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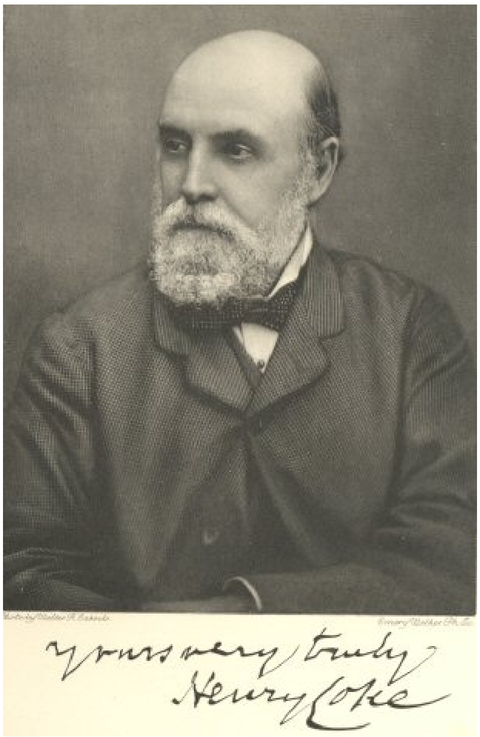

Yours very truly
Henry Coke

TRACKS
OF
A ROLLING STONE

BY THE
HONOURABLE HENRY J. COKE

AUTHOR OF
‘A RIDE OVER THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS’ ‘CREEDS OF THE DAY’ ETC.

WITH A PORTRAIT

SECOND EDITION

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1905

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TO
MY DAUGHTER SYBIL

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

The First Edition of this book was written, from beginning to end, in the short space of five months, without the aid of diary or notes, beyond those cited as such from a former work.

The Author, having no expectation that his reminiscences would be received with the kind indulgence of which this Second Edition is the proof, with diffidence ventured to tell so many tales connected with his own unimportant life as he has done. Emboldened by the reception his 'Tracks' have met with, he now adds a few stories which he trusts may further amuse its readers.

June 1905.

CHAPTER I

We know more of the early days of the Pyramids or of ancient Babylon than we do of our own. The Stone age, the dragons of the prime, are not more remote from us than is our earliest childhood. It is not so long ago for any of us; and yet, our memories of it are but veiled spectres wandering in the mazes of some foregone existence.

Are we really trailing clouds of glory from afar? Or are our 'forgettings' of the outer Eden only? Or, setting poetry aside, are they perhaps the quickening germs of all past heredity—an epitome of our race and its descent? At any rate *then*, if ever, our lives are such stuff as dreams are made of. There is no connected story of events, thoughts, acts, or feelings. We try in vain to re-collect; but the secrets of the grave are not more inviolable,—for the beginnings, like the endings, of life are lost in darkness.

It is very difficult to affix a date to any relic of that dim past. We may have a distinct remembrance of some pleasure, some pain, some fright, some accident, but the vivid does not help us to chronicle with accuracy. A year or two makes a vast difference in our ability. We can remember well enough when we donned the '*cauda virilis*,' but not when we left off petticoats.

The first remembrance to which I can correctly tack a date is the death of George IV. I was between three and four years old. My recollection of the fact is perfectly distinct—distinct by its association with other facts, then far more weighty to me than the death of a king.

I was watching with rapture, for the first time, the spinning of a peg-top by one of the grooms in the stable yard, when the coachman, who had just driven my mother home, announced the historic news. In a few minutes four or five servants—maids and men—came running to the stables to learn particulars, and the peg-top, to my sorrow, had to be abandoned for gossip and flirtation. We were a long way from street criers—indeed, quite out of town. My father's house was in Kensington, a little further west than the present museum. It was completely surrounded by fields and hedges. I mention the fact merely to show to what age definite memory can be authentically assigned. Doubtless we have much earlier remembrances, though we must reckon these by days, or by months at the outside. The relativity of the reckoning would seem to make Time indeed a 'Form of Thought.'

Two or three reminiscences of my childhood have stuck to me; some of them on account of their comicality. I was taken to a children's ball at St. James's Palace. In my mind's eye I have but one distinct vision of it. I cannot see the crowd—there was nothing to distinguish that from what I have so often seen since; nor the court dresses, nor the soldiers even, who always attract a child's attention in the streets; but I see a raised dais on which were two thrones. William IV. sat on one, Queen Adelaide on the other. I cannot say whether we were marched past in turn, or how I came there. But I remember the look of the king in his naval uniform. I remember his white kerseymere breeches, and pink silk stockings, and buckled shoes. He took me between his knees, and asked, 'Well, what are you going to be, my little man?'

'A sailor,' said I, with brazen simplicity.

'Going to avenge the death of Nelson—eh? Fond o' sugar-plums?'

'Ye-es,' said I, taking a mental inventory of stars and anchor buttons.

Upon this, he fetched from the depths of his waistcoat pocket a capacious gold box, and opened it with a tap, as though he were about to offer me a pinch of snuff. 'There's for you,' said he.

I helped myself, unawed by the situation, and with my small fist clutching the bonbons, was passed on to Queen Adelaide. She gave me a kiss, for form's sake, I thought; and I scuttled back to my mother.

But here followed the shocking part of the *enfant terrible's* adventure. Not quite sure of Her Majesty's identity—I had never heard there was a Queen—I naïvely asked my mother, in a very audible stage-whisper, 'Who is the old lady with—?' My mother dragged me off the instant she had made her curtsey. She had a quick sense of humour; and, judging from her laughter, when she told her story to another lady in the supper room, I fancied I had said or done something very funny. I was rather disconcerted at being seriously admonished, and told I must never again comment upon the breath of ladies who condescended to kiss, or to speak to, me.

While we lived at Kensington, Lord Anglesey used often to pay my mother a visit. She had told me the story of the battle of Waterloo, in which my Uncle George—6th Lord Albemarle—had taken part; and related how Lord Anglesey had lost a leg there, and how one of his legs was made of cork. Lord Anglesey was a great dandy. The cut of the Paget hat was an heirloom for the next generation or two, and the gallant Marquis' boots and tightly-strapped trousers were patterns of polish and precision. The limp was perceptible; but of which leg, was, in spite of careful investigation, beyond my diagnosis. His presence provoked my curiosity, till one fine day it became too strong for resistance. While he was busily engaged in conversation with my mother, I, watching for the chance, sidled up to his chair, and as soon as he looked away, rammed my heel on to his toes. They were his toes. And considering the jump and the oath which instantly responded to my test, I am persuaded they were abnormally tender ones. They might have been made of corns, certainly not of cork.

Another discovery I made about this period was, for me at least, a 'record': it happened at Quidenham—my grandfather the 4th Lord Albemarle's place.

Some excursion was afoot, which needed an early breakfast. When this was half over, one married couple were missing. My grandfather called me to him (I was playing with another small boy in one of the window bays). 'Go and tell Lady Maria, with my love,' said he, 'that we shall start in half an hour. Stop, stop a minute. Be sure you knock at the door.' I obeyed orders—I knocked at the door, but failed to wait for an answer. I entered without it. And what did I behold? Lady Maria was still in bed; and by the side of Lady M. was, very naturally, Lady M.'s husband, also in bed and fast asleep. At first I could hardly believe my senses. It was within the range of my experience that boys of my age occasionally slept in the same bed. But that a grown up man should sleep in the same bed with his wife was quite beyond my notion of the fitness of things. I was so staggered, so long in taking in this astounding novelty, that I could not at first deliver my grandfathers message. The moment I had done so, I rushed back to the breakfast room, and in a loud voice proclaimed to the company what I had seen. My tale produced all the effect I had anticipated, but mainly in the shape of amusement. One wag—my uncle Henry Keppel—asked for details, gravely declaring he could hardly credit my statement. Every one, however, seemed convinced by the circumstantial nature of my evidence when I positively asserted that their heads were not even at opposite ends of the bed, but side by side upon the same pillow.

A still greater soldier than Lord Anglesey used to come to Holkham every year, a great favourite of my father's; this was Lord Lynedoch. My earliest recollections of him owe their vividness to three accidents—in the logical sense of the term: his silky milk-white locks, his Spanish servant who wore earrings—and whom, by the way, I used to confound with Courvoisier, often there at the same time with his master Lord William Russell, for the murder of whom he was hanged, as all the world knows—and his fox terrier Nettle, which, as a special favour, I was allowed to feed with Abernethy biscuits.

He was at Longford, my present home, on a visit to my father in 1835, when, one evening after dinner, the two old gentlemen—no one else being present but myself—sitting in armchairs over the fire, finishing their bottle of port, Lord Lynedoch told the wonderful story of his adventures during the siege of Mantua by the French, in 1796. For brevity's sake, it were better perhaps to give the outline in the words of Alison. 'It was high time the Imperialists should advance to the relief of this fortress, which was now reduced to the last extremity from want of provisions. At a council of war held in the end of December, it was decided that it was indispensable that instant intelligence should be sent to Alvinzi of their desperate situation. An English officer, attached to the garrison, volunteered to perform the perilous mission, which he executed with equal courage and success. He set out, disguised as a peasant, from Mantua on December 29, at nightfall in the midst of a deep fall of snow, eluded the vigilance of the French patrols, and, after surmounting a thousand hardships and dangers, arrived at the headquarters of Alvinzi, at Bassano, on January 4, the day after the conferences at Vicenza were broken up.

'Great destinies awaited this enterprising officer. He was Colonel Graham, afterwards victor at Barrosa, and the first British general who planted the English standard on the soil of France.'

This bare skeleton of the event was endued 'with sense and soul' by the narrator. The 'hardships and dangers' thrilled one's young nerves. Their two salient features were ice perils, and the no less imminent one of being captured and shot as a spy. The crossing of the rivers stands out prominently in my recollection. All the bridges were of course guarded, and he had two at least within the enemy's lines to get over—those of the Mincio and of the Adige. Probably the lagunes surrounding the invested fortress would be his worst difficulty. The Adige he described as beset with a two-fold risk—the avoidance of the bridges, which courted suspicion, and the thin ice and only partially frozen river, which had to be traversed in the dark. The vigour, the zest with which the wiry veteran 'shoulder'd his crutch and show'd how fields were won' was not a thing to be forgotten.

Lord Lynedoch lived to a great age, and it was from his house at Cardington, in Bedfordshire, that my brother Leicester married his first wife, Miss Whitbread, in 1843. That was the last time I saw him.

Perhaps the following is not out of place here, although it is connected with more serious thoughts:

Though neither my father nor my mother were more pious than their neighbours, we children were brought up religiously. From infancy we were taught to repeat night and morning the Lord's Prayer, and invoke blessings on our parents. It was instilled into us by constant repetition that God did not love naughty children—our naughtiness being for the most part the original sin of disobedience, rooted in the love of forbidden fruit in all its forms of allurement. Moses himself could not have believed more faithfully in the direct and immediate intervention of an avenging God. The pain in one's stomach incident to unripe gooseberries, no less than the consequent black dose, or the personal chastisement of a responsible and apprehensive nurse, were but the just visitations of an offended Deity.

