whether what is said to have happened to-morrow (Good Friday) be true or false.' In this way Kingsley educated his heart and became truly wise. For no matter how extensive may be our stock of information, we cannot be called wise unless heart become to head a helpmate.

And how well he used his matrimony—a state that should be to all the means of highest culture, or 'grace.' Sympathising with a husband's anxiety, he once wrote to a friend: 'I believe one never understands the blessed mystery of marriage till one has nursed a sick wife, nor understands either what treasures women are.' He believed in the eternity of marriage. 'So well and really married on earth' did he think himself, that in one of his letters he writes: 'If I do not love my wife body and soul as well there as I do here, then there is neither resurrection of my body nor of my soul, but of some other, and I shall not be I.' And again in another letter: 'If immortality is to include in my case identity of person, I shall feel to her for ever what I feel now. That feeling may be developed in ways which I do not expect; it may have provided for it forms of expression very different from any which are among the holiest sacraments of life.... Will not one of the properties of the spiritual body be, that it will be able to express that which the natural body only tries to express?'

Kingsley and his future wife met for the first time when he was only twenty years of age in Oxfordshire, where he was spending his college vacation. 'That was my real wedding-day,' he used always to say. The Cambridge undergraduate was at the time going through the crisis in a young man's life that may be called without irreverence 'moral measles.' He was then full of religious doubts; and his face, with its unsatisfied hungering look, bore witness to the state of his mind. He told her his doubts, and she told him her faith; and the positive, being stronger than the negative, so prevailed that he was no longer faithless but believing. Hitherto his peculiar character had not been understood, and his heart had been half asleep. It woke up now, and never slept again. For the first time he could speak with perfect freedom, and be met with answering sympathy. And gradually, as the new friendship deepened into intimacy, every doubt, every thought, every failing, every sin was laid bare. Counsel was asked and given; and as new hopes dawned, the look of hard defiance gave way to a wonderful humility and tenderness, which were his characteristics, with those who understood him, to his dying day. 'My memory often runs back,' writes an early friend of his, 'to the days when I used to meet dear Kingsley in his little curate rooms; when he told me of his attachment to one whom he feared he should never be able to marry.' But things turning out brighter than he expected, the same friend records how, calling at his cottage one morning, 'I found him almost beside himself, stamping his things into a portmanteau. "What is the matter, dear Kingsley?"—"I am engaged. I am going to see her *now*—to-day."'

His chivalrous idea of wedlock was only natural, for he always attributed to Mrs Kingsley's sympathy and influence his success, saying that never but for her would he have become a writer. Writing to a friend on the subject of marriage, he says that it is his duty to hold the highest and most spiritual views, 'for God has shewed me these things in an eventful and blissful marriage history, and woe to me if I preach them not.'

Writing to his wife from the sea-side, where he had gone in search of health, he says: 'This place is perfect; but it seems a dream and imperfect without you. Kiss the darling ducks of children for me. How I long after them and their prattle. I delight in all the little ones in the street, for their sake, and continually I start and fancy I hear their voices outside. You do not know how I love them; nor did I hardly till I came here. Absence quickens love into consciousness.'—'Blessed be God for the rest, though I never before felt the loneliness of being without the beloved being whose every look, and word, and motion are the key-notes of my life. People talk of love ending at the altar.... Fools! I lay at the window all morning, thinking of nothing but home; how I long for it!'—'Tell Rose and Maurice that I have got two pair of bucks' horns—one for each of them, huge old fellows, almost as big as baby.' {499}

Writing from France to 'my dear little man,' as he calls his youngest son (for whom he wrote the *Water Babies*), he says: 'There is a little Egyptian vulture here in the inn; ask mother to shew you his picture in the beginning of the Bird book.' When smarting from severe attacks on his historical teaching at Cambridge, he could write to his wife: 'I have been very unhappy about your unhappiness about me, and cannot bear to think of your having a pang on my account.' From America he writes: 'My digestion is perfect, and I am in high spirits. But I am home-sick at times, and would give a finger to be one hour with you and G. and M.'

From such things; which, though they may appear little, are really the great things of life, or at least its *heart's ease*, Canon Kingsley got power to do and to suffer.

Coming out from service in Westminster Abbey, he caught a cold; but he made light of it, for he could think of nothing but the joy of returning with his wife to Eversley for Christmas and the quiet winter's work. No sooner had they returned home than Mrs Kingsley became seriously ill. On being told that her life was in the greatest danger, Kingsley said: 'My own death-warrant was signed with those words.' His ministrations in his wife's sick-room shewed the intensity of his faith, as he strengthened the weak, encouraged the fearful speaking of an eternal reunion, of the

indestructibility of that married love, which if genuine on earth, could only, he thought, be severed for a brief moment.

At this time Kingsley was himself ill, and on the 28th December he had to take to his bed, for symptoms of pneumonia came on rapidly. The weather was bitter, and he had been warned that his recovery depended on the same temperature being kept up in his bedroom and on his never leaving it; but one day he indiscreetly leaped out of bed, came into his wife's room for a few moments, and taking her hand in his, he said: 'This is heaven; don't speak;' but after a short silence, a severe fit of coughing came on, he could say nothing more, and they never met again. For a few days the sick husband and wife wrote to each other in pencil, but it then became 'too painful, too tantalising,' and the letters ceased. A few days after this, the preacher, poet, novelist, naturalist died, January 23, 1875, and was universally lamented, for England had lost one of her most estimable men—not great, in the ordinary sense of the word, for Kingsley could lay no claim to be a profound thinker. His philanthropy confused his perceptions, as when in his writings he denounced large towns and mill-owners, and proposed to restore the population to the land. Such 'socialism' as this would throw us back into ignorance and poverty, instead of solving the difficult modern problem of rich and poor. Kingsley was great only as regards the feelings. There he may be said to have made his mark.

How many of Charles Kingsley's works will last? Some (with whom he himself would probably have agreed) think that *Hypatia* and a few songs, such as the *Sands of Dee* and *Three Fishers*, are his only contributions to English literature likely to endure. It may be that he had too many irons in the fire for any of them to become white-hot. We prefer to think of him as a minister of the Gospel, who not only preached piety but shewed it at home, by being a dutiful son, a wise father, and a husband whose love during thirty-six years 'never stooped from its lofty level to a hasty word, an impatient gesture, or a selfish act, in sickness or in health, in sunshine or in storm, by day or by night.'

'He was a true and perfect knight,' is our verdict, on rising from the perusal of his biography. It is surely a great encouragement to think that all who cultivate their hearts may, without his genius, hope to imitate the home-virtues of one who, however great in other respects, was, in our opinion, greater at home.

THE LAST OF THE HADDONS.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—WAGES.

After the bride and bridegroom were gone, occurred the first slip in my behaviour. The rest of the company had returned to the house, and I suppose I must have stood in the road—gazing in the direction the carriage had taken, the sound of the distant bells floating faintly towards me in the summer air—so long as to be unconscious of the lapse of time, when gently and lightly a hand was laid upon mine, and it was drawn under Robert Wentworth's arm.

'You are wanted up there, Mary,' he said cheerfully. 'Mrs Tipper does not, I think, find herself quite equal to Mrs Dallas and Mrs Trafford; to say nothing of two discontented bride's-maids, and a father who came here under protest, and was only allowed to perform half the duty he came to perform. You took that out of his hands, you know; the giving away was virtually yours.' Going on to talk amusingly of the incongruous materials which went to make up the wedding-party, and so giving me time to recover my self-command. It was very soon put to the test. There was, to begin with, some pretty banter from Mrs Chichester to parry, when we reached the green terrace, where the guests were sitting, to enjoy the air and lovely view, and from which I suddenly remembered they could see the part of the road where I had been standing.

'We began to fear you must be ill, Miss Haddon, seeing you stand so long motionless in the road. It was quite a relief to see you move at last when Mr Wentworth joined you—it really was!'

Probably Robert Wentworth considered that this kind of thing was what I required, for he left me to it, and devoted himself to the not very easy task of trying to reconcile the two pretty bride's-maids; gravely listening to their assurances that the whole affair had been shockingly mismanaged from first to last! I soon had enough to do to reply to the patter of questions with which I was assailed from Marian and Mrs Chichester.

Where in the world had I been hiding myself all these months? Had I really come into a large fortune, and turned Mr Dallas off, as people said; or was it the other thing? As I did not know what 'the other thing' was, I could not answer for that; but acknowledged to having been fortunate; smiling to myself as I wondered what they would think of my idea of good fortune. Of course they would know what my real position was in time; but for the present I was mischievous enough to let them imagine any improbable thing they pleased. But there was one thing which they must not be allowed to have any doubt about, and that was my regard for Philip and Lilian, and hearty concurrence in the marriage.

'I am *so* glad—so very glad; because we can now speak very decidedly upon the point. People are so terribly unkind and censorious; are they not, Miss Haddon?'

'Some are, Mrs Chichester; yet I think, on the whole, censorious people do a great deal less mischief than they are supposed to do. My experience is happily small in such matters; but I believe that censorious people are generally well known to be so, and therefore they are not

capable of doing much harm.'

'Then it was *not* true, Miss Haddon; I am so very pleased to be able to say so!'

'What was not true, Mrs Chichester?'

'Oh, I would rather not repeat, really.'

'Well, I only know Caroline says she's heard it said over and over again that you ran away in despair, because you found that Mr Dallas and Lilian were untrue to you,' said Marian, less scrupulous about repeating than the other.