Whether my religious proclivities were more pronounced than those of other children I cannot say, but certainly, as a child, I was in the habit of appealing to Omnipotence to gratify every ardent desire.

There were peacocks in the pleasure grounds at Holkham, and I had an æsthetic love for their gorgeous plumes. As I hunted under and amongst the shrubs, I secretly prayed that my search might be rewarded. Nor had I a doubt, when successful, that my prayer had been granted by a beneficent Providence.

Let no one smile at this infantine credulity, for is it not the basis of that religious trust which helps so many of us to support the sorrows to which our stoicism is unequal? Who that might be tempted thoughtlessly to laugh at the child does not sometimes sustain the hope of finding his 'plumes' by appeals akin to those of his childhood? Which of us could not quote a hundred instances of such a soothing delusion—if delusion it be? I speak not of saints, but of sinners: of the countless hosts who aspire to this world's happiness; of the dying who would live, of the suffering who would die, of the poor who would be rich, of the aggrieved who seek vengeance, of the ugly who would be beautiful, of the old who would appear young, of the guilty who would not be found out, and of the lover who would possess. Ah! the lover. Here possibility is a negligible element. Consequences are of no consequence. Passion must be served. When could a miracle be more pertinent?

It is just fifty years ago now; it was during the Indian Mutiny. A lady friend of mine did me the honour to make me her confidant. She paid the same compliment to many—most of her friends; and the friends (as is their wont) confided in one another. Poor thing! her case was a sad one. Whose case is not? She was, by her own account, in the forty-second year of her virginity; and it may be added, parenthetically, an honest fourteen stone in weight.

She was in love with a hero of Lucknow. It cannot be said that she knew him only by his well-earned fame. She had seen him, had even sat by him at dinner. He was young, he was handsome. It was love at sight, accentuated by much meditation—'obsessions [peradventure] des images génétiques.' She told me (and her other confidants, of course) that she prayed day and night that this distinguished officer, this handsome officer, might return her passion. And her letters to me (and to other confidants) invariably ended with the entreaty that I (and her other, &c.) would offer up a similar prayer on her behalf. Alas! poor soul, poor body! I should say, the distinguished officer, together with the invoked Providence, remained equally insensible to her supplications. The lady rests in peace. The soldier, though a veteran, still exults in war.

But why do I cite this single instance? Are there not millions of such entreaties addressed to Heaven on this, and on every day? What difference is there, in spirit, between them and the child's prayer for his feather? Is there anything great or small in the eye of Omniscience? Or is it not our thinking only that makes it so?

CHAPTER II

Soon after I was seven years old, I went to what was then, and is still, one of the most favoured of preparatory schools—Temple Grove—at East Sheen, then kept by Dr. Pinkney. I was taken thither from Holkham by a great friend of my father's, General Sir Ronald Ferguson, whose statue now adorns one of the niches in the façade of Wellington College. The school contained about 120 boys; but I cannot name any one of the lot who afterwards achieved distinction. There were three Macaulays there, nephews of the historian—Aulay, Kenneth, and Hector. But I have lost sight of all.

Temple Grove was a typical private school of that period. The type is familiar to everyone in its photograph as Dotheboys Hall. The progress of the last century in many directions is great indeed; but in few is it greater than in the comfort and the cleanliness of our modern schools. The luxury enjoyed by the present boy is a constant source of astonishment to us grandfathers. We were half starved, we were exceedingly dirty, we were systematically bullied, and we were flogged and caned as though the master's pleasure was in inverse ratio to ours. The inscription on the threshold should have been 'Cave canem.'

We began our day as at Dotheboys Hall with two large spoonfuls of sulphur and treacle. After an hour's lessons we breakfasted on one bowl of milk—'Skyblue' we called it—and one hunch of buttered bread, unbuttered at discretion. Our dinner began with pudding—generally rice—to save the butcher's bill. Then mutton—which was quite capable of taking care of itself. Our only other meal was a basin of 'Skyblue' and bread as before.

As to cleanliness, I never had a bath, never bathed (at the school) during the two years I was there. On Saturday nights, before bed, our feet were washed by the housemaids, in tubs round which half a dozen of us sat at a time. Woe to the last comers! for the water was never changed. How we survived the food, or rather the want of it, is a marvel. Fortunately for me, I used to discover, when I got into bed, a thickly buttered crust under my pillow. I believed, I never quite made sure, (for the act was not admissible), that my good fairy was a fiery-haired lassie (we called her 'Carrots,' though I had my doubts as to this being her Christian name) who hailed from Norfolk. I see her now: her jolly, round, shining face, her extensive mouth, her ample person. I recall, with more pleasure than I then endured, the cordial hugs she surreptitiously bestowed upon me when we met by accident in the passages. Kind, affectionate 'Carrots'! Thy heart was as bounteous as thy bosom. May the tenderness of both have met with their earthly deserts; and mayest thou have shared to the full the pleasures thou wast ever ready to impart!

There were no railways in those times. It amuses me to see people nowadays travelling by coach, for pleasure. How many lives must have been shortened by long winter journeys in those horrible coaches. The inside passengers were hardly better off than the outside. The corpulent and heavy occupied the scanty space allotted to the weak and small—crushed them, slept on them, snored over them, and monopolised the straw which was supposed to keep their feet warm.

A pachydermatous old lady would insist upon an open window. A wheezy consumptive invalid would insist on a closed one. Everybody's legs were in their own, and in every other body's, way. So that when the distance was great and time precious, people avoided coaching, and remained where they were.

For this reason, if a short holiday was given—less than a week say—Norfolk was too far off; and I was not permitted to spend it at Holkham. I generally went to Charles Fox's at Addison Road, or to Holland House. Lord Holland was a great friend of my father's; but, if Creevey is to be trusted—which, as a rule, my recollection of him would permit me to doubt, though perhaps not in this instance—Lord Holland did not go to Holkham because of my father's dislike to Lady Holland.

I speak here of my introduction to Holland House, for although Lady Holland was then in the zenith of her ascendency, (it was she who was the Cabinet Minister, not her too amiable husband,) although Holland House was then the resort of all the potentates of Whig statecraft, and Whig literature, and Whig wit, in the persons of Lord Grey, Brougham, Jeffrey, Macaulay, Sydney Smith, and others, it was not till eight or ten years later that I knew, when I met them there, who and what her Ladyship's brilliant satellites were. I shall not return to Lady Holland, so I will say a parting word of her forthwith.

The woman who corresponded with Buonaparte, and consoled the prisoner of St. Helena with black currant jam, was no ordinary personage. Most people, I fancy, were afraid of her. Her stature, her voice, her beard, were obtrusive marks of her masculine attributes. It is questionable whether her amity or her enmity was most to be dreaded. She liked those best whom she could most easily tyrannise over. Those in the other category might possibly keep aloof. For my part I feared her patronage. I remember when I was about seventeen—a self-conscious hobbledehoy—Mr. Ellice took me to one of her large receptions. She received her guests from a sort of elevated dais. When I came up—very shy—to make my salute, she asked me how old I was. 'Seventeen,' was the answer. 'That means next birthday,' she grunted. 'Come and give me a kiss, my dear.' I, a man!—a man whose voice was (sometimes) as gruff as hers!—a man who was beginning to shave for a moustache! Oh! the indignity of it!

But it was not Lady Holland, or her court, that concerned me in my school days, it was Holland Park, or the extensive grounds about Charles Fox's house (there were no other houses at Addison Road then), that I loved to roam in. It was the birds'-nesting; it was the golden carp I used to fish for on the sly with a pin; the shying at the swans, the hunt for cockchafers, the freedom of mischief generally, and the excellent food—which I was so much in need of—that made the holiday delightful.

Some years later, when dining at Holland House, I happened to sit near the hostess. It was a large dinner party. Lord Holland, in his bath-chair (he nearly always had the gout), sat at the far end of the table a long way off. But my lady kept an eye on him, for she had caught him drinking champagne. She beckoned to the groom of the chambers, who stood behind her; and in a gruff and angry voice shouted: 'Go to my Lord. Take away his wine, and tell him if he drinks any more you have my orders to wheel him into the next room.' If this was a joke it was certainly a practical one. And yet affection was behind it. There's a tender place in every heart.

Like all despots, she was subject to fits of cowardice—especially, it was said, with regard to a future state, which she professed to disbelieve in. Mr. Ellice told me that once, in some country house, while a fearful storm was raging, and the claps of thunder made the windows rattle, Lady Holland was so terrified that she changed dresses with her maid, and hid herself in the cellar. Whether the story be a calumny or not, it is at least characteristic.

After all, it was mainly due to her that Holland House became the focus of all that was brilliant in Europe. In the memoirs of her father—Sydney Smith—Mrs. Austin writes: 'The world has rarely seen, and will rarely, if ever, see again all that was to be found within the walls of Holland House. Genius and merit, in whatever rank of life, became a passport there; and all that was choicest and rarest in Europe seemed attracted to that spot as their natural soil.'

Did we learn much at Temple Grove? Let others answer for themselves. Acquaintance with the classics was the staple of a liberal education in those times. Temple Grove was the *atrium* to Eton, and gerund-grinding was its *raison d'être*. Before I was nine years old I daresay I could repeat—parrot, that is—several hundreds of lines of the Æneid. This, and some elementary arithmetic, geography, and drawing, which last I took to kindly, were dearly paid for by many tears, and by temporarily impaired health. It was due to my pallid cheeks that I was removed. It was due to the following six months—summer months—of a happy life that my health was completely restored.

CHAPTER III

Mr. Edward Ellice, who constantly figures in the memoirs of the last century as 'Bear Ellice' (an outrageous misnomer, by the way), and who later on married my mother, was the chief controller of my youthful destiny. His first wife was a sister of the Lord Grey of Reform Bill fame, in whose Government he filled the office of War Minister. In many respects Mr. Ellice was a notable man. He possessed shrewd intelligence, much force of character, and an autocratic spirit—to which he owed his sobriquet. His kindness of heart, his powers of conversation, with striking personality and ample wealth, combined to make him popular. His house in Arlington Street, and his shooting lodge at Glen Quoich, were famous for the number of eminent men who were his frequent guests.

Mr. Ellice's position as a minister, and his habitual residence in Paris, had brought him in touch with the leading statesmen of France. He was intimately acquainted with Louis Philippe, with Talleyrand, with Guizot, with Thiers, and most of the French men and French women whose names were bruited in the early part of the nineteenth century.

When I was taken from Temple Grove, I was placed, by the advice and arrangement of Mr. Ellice, under the charge of a French family, which had fallen into decay—through the change of dynasty. The Marquis de Coubrier had been Master of the Horse to Charles X. His widow—an old lady between seventy and eighty—with three maiden daughters, all advanced in years, lived upon the remnant of their estates in a small village called Larue, close to Bourg-la-Reine, which, it may be remembered, was occupied by the Prussians during the siege of Paris. There was a château, the former seat of the family; and, adjoining it, in the same grounds, a pretty and commodious cottage. The first was let as a country house to some wealthy Parisians; the cottage was occupied by the Marquise and her three daughters.

The personal appearances of each of these four elderly ladies, their distinct idiosyncrasies, and their former high position as members of a now moribund nobility, left a lasting impression on my memory. One might expect, perhaps, from such a prelude, to find in the old Marquise traces of stately demeanour, or a regretted superiority. Nothing of the kind. She herself was a short, square-built woman, with large head and strong features, framed in a mob cap, with a broad frill which flopped over her tortoise-shell spectacles. She wore a black bombazine gown, and list slippers. When in the garden, where she was always busy in the summer-time, she put on wooden sabots over her slippers.

Despite this homely exterior, she herself was a 'lady' in every sense of the word. Her manner was dignified and courteous to everyone. To her daughters and to myself she was gentle and affectionate. Her voice was sympathetic, almost musical. I never saw her temper ruffled. I never heard her allude to her antecedents.

The daughters were as unlike their mother as they were to one another. Adèle, the eldest, was very stout, with a profusion of grey ringlets. She spoke English fluently. I gathered, from her mysterious nods and tosses of the head, (to be sure, her head wagged a little of its own accord, the ringlets too, like lambs' tails,) that she had had an *affaire de cœur* with an Englishman, and that the perfidious islander had removed from the Continent with her misplaced affections. She was a trifle bitter, I thought—for I applied her insinuations to myself—against Englishmen generally. But, though cynical in theory, she was perfectly amiable in practice. She superintended the ménage and spent the rest of her life in making paper flowers. I should hardly have known they were flowers, never having seen their prototypes in nature. She assured me, however, that they were beautiful copies—undoubtedly she believed them to be so.

Henriette, the youngest, had been the beauty of the family. This I had to take her own word for, since here again there was much room for imagination and faith. She was a confirmed invalid, and, poor thing! showed every symptom of it. She rarely left her room except for meals; and although it was summer when I was there, she never moved without her chauffrette. She seemed to live for the sake of patent medicines and her chauffrette; she was always swallowing the one, and feeding the other.

The middle daughter was Agläé. Mademoiselle Agläé took charge—I may say, possession—of me. She was tall, gaunt, and bony, with a sharp aquiline nose, pomegranate cheek-bones, and large saffron teeth ever much in evidence. Her speciality, as I soon discovered, was sentiment. Like her sisters, she had had her 'affaires' in the plural. A Greek prince, so far as I could make out, was the last of her adorers. But I sometimes got into scrapes by mixing up the Greek prince with a Polish count, and then confounding either one or both with a Hungarian pianoforte player.

Without formulating my deductions, I came instinctively to the conclusion that 'En fait d'amour,' as Figaro puts it, 'trop n'est pas même assez.' From Miss Agläé's point of view a lover was a lover. As to the superiority of one over another, this was—nay, is—purely subjective. 'We receive but what we give.' And, from what Mademoiselle then told me, I cannot but infer that she had given without stint.

Be that as it may, nothing could be more kind than her care of me. She tucked me up at night, and used to send for me in the morning before she rose, to partake of her *café-au-lait*. In return for her indulgences, I would 'make eyes' such as I had seen Auguste, the young man-servant, cast at Rose the cook. I would present her with little scraps which I copied in roundhand from a volume of French poems. Once I drew, and coloured with red ink, two hearts pierced with an arrow, a copious pool of red ink beneath, emblematic of both the quality and quantity of my passion. This work of art produced so deep a sigh that I abstained thenceforth from repeating such sanguinary endearments.

Not the least interesting part of the family was the servants. I say 'family,' for a French family, unlike an English one, includes its domestics; wherein our neighbours have the advantage over us. In the British establishment the household is but too often thought of and treated as furniture. I was as fond of Rose the cook and maid-of-all-work as I was of anyone in the house. She showed me how to peel potatoes, break eggs, and make *pot-au-feu*. She made me little delicacies in pastry—swans with split almonds for wings, comic little pigs with cloves in their eyes—for all of which my affection and my liver duly acknowledged receipt in full. She taught me more provincial pronunciation and bad grammar than ever I could unlearn. She was very intelligent, and radiant with good humour. One peculiarity especially took my fancy—the yellow bandana in which she enveloped her head. I was always wondering whether she was born without hair—there was none to be seen. This puzzled me so that one day I consulted Auguste, who was my chief companion. He was quite indignant, and declared with warmth that Mam'selle Rose had the most beautiful hair he had ever beheld. He flushed even with enthusiasm. If it hadn't been for his manner, I should have asked him how he knew. But somehow I felt the subject was a delicate one.

How incessantly they worked, Auguste and Rose, and how cheerfully they worked! One could hear her singing, and him whistling, at it all day. Yet they seemed to have abundant leisure to exchange a deal of pleasantry and harmless banter. Auguste was a Swiss, and a bigoted Protestant, and never lost an opportunity of holding forth on the superiority of the reformed religion. If he thought the family were out of hearing, he would grow very animated and declamatory. But Rose, who also had hopes, though perhaps faint, for my salvation, would suddenly rush into the room with the carpet broom, and drive him out, with threats of Miss Agläé, and the broomstick.

The gardener, Monsieur Benoît, was also a great favourite of mine, and I of his, for I was never tired of listening to his wonderful adventures. He had, so he informed me, been a soldier in the *Grande Armée*. He enthralled me with hair-raising accounts of his exploits: how, when leading a storming party—he was always the leader—one dark and terrible night, the vivid and incessant lightning betrayed them by the flashing of their bayonets; and how in a few minutes they were mowed down by *mitraille*. He had led forlorn hopes, and performed deeds of astounding prowess. How many Life-guardsmen he had annihilated: 'Ah! ben oui!' he was afraid to say. He had been personally noticed by 'Le p'tit caporal.' There were many, whose deeds were not to compare with his, who had been made princes and mareschals. *Parbleu*! but his luck was bad. 'Pas d'chance! pas d'chance! Mo'sieu Henri.' As Monsieur Benoît recorded his feats, and witnessed my unbounded admiration, his voice would grow more and more sepulchral, till it dropped to a hoarse and scarcely audible whisper.

I was a little bewildered one day when, having breathlessly repeated some of his heroic deeds to the Marquise, she with a quiet smile assured me that 'ce petit bon-homme,' as she called him, had for a short time been a drummer in the National Guard, but had never been a soldier. This was a blow to me; moreover, I was troubled by the composure of the Marquise. Monsieur Benoît had actually been telling me what was not true. Was it, then, possible that grown-up people acquired the privilege of fibbing with impunity? I wondered whether this right would eventually become mine!

At Bourg-la-Reine there is, or was, a large school. Three days in the week I had to join one of the classes there; on the other three one of the ushers came up to Larue for a couple of hours of private tuition. At the school itself I did not learn very much, except that boys everywhere are pretty similar, especially in the badness of their manners. I also learnt that shrugging the shoulders while exhibiting the palms of the hands, and smiting oneself vehemently on the chest, are indispensable elements of the French idiom. The indiscriminate use of the word ‘parfaitement’ I also noticed to be essential when at a loss for either language or ideas, and have made valuable use of it ever since.

Monsieur Vincent, my tutor, was a most good-natured and patient teacher. I incline, however, to think that I taught him more English than he taught me French. He certainly worked hard at his lessons. He read English aloud to me, and made me correct his pronunciation. The mental agony this caused me makes me hot to think of still. I had never heard his kind of Franco-English before. To my ignorance it was the most comic language in the world. There were some words which, in spite of my endeavours, he persisted in pronouncing in his own way. I have since got quite used to the most of them, and their only effect is to remind me of my own rash ventures in a foreign tongue. There are one or two words which recall the pain it gave me to control my emotions. He would produce his penknife, for instance; and, contemplating it with a despondent air, would declare it to be the most difficult word in the English language to pronounce. ‘Ow you say ’im?’ ‘Penknife,’ I explained. He would bid me write it down; then having spelt it, he would, with much effort, and a sound like sneezing—oh! the pain I endured!—slowly repeat ‘Penkneef.’ I gave it up at last; and he was gratified with his success. As my explosion generally occurred about five minutes afterwards, Monsieur Vincent failed to connect cause and effect. When we parted he gave me a neatly bound copy of La Bruyère as a prize—for his own proficiency, I presume. Many a pleasant half-hour have I since spent with the witty classic.

Except the controversial harangues of the zealot Auguste, my religious teaching was neglected on week days. On Sundays, if fine, I was taken to a Protestant church in Paris; not infrequently to the Embassy. I did not enjoy this at all. I could have done very well without it. I liked the drive, which took about an hour each way. Occasionally Aglăé and I went in the Bourg-la-Reine coucou. But Mr. Ellice had arranged that a carriage should be hired for me. Probably he was not unmindful of the convenience of the old ladies. They were not. The carriage was always filled. Even Mademoiselle Henriette managed to go sometimes—aided by a little patent medicine, and when it was too hot for the chauffrette. If she was unable, a friend in the neighbourhood was offered a seat; and I had to sit bodkin, or on Mademoiselle Aglăé’s lap. I hated the ‘friend’; for, secretly, I felt the carriage was mine, though of course I never had the bad taste to say so.

They went to Mass, and I was allowed to go with them, in addition to my church, as a special favour. I liked the music, the display of candles, the smell of the incense, and the dresses of the priests; and wondered whether when undressed—unrobed, that is—they were funny old gentlemen like Monsieur le Curé at Larue, and took such a prodigious quantity of snuff up their noses and under their finger-nails. The ladies did a good deal of shopping, and we finished off at the Flower Market by the Madeleine, where I, through the agency of Mademoiselle Aglăé, bought plants for ‘Maman.’ This gave ‘Maman’ *un plaisir inouï*, and me too; for the dear old lady always presented me with a stick of barley-sugar in return. As I never possessed a sou (Miss Aglăé kept account of all my expenses and disbursements) I was strongly in favour of buying plants for ‘Maman.’

I loved the garden. It was such a beautiful garden; so beautifully kept by Monsieur Benoît, and withered old Mère Michèle, who did the weeding and helped Rose once a week in the laundry. There were such pretty trellises, covered with roses and clematis; such masses of bright flowers and sweet mignonette; such tidy gravel walks and clipped box edges; such floods of sunshine; so many butterflies and lizards basking in it; the birds singing with excess of joy. I used to fancy they sang in gratitude to the dear old Marquise, who never forgot them in the winter snows.

What a quaint but charming picture she was amidst this quietude,—she who had lived through the Reign of Terror: her mob cap, garden apron, and big gloves; a trowel in one hand, a watering-pot in the other; potting and unpotting; so busy, seemingly so happy. She loved to have me with her, and let me do the watering. What a pleasure that was! The scores of little jets from the perforated rose, the gushing sound, the freshness and the sparkle, the gratitude of the plants, to say nothing of one’s own wet legs. ‘Maman’ did not approve of my watering my own legs. But if the watering-pot was too big for me how could I help it? By and by a small one painted red within and green outside was discovered in Bourg-la-Reine, and I was happy ever afterwards.