'That is really too ridiculous!' I ejaculated.—'But you will be able to tell your friend or friends that you did not see a love-lorn damsel to-day, Mrs Chichester;' gazing at her with steady calm eyes.

'You certainly don't look a bit love-lorn,' candidly said Marian.

'O no,' chimed in Mrs Chichester. 'If you will pardon the jest, I might say you looked a great deal more as though you had *found* a lover, than lost one!' with a meaning glance in Robert Wentworth's direction.

'Will you excuse my asking if you had that dress direct from Paris, Miss Haddon?' inquired Marian.

'Paris? No; it came from Madame Michaux,' I replied, happily recollecting that Jane had mentioned that name.

'Oh, that is the same thing; isn't it? She charges enormously; but one is quite sure of having just the right thing from her. I suppose you have all your dresses from her now?'

'No; not all,' I said, smiling at the remembrance of my every-day attire.

'They say brown is to be the new colour: the Duchess of Meck—Meck—— (What's her name, Caroline? those German names are *so* absurd)—is wearing nothing else but brown at Homburg.'

'I have been wearing brown some time,' I replied, almost laughing outright.

'Some people always contrive to be in advance of the fashions,' she said a little disconcertedly.—'Are they going away already, Caroline; just inquire if the carriage is there, will you?—I see you have drab liveries, Miss Haddon; ours is changed to claret; the Marchioness of'—— Breaking off to make a reply to a few words from the little bride's-maids, who with their father were taking themselves off from the uncongenial atmosphere. 'O yes; went off very nicely indeed; did it not? I wanted them to have the breakfast at Fairview, or at anyrate to have two or three of the men-servants to wait. But the party is small certainly, and everything has been very well contrived. No one is inclined to be very critical at such times. I hope you will be able to come down to Fairview before you return to Cornwall; any time which may suit you best. You need not write; we are always prepared for visitors.'

Both sisters hurriedly explained that their stay in town would be very short, and that there was not the *slightest* chance of their having a spare day.

Then there was one other little trial of my nerves—the few words which had to be spoken to Mr and Mrs Dallas; but pride came to my assistance, and I got through it pretty well, bearing their curious looks and gracious speeches with at anyrate apparent stoicism. Under other circumstances, I might have been somewhat amused by Mr Dallas's remark, that for his part he wished I had not thrown Philip over; accompanied as it was by a comprehensive glance at 'my carriage' waiting in the road below.

As soon as they left, I felt at liberty to whisper a loving good-bye to dear old Mrs Tipper, with a promise to see her and clear up all mysteries on the morrow, and take my departure. In a matter-of-course way, Robert Wentworth walked with me down the path, talking in the old pleasant easy fashion until he had put me into the carriage. Then just as I was bending forward to say the one word 'Home,' he gave the order 'Greybrook Hall.'

'Wait, John.'

The man stood aside; and I added to Robert Wentworth: 'You know then?'

'Of course I know,' he replied with a quiet smile.

I shrank back. He made a gesture to the footman, gave me the orthodox bow, and I was driven away.

Not a little agitated, I asked myself how much more did he know—all? If he recognised me that night in the wood, he did know not only what I had done, but what it had cost me to do it! I was no heroine; I have shewn myself as I was on Philip's wedding-day; but I had not won my peace without many a weary struggle for it. Once—three months after my departure from the cottage—I had stolen down in the darkness of evening to watch the shadows on the blinds, and perhaps catch the sound of a voice still so terribly dear to me. I saw Philip and Lilian together, and recognised that they were lovers, and then I knew that the victory was not yet won.

An hour later some one stooped over me as I lay crouched in the woods. 'Are you ill? What is the matter with you, good woman?' said the familiar voice of Robert Wentworth, as he laid his hand upon my shoulder. 'It is bad for you to be lying here this damp night.' {501}

I shrank away, drawing the hood of my cloak more closely round my face, which I kept turned away. He stood still a few moments, and then without another word passed on. I had hitherto always persuaded myself that he had not recognised me; but now my cheeks grew uncomfortably

hot with the suspicion that he did know me, and that the passing silently on was the very thing which a delicate consideration for me would prompt him to do. I was only surprised that it had not occurred to me before. I never had succeeded in throwing dust into Robert Wentworth's eyes when I had tried so to do. I knew now that it was to him Jane Osborne had alluded when she jested about a certain friend of hers who was so interested in all that concerned me, and whom I was to know more about by-and-by. I had sometimes a little murmured in my heart at having to give up Robert Wentworth's friendship with other things, knowing the worth of it, and he had been watching over me all the time! He had traced me at once; but respecting my desire to be lost to them all for a time, he had not obtruded himself upon me, contenting himself with obtaining an introduction to Jane Osborne and making friends with her.

That I had been watched over, had been shewn to me in more ways than one. I could almost smile now, holding the key, as I recollected many a little speech from Jane Osborne which seemed to breathe some stronger spirit than her own. Tenderly anxious about me, and inclined to pet me as she was, she would now and again spur me on to my work with a few words, which puzzled me extremely from her lips, but which I now could see she had been instigated to speak by one who knew me better than she did. But I had not much time for reflection; the drive was only three miles, and the ground very quickly got over by a couple of spirited horses. It seemed but a few moments after I had left Robert Wentworth in the road before I was at home.

It is now time to explain what has doubtlessly suggested itself to the reader, that I had been acting as superintendent of the Home for the last twelve months. Nancy had given me a hint that Mrs Gower had sent in her resignation of the office, having amassed a comfortable independence. My visit to town the day before I left the cottage had been for the purpose of seeing Mrs Osborne, the foundress of the Home, and I had the good fortune to find favour in her sight. She saw that it was a crisis in my life, and was inclined to be my friend had we two not needed each other. I went to stay with her a couple of days until Mrs Gower's departure, and then was duly installed in the latter's place.

As I expected that Lilian would hope to trace me through Nancy, the latter was drafted into Jane Osborne's establishment for a few weeks. Consequently, when Lilian made her appearance at the gates, she was informed that Nancy had gone to some lady whose address the portress for the nonce was not acquainted with. As I hoped she would, Lilian jumped to the conclusion that *I* was the lady alluded to, and was thus thrown off the scent as to my whereabouts.

What shall I say—what ought I to say about *my* management of the Home? I think as little as possible. But I will say that my success has been greater than I dared to hope for, although I have had a great deal to unlearn as well as learn. All sorts of objections were in the outset made to what were termed my innovations, and perhaps they were rather daring; but I was beginning to be able to reply to objectors by more cogent means than words.

As to myself—could anything have been more delightfully refreshing to a wearied spirit than was the greeting which I received on entering the long room on my return that afternoon, a welcome from twenty smiling faces! It is the long room to which the reader has been previously introduced, with a difference; the high brick wall before the windows is gone, and a light palisading marks the boundary of the grounds, without obstructing the view, a very fine one, of the most beautiful part of Kent. Moreover, the room was to-day *en fête*; decorated with flowers and evergreens, and with a feast, almost as grand as that I had just been a guest at, spread upon the long tables in honour of my sister's wedding-day. I do not like to write the kind words of 'Welcome home' pattered out around me. Jane Osborne and I went to my room; and whilst I threw off my finery and slipped on my brown dress (the only badge of distinction between me and my protégées on ordinary days was my mother's ring), I set her mind at rest as to the state of mind in which I had returned.

After tea we had a reading. Reading aloud or music on certain evenings of the week, whilst the inmates worked, was another of my innovations. That night too we had a new arrival. As I afterwards learned, she had been sought out specially to be brought down there, and a new-comer was always under my particular care, and slept in the place of honour—a little room adjoining my own. Not a little astonished seemed the poor waif when ushered into our gaily bedecked room, and received as a welcome guest to our evening's entertainment. Perhaps my few words to that poor girl when I bade her good-night was as good a termination to Philip's wedding-day as could be desired for me.

A VISIT TO AMAZONIA.

THE Amazon, as is pretty well known, is a river of great length and more wonderful for its breadth in South America, entering the Atlantic between Brazil and Guiana. I am going to speak of Pará, a Brazilian port not far from the sea, to which I paid a visit, by what is known as the Pará estuary. The blue ocean had been left the day before. Passing some islands bearing clumps of palms, anchor was dropped in front of the city of Pará, a gun fired from the bridge, and immediately a fleet of shore-boats came off, keeping at a respectable distance, however, until the board of health, customs, and other formalities usual upon entering a Brazilian port had been observed; but no sooner had permission been given, than the deck was swarming with men seeking fares.

'You wan a boat go ashore, sir?' inquired a demure swarthy man about fifty, who stood twirling his cap in hand; 'cos I take you for five shillins, carry what you got to hotel; an if you like to give

me anything afterwards, much obliged.'

'That will do!' I returned. And in a few minutes we were speeding towards the landing-place—a flight of wooden steps, crowded with men and boys, anxious to know the latest home prices of india-rubber and other products. The heat was excessive. Not a breath of air stirred on shore; and although longing to ramble through the town, I felt it advisable to rest a while first; so we went direct to the Hotel de Commercio in the Rua da Industria, kept by M. Leduc, an enterprising Frenchman. Here, single rooms with food run from ten to fifteen shillings per diem. The food is excellent, everything considered; but the rooms are dirty and unfurnished, having each but one chair—invariably broken—a hammock slung in a corner, and a hard bed and straw bolster covered with but one sheet. The sanitary arrangements too are far from perfect.