Much of my time was spent with the children and nurses of the family which occupied the château. The costume of the head nurse with her high Normandy cap (would that I had a female pen for details) invariably suggested to me that she would make any English showman’s fortune, if he could only exhibit her stuffed. At the cottage they called her ‘La Grosse Normande.’ Not knowing her by any other name, I always so addressed her. She was not very quick-witted, but I think she a little resented my familiarity, and retaliated by comparisons between her compatriots and mine, always in a tone derogatory to the latter. She informed me as a matter of history, patent to all nurses, that the English race were notoriously bow-legged; and that this was due to the vicious practice of allowing children to use their legs before the gristle had become bone. Being of an inquiring turn of mind, I listened with awe to this physiological revelation, and with chastened and depressed spirits made a mental note of our national calamity. Privately I fancied that the mottled and spasmodic legs of Achille—whom she carried in her arms—or at least so much of the infant Pelides' legs as were not enveloped in a napkin, gave every promise of refuting her generalisation.

One of my amusements was to set brick traps for small birds. At Holkham in the winter time, by baiting with a few grains of corn, I and my brothers used, in this way, to capture robins, hedge-sparrows, and tits. Not far from the château was a large osier bed, resorted to by flocks of the common sparrow. Here I set my traps. But it being summer time, and (as I complained when twitted with want of success) French birds being too stupid to know what the traps were for, I never caught a feather. Now this osier bed was a favourite game covert for the sportsmen of the château; and what was my delight and astonishment when one morning I found a dead hare with its head under the fallen brick of my trap. How triumphantly I dragged it home, and showed it to Rose and Auguste,—who more than the rest had 'mocked themselves' of my traps, and then carried it in my arms, all bloody as it was (I could not make out how both its hind legs were broken) into the salon to show it to the old Marquise. Mademoiselle Henriette, who was there, gave a little scream (for effect) at sight of the blood. Everybody was pleased. But when I overheard Rose's *sotto voce* to the Marquise: 'Comme ils sont gentils!' I indignantly retorted that 'it wasn't kind of the hare at all: it was entirely due to my skill in setting the traps. They would catch anything that put its head into them. Just you try.'

How severe are the shocks of early disillusionment! It was not until long after the hare was skinned, roasted, served as *civet* and as *purée* that I discovered the truth. I was not at all grateful to the gentlemen of the château whose dupe I had been; was even wrath with my dear old 'Maman' for treating them with extra courtesy for their kindness to her *petit chéri*.

That was a happy summer. After it was ended, and it was time for me to return to England and begin my education for the Navy I never again set eyes on Larue, or that charming nest of old ladies who had done their utmost to spoil me. Many and many a time have I been to Paris, but nothing could tempt me to visit Larue. So it is with me. Often have I questioned the truth of the *nessun maggior dolore* than the memory of happy times in the midst of sorry ones. The thought of happiness, it would seem, should surely make us happier, and yet—not of happiness for ever lost. And are not the deepening shades of our declining sun deepened by youth's contrast? Whatever our sweetest songs may tell us of, we are the sadder for our sweetest memories. The grass can never be as green again to eyes grown watery. The lambs that skipped when we did were long since served as mutton. And if

> Die Füsse tragen mich so muthig nicht empor
> Die hohen Stufen die ich kindisch übersprang,

why, I will take the fact for granted. My youth is fled, my friends are dead. The daisies and the snows whiten by turns the grave of him or her—the dearest I have loved. Shall I make a pilgrimage to that sepulchre? Drop futile tears upon it? Will they warm what is no more? I for one have not the heart for that. Happily life has something else for us to do. Happily 'tis best to do it.

CHAPTER IV

THE passage from the romantic to the realistic, from the chimerical to the actual, from the child's poetic interpretation of life to life's practical version of itself, is too gradual to be noticed while the process is going on. It is only in the retrospect we see the change. There is still, for yet another stage, the same and even greater receptivity,—delight in new experiences, in gratified curiosity, in sensuous enjoyment, in the exercise of growing faculties. But the belief in the impossible and the bliss of ignorance are seen, when looking back, to have assumed almost abruptly a cruder state of maturer dulness. Between the public schoolboy and the child there is an essential difference; and this in a boy's case is largely due, I fancy, to the diminished influence of woman, and the increased influence of men.

With me, certainly, the rough usage I was ere long to undergo materially modified my view of things in general. In 1838, when I was eleven years old, my uncle, Henry Keppel, the future Admiral of the Fleet, but then a dashing young commander, took me (as he mentions in his Autobiography) to the Naval Academy at Gosport. The very afternoon of my admittance—as an illustration of the above remarks—I had three fights with three different boys. After that the 'new boy' was left to his own devices,—*qua* 'new boy,' that is; as an ordinary small boy, I had my share. I have spoken of the starvation at Dr. Pinkney's; here it was the terrible bullying that left its impress on me—literally its mark, for I still bear the scar upon my hand.

Most boys, I presume, know the toy called a whirligig, made by stringing a button on a loop of thread, the twisting and untwisting of which by approaching and separating the hands causes the button to revolve. Upon this design, and by substituting a jagged disk of slate for the button, the senior 'Bull-dogs' (we were all called 'Burney's bull-dogs') constructed a very simple instrument of torture. One big boy spun the whirligig, while another held the small boy's palm till the sharp slate-edge gashed it. The wound was severe. For many years a long white cicatrice recorded the fact in my right hand. The ordeal was, I fancy, unique—a prerogative of the naval 'bull-dogs.'

The other torture was, in those days, not unknown to public schools. It was to hold a boy’s back and breech as near to a hot fire as his clothes would bear without burning. I have an indistinct recollection of a boy at one of our largest public schools being thus exposed, and left tied to chairs while his companions were at church. When church was over the boy was found—roasted.

By the advice of a chum I submitted to the scorching without a howl, and thus obtained immunity, and admission to the roasting guild for the future. What, however, served me best, in all matters of this kind, was that as soon as I was twelve years old my name was entered on the books of the ‘Britannia,’ then flag-ship in Portsmouth Harbour, and though I remained at the Academy, I always wore the uniform of a volunteer of the first class, now called a naval cadet. The uniform was respected, and the wearer shared the benefit.

During the winter of 1839–40 I joined H.M.S. ‘Blonde,’ a 46-gun frigate commanded by Captain Bouchier, afterwards Sir Thomas, whose portrait is now in the National Portrait Gallery. He had seen much service, and had been flag-captain to Nelson’s Hardy. In the middle of that winter we sailed for China, where troubles had arisen anent the opium trade.

What would the cadet of the present day think of the treatment we small boys had to put up with sixty or seventy years ago? Promotion depended almost entirely on interest. The service was entered at twelve or thirteen. After two years at sea, if the boy passed his examination, he mounted the white patch, and became a midshipman. At the end of four years more he had to pass a double examination,—one for seamanship before a board of captains, and another for navigation at the Naval College. He then became a master’s mate, and had to serve for three years as such before he was eligible for promotion to a lieutenancy. Unless an officer had family interest he often stuck there, and as often had to serve under one more favoured, who was not born when he himself was getting stale.

Naturally enough these old hands were jealous of the fortunate youngsters, and, unless exceptionally amiable, would show them little mercy.

We left Portsmouth in December 1839. It was bitter winter. The day we sailed, such was the severity of the gale and snowstorm, that we had to put back and anchor at St. Helens in the Isle of Wight. The next night we were at sea. It happened to be my middle watch. I had to turn out of my hammock at twelve to walk the deck till four in the morning. Walk! I could not stand. Blinded with snow, drenched by the seas, frozen with cold, home sick and sea sick beyond description, my opinion of the Royal Navy—as a profession—was, in the course of these four hours, seriously subverted. Long before the watch ended. I was reeling about more asleep than awake; every now and then brought to my senses by breaking my shins against the carronade slides; or, if I sat down upon one of them to rest, by a playful whack with a rope’s end from one of the crusty old mates aforesaid, who perhaps anticipated in my poor little personality the arrogance of a possible commanding officer. Oh! those cruel night watches! But the hard training must have been a useful tonic too. One got accustomed to it by degrees; and hence, indifferent to exposure, to bad food, to kicks and cuffs, to calls of duty, to subordination, and to all that constitutes discipline.

Luckily for me, the midshipman of my watch, Jack Johnson, was a trump, and a smart officer to boot. He was six years older than I, and, though thoroughly good-natured, was formidable enough from his strength and determination to have his will respected. He became my patron and protector. Rightly, or wrongly I am afraid, he always took my part, made excuses for me to the officer of our watch if I were caught napping under the half-deck, or otherwise neglecting my duty. Sometimes he would even take the blame for this upon himself, and give me a ‘wigging’ in private, which was my severest punishment. He taught me the ropes, and explained the elements of seamanship. If it was very cold at night he would make me wear his own comforter, and, in short, took care of me in every possible way. Poor Jack! I never had a better friend; and I loved him then, God knows. He was one of those whose advancement depended on himself. I doubt whether he would ever have been promoted but for an accident which I shall speak of presently.

When we got into warm latitudes we were taught not only to knot and splice, but to take in and set the mizzen royal. There were four of us boys, and in all weathers at last we were practised aloft until we were as active and as smart as any of the ship’s lads, even in dirty weather or in sudden squalls.

We had a capital naval instructor for lessons in navigation, and the quartermaster of the watch taught us how to handle the wheel and con.

These quartermasters—there was one to each of the three watches—were picked men who had been captains of tops or boatswains’ mates. They were much older than any of the crew. Our three in the ‘Blonde’ had all seen service in the French and Spanish wars. One, a tall, handsome old fellow, had been a smuggler; and many a fight with, or narrow escape from, the coast-guard he had to tell of. The other two had been badly wounded. Old Jimmy Bartlett of my watch had a hole in his chest half an inch deep from a boarding pike. He had also lost a finger, and a bullet had passed through his cheek. One of his fights was in the ‘Amethyst’ frigate when, under Sir Michael Seymour, she captured the ‘Niemen’ in 1809. Often in the calm tropical nights, when the helm could take care of itself almost, he would spin me a yarn about hot actions, cutting-outs, press-gangings, and perils which he had gone through, or—what was all one to me—had invented.

From England to China round the Cape was a long voyage before there was a steamer in the

Navy. It is impossible to describe the charm of one's first acquaintance with tropical vegetation after the tedious monotony unbroken by any event but an occasional flogging or a man overboard. The islands seemed afloat in an atmosphere of blue; their jungles rooting in the water's edge. The strange birds in the daytime, the flocks of parrots, the din of every kind of life, the flying foxes at night, the fragrant and spicy odours, captivate the senses. How delicious, too, the fresh fruits brought off by the Malays in their scooped-out logs, one's first taste of bananas, juicy shaddocks, mangoes, and custard apples—after months of salt junk, disgusting salt pork, and biscuit all dust and weevils. The water is so crystal-clear it seems as though one could lay one's hands on strange coloured fish and coral beds at any depth. This, indeed, was 'kissing the lips of unexpected change.' It was a first kiss moreover. The tropics now have ceased to remind me even of this spell of novelty and wonder.