Most places are celebrated for something; Pará is celebrated amongst other things for its bats. Enormous specimens, a foot or two across the wings, may be seen banging to and fro about the veranda and bedrooms; beetles and cockroaches abound too; but there are places up the river where these are an infinitely greater plague.

The town of Pará is situated about seventy miles from the Atlantic. It has several spacious squares, such as the Praças do Cuartel, marine arsenal, government palace, and Mercado. If clangour of bells and cracking of rockets above steeples at high mass are indicative of religious enthusiasm, the Paraenses ought to be very devout. They certainly are not badly off for churches, of which I counted a considerable number.

The streets in this Brazilian town are laid out at right angles, upon the American block plan; half-a-dozen are paved with limestone from Lisbon—brought as ballast, which is cheaper than getting it from Rio Janeiro; and facing the river are a number of houses three stories high, some with staffs from upper balconies, from which droop consular flags. Elsewhere, dwelling-houses are usually one and two stories only. The favourite colour of Brazilians is green, and doors and windows, in fact every kind of wood-work, are as verdant as the forests that surround the town. Few shops boast of glass windows, on account of the deteriorative action of the sun upon goods exposed; but some wholesale firms exhibit a considerable variety of merchandise in their tunnel-shaped stores, where clerks are seen poring over ledgers in their shirt-sleeves. A seawall running the whole length of the river-frontage is in course of construction; and when finished, and the intervening space between it and the shore is filled up and built upon or paved, the appearance of the city will be decidedly enhanced, and its sanitary condition improved; for until recently, every kind of filth and rubbish was shot into the river, where at low-tide it generated a miasma enough to breed a pestilence.

Brazilians of social position rarely bring up their sons to trade, but strive to gain them government employ or entrance into one of the learned professions. It happens, however, that a university career is essential for the acquisition of a diploma; and as a large percentage of Brazilian youth entertain a hearty detestation for books, indulgent parents openly resort to influence, patronage, and intrigue, to enable their high-spirited though wonderfully delicate sons to live on the imperial exchequer. Paraense tradesmen are chiefly Portuguese; and it really is astonishing how rapidly one of these worthies gets on after his arrival in Pará; for he usually leaves the steerage of an English vessel with nothing but the clothes on his back, a strong constitution, and a bag of consecrated charms suspended from a string round his neck. Accustomed to hard work and poor fare at home, he considers himself well off with two mil reis or four shillings per diem; and as shibé or farinha and water is very filling, and goes down with a gusto if seasoned with an onion, he soon saves enough to purchase a horse and cart, or maybe send to Lisbon for a stout boat painted green and red. By thrift and economy his pile of mil rei notes steadily increases in dimensions; and one fine morning he opens a provision store and taberna, and begins to see his way to fortune. How complacently he smiles as he pours out vintems-worth of cashaça to negro labourers! How carefully he weighs bacalhão and farinha for stout Cafuza women (half Indian and negro), who balance basins upon the head, smoke short wooden-stemmed black-bowled pipes, and walk about bare-footed with light print skirts and no body! He knows the reckless native has no thought for the morrow, but spends his money as fast as it is received.

Shortly after my arrival in Pará I was invited by Mr Henderson, a Scotch merchant, to take up my quarters in his charming roçinha at the outskirts of Nazaré, where I remained a little over three months. Our house was large and roomy, with immense wooden window-shutters, which were kept open from early morning till we retired at night, so as to admit as much fresh air as possible. The rainy season had set in, and every day we were favoured with a tropical thunderstorm of more or less violence. I often watched the approach of these storms from the dining-room balconies of Leduc's hotel, which command a splendid view of the river. Distant peals of thunder herald the coming storm, and gusts of wind that rattle shrunken doors and whistle through crazy windows, impart a welcome freshness to the sweltering stagnant air. Steamships at anchor have their funnels covered with snowy conical caps, to keep out the deluge; barges taking in or giving out cargo are hastily covered with tarpaulin; streets become deserted, except by vehicles drawn by miserable horses, that firmly compose themselves for a doze till the down-pour passes over; while clouds of vultures fly against the gale, to inhale as much fresh air as possible after their ghastly repast. A steady approaching line of dense gray clouds with a ragged blue fringe diminishes the horizon; thunder-claps grow louder and more frequent; big drops patter upon the red-tiled roofs; and then falls a deluge upon house-tops, that rolls into the streets below in a perfect cascade. Anything beyond ejaculatory conversation is quite out of the question, for the noise is simply deafening; and although, from the vivid flashes of lightning, we know it is thundering big-guns, we hear nothing beyond the crash of rain.

While the tempest lasts we tumble into our hammocks and endeavour to escape drops that trickle between the tiles; and in half an hour proceed to the balcony to see how matters look outside. The storm has passed over, and the horizon grows clearer; the islands in front are lit up with rays of golden sunshine, that stream through rifts in the leaden clouds upon the emerald expanse of forest; sleepy horses are awoke by drivers, who hit them over the nose with a stick and inquire what is ailing; foot-passengers with coloured umbrellas pick their way tiptoe amid miniature lakes, seas, and channels that flood the road; steamboats are the cleaner for their washing; vultures stand upon houses, palacios, and churches, with wings outstretched to dry; and by-and-by in the azure heavens float mountains of fleecy clouds that playfully emit flashes of lightning as they collide, until night draws near; and as the sun sinks beneath the western forests, pale stars peep forth, proclaiming the close of another day.

Mr Henderson's house was so far distant from Pará that no noise reached us from the city excepting the occasional crack of a rocket, a faint bugle-call, or gun-fire of a boat announcing the arrival of a foreign mail. The noise of insect life, especially during the middle watches of the night, imparted a sense of loneliness, of being shut out from the world. There was an incessant hum, chirp, burr, and whir, and every now and then a bull-frog would 'Woof, woof!' smaller frogs shout 'Hoy, hoy, hoy!' night-birds fly over the roof, emitting weird shrill cries; and what with the kissing conversation of bats, bites of sanguinary carpanás or mosquitoes, the tickling sensation of jiggers in my toes, and the fear of being wound up by a scorpion, centipede, tarantula, or maybe poisonous snake, I frequently kept awake till towards morning, when thoroughly overcome with watching and fatigue, I would fall into a profound and refreshing sleep.

At daybreak we always had a cup of delicious fragrant black coffee; and while the heavy dew spangled every leaf and blade of grass, I frequently went for a walk down the newly cut roads into the forest, when I would be sure to be overtaken by the early train going out with female slaves and batches of children of all shades of black, white, and copper colour, to breathe the cooler air of the forest glades. In anticipation of the probable extension of the city, an immense area of forest has been divided into blocks by spacious parallel avenues, to be intersected by streets at equidistant right angles. The open spaces are covered with short capim or grass; but however much one may delight to stroll about in the shade, he is sure to have his legs covered with an almost invisible mite called moquim, that causes an itch almost enough to drive one frantic, especially at night; and very likely a number of carrapatos into the bargain. It is dangerous to scratch where moquim have settled, for running sores difficult to heal usually follow. I have seen Europeans and North Americans from the States with legs in a frightful condition, in fact lamed through scratching the skin till sore. An immediate, agreeable, and effectual remedy against moquim, though they be ever so numerous, is to sponge the body with cashaça, the common white rum of the country. Carrapatos differ in size. These tiny pests are about as large as a pin's head; and the horse tick about three or four times larger still. Both settle upon the clothes, or crawl up the legs, laying hold of the flesh with serrated fangs, and adhering so tenaciously that it is impossible to remove them entire; and to leave a portion sticking to the skin is certain to produce an ugly sore. The best way to get rid of this loathsome acaride is to sponge it well with spirits of any kind, when it will soon drop off; a hint which may be useful to Europeans who are pestered with harvest-bugs.

The forest round Pará naturally strikes a European as superlatively grand. It is only, however, upon interior high lands that vegetation attains the height, dimensions, and luxuriance that captivate and bewilder the senses. It wholly differs from anything found in temperate climes; and the stranger never tires of new forms of life and beauty that momentarily meet his gaze, and indicate an exuberance and prodigality surpassing his grandest ideal home conceptions. Accustomed only to individual forms as seen in home conservatories, the mind becomes bewildered when countless specimens of equatorial growth are massed together. Instead of gnarled and knotted oaks whose venerable appearance denote centuries of battle against fierce autumn storms and icy northern blasts, there is a lithe youthfulness even about veritable giants; and though a tree may be dead and hollow within, luxuriance of verdant parasitical plants lends a charming illusion, and hides the fact from view. Light, heat, air, and moisture are essential for the proper development of the richer forms of parasitical life; hence on water frontage and in some of the quiet avenues where I loved to stroll, I observed exhibitions of lavish profusion which rather resembled the dreams of fairyland than the realities of actual life. In one spot, a compact mass of tiny foliage would drape a number of lofty trees to the ground; in another, eccentrically arranged festoons and garlands sprinkled with occasional scarlet and violet passion-flowers decorated some hundreds of feet without a single break; while further on, endless picturesque, artistic, and graceful combinations ravished the sight, and awoke reverential and exquisitely happy emotions.