CHAPTER V

The first time I 'smelt powder' was at Amoy. The 'Blonde' carried out Lord Palmerston's letter to the Chinese Government. Never was there a more iniquitous war than England then provoked with China to force upon her the opium trade with India in spite of the harm which the Chinese authorities believed that opium did to their people.

Even Macaulay advocated this shameful imposition. China had to submit, and pay into the bargain four and a half millions sterling to prove themselves in the wrong. Part of this went as prize money. My share of it—the *douceur* for a middy's participation in the crime—was exactly 100*l.*

To return to Amoy. When off the mouth of the Canton river we had taken on board an interpreter named Thom. What our instructions were I know not; I can only tell what happened. Our entry into Amoy harbour caused an immediate commotion on land. As soon as we dropped anchor, about half a mile from the shore, a number of troops, with eight or ten field-pieces, took up their position on the beach, evidently resolved to prevent our landing. We hoisted a flag of truce, at the same time cleared the decks for action, and dropped a kedge astern so as to moor the ship broadside to the forts and invested shore. The officer of my watch, the late Sir Frederick Nicholson, together with the interpreter, were ordered to land and communicate with the chief mandarin. To carry out this as inoffensively as possible, Nicholson took the jolly-boat, manned by four lads only. As it was my watch, I had charge of the boat. A napkin or towel served for a flag of truce. But long before we reached the shore, several mandarins came down to the water's edge waving their swords and shouting angrily to warn us off. Mr. Thom, who understood what they said, was frightened out of his wits, assuring us we should all be sawed in half if we attempted to land. Sir Frederick was not the man to disobey orders even on such a penalty; he, however, took the precaution—a very wise one as it happened—to reverse the boat, and back her in stern foremost.

No sooner did the keel grate on the shingle than a score of soldiers rushed down to seize us. Before they could do so we had shoved off. The shore was very steep. In a moment we were in deep water, and our lads pulling for dear life. Then came a storm of bullets from matchlocks and jingals and the bigger guns, fortunately just too high to hit us. One bullet only struck the back-board, but did no harm. What, however, seemed a greater danger was the fire from the ship. Ere we were halfway back broadside after broadside was fired over our heads into the poor devils massed along the beach. This was kept up until not a living Chinaman was to be seen.

I may mention here a curious instance of cowardice. One of our men, a ship's painter, soon after the firing began and was returned by the fort's guns, which in truth were quite harmless, jumped overboard and drowned himself. I have seen men's courage tried under fire, and in many other ways since; yet I have never known but one case similar to this, when a friend of my own, a rich and prosperous man, shot himself to avoid death! So that there are men like 'Monsieur Grenouille, qui se cachait dans l'eau pour éviter la pluie.' Often have I seen timid and nervous men, who were thought to be cowards, get so excited in action that their timidity has turned to rashness. In truth 'on est souvent ferme par faiblesse, et audacieux par timidité.'

Partly for this reason, and partly because I look upon it as a remnant of our predatory antecedents and of animal pugnacity, I have no extravagant admiration for mere combativeness or physical courage. Honoured and rewarded as one of the noblest of manly attributes, it is one of the commonest of qualities,—one which there is not a mammal, a bird, a fish, or an insect even, that does not share with us. Such is the esteem in which it is held, such the ignominy which punishes the want of it, that the most cautious and the most timid by nature will rather face the uncertain risks of a fight than the certain infamy of imputed cowardice.

Is it likely that courage should be rare under such circumstances, especially amongst professional fighters, who in England at least have chosen their trade? That there are poltroons, and plenty of them, amongst our soldiers and sailors, I do not dispute. But with the fear of shame on one hand, the hope of reward on the other, the merest dastard will fight like a wild beast, when his blood is up. The extraordinary merit of his conduct is not so obvious to the peaceful thinker. I speak not of such heroism as that of the Japanese,—their deeds will henceforth be bracketed with those of Leonidas and his three hundred, who died for a like cause. With the

Japanese, as it was with the Spartans, every man is a patriot; nor is the proportionate force of their barbaric invaders altogether dissimilar.

Is then the Victoria Cross an error? To say so would be an outrage in this age of militarism. And what would all the Queens of Beauty think, from Sir Wilfred Ivanhoe's days to ours, if mighty warriors ceased to poke each other in the ribs, and send one another's souls untimely to the 'viewless shades,' for the sake of their 'doux yeux?' Ah! who knows how many a mutilation, how many a life, has been the price of that requital? Ye gentle creatures who swoon at the sight of blood, is it not the hero who lets most of it that finds most favour in your eyes? Possibly it may be to the heroes of moral courage that some distant age will award its choicest decorations. As it is, the courage that seeks the rewards of Fame seems to me about on a par with the virtue that invests in Heaven.

Though an anachronism as regards this stage of my career, I cannot resist a little episode which pleasantly illustrates moral courage, or chivalry at least, combined with physical bravery.

In December, 1899, I was a passenger on board a Norddeutscher Lloyd on my way to Ceylon. The steamer was crowded with Germans; there were comparatively few English. Things had been going very badly with us in the Transvaal, and the telegrams both at Port Said and at Suez supplemented the previous ill-news. At the latter place we heard of the catastrophe at Magersfontein, of poor Wauchope's death, and of the disaster to the Highland Light Infantry. The moment it became known the Germans threw their caps into the air, and yelled as if it were they who had defeated us.

Amongst the steerage passengers was a Major—in the English army—returning from leave to rejoin his regiment at Colombo. If one might judge by his choice of a second-class fare, and by his much worn apparel, he was what one would call a professional soldier. He was a tall, powerfully-built, handsome man, with a weather-beaten determined face, and keen eye. I was so taken with his looks that I often went to the fore part of the ship on the chance of getting a word with him. But he was either shy or proud, certainly reserved; and always addressed me as 'Sir,' which was not encouraging.

That same evening, after dinner in the steerage cabin, a German got up and, beginning with some offensive allusions to the British army, proposed the health of General Cronje and the heroic Boers. This was received with deafening 'Hochs.' To cap the enthusiasm up jumped another German, and proposed 'unglück—bad luck to all Englanders and to their Queen.' This also was cordially toasted. When the ceremony was ended and silence restored, my reserved friend calmly rose, tapped the table with the handle of his knife (another steerage passenger—an Australian—told me what happened), took his watch from his pocket, and slowly said: 'It is just six minutes to eight. If the person who proposed the last toast has not made a satisfactory apology to me before the hand of my watch points to the hour, I will thrash him till he does. I am an officer in the English army, and always keep my word.' A small band of Australians was in the cabin. One and all of them applauded this laconic speech. It was probably due in part to these that the offender did not wait till the six minutes had expired.

Next day I congratulated my reserved friend. He was reticent as usual. All I could get out of him was, 'I never allow a lady to be insulted in my presence, sir.' It was his Queen, not his cloth, that had roused the virility in this quiet man.

Let us turn to another aspect of the deeds of war. About daylight on the morning following our bombardment, it being my morning watch, I was ordered to take the surgeon and assistant surgeon ashore. There were many corpses, but no living or wounded to be seen. One object only dwells visually in my memory.

At least a quarter of a mile from the dead soldiers, a stray shell had killed a grey-bearded old man and a young woman. They were side by side. The woman was still in her teens and pretty. She lay upon her back. Blood was oozing from her side. A swarm of flies were buzzing in and out of her open mouth. Her little deformed feet, cased in the high-heeled and embroidered tiny shoes, extended far beyond her petticoats. It was these feet that interested the men of science. They are now, I believe, in a jar of spirits at Haslar hospital. At least, my friend the assistant surgeon told me, as we returned to the ship, that that was their ultimate destination. The mutilated body, as I turned from it with sickening horror, left a picture on my youthful mind not easily to be effaced.

After this we joined the rest of the squadron: the 'Melville' (a three-decker, Sir W. Parker's flagship), the 'Blenheim,' the 'Druid,' the 'Calliope,' and several 18-gun brigs. We took Hong Kong, Chusan, Ningpo, Canton, and returned to take Amoy. One or two incidents only in the several engagements seem worth recording.

We have all of us supped full with horrors this last year or so, and I have no thought of adding to the surfeit. But sometimes common accidents appear exceptional, if they befall ourselves, or those with whom we are intimate. If the sufferer has any special identity, we speculate on his peculiar way of bearing his misfortune; and are thus led on to place ourselves in his position, and imagine ourselves the sufferers.

Major Daniel, the senior marine officer of the 'Blonde,' was a reserved and taciturn man. He was quiet and gentlemanlike, always very neat in his dress; rather severe, still kind to his men. His aloofness was in no wise due to lack of ideas, nor, I should say, to pride—unless, perhaps, it were the pride which some men feel in suppressing all emotion by habitual restraint of manner.

Whether his *sangfroid* was constitutional, or that nobler kind of courage which feels and masters timidity and the sense of danger, none could tell. Certain it is he was as calm and self-possessed in action as in repose. He was so courteous one fancied he would almost have apologised to his foe before he remorselessly ran him through.

On our second visit to Amoy, a year or more after the first, we met with a warmer reception. The place was much more strongly fortified, and the ship was several-times hulled. We were at very close quarters, as it is necessary to pass under high ground as the harbour is entered. Those who had the option, excepting our gallant old captain, naturally kept under shelter of the bulwarks and hammock nettings. Not so Major Daniel. He stood in the open gangway watching the effect of the shells, as though he were looking at a game of billiards. While thus occupied a round shot struck him full in the face, and simply left him headless.

Another accident, partly due to an ignorance of dynamics, happened at the taking of Canton. The whole of the naval brigade was commanded by Sir Thomas Bouchier. Our men were lying under the ridge of a hill protected from the guns on the city walls. Fully exposed to the fire, which was pretty hot, ‘old Tommy’ as we called him, paced to and fro with contemptuous indifference, stopping occasionally to spy the enemy with his long ship’s telescope. A number of bluejackets, in reserve, were stationed about half a mile further off at the bottom of the protecting hill. They were completely screened from the fire by some buildings of the suburbs abutting upon the slope. Those in front were watching the cannon-balls which had struck the crest and were rolling as it were by mere force of gravitation down the hillside. Some jokes were made about football, when suddenly a smart and popular young officer—Fox, first lieutenant of one of the brigs—jumped out at one of these spent balls, which looked as though it might have been picked up by the hands, and gave it a kick. It took his foot off just above the ankle. There was no surgeon at hand, and he was bleeding to death before one could be found. Sir Thomas had come down the hill, and seeing the wounded officer on the ground with a group around him, said in passing, ‘Well, Fox, this is a bad job, but it will make up the pair of epaulets, which is something.’

‘Yes sir,’ said the dying man feebly, ‘but without a pair of legs.’ Half an hour later he was dead.