On both sides of avenues near the trees the ground is closely covered with beautiful lycopodium moss. Its favourite place of growth is on shady clearings, though it seems to grow best where timber has been burned on the ground. A foreigner desirous of learning how to take forest bearings without a compass cannot do better than cut his way into one of the furthest blocks in the district beyond Nazaré. He knows he cannot be lost, from the fact of roads existing on every side; hence he may go to work deliberately, and be under no apprehension as to result. In these spots where undergrowth has not been touched will be found solitary specimens of the curuá, a pretty ground-palm that shoots a number of long fronds from the centre, in which stands a smooth slender spathe, employed in thatching. The broken stems of slim palms shew where young assaís have been cut down for the sake of bunches of cherry-looking fruit employed in the manufacture of a refresco. Assaí is drunk by everybody in Amazonia when they can get it, at all hours of the day and before and after meals. Five or six gallons of the fruit, each about the size of

a marble, are usually piled in a large iron basin containing a requisite proportion of water; the mass is then worked over and over till the outer pulpy skin is worked off; the bare kernels are taken out, and at the bottom remains a rich violet-coloured liquid, that may be imbibed *ad lib.* It is best mixed with farinha seca and sugar, and eaten with a spoon. A liking for it is soon acquired, and it is not considered good taste to refuse a cuya or calabash of assaí when offered by a lady.

Every shrub, plant, and tree, and almost every blade and leaf of grass, is covered with insect life. Ants are the most common, and meet the eye everywhere. It is impossible to go far without coming across tumuli of hard mud four feet high; and huge coffee-coloured excrescences standing out upon the trunks of trees indicate where copim or white ants have taken up their abode. A few days after my arrival at Mr Henderson's, I noticed the front of our house was covered with what appeared to me to be streaks of mud; and feeling convinced they had not been there the day before, I proceeded to examine them, and found the lines were neatly constructed covered-ways. Myriads of white ants were travelling backwards and forwards; and no doubt a colony had made up its mind to devour as much of the wood-work as possible, and by way of change, shew students how to rapidly get through and digest good books. I saw two volumes of *Chambers's Information* which had been drilled by these indefatigable workers as neatly as though the holes had been punched by an awl. The covered-way hides the workers from quick-sighted insectivorous birds, especially woodpeckers. Domestic fowls, lizards, toads, armadillos, and tamanduas destroy vast numbers. The largest and most numerous ants I have seen were in the Campos between the Xingú and Tapajóz. Near the hill-slopes a few miles from Santarem, it is simply impossible to preserve a house from attack, and very frequently a huge nest actually hangs from the ridge-pole. The ant, however, which attracts most attention is the saúba. It marches in columns, each member carrying a triangular or circular section of a leaf larger than itself. The only way to turn them from a garden is by sweeping the track with a flaming branch for a distance of forty or fifty yards; but as new excursions will probably be made during the night, one often finds that they have paid a visit and departed, leaving perhaps a favourite orange tree entirely denuded of foliage. A big ant called the tucandera is very common just outside Pará; indeed it is hardly possible to walk many yards in the forest without meeting it: the bite inflicts excruciating agony. I have never been stung by a scorpion or bitten by a centipede; but I have been nipped by a tucandera, and can quite believe that the pain inflicted is more severe than that of either of the two former.

What with the uproar of çicadas, chirping of grasshoppers, screaming of parrots, cawing of aráras or macaws (the cry of this splendidly plumaged bird closely resembles ára, arára, hence its name), plaintive notes of japím and toucans, and numerous other indescribable sounds, the attention of the new-comer is kept continually upon the *qui vive* until eleven o'clock, when the intense oven-like heat warns him it is time to return. Emerging from the forest into one of the avenues the sun will be found nearly overhead; lizards of all sizes—that is to say from three inches to four feet in length—dart across the path and scuttle into the bush; and here and there a snake has to be guarded against, and if need be killed, with the short sapling which every pedestrian ought to carry. Upon reaching home I usually took a bath, had a substantial breakfast, and rested till the unfailing thunderstorm cooled the atmosphere.

A QUEER CLUE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

I HAD left the police altogether, and was living very comfortably, my good lady and I, up at Islington, in the same street with my married daughter, who was doing very comfortably too, her husband having a good berth in the City. I had always been of a saving turn, and had bought two or three houses; so with a tidy pension, which I had earned by thirty years' service, I could afford to go about a bit and enjoy myself. Of course in all that time I had made the acquaintance of a good many professional people; and there were very few theatres or exhibitions that I couldn't get admission to. We—my wife and I, I mean—made it a rule to go everywhere that we could get tickets for; and whether it was the launch of a ship, the charity children at St Paul's, or Sam Cowell at the Canterbury Hall, it didn't matter to us; we went. And it was at the Canterbury I first had the Combestead murder more particularly recalled to my mind.

I was there by myself, the old lady not being willing to leave my married daughter—because, well, it was in consequence of her being a married daughter—so I went by myself. There was a young woman who sang a comic version of *There's a good Time coming* splendidly; and as I was always of a chatty turn, I couldn't help remarking to the person that was sitting next to me how first-class she did it, when he exclaimed: 'Hollo! why, never! Superintendent Robinson?' And then he held out his hand.

It was young Lytherly, but so stout, and brown, and whiskery—if I may say so—that I didn't know him.

'Mr Lytherly!' I exclaimed, 'I didn't expect to see *you*; and you're right as to my being Robinson, although police officer no longer. Why, I thought you were in the army.'

'So I was,' he returned; 'but I'm out of it now; and I'll tell you how it was.'

It seems he had been to India, and got some promotion after three years' service; and had the good fortune to save his colonel from drowning, or what was more likely in those parts, being

taken down by a crocodile, under circumstances of extraordinary bravery. He did not tell me this last bit, but I heard so afterwards. Lytherly was always a wonderful swimmer, and I remembered his taking a prize at London. The exertion or the wetting brought on a fever, and he was recommended for his discharge. The colonel behaved most liberally. But what was the best of all, the old fellow who kept the canteen at the station died about this time, and Lytherly had been courting his daughter for a good bit, more to the girl's satisfaction than that of her father; so then they got married, and came home to England, and he was tolerably well off. He naturally talked about the Combestead murder, and said frankly enough, that—except the people with whom he lodged, and *they* were suspected, he said, of perjury—he thought I was the only person in the town who did not believe him guilty of the murder. {505}

'But murder will out, Mr Robinson,' he said; 'and you will see this will be found out some day.'

'Well, I am sure I hope it will, Mr Lytherly,' I answered him. 'But as for "murder will out" and all that, I don't think you will find any policeman or magistrate who will agree with you there; and there was less to help us when you had got out of the scrape in this Combestead business, than any affair I was ever concerned in.'

'I don't care,' he says; 'it will come out, Mr Robinson. I dream of it almost every night; and my wife consulted some of the best fortune-tellers in India, and they all told her it would be discovered.'

'Hum!' I said; 'we don't think much of fortune-tellers here, you know.'

'I'm perfectly aware of that,' he says; 'and I shouldn't give them in as evidence; but if you had lived three years in India with people who knew the native ways, you might alter your mind about fortune-tellers. Anyway, you will remember, when it's found out, that I told you how it would be.'

I laughed, and said I should; and after we had had another glass together, and he had given me his address and made me promise to call on him, we parted.

I told my wife all about it; and it is very curious to see how women are all alike in curiosity and superstition and all that; for although my wife had been married to me for thirty years, and so had every opportunity of learning better, yet she caught at what young Lytherly—not so very young now, by-the-by—had said about these fortune-tellers, and was quite ready to believe and swear that the murder would be found out. It's no use arguing with a party like that; so I merely smiled at her, and passed it off.

It was the very next day that Mrs Robinson and myself had agreed to go and see a new exhibition of paintings which some one was starting in London, and tickets were pretty freely given away for it; but the same reason which stopped my wife from going to the Canterbury, stopped her from going to the exhibition. I went, of course, because *I* couldn't be of any use, under the circumstances, to my married daughter; and a very good exhibition it was too. There were plenty of paintings, and I had gone through all the rooms and entered the last one. There were very few persons, I was sorry to see, in the place, so that you could have an uninterrupted view of any picture you pleased. After glancing carelessly round the room, for one gets a kind of surfeited with pictures after a bit, I was struck by a gloomy-looking painting to the left of the doorway, and which I had not noticed on my first entry. When I came to look closer into it, I was more than struck—I was astounded. It was a picture representing the finding of old Trapbois the miser, in the *Fortunes of Nigel*. The heavy dull room was lighted only by the candle which the young nobleman held above his head; and it appeared to be excellently painted. But what drew my attention was that, as a part of the confusion in which the struggle between the old man and his murderers had placed the room, the washstand had been upset, had fallen into the fireplace, and the ewer had rolled into the grate, where it was shewn as unbroken, although the water was flooding the boards—all exactly as I had seen the same things five years before—so exactly, that I was perfectly sure no chance coincidence had produced the resemblance, but that whoever had painted this picture had seen the room where Miss Parkway was murdered, and had had the features of the scene stamped on his memory. Who so likely to have the scene so stamped, I instantly thought, as the murderer himself? As this rushed on my mind, I could not repress an exclamation, although pretty well guarded as a rule. The only other person in the room heard me, and came to see what had excited me so strongly. Apparently, he was disappointed, for he looked from the picture to his catalogue, then to the picture again, then at me, back to his catalogue, and then went away with a discontented grunt. I did not move, however, but remained quite absorbed in the study of this mysterious painting; and the more I looked, the more convinced I became that it was copied from the scene of Miss Parkway's murder. There were several little points which I had not at first noticed, and in fact had quite forgotten; such as the position of the fire-irons, the direction in which the water had run, and so forth, which were all faithfully shewn in the picture. To be brief, I had made up my mind before I left the room that I had at last found the real clue to the Combestead murder.

The artist's name was Wyndham; and I determined that I would very soon, as a natural beginning, make some inquiries about this Mr Wyndham; and indeed I began before I left the exhibition. I engaged the hall-keeper to have a glass with me at the nearest tavern, and when I got fairly into conversation with him, asked carelessly where Mr Wyndham lived, as I thought I had known him many years ago, giving a description of some entirely imaginary person. The hall-keeper said: 'No—that was not the sort of man at all. Mr Wyndham was' (here he described him); 'and he doesn't live at the west-end of London, as you said, sir, but at a place in Essex, not very far from Colchester.' He knew where he lived, because he had several times posted letters to him at 'The Mount.' This was about all I got from the hall-keeper, but it was as much as I wanted.

I am not greatly in the habit of taking other people into my confidence, but this was altogether an exceptional case; so, after a little reflection, I went straight to the address John Lytherly had given me, and told him what I had seen. He of course introduced me to his wife, a very pretty dark-eyed young woman; and when I had told all, they exchanged looks less of surprise than triumph. 'Oh, it is coming all right!' he exclaimed. 'I knew the murder would cry out some day. And now you will have a little more respect for Indian fortune-tellers.'

'I am not quite sure about that,' I said. 'But don't you go making so certain that we are going to find out anything, Mr Lytherly: this may be only an accidental resemblance.' Because, as you may suppose, I had not told them how confident I felt in my own mind.

'Accidental! Nonsense!' was all he said to that; and then he asked me what was the first step I proposed to take. I told him that I thought we ought to go down to this village and see if we could learn anything suspicious about Mr Wyndham; and by my old detective habits, and the way in which the officers about would be sure to help me, I thought we might reckon on finding out what {506} was wanted. He was delighted, and asked when we should start, and when I said that very night, he was more delighted still.

It is always my rule to strike the iron while it's hot, and nothing could possibly be got by waiting now; so I had made up my mind just to run home, get a few things in my bag, and go down by the ten o'clock train. My wife, you may be sure, was very much astonished; but, as I expected she would be, was just as confident in the murder being found out as young Lytherly himself. Of course the latter was ready. And we were put down at our destination about twelve o'clock; too late for anything that night, but still we were on the spot to begin the first thing in the morning. And accordingly directly after breakfast we began. John Lytherly would have begun before breakfast, but as an old hand I knew better than that; because the party we were after, allowing he was the right party, after a five years' rest, wasn't going to bolt now; so it was no case for hurrying and driving. Well, soon after breakfast, I sauntered into the bar, and began talking with the landlord, who was an elderly sort of party about my own age, and who bragged—as if it was a thing to be proud of—before we had talked three minutes, that he had lived, man and boy, in Chumpley, which was the name of the lively place, for more than fifty years.

'Then you're just the fellow for me,' I thought; and then began talking of an old master of mine who was now living somewhere down in this neighbourhood, by the name of Wyndham.

'Wyndham? Let me see; Wyndham?' says the landlord, putting on his wisest look. 'No; I can't remember any party of that name. There's Wilkinson, and Wiggins; perhaps it's one of them.'

I told him they would not do; and then added, that the party I meant was something of an artist, painted pictures partly for pleasure and partly for profit. This was only a guess of mine, but it was a pretty safe one.

'Oh! there's lots of *them* about here!' exclaims the old boy, grinning very much, as if it was a capital idea. 'There's Mr De Lancy Chorkle, Miss Belvidera Smith, Mrs Galloon Whyte, Mr Hardy Canute, and a lot more; but I don't think there's a Wyndham.'

'Ah, well, it don't matter,' I said, very carelessly still; 'I may be mistaken. I heard, however, he lived down here at a place called the Mount. Is there such a place?'

'Is there such a place!' says the landlord, with as much contempt in his voice as if I ought to be ashamed of myself for not knowing. 'Yes, there is; and a first-rate gentleman artist lives there too; but his name ain't Wyndham; his name happens to be Parkway, sir, Mr Philip Parkway; though I have heard that he is too proud to paint under his own name.'

'I think, landlord,' I said, 'that I'll have just three-penn'orth of brandy, cold;' which I took, and left him without another word, for when I heard this name, I felt struck all of a heap, because it made a guess into a certainty, though in a way I had never dreamt of. I couldn't even go back to Lytherly for a little while; it was all so wonderful; and I was so angry with myself for never having thought at the time that the man who, of all others in the world, had the most to gain by the poor woman's death, might have been the one who killed her. In the bitterness of my feeling I could not help saying that any one but a detective would have pounced upon this fellow at the first. However, I got over the vexation, and went back to Lytherly to tell him my news. We were each very confident that we had the right scent now; but yet it was not easy to see what we were to do. I could not very well apply for a warrant against a man because he had painted a picture; and so we walked and talked until we could think of nothing better than going down to Combestead, and with our fresh information to help us, seeing if we could not rake up something there.

We came to this resolution just as we reached a toll-gate, close by which stood a little house, which appeared to be the beer-shop, baker's, post-office, and grocer's for the neighbourhood. Not much of a neighbourhood, by-the-by, for, excepting a few gentlemen's seats, there was hardly another house within sight. One small but comfortable-looking residence, we were informed by the chatty old lady who owned the 'store,' was the Mount, where Mr Parkway lived. He was a very retired, silent sort of a gentleman, she said, and people thought his wife didn't have the happiest of lives with him. He had been married for a few years, the old lady went on; soon after a relation had died, and left him a good bit of money. Before that he only rented apartments in the village; but then he married Miss Dellar, who was an orphan, with a good bit of money too, but quite a girl to him, and they went to live at the Mount. At this point the old lady broke suddenly off, and said: 'Here they are!' going to the door immediately, and dropping her very best courtesy. We followed her into the little porch; and there, sure enough, was a low carriage, drawn by one horse, and in it sat a gloomy dark man, whom I had no difficulty in recognising, and by his side a slight, very pretty, but careworn-looking young woman. Mr Parkway looked coolly

enough at us, and we as carelessly returned his glance, for we were both so much changed since the Combestead days, that there was little fear of his remembering us.

It seemed they had called about a servant which the post-office keeper was to have recommended, and Mrs Parkway alighted from the carriage to write some memorandum on the business. Parkway had never spoken, and I thought I could see in his harsh features traces of anxiety and remorse. Lytherly had followed Mrs Parkway into the shop, and, as I could see from where I stood, on the lady asking for a pen, he drew his gold pencil-case from his pocket, and offered it, as probably containing a better implement than any the post-office could afford. The lady stared, looked a little startled, but after a moment's hesitation accepted it with a very sweet smile. While Mrs Parkway was engaged in writing her letter, Lytherly stood by her side, and sauntered out after her. I had been waiting in the porch, watching her husband, whose face was so familiar to me that I half expected to see a look of recognition come into his eyes; but nothing of the sort happened. Lytherly watched them drive off, then turning suddenly round, exclaimed: 'It's as good as over, Robinson! We've got them!'

'Why, what is there afresh?' I asked.

'Just sufficient to hang the scoundrel,' said Lytherly. 'You remember, of course, that among other things which were stolen on the night of the murder was a curious locket which poor Miss Parkway used to wear, and that some fragments of the chain were afterwards found.' {507}

I remembered this very well, and told him so.

'Very good,' he continued. 'I gave that locket and chain to the poor old girl: it was the only valuable I possessed in the world; and Mrs Parkway has the central carbuncle in her brooch now.'

'Nonsense!' I exclaimed, not knowing exactly what I did say at the moment.

'It is a fact,' he said; 'and I can swear to it. What is more to the point, perhaps, is, that although the stone is in a strange setting, and no one but myself, probably, could recognise it, yet I can identify it. On the side are my initials cut in almost microscopical characters. If they are there, that settles it; if they are not, put me down as an impostor, and fix the murder on me if you like.'

There was a good deal more said after this, but the upshot of it was that we went over to Colchester, and laid the matter before the authorities; when after a little hesitation, a warrant was granted for the apprehension of Mr Philip Parkway; and two officers, accompanied by Lytherly and myself, went over to execute it.

It was after nightfall when we arrived at the Mount; and on knocking at the door, we found that Mr Parkway was in; but his wife was out, having gone up (so the elderly woman that was called by the footboy informed us), to play the harmonium at the weekly rehearsal of the village choir. 'About the only amusement she has, poor thing,' the woman muttered, and she seemed in a very bad temper about something. We said we wanted to see her master, and that she need not announce us. And, as I live, I believe that woman guessed directly who we were, and what we had come for. At anyrate, quite a glow of triumph came into her face, and she pointed to a door nearly opposite to where we stood. We opened it, and found ourselves in a sort of large study, where, seated at a table, reading, was the man we wanted. He looked up in surprise as we entered, and the light falling strongly on his face, while all the rest of the room was in darkness, I thought I saw a paleness come and go on his gloomy features; but that might have been fancy.

'What is your business?' he began; but Mr Banes the chief constable cut him short.

'I am sorry to inform you, Mr Parkway,' he said, 'that I hold a warrant for your arrest, and you must consider yourself in custody.'

Parkway stared at him, mechanically closed the book he was reading, and said: 'On what charge, sir?'