I have spoken lightly of courage, as if, by implication, I myself possessed it. Let me make a confession. From my soul I pity the man who is or has been such a miserable coward as I was in my infancy, and up to this youthful period of my life. No fear of bullets or bayonets could ever equal mine. It was the fear of ghosts. As a child, I think that at times when shut up for punishment, in a dark cellar for instance, I must have nearly gone out of my mind with this appalling terror.

Once when we were lying just below Whampo, the captain took nearly every officer and nearly the whole ship’s crew on a punitive expedition up the Canton river. They were away about a week. I was left behind, dangerously ill with fever and ague. In his absence, Sir Thomas had had me put into his cabin, where I lay quite alone day and night, seeing hardly anyone save the surgeon and the captain’s steward, who was himself a shadow, pretty nigh. Never shall I forget my mental sufferings at night. In vain may one attempt to describe what one then goes through; only the victims know what that is. My ghost—the ghost of the Whampo Reach—the ghost of those sultry and miasmal nights, had no shape, no vaporous form; it was nothing but a presence, a vague amorphous dread. It may have floated with the swollen and putrid corpses which hourly came bobbing down the stream, but it never appeared; for there was nothing to appear. Still it might appear. I expected every instant through the night to see it in some inconceivable form. I expected it to touch me. It neither stalked upon the deck, nor hovered in the dark, nor moved, nor rested anywhere. And yet it was there about me,—where, I knew not. On every side I was threatened. I feared it most behind the head of my cot, because I could not see it if it were so.

This, it will be said, is the description of a nightmare. Exactly so. My agony of fright was a nightmare; but a nightmare when every sense was strained with wakefulness, when all the powers of imagination were concentrated to paralyse my shattered reason.

The experience here spoken of is so common in some form or other that we may well pause to consider it. What is the meaning of this fear of ghosts?—how do we come by it? It may be thought that its cradle is our own, that we are purposely frightened in early childhood to keep us calm and quiet. But I do not believe that nurses’ stories would excite dread of the unknown if the unknown were not already known. The susceptibility to this particular terror is there before the terror is created. A little reflection will convince us that we must look far deeper for the solution of a mystery inseparable from another, which is of the last importance to all of us.

CHAPTER VI

The belief in phantoms, ghosts, or spirits, has frequently been discussed in connection with speculations on the origin of religion. According to Mr. Spencer (‘Principles of Sociology’) ‘the first traceable conception of a supernatural being is the conception of a ghost.’ Even Fetichism is ‘an extension of the ghost theory.’ The soul of the Fetich ‘in common with supernatural agents at large, is originally the double of a dead man.’ How do we get this notion—‘the double of a dead man?’ Through dreams. In the Old Testament we are told: ‘God came to’ Abimelech, Laban, Solomon, and others ‘in a dream’; also that ‘the angel of the Lord’ appeared to Joseph ‘in a dream.' That is to say, these men dreamed that God came to them. So the savage, who dreams of his dead acquaintance, believes he has been visited by the dead man's spirit. This belief in ghosts is confirmed, Mr. Spencer argues, by other phenomena. The savage who faints from the effect of a wound sustained in fight looks just like the dead man beside him. The spirit of the wounded man returns after a long or short period of absence: why should the spirit of the other not do likewise? If reanimation follows comatose states, why should it not follow death? Insensibility is but an affair of time. All the modes of preserving the dead, in the remotest ages, evince the belief in casual separation of body and soul, and of their possible reunion.

Take another theory. Comte tells us there is a primary tendency in man 'to transfer the sense of his own nature, in the radical explanation of all phenomena whatever.' Writing in the same key, Schopenhauer calls man 'a metaphysical animal.' He is speaking of the need man feels of a theory, in regard to the riddle of existence, which forces itself upon his notice; 'a need arising from the consciousness that behind the physical in the world, there is a metaphysical something permanent as the foundation of constant change.' Though not here alluding to the ghost theory, this bears indirectly on the conception, as I shall proceed to show.

We need not entangle ourselves in the vexed question of innate ideas, nor inquire whether the principle of casuality is, as Kant supposed, like space and time, a form of intuition given *a priori*. That every change has a cause must necessarily (without being thus formulated) be one of the initial beliefs of conscious beings far lower in the scale than man, whether derived solely from experience or otherwise. The reed that shakes is obviously shaken by the wind. But the riddle of the wind also forces itself into notice; and man explains this by transferring to the wind 'the sense of his own nature.' Thunderstorms, volcanic disturbances, ocean waves, running streams, the motions of the heavenly bodies, had to be accounted for as involving change. And the natural—the primitive—explanation was by reference to life, analogous, if not similar, to our own. Here then, it seems to me, we have the true origin of the belief in ghosts.

Take an illustration which supports this view. While sitting in my garden the other day a puff of wind blew a lady's parasol across the lawn. It rolled away close to a dog lying quietly in the sun. The dog looked at it for a moment, but seeing nothing to account for its movements, barked nervously, put its tail between its legs, and ran away, turning occasionally to watch and again bark, with every sign of fear.

This was animism. The dog must have accounted for the eccentric behaviour of the parasol by endowing it with an uncanny spirit. The horse that shies at inanimate objects by the roadside, and will sometimes dash itself against a tree or a wall, is actuated by a similar superstition. Is there any essential difference between this belief of the dog or horse and the belief of primitive man? I maintain that an intuitive animistic tendency (which Mr. Spencer repudiates), and not dreams, lies at the root of all spiritualism. Would Mr. Spencer have had us believe that the dog's fear of the rolling parasol was a logical deduction from its canine dreams? This would scarcely elucidate the problem. The dog and the horse share apparently Schopenhauer's metaphysical propensity with man.

The familiar aphorism of Statius: *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*, points to the relation of animism first to the belief in ghosts, thence to Polytheism, and ultimately to Monotheism. I must apologise to those of the transcendental school who, like Max Müller for instance (Introduction to the 'Science of Religion'), hold that we have 'a primitive intuition of God'; which, after all, the professor derives, like many others, from the 'yearning for something that neither sense nor reason can supply'; and from the assumption that 'there was in the heart of man from the very first a feeling of incompleteness, of weakness, of dependency, &c.' All this, I take it, is due to the aspirations of a much later creature than the 'Pithecanthropus erectus,' to whom we here refer.

Probably spirits and ghosts were originally of an evil kind. Sir John Lubbock ('The Origin of Civilisation') says: 'The baying of the dog to the moon is as much an act of worship as some ceremonies which have been so described by travellers.' I think he would admit that fear is the origin of the worship. In his essay on 'Superstition,' Hume writes: 'Weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance, are the true sources of superstition.' Also 'in such a state of mind, infinite unknown evils are dreaded from unknown agents.'

Man's impotence to resist the forces of nature, and their terrible ability to injure him, would inspire a sense of terror; which in turn would give rise to the twofold notion of omnipotence and malignity. The savage of the present day lives in perpetual fear of evil spirits; and the superstitious dread, which I and most others have suffered, is inherited from our savage ancestry. How much further back we must seek it may be left to the sage philosophers of the future.

CHAPTER VII

The next winter we lay for a couple of months off Chinhai, which we had stormed, blockading the mouth of the Ningpo river. Here, I regret to think, I committed an act which has often haunted my conscience as a crime; although I had frequently promised the captain of a gun a glass of grog to let me have a shot, and was mightily pleased if death and destruction rewarded my aim.

Off Chinhai, lorchers and fast sailing junks laden with merchandise would try to run the blockade before daylight. And it sometimes happened that we youngsters had a long chase in a cutter to overhaul them. This meant getting back to a nine or ten o'clock breakfast at the end of the morning's watch; equivalent to five or six hours' duty on an empty stomach.

One cold morning I had a hard job to stop a small junk. The men were sweating at their oars like galley slaves, and muttering curses at the apparent futility of their labour. I had fired a couple of shots from a 'brown Bess'—the musket of the day—through the fugitive's sails; and fearing punishment if I let her escape, I next aimed at the boat herself. Down came the mainsail in a crack. When I boarded our capture, I found I had put a bullet through the thigh of the man at the tiller. Boys are not much troubled with scruples about bloodguiltiness, and not unfrequently are very cruel, for cruelty as a rule (with exceptions) mostly proceeds from thoughtlessness. But when I realised what I had done, and heard the wretched man groan, I was seized with remorse for what, at a more hardened stage, I should have excused on the score of duty.

It was during this blockade that the accident, which I have already alluded to, befell my dear protector, Jack Johnson.

One night, during his and my middle watch, the forecastle sentries hailed a large sampan, like a Thames barge, drifting down stream and threatening to foul us. Sir Frederick Nicholson, the officer of the watch, ordered Johnson to take the cutter and tow her clear.

I begged leave to go with him. Sir Frederick refused, for he at once suspected mischief. The sampan was reached and diverted just before she swung athwart our bows. But scarcely was this achieved, when an explosion took place. My friend was knocked over, and one or two of the men fell back into the cutter. This is what had happened: Johnson finding no one in the sampan, cautiously raised one of the deck hatches with a boat-hook before he left the cutter. The mine (for such it proved) was so arranged that examination of this kind drew a lighted match on to the magazine, which instantly exploded.

Poor Jack! what was my horror when we got him on board! Every trace of his handsome features was gone. He was alive, and that seemed to be all. In a few minutes his head and face swelled so that all was a round black charred ball. One could hardly see where the eyes were, buried beneath the powder-ingrained and incrusted flesh.

For weeks, at night, I used to sit on a chest near his hammock, listening for his slightest movement, too happy if he called me for something I could get him. In time he recovered, and was invalided home, and I lost my dear companion and protector. A couple of years afterwards I had the happiness to dine with him on board another ship in Portsmouth, no longer in the midshipman's berth, but in the wardroom.

Twice during this war, the 'Blonde' was caught in a typhoon. The first time was in waters now famous, but then unknown, the Gulf of Liau-tung, in full sight of China's great wall. We were twenty-four hours battened down, and under storm staysails. The 'Blenheim,' with Captain Elliott our plenipotentiary on board, was with us, and the one circumstance left in my memory is the sight of a line-of-battle ship rolling and pitching so that one caught sight of the whole of her keel from stem to stern as if she had been a fishing smack. We had been wintering in the Yellow Sea, and at the time I speak of were on a foraging expedition round the Liau-tung peninsula. Those who have followed the events of the Japanese war will have noticed on the map, not far north of Ta-lien-wan in the Korean Bay, three groups of islands. So little was the geography of these parts then known, that they had no place on our charts. On this very occasion, one group was named after Captain Elliott, one was called the Bouchier Islands, and the other the Blonde Islands. The first surveying of the two latter groups, and the placing of them upon the map, was done by our naval instructor, and he always took me with him as his assistant.

Our second typhoon was while we were at anchor in Hong Kong harbour. Those who have knowledge only of the gales, however violent, of our latitudes, have no conception of what wind-force can mount to. To be the toy of it is enough to fill the stoutest heart with awe. The harbour was full of transports, merchant ships, opium clippers, besides four or five men-of-war, and a steamer belonging to the East India Company—the first steamship I had ever seen.