'For murder,' says Banes; and then I was sure Parkway did turn very white. 'For the murder of Miss Parkway, at Combestead, in 186-.'

Parkway looked from one to the other of us for a few seconds without speaking; at last his eyes settled for an instant on Lytherly; then turning to Banes, he said, pointing straight at Lytherly: 'It was that man, I have no doubt, who set you on.'

'You had better not say anything, sir,' said the chief constable, 'but just give your servants what orders you wish, and come with us, as we cannot stop.'

'I daresay it was he,' continued Parkway, not answering Mr Banes, but seeming to go with his own thoughts. 'I fancied he was dead, for what I took to be his ghost has been in my room every night for this month past.—Where is my wife?'

We told him she was not at home, and that we were anxious to spare her as far as possible; but he gave such a bitter smile, and said: 'She will certainly be vexed to have had a husband that was hanged; but she will be glad to be a widow on any terms.'

We didn't want to hear any more of this, so got him away; not without some little trouble though; and if there had not been so many of us, we should have had a scene; as it was, we were obliged to handcuff him.

The servants, four of them, were naturally alarmed, and were in the hall when we went out. Mr Parkway gave a very few directions, and the elderly woman grinned quite spitefully at him.

'Don't insult the man, now he's down,' I said in a whisper, while Parkway and the two officers got into the fly. Lytherly and I were to ride outside and drive.

'Insult *him*! the wretch!' she said. 'You don't mean to suppose *he* has any feelings to hurt. He has been trying to drive my poor young mistress—that I nursed when a baby—into her grave, and he would have done it, if I had not been here. The only excuse is, he is, and always has been, a dangerous lunatic.'

We drove off, and I saw no more of her, and never heard how Mrs Parkway took the intelligence.

The lady was present at the preliminary examination; and to her great surprise her carbuncle brooch was taken from her and used against her husband. This examination was on the next morning, and we obtained more evidence than we had at first expected. Not only was the carbuncle marked as Lytherly had said it would be, but I had been up at the station, being unable to shake off old habits, and had made some inquiries there. Strangely enough, the man who was head-porter now had been head-porter there five years ago (it is a very sensible way railways have of keeping a good man in the same position always; promotion generally upsets and confuses things); and he was able, by secondary facts, to fix the dates and to shew that not only did Mr Parkway go to Combestead for the funeral, but that he went to London and back just before; from London, of course, he could easily get to Combestead, and his absence left him about time to do so. We proposed then to have a remand and get evidence from Combestead; but it was never needed.

Parkway had been expecting this blow for years, and always kept some deadly poison concealed in the hollow of his watch-seal. This he took, on the night after his examination, and was found dead in his cell by the officer who went the rounds. He first wrote a very long and minute confession, or rather justification, shewing that his motive had been to prevent his cousin's marriage with Lytherly, whom he seemed to hate very much, although the young man had never harmed him. He said he went expressly to Combestead to get possession of the money his misguided relative had drawn, and to kill her. He felt that if he left her alive, she would carry out her scandalous plan, and therefore it was his duty to kill her; so in doing this he felt he had committed no crime, but had only been an instrument of justice. So I suppose he was, as the housekeeper declared, a dangerous lunatic.

However, the reward of one hundred pounds had never been withdrawn, and I got it; it was paid out of Parkway's estate too, which was about the strangest go I ever heard of. Lytherly and his wife are great friends with Mrs Robinson and myself; indeed we have usually one of their young ones staying with us, when we haven't one or two from my married daughter. Mrs Parkway, I heard, sold off at the Mount, and went away; and some time after I saw by the papers that she was married to some one else. I hope she made a better match the second time.

On the whole, on looking back I am inclined to think that of all the clues by which I ever found anybody out, this was really the queerest.

THE MONGOOSE.

We some time ago published an account of that deadly snake the Cobra, from the pen of a now well-known writer on Indian sports. In that paper it was given as the opinion of Dr Fayrer, author of a splendid work on Indian poisonous serpents, that a human being if bitten by a cobra in full vigour, was entirely beyond the reach of any known antidote; death was certain. In the following paper, which is from the pen of the author of the article above mentioned, some curious facts are adduced relative to the mongoose or ichneumon, an animal which is credited in many parts of India with being proof against snake-bite! With these few words of introduction, we leave our sporting friend to describe the little creature.

In countries where snakes and other noxious reptiles abound, nature, as a means of checking the excessive increase of such plagues, has provided certain animals, both biped and quadruped, which, by continually preying upon and destroying snakes of all kinds, both large and small, fulfil a most useful office, and confer an inestimable benefit on man. The peccary of South America, a small but fearless species of the hog-tribe, will not flinch from an encounter with such a terrible foe as the deadly rattlesnake; but encased in a hide of extreme toughness, quickly despatches and devours his scaly antagonist. The Secretary bird of Southern Africa, belonging to the falcon tribe, habitually subsists on reptiles of all kinds. In Europe the stork acts a similar part; and many other useful birds and beasts, performing the same good work, might be mentioned.

In India, where serpents are specially common and destructive to human life, we have various kinds of snake-devourers, such as storks and cranes and the well-known adjutant. Peafowl are especially active in destroying small descriptions of snakes; and others of the feathered race assist in the work. But in general, animals of all kinds have a natural dread, and carefully avoid permitting themselves to come in contact with, or even close proximity to a member of the snake-tribe, instinctively aware of the danger of meddling with such creatures.

The little ichneumon (a Greek word signifying a follower of the tracks or footsteps) or mongoose of India, is, however, a bright exception to this rule, for not only will he, when so disposed, without fear of consequences readily enter into mortal combat with the most venomous descriptions of snakes, but will even seek them out, attack, slay, and devour them, their young, or eggs, in their various strongholds and hiding-places.

The common gray mongoose (*Herpestes griseus*), called by the natives of Northern India 'Néwelá,' is exceedingly abundant everywhere. In general shape and contour, though not in

colour, it is much like a ferret, and in many other ways resembles one of the weasel tribe. In size it is considerably larger than a ferret; and the hair which covers the body, instead of lying smooth and feeling soft to the touch, as that of the ferret, is coarse and bristly. The colour, which varies much in different parts of the country and according to the season of the year, is generally of a reddish brown, speckled over with gray. Its length from tip of nose to tip of tail is about two feet. The snout is sharply pointed, ears short and round, eyes small and piercing; the jaws are armed with a formidable set of teeth, the canines being especially sharp and long.

The mongoose frequents gardens, thick hedgerows, and scrub jungle; and if left unmolested, and not hunted by dogs, will often take up its abode in some burrow or hole in a bank in close proximity to inhabited buildings. Though in general nocturnal in habits, yet it may often be seen crossing a road or footpath during the day, usually pausing a moment to look around and make sure that the coast is clear of dogs and suchlike enemies before venturing to cross open ground. It possesses in common with the weasel tribe the habit of constantly sitting up on its hind legs to listen or obtain a better view around. I never, however, have observed it *feeding* in this position, like a squirrel, as has been stated to be the case. The mongoose has not the wandering propensities of the weasel tribe, one day here, the next miles away, but takes up its residence and remains in one particular spot, to which it returns, after roaming through the country around in search of food. A single animal, sometimes a pair, is usually seen at a time, seldom more; and I have never myself beheld, or heard of, large numbers travelling together, as we know stoats and weasels not unfrequently do. Though seldom if ever known to ascend trees, even when pursued by an enemy, the little creature may frequently be seen hunting about on the roofs of outhouses or deserted buildings of no great height, to which it has ascended probably by means of holes in the walls; but strictly speaking, the mongoose is not a climber, like the squirrel and marten.

Our little friend has been described as an excellent swimmer; but I imagine that it does not readily take to water, for I have never seen it swimming across streams or pools, though the banks of rivers, especially when honeycombed with rat-holes, and affording cover to the animal's {509} usual prey, are much frequented by it. It is an exceedingly courageous creature, and capable of inflicting severe punishment on animals far larger than itself, with its formidable teeth. A full-grown and powerful Tom-cat belonging to my regiment, the terror of all the squirrels in the neighbourhood, was worsted and most severely mauled in an encounter of his own seeking with a harmless mongoose. The latter surprised in the first instance and hard pressed by his opponent, turned on his assailant, and bit him through the face, inflicting so severe a wound, extending as it did from the corner of the eye to the mouth, that the aggressor was compelled to beat a retreat, having caught a regular Tartar. For many weeks we all thought that the sight of the injured optic was destroyed, though eventually the contrary proved to be the case; but puss for ever after carefully avoided seeking a quarrel with such an undaunted little champion.

The mongoose at times is mischievous; and not unfrequently during the night invades the poultry-yard; and when intent on making an entrance into a hen-roost, is a difficult thief to keep out, for the creature manages to creep through very small openings and crevices. Having once succeeded in forcing its way in, the mongoose, like many others of its tribe, not content with obtaining a single fowl sufficient to furnish a hearty meal, is given to the bad habit of slaying half a dozen or more unfortunates, which it never attempts to carry off, but leaves scattered about the floor.

In spite, however, of such small 'peccadillos' and insignificant petty thefts, which I believe are the sum-total of crimes which can be with justice laid to the charge of the little animal, the mongoose, on account of its many admirable qualities and the exceedingly useful office it fulfils, should ever be encouraged and protected by man. Not only does it continually hunt for and prey upon reptiles of various kinds, devouring their young and eggs alike, but cobras and other venomous snakes on becoming aware of such an active and dreaded little adversary being in their midst, speedily leave such a neighbourhood, and betake themselves to other and safer quarters; and as we know that the smell of a cat suffices to keep away rats and mice from our dwellings, so in like manner will a mongoose, by continually prowling about a house, in a great measure free the premises from snakes, rats, mice, and such vermin.