The coming of a typhoon is well known to the natives at least twenty-four hours beforehand, and every preparation is made for it. Boats are dragged far up the beach; buildings even are fortified for resistance. Every ship had laid out its anchors, lowered its yards, and housed its topmasts. We had both bowers down, with cables paid out to extreme length. The danger was either in drifting on shore or, what was more imminent, collision. When once the tornado struck us there was nothing more to be done; no men could have worked on deck. The seas broke by tons over all; boats beached as described were lifted from the ground, and hurled, in some instances, over the houses. The air was darkened by the spray.

But terrible as was the raging of wind and water, far more awful was the vain struggle for life of the human beings who succumbed to it. In a short time almost all the ships except the men-of-war, which were better provided with anchors, began to drift from their moorings. Then wreck followed wreck. I do not think the 'Blonde' moved; but from first to last we were threatened with the additional weight and strain of a drifting vessel. Had we been so hampered our anchorage must have given way. As a single example of the force of a typhoon, the 'Phlegethon' with three anchors down, and engines working at full speed, was blown past us out of the harbour.

One tragic incident I witnessed, which happened within a few fathoms of the 'Blonde.' An opium clipper had drifted athwart the bow of a large merchantman, which in turn was almost foul of us. In less than five minutes the clipper sank. One man alone reappeared on the surface. He was so close, that from where I was holding on and crouching under the lee of the mainmast I could see the expression of his face. He was a splendidly built man, and his strength and activity must have been prodigious. He clung to the cable of the merchantman, which he had managed to clasp. As the vessel reared between the seas he gained a few feet before he was again submerged. At last he reached the hawse-hole. Had he hoped, in spite of his knowledge, to find it large enough to admit his body? He must have known the truth; and yet he struggled on. Did he hope that, when thus within arms' length of men in safety, some pitying hand would be stretched out to rescue him,—a rope's end perhaps flung out to haul him inboard? Vain desperate hope! He looked upwards: an imploring look. Would Heaven be more compassionate than man? A mountain of sea towered above his head; and when again the bow was visible, the man was gone for ever.

Before taking leave of my seafaring days, I must say one word about corporal punishment. Sir Thomas Bouchier was a good sailor, a gallant officer, and a kind-hearted man; but he was one of the old school. Discipline was his watchword, and he endeavoured to maintain it by severity. I dare say that, on an average, there was a man flogged as often as once a month during the first two years the 'Blonde' was in commission. A flogging on board a man-of-war with a 'cat,' the nine tails of which were knotted, and the lashes of which were slowly delivered, up to the four dozen, at the full swing of the arm, and at the extremity of lash and handle, was very severe punishment. Each knot brought blood, and the shock of the blow knocked the breath out of a man with an involuntary 'Ugh!' however stoically he bore the pain.

I have seen many a bad man flogged for unpardonable conduct, and many a good man for a glass of grog too much. My firm conviction is that the bad man was very little the better; the good man very much the worse. The good man felt the disgrace, and was branded for life. His self-esteem was permanently maimed, and he rarely held up his head or did his best again. Besides which,—and this is true of all punishment—any sense of injustice destroys respect for the punisher. Still I am no sentimentalist; I have a contempt for, and even a dread of, sentimentalism. For boy housebreakers, and for ruffians who commit criminal assaults, the rod or the lash is the only treatment.

A comic piece of insubordination on my part recurs to me in connection with flogging. About the year 1840 or 1841, a midshipman on the Pacific station was flogged. I think the ship was the 'Peak.' The event created some sensation, and was brought before Parliament. Two frigates were sent out to furnish a quorum of post-captains to try the responsible commander. The verdict of the court-martial was a severe reprimand. This was, of course, nuts to every midshipman in the service.

Shortly after it became known I got into a scrape for laughing at, and disobeying the orders of, our first-lieutenant,—the head of the executive on board a frigate. As a matter of fact, the orders were ridiculous, for the said officer was tipsy. Nevertheless, I was reported, and had up before the captain. 'Old Tommy' was, or affected to be, very angry. I am afraid I was very 'cheeky.' Whereupon Sir Thomas did lose his temper, and threatened to send for the boatswain to tie me up and give me a dozen,—not on the back, but where the back leaves off. Undismayed by the threat, and mindful of the episode of the 'Peak' (?) I looked the old gentleman in the face, and shrilly piped out, 'It's as much as your commission is worth, sir.' In spite of his previous wrath, he was so taken aback by my impudence that he burst out laughing, and, to hide it, kicked me out of the cabin.

After another severe attack of fever, and during a long convalescence, I was laid up at Macao, where I enjoyed the hospitality of Messrs. Dent and of Messrs. Jardine and Matheson. Thence I was invalided home, and took my passage to Bombay in one of the big East India tea-ships. As I was being carried up the side in the arms of one of the boatmen, I overheard another exclaim: 'Poor little beggar. He'll never see land again!'

The only other passenger was Colonel Frederick Cotton, of the Madras Engineers, one of a distinguished family. He, too, had been through the China campaign, and had also broken down. We touched at Manila, Batavia, Singapore, and several other ports in the Malay Archipelago, to take in cargo. While that was going on, Cotton, the captain, and I made excursions inland. Altogether I had a most pleasant time of it till we reached Bombay.

My health was now re-established; and after a couple of weeks at Bombay, where I lived in a merchant's house, Cotton took me to Poonah and Ahmadnagar; in both of which places I stayed with his friends, and messed with the regiments. Here a copy of the 'Times' was put into my hands; and I saw a notice of the death of my father.

After a fortnight's quarantine at La Valetta, where two young Englishmen—one an Oxford man—shared the same rooms in the fort with me, we three returned to England; and (I suppose few living people can say the same) travelled from Naples to Calais before there was a single railway on the Continent.

At the end of two months' leave in England I was appointed to the 'Caledonia,' flagship at Plymouth. Sir Thomas Bouchier had written to the Admiral, Sir Edward Codrington, of Navarino fame (whose daughter Sir Thomas afterwards married), giving me 'a character.' Sir Edward sent for me, and was most kind. He told me I was to go to the Pacific in the first ship that left for South America, which would probably be in a week or two; and he gave me a letter to his friend, Admiral Thomas, who commanded on that station.

About this time, and for a year or two later, the relations between England and America were severely strained by what was called ‘the Oregon question.’ The dispute was concerning the right of ownership of the mouth of the Columbia river, and of Vancouver’s Island. The President as well as the American people took the matter up very warmly; and much discretion was needed to avert the outbreak of hostilities.

In Sir Edward’s letter, which he read out and gave to me open, he requested Admiral Thomas to put me into any ship ‘that was likely to see service’; and quoted a word or two from my dear old captain Sir Thomas, which would probably have given me a lift.

The prospect before me was brilliant. What could be more delectable than the chance of a war? My fancy pictured all sorts of opportunities, turned to the best account,—my seniors disposed of, and myself, with a pair of epaulets, commanding the smartest brig in the service.

Alack-a-day! what a climb down from such high flights my life has been. The ship in which I was to have sailed to the west was suddenly countermanded to the east. She was to leave for China the following week, and I was already appointed to her, not even as a ‘super.’

My courage and my ambition were wrecked at a blow. The notion of returning for another three years to China, where all was now peaceful and stale to me, the excitement of the war at an end, every port reminding me of my old comrades, visions of renewed fevers and horrible food,—were more than I could stand.

I instantly made up my mind to leave the Navy. It was a wilful, and perhaps a too hasty, impulse. But I am impulsive by nature; and now that my father was dead, I fancied myself to a certain extent my own master. I knew moreover, by my father’s will, that I should not be dependent upon a profession. Knowledge of such a fact has been the ruin of many a better man than I. I have no virtuous superstitions in favour of poverty—quite the reverse—but I am convinced that the rich man, who has never had to earn his position or his living, is more to be pitied and less respected than the poor man whose comforts certainly, if not his bread, have depended on his own exertions.

My mother had a strong will of her own, and I could not guess what line she might take. I also apprehended the opposition of my guardians. On the whole, I opined a woman’s heart would be the most suitable for an appeal *ad misericordiam*. So I pulled out the agony stop, and worked the pedals of despair with all the anguish at my command.

‘It was easy enough for her to *revel in luxury* and consign me to a life worse than a *convict’s*. But how would *she* like to live on *salt junk*, to keep *night watches*, to have to cut up her blankets for *ponchos* (I knew she had never heard the word, and that it would tell accordingly), to save her from being *frozen to death*? How would *she* like to be mast-headed when a ship was rolling gunwale under? As to the wishes of my guardians, were *their feelings* to be considered before mine? I should like to see Lord Rosebery or Lord Spencer in my place! They’d very soon wish they had a mother who &c. &c.’

When my letter was finished I got leave to go ashore to post it. Feeling utterly miserable, I had my hair cut; and, rendered perfectly reckless by my appearance, I consented to have what was left of it tightly curled with a pair of tongs. I cannot say that I shared in any sensible degree the pleasure which this operation seemed to give to the artist. But when I got back to the ship the sight of my adornment kept my messmates in an uproar for the rest of the afternoon.

Whether the touching appeal to my mother produced tears, or of what kind, matters little; it effectually determined my career. Before my new ship sailed for China, I was home again, and in full possession of my coveted freedom as a civilian.

CHAPTER VIII

It was settled that after a course of three years at a private tutor’s I was to go to Cambridge. The life I had led for the past three years was not the best training for the fellow-pupil of lads of fifteen or sixteen who had just left school. They were much more ready to follow my lead than I theirs, especially as mine was always in the pursuit of pleasure.

I was first sent to Mr. B.’s, about a couple of miles from Alnwick. Before my time, Alnwick itself was considered out of bounds. But as nearly half the sin in this world consists in being found out, my companions and I managed never to commit any in this direction.

We generally returned from the town with a bottle of some noxious compound called ‘port’ in our pockets, which was served out in our ‘study’ at night, while I read aloud the instructive adventures of Mr. Thomas Jones. We were, of course, supposed to employ these late hours in preparing our work for the morrow. One boy only protested that, under the combined seductions of the port and Miss Molly Seagrim, he could never make his verses scan.

Another of our recreations was poaching. From my earliest days I was taught to shoot, myself and my brothers being each provided with his little single-barrelled flint and steel ‘Joe Manton.’

At — we were surrounded by grouse moors on one side, and by well-preserved coverts on the other. The grouse I used to shoot in the evening while they fed amongst the corn stooks; for pheasants and hares, I used to get the other pupils to walk through the woods, while I with a gun walked outside. Scouts were posted to look out for keepers.

Did our tutor know? Of course he knew. But think of the saving in the butcher's bill! Besides which, Mr. B. was otherwise preoccupied; he was in love with Mrs. B. I say 'in love,' for although I could not be sure of it then, (having no direct experience of the *amantium iræ*,) subsequent observation has persuaded me that their perpetual quarrels could mean nothing else. This was exceedingly favourable to the independence of Mr. B.'s pupils. But when asked by Mr. Ellice how I was getting on, I was forced in candour to admit that I was in a fair way to forget all I ever knew.