The mongoose in its wild state, if kindly treated, fed with milk, and made a welcome visitant, speedily loses its natural fear of human beings, and not only will pass along the veranda of a house, but if unmolested, soon learns to cross from one room to another by an open door or window. When captured young, it is very easily reared and domesticated, and soon becomes familiarised with the loss of liberty. It is cleanly in its habits, and has no offensive odour pertaining to it, like many of its tribe. It will trot about after its owner like a dog or cat, and even permit children to handle or play with it, without attempting to bite or scratch them. I have seen one curled up asleep in a lady's lap. They are special favourites of the British soldiers in the barracks, and dozens of such pets may be seen in a single building.

Being, as I have already stated, a deadly foe to the cobra, battles between that formidable reptile and the mongoose are of constant occurrence; but I never have had the good fortune to witness a combat between the two animals in *their wild state*, though I have several times seen large and formidable snakes despatched within a few minutes of the commencement of the fight, by tame ichneumons; and I imagine that the tactics employed on both sides are much the same whether the champions have casually met in the jungle, or the duel has been arranged for them by human beings.

In the various encounters which I have personally witnessed between mongoose and cobra, the former invariably came off the victor, and that without apparently receiving a wound. The little animal always adopted the same tactics, vigorously attacking the snake by circling round it and springing at its throat or head, but at the same time with wonderful skill and quickness avoiding

the counter-strokes of its dangerous enemy; till at length waiting for a favourable opportunity—when the snake had become to a certain extent exhausted by its exertions—the nimble little quadruped would suddenly dart forward, and, so to speak, getting under its opponent's guard, end the fight by delivering a crunching bite through the cobra's skull.

In none of the half-dozen battles which I have witnessed has there been an attempt on the part of the mongoose to 'extract the serpent's fangs' (as some recent writers have described); though more than once, after gaining the victory, the animal has commenced to ravenously devour its late opponent. Possibly these poor creatures, that shewed so inordinate a desire for food, had been intentionally starved for the occasion by their owners, to make them the more eager to engage and overcome the cobra so soon as let loose, and thus without fail or delay to insure a pitched battle for the benefit of the spectators.

As the reader is probably aware, these combats between mongoose and cobra have given rise to many differences of opinion and disputes among naturalists; though I think that the careful inquiries and numberless experiments made by scientific men in late years have done much to clear up these old points of contention, and at the same time have put to flight many delusions no longer tenable. For instance, a common belief formerly prevailed 'that a mongoose, when bitten in an engagement with a cobra or other venomous snake, was in the habit of eating some kind of plant or root, which altogether nullified the effects of the poison.' This extraordinary idea yet prevails in some parts of India among certain classes of natives, who to this day maintain that the mongoose, by means of some such specific as I have mentioned, works a self-cure when bitten by a venomous reptile. But it is a well-known fact that many tribes and castes are exceedingly superstitious and obstinate, pertinaciously clinging to the convictions, maxims, and customs handed down to them by their forefathers; and with such people it is, generally speaking, useless to enter into an argument.

We shall now proceed to consider a second and far more difficult point to determine, and which, I think, yet remains a vexed question, requiring further investigation. I refer to the supposition, which many maintain, 'that the poison from the fangs of venomous snakes, though so fatal in its results with most living creatures, is *innoxious to the genus to which the mongoose belongs*, and that one of these animals, beyond suffering pain from the bite of a cobra, sustains no further harm or inconvenience.' {510}

Many strong and weighty arguments have been urged in support of this theory; and perhaps the most remarkable that has ever been brought before the public appeared many years ago in an article published in the *Churchman's Magazine*, entitled 'A Question in Natural History settled at last.' The writer, after ably sustaining his view of the question, concludes by publishing at length a most interesting communication from India, giving a detailed account of a prolonged and bloody engagement between mongoose and cobra. This letter was signed by three officers of the Indian army, witnesses of the combat, and who vouched for the strict accuracy of the report. The particulars of this desperate duel, which actually lasted three-quarters of an hour, with the various changes and incidents as the combat proceeded, are minutely described; but after a gallantly contested battle, the mongoose proved the victor, and the cobra was overcome and slain. The former, however, did not come off scathless, but, on the contrary, received several wounds, including one of great severity.

When the encounter was over, the witnesses proceeded to carefully examine, with a magnifying glass, the wounds which the mongoose had received, in order to ascertain and satisfy themselves of their extent and nature; and mark the important discovery brought to light by aid of the lens. I will quote the concluding words of the narrative: 'On washing away the blood from one of these places the lens disclosed *the broken fang of the cobra deeply imbedded in the head of the mongoose*.... We have had the mongoose confined ever since (now four days ago), and it is now as healthy and lively as ever.'

It cannot be denied that such clear and trustworthy evidence as this carries considerable weight with it, and tends to bear out the writer's view of the question. On the other hand, to deal impartially, it is right to point out one or two weak points in carrying out this otherwise well-conducted experiment, and which somewhat detract from the results and consequent opinions arrived at.

In the first place, we are told that the cobra was only three feet long, undoubtedly a very small one; and further, that previous to engaging the mongoose, to make sure that the reptile was in full possession of its fatal powers, it was made to bite a fowl, which died soon after. This certainly clearly proved that the snake's deadly machinery was in full working order. But the experimentalists appear to have forgotten that by this very act they were in a measure disarming the cobra, for it is a well-known fact that the *first* bite of a venomous snake is most to be feared; and that a second bite by the same reptile, if delivered shortly after the first, owing to the poison having been partially exhausted by the first effort, is less deadly in its effects.

So that, all things considered, and fully allowing that this account strengthens the assertion that the mongoose is really proof against the effects of snake-poison, I am yet of opinion that the question is not finally and conclusively settled, more especially as later experiments, quite as fairly and carefully carried out, have terminated differently, and resulted in the death of the plucky little fellow.

SOME CURIOUS COINCIDENCES.

It has often been jocularly said that no family can have any right to call itself 'old' unless it has its 'family ghost.' As regards the Highlands of Scotland, we may substitute for the ghost the inevitable 'doom,' or prediction foretelling future weal or woe to the family. Almost every old Highland house has its 'prophecy' of this kind, such as the Argyll and Breadalbane predictions, the 'Fate of Seaforth,' the 'Fall and Rise of Macleod,' and many others well known in the north. The great majority of the families so gifted have had of course no events in their history that even the credulity of their retainers in the past could twist into a fulfilment of the predictions; but in a few cases there have been some curious coincidences between the old traditions and the facts of a later time.

We propose to select one or two well authenticated instances of such coincidences from among a mass of Highland superstition in a little book that has recently been published at Inverness entitled *The Prophecies of the Brahan Seer*, by Alexander Mackenzie (Inverness: A. and W. Mackenzie). This pamphlet is a collection of most of the traditionary 'prophecies' attributed to an apocryphal Ross-shire seer of the seventeenth century, and which have been handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation in the Highlands since that time. In the north, the popular faith in this prophet *Coinneach Odhar* or 'Dun Kenneth' and his predictions has been and is both strong and wide, says Mr Mackenzie, who thinks the legends worthy of preservation, as an additional chapter 'both remarkable and curious, to the already extensive history of the marvellous.' At anyrate, these legends are of some interest as illustrations of the superstition and credulity of the Highlanders of the last century, and perhaps even of this; but our purpose leaves untouched the wilder traditions in this collection, and deals only with two episodes in the histories of two great families of the north.

Sir Edmund Burke in his *Vicissitudes of Families* has a weird chapter on 'the Fate of Seaforth,' in which he gives at full length the doom of this family, as pronounced by the 'Warlock of the Glen' (as Sir Edmund calls Dun Kenneth), and its fulfilment a century and a half after it was spoken. Burke seemingly accepts as fact (as does Mr Mackenzie) the purely mythical story of the seer and his cruel fate—how, being a clansman of Seaforth, and famed for his prophetic skill, he was called on by his chief's wife to explain why her husband staid so long in Paris, whither he had gone on business soon after the Restoration; how the Warlock, unwilling at first to tell what his uncanny gift shewed him, at last was forced to say that the Lord of Kintail was forgetting home and Lady Isabel in the smiles of a French lady; how the angry countess, furious that he should have so slandered his chief before his clansmen, ordered the seer to be burned to death—another instance of the proverbial 'honour' in which prophets are held in their own country. As he was dying at the stake, Kenneth uttered a weird prediction foretelling the downfall of the Seaforths for Lady Isabel's crime. So runs the legend. It is quite certain that a prediction regarding the Seaforth family was well known in the Highlands long before the days of the last chief of Kintail. We have Lockhart's authority for the fact that both Sir Humphry Davy and Sir Walter Scott knew and believed it. 'I do fear the accomplishment of the prophecy,' writes Scott in another place to his friend Morritt of Rokeby, who himself testifies that he heard it quoted in the Highlands at a time when Lord Seaforth had two sons both alive and in good health. This prediction ran, that the house of Seaforth would fall when there should be a deaf and dumb earl who should sell Kintail (the 'gift-land' of his house); that this earl would have three sons, all of whom he should survive; that four great Highland lairds, his contemporaries, should each have certain physical defects, which were named; that the Seaforth estates should go to 'a white-hooded lassie from the East,' who should be the cause of her sister's death.

With all these particulars the facts coincided exactly. Francis Humberstone Mackenzie, the last Seaforth, became deaf from an attack of fever while at school, and latterly also became dumb. His remarkable life is well known: he raised from his clan the 78th Highlanders, and subsequently rose to be a lieutenant-general in the army and governor of various colonies. Scott, whose great friend he was, says he was a man 'of extraordinary talents, who must have made for himself a lasting reputation, had not his political exertions been checked by painful natural infirmity.' He was the happy father of three sons and six daughters, all of high promise; but the end of his life was darkened by misfortunes. Two of his sons died suddenly; and in 1814, William, his last hope—M. P. for his native county, and a young man of great abilities—sickened of a lingering disease, and died about the time that losses in the West Indies necessitated the sale of Kintail. In January following, the old man, broken-hearted at the loss of his three sons, died; and then, as Scott says:

> Of the line of Mackenneth remained not a male
> To bear the proud name of the chiefs of Kintail.

The estates went to his eldest daughter, the widow of Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, who was on her way home from India when her father died. The four Highland lairds, friends of Earl Francis, were all distinguished by the peculiar personal marks which were mentioned in the prediction; and to make the coincidence complete, Lady Hood—then Mrs Stewart Mackenzie—many years afterwards may be said to have been the innocent cause of her sister's death, for when she was driving Miss Caroline Mackenzie in a pony-carriage, the ponies ran away, the ladies were thrown out, and Miss Mackenzie killed!

So much for this strange chapter in family history. Let us now glance at the records of another family—equally famous in the Highlands—where the prediction, as a whole, has not been fulfilled, though enough has happened here also to make the coincidence very striking. Our authority in

this case is the Rev. Norman Macleod, father of the late Dr Norman Macleod. In the appendix to Dr Norman's *Life* by his brother are given a series of reminiscences dictated in his old age by their father. He says that in the summer of 1799 he visited Dunvegan Castle in Skye, the old stronghold of the Macleods. 'One circumstance took place at the castle on this occasion which I think worth recording, especially as I am the only person now living who can attest the truth of it. There had been a traditionary prophecy, couched in Gaelic verse, regarding the family of Macleod, which on this occasion received a most extraordinary fulfilment. This prophecy I have heard repeated by several persons.... It was prophesied at least a hundred years prior to the circumstance I am about to relate.' This prediction shortly was, that when 'Norman, the third Norman,' should meet an accidental death; when the rocks on the coast of Macleod's country called the 'Maidens' became the property of a Campbell; when a fox had young ones in the castle; and when the 'Fairy Banner' should be for the last time shewn—the glory of Macleod should depart for a time; the estates be sold to others. But that again in the far future another Macleod should redeem the property and raise the family higher than ever. Now comes the curious coincidence told by Mr Macleod.

An English smith at Dunvegan told him one day that next morning he was going to the castle to force open the iron chest in which the 'fairy flag' of the Macleods had lain for ages undisturbed. Mr Macleod was very anxious to be present, and at last he got permission from 'the factor,' upon condition that he told no one of the name of Macleod—the chief included—what was to be done. The smith tore off the lid of the box, and the famous old flag was exposed—'a square piece of very rich silk, with crosses wrought with gold-thread, and several elf-spots stitched with great care on different parts of it.' Very soon after this, Mr Macleod goes on to say, 'the melancholy news of the death of the young and promising heir of Macleod reached the castle. "Norman, the third Norman," was a lieutenant of H.M.S. the *Queen Charlotte*, which was blown up at sea, and he and the rest perished. At the same time, the rocks called "Macleod's Maidens" were sold in the course of that very week to Angus Campbell of Ensay; and they are still in possession of his grandson. A fox in possession of a Lieutenant Maclean residing in the west turret of the castle, had young ones, which I handled. And thus all that was said in the prophecy alluded to was so far fulfilled; although I am glad the family of my chief still enjoy their ancestral possessions, and the worst part of the prophecy accordingly remains unverified. I merely state the facts of the case as they occurred, without expressing any opinion whatever as to the nature of these traditionary legends with which they were connected.'

A coincidence as remarkable as any of these is the one Mr Wilkie Collins notices in connection with his novel *Armadale*. Readers of that powerful story will recollect what an important part the fatal effects of sleeping in poisoned and foul air play in it. They, writes Mr Wilkie Collins, 'may be interested in hearing of a coincidence relating to the present story which actually happened, and which in the matter of "extravagant improbability" sets anything of the same kind that a novelist could imagine at flat defiance. In November 1865—that is to say, when thirteen monthly parts of *Armadale* had been published, and I may add, when more than a year and a half had elapsed since the end of the story, as it now appears, was first sketched in my note-book—a vessel lay in the Huskisson Dock at Liverpool, which was looked after by one man, who slept on board, in the capacity of ship-keeper. On a certain day in the week this man was found dead in the deck-house. On the next day a second man, who had taken his place, was carried dying to the Northern Hospital. On the third day a third ship-keeper was appointed, and was found dead in the deck-house, which had already proved fatal to the other two. *The name of that ship was the Armadale.* And the proceedings at the inquest proved that the three men had all been suffocated by *sleeping in poisoned air*.' The case, Mr Collins goes on to say, 'was noticed—to give two instances in which I can cite the dates—in the *Times* of November 30, 1865, and was more fully described in the *Daily News* of November 28, in the same year.'

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION IN JAPAN.

In pursuance of a plan commenced a short time back of furnishing information respecting the staple products of Japan, their culture or preparation, Her Majesty's Consul at Yokohama, in his published Report to the Foreign Office, deals, among other matters, with the cultivation, &c. of mushrooms; and as that subject is a novel one in this country, some brief account of the process may not be unacceptable to our readers. The best of the edible species of mushrooms are known to the Japanese as *matsu-také* and *shü-také*. The difficulties experienced in preserving the former kind prevent their being available for export, added to which, even when successfully dried, they are nearly tasteless; the *shü-také*, on the other hand, have this peculiar excellence, that though they are all but tasteless in their raw state, they have an extremely fine flavour when they are dried. The quantity that grows naturally on the decayed roots or cut stumps of the *shü* tree is not sufficient to meet the demand, and consequently much skill has been brought to bear on their cultivation, notably by cutting off the trunks of the *shü* and other trees, and forcing the growth of the mushrooms on them. Different varieties of oak are most in favour with the Japanese for the cultivation of mushrooms, the one just mentioned being considered to give the best results. The tree grows abundantly in warm places with a south-easterly aspect, and attains a height of about eighteen or nineteen feet. It is an evergreen, bearing small acorns, which are steamed and eaten; the wood is used for making boats' oars, charcoal, &c. Another oak, the *kashiwa*, from which mushrooms are obtained, is also plentiful in warm localities, and grows to a height of thirty or forty feet; its leaves are used in cookery, and the wood is in great demand for divining-sticks. A

third description of oak, the *donguri*, is found all over the country; and its acorns, after being pounded and steeped in water, are made into dumplings.

Mushrooms, we are told, are obtained from any of the above-mentioned trees in the following manner: about the beginning of autumn a trunk five or six inches in diameter is selected and cut up into lengths of four or five feet; each log is then split into four pieces; and on the outer bark slight incisions are made at once with a hatchet, or else the logs are left till the following spring, when deep cuts are made in them. Assuming the former course to have been pursued, the logs, after having received several slight incisions, are placed in a wood where they can get the full benefit of the air and heat; and in about three years they will have become tolerably rotten in parts. After the more rotten parts have been removed, they are placed in a slanting position; and about the middle of the ensuing spring the mushrooms will come forth in abundance. After these have been gathered, the logs are still kept, and submitted to the following process. Every morning they are steeped in water, and in the afternoon they are taken out and beaten with a mallet; they are then ranged on end in the same slanting position as before; and in two or three days' time mushrooms will again make their appearance. In some places it is the custom to beat the logs so heavily that the wood swells, and this seems to induce the growth of mushrooms of more than ordinarily large size. If, however, the logs are beaten gently, a great number of small mushrooms grow up in succession. Another mode of forcing the growth of mushrooms is to bury the cut logs at once in the earth, and after the lapse of a year, to take them out and treat them in the manner just described.

The mushrooms thus grown are stored in a barn on shelves ranged along three sides, with braziers lighted underneath. Afterwards they are put into small boxes, the bottoms of which are lined with either straw or bamboo mats; these are placed on the shelves, and gradually dried with great care. Another mode of drying mushrooms is to string them on thin slips of bamboo, which are piled together near the brazier, the heat being kept in by inverting a closely woven basket over them.

Of other edible mushrooms in Japan besides the *shü-také*, Mr Robertson particularises the following: The *kikurage*, which grows in spring, summer, and autumn, on the mulberry, the willow, and other trees; it is a small, thin, and soft mushroom, very much marked at the edge, and of a brownish tinge. The *iwa-také*, which grows on rocks in thick masses. The *so-také*, a very delicately flavoured mushroom, which is found on precipitous crags, and is consequently scarce, owing to the difficulties attendant upon its collection. The *kawa-také*, a funnel-shaped mushroom with a long hollow stalk, which is found in shady spots on moorland.

By adopting a somewhat similar plan of forcing mushrooms in Great Britain, it is quite possible that growers might find it to their advantage.

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