By the advice of Lord Spencer I was next placed under the tuition of one of the minor canons of Ely. The Bishop of Ely—Dr. Allen—had been Lord Spencer's tutor, hence his elevation to the see. The Dean—Dr. Peacock, of algebraic and Trinity College fame—was good enough to promise 'to keep an eye' on me. Lord Spencer himself took me to Ely; and there I remained for two years. They were two very important years of my life. Having no fellow pupil to beguile me, I was the more industrious. But it was not from the better acquaintance with ancient literature that I mainly benefited,—it was from my initiation to modern thought. I was a constant guest at the Deanery; where I frequently met such men as Sedgwick, Airey the Astronomer-Royal, Selwyn, Phelps the Master of Sydney, Canon Heaviside the master of Haileybury, and many other friends of the Dean's, distinguished in science, literature, and art. Here I heard discussed opinions on these subjects by some of their leading representatives. Naturally, as many of them were Churchmen, conversation often turned on the bearing of modern science, of geology especially if Sedgwick were of the party, upon Mosaic cosmogony, or Biblical exegesis generally.

The knowledge of these learned men, the lucidity with which they expressed their views, and the earnestness with which they defended them, captivated my attention, and opened to me a new world of surpassing interest and gravity.

What startled me most was the spirit in which a man of Sedgwick's intellectual power protested against the possible encroachments of his own branch of science upon the orthodox tenets of the Church. Just about this time an anonymous book appeared, which, though long since forgotten, caused no slight disturbance amongst dogmatic theologians. The tendency of this book, 'Vestiges of the Creation,' was, or was then held to be, antagonistic to the arguments from design. Familiar as we now are with the theory of evolution, such a work as the 'Vestiges' would no more stir the *odium theologicum* than Franklin's kite. Sedgwick, however, attacked it with a vehemence and a rancour that would certainly have roasted its author had the professor held the office of Grand Inquisitor.

Though incapable of forming any opinion as to the scientific merits of such a book, or of Hugh Miller's writings, which he also attacked upon purely religious grounds, I was staggered by the fact that the Bible could possibly be impeached, or that it was not profanity to defend it even. Was it not the 'Word of God'? And if so, how could any theories of creation, any historical, any philological researches, shake its eternal truth?

Day and night I pondered over this new revelation. I bought the books—the wicked books—which nobody ought to read. The *Index Expurgatorius* became my guide for books to be digested. I laid hands on every heretical work I could hear of. By chance I made the acquaintance of a young man who, together with his family, were Unitarians. I got, and devoured, Channing's works. I found a splendid copy of Voltaire in the Holkham library, and hunted through the endless volumes, till I came to the 'Dialogues Philosophiques.' The world is too busy, fortunately, to disturb its peace with such profane satire, such withering sarcasm as flashes through an 'entretien' like that between 'Frère Rigolet' and 'L'Empereur de la Chine.' Every French man of letters knows it by heart; but it would wound our English susceptibilities were I to cite it here. Then, too, the impious paraphrase of the Athanasian Creed, with its terrible climax, from the converting Jesuit: 'Or vous voyez bien . . . qu'un homme qui ne croit pas cette histoire doit être brûlé dans ce monde ci, et dans l'autre.' To which 'L'Empereur' replies: 'Ça c'est clair comme le jour.'

Could an ignorant youth, fevered with curiosity and the first goadings of the questioning spirit, resist such logic, such scorn, such scathing wit, as he met with here?

Then followed Rousseau; 'Emile' became my favourite. Froude's 'Nemesis of Faith' I read, and many other books of a like tendency. Passive obedience, blind submission to authority, was never one of my virtues, and once my faith was shattered, I knew not where to stop—what to doubt, what to believe. If the injunction to 'prove all things' was anything more than an empty apophthegm, inquiry, in St. Paul's eyes at any rate, could not be sacrilege.

It was not happiness I sought,—not peace of mind at least; for assuredly my thirst for knowledge, for truth, brought me anything but peace. I never was more restless, or, at times, more unhappy. Shallow, indeed, must be the soul that can lightly sever itself from beliefs which lie at the roots of our moral, intellectual, and emotional being, sanctified too by associations of our earliest love and reverence. I used to wander about the fields, and sit for hours in sequestered spots, longing for some friend, some confidant to take counsel with. I knew no such friend. I did not dare to speak of my misgivings to others. In spite of my earnest desire for guidance, for more light, the strong grip of childhood's influences was impossible to shake off. I could not rid my conscience of the sin of doubt.

It is this difficulty, this primary dependence on others, which develops into the child's first religion, that perpetuates the infantile character of human creeds; and, what is worse, generates the hideous bigotry which justifies that sad reflection of Lucretius: 'Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum!'

CHAPTER IX

To turn again to narrative, and to far less serious thoughts. The last eighteen months before I went to Cambridge, I was placed, or rather placed myself, under the tuition of Mr. Robert Collyer, rector of Warham, a living close to Holkham in the gift of my brother Leicester. Between my Ely tutor and myself there was but little sympathy. He was a man of much refinement, but with not much indulgence for such aberrant proclivities as mine. Without my knowledge, he wrote to Mr. Ellice lamenting my secret recusancy, and its moral dangers. Mr. Ellice came expressly from London, and stayed a night at Ely. He dined with us in the cloisters, and had a long private conversation with my tutor, and, before he left, with me. I indignantly resented the clandestine representations of Mr. S., and, without a word to Mr. Ellice or to anyone else, wrote next day to Mr. Collyer to beg him to take me in at Warham, and make what he could of me, before I went to Cambridge. It may here be said that Mr. Collyer had been my father's chaplain, and had lived at Holkham for several years as family tutor to my brothers and myself, as we in turn left the nursery. Mr. Collyer, upon receipt of my letter, referred the matter to Mr. Ellice; with his approval I was duly installed at Warham. Before describing my time there, I must tell of an incident which came near to affecting me in a rather important way.

My mother lived at Longford in Derbyshire, an old place, now my home, which had come into the Coke family in James I.'s reign, through the marriage of a son of Chief Justice Coke's with the heiress of the De Langfords, an ancient family from that time extinct. While staying there during my summer holidays, my mother confided to me that she had had an offer of marriage from Mr. Motteux, the owner of considerable estates in Norfolk, including two houses—Beachamwell and Sandringham. Mr. Motteux—'Johnny Motteux,' as he was called—was, like Tristram Shandy's father, the son of a wealthy 'Turkey merchant,' which, until better informed, I always took to mean a dealer in poultry. 'Johnny,' like another man of some notoriety, whom I well remember in my younger days—Mr. Creevey—had access to many large houses such as Holkham; not, like Creevey, for the sake of his scandalous tongue, but for the sake of his wealth. He had no (known) relatives; and big people, who had younger sons to provide for, were quite willing that one of them should be his heir. Johnny Motteux was an epicure with the best of *chefs*. His capons came from Paris, his salmon from Christchurch, and his Strasburg pies were made to order. One of these he always brought with him as a present to my mother, who used to say, 'Mr. Motteux evidently thinks the nearest way to my heart is down my throat.'

A couple of years after my father's death, Motteux wrote to my mother proposing marriage, and, to enhance his personal attractions, (in figure and dress he was a duplicate of the immortal Pickwick,) stated that he had made his will and had bequeathed Sandringham to me, adding that, should he die without issue, I was to inherit the remainder of his estates.

Rather to my surprise, my mother handed the letter to me with evident signs of embarrassment and distress. My first exclamation was: 'How jolly! The shooting's first rate, and the old boy is over seventy, if he's a day.'

My mother apparently did not see it in this light. She clearly, to my disappointments did not care for the shooting; and my exultation only brought tears into her eyes.

'Why, mother,' I exclaimed, 'what's up? Don't you—don't you care for Johnny Motteux?'

She confessed that she did not.

'Then why don't you tell him so, and not bother about his beastly letter?'

'If I refuse him you will lose Sandringham.'

'But he says here he has already left it to me.'

'He will alter his will.'

'Let him!' cried I, flying out at such prospective meanness. 'Just you tell him you don't care a rap for him or for Sandringham either.'

In more lady-like terms she acted in accordance with my advice; and, it may be added, not long afterwards married Mr. Ellice.

Mr. Motteux's first love, or one of them, had been Lady Cowper, then Lady Palmerston. Lady Palmerston's youngest son was Mr. Spencer Cowper. Mr. Motteux died a year or two after the above event. He made a codicil to his will, and left Sandringham and all his property to Mr. Spencer Cowper. Mr. Spencer Cowper was a young gentleman of costly habits. Indeed, he bore the slightly modified name of 'Expensive Cowper.' As an attaché at Paris he was famous for his patronage of dramatic art—or artistes rather; the votaries of Terpsichore were especially indebted to his liberality. At the time of Mr. Motteux's demise, he was attached to the Embassy at St. Petersburg. Mr. Motteux's solicitors wrote immediately to inform him of his accession to their late client's wealth. It being one of Mr. Cowper's maxims never to read lawyers' letters, (he was in daily receipt of more than he could attend to,) he flung this one unread into the fire; and only learnt his mistake through the congratulations of his family.

The Prince Consort happened about this time to be in quest of a suitable country seat for his present Majesty; and Sandringham, through the adroit negotiations of Lord Palmerston, became the property of the Prince of Wales. The soul of the 'Turkey merchant,' we cannot doubt, will repose in peace.

The worthy rector of Warham St. Mary's was an oddity deserving of passing notice. Outwardly he was no Adonis. His plain features and shock head of foxy hair, his antiquated and neglected garb, his copious jabot—much affected by the clergy of those days—were becoming investitures of the inward man. His temper was inflammatory, sometimes leading to excesses, which I am sure he rued in mental sackcloth and ashes. But visitors at Holkham (unaware of the excellent motives and moral courage which inspired his conduct) were not a little amazed at the austerity with which he obeyed the dictates of his conscience.

For example, one Sunday evening after dinner, when the drawing-room was filled with guests, who more or less preserved the decorum which etiquette demands in the presence of royalty, (the Duke of Sussex was of the party,) Charles Fox and Lady Anson, great-grandmother of the present Lord Lichfield, happened to be playing at chess. When the irascible dominie beheld them he pushed his way through the bystanders, swept the pieces from the board, and, with rigorous impartiality, denounced these impious desecrators of the Sabbath eve.

As an example of his fidelity as a librarian, Mr. Panizzi used to relate with much glee how, whenever he was at Holkham, Mr. Collyer dogged him like a detective. One day, not wishing to detain the reverend gentleman while he himself spent the forenoon in the manuscript library, (where not only the ancient manuscripts, but the most valuable of the printed books, are kept under lock and key,) he considerately begged Mr. Collyer to leave him to his researches. The dominie replied 'that he knew his duty, and did not mean to neglect it.' He did not lose sight of Mr. Panizzi.

The notion that he—the great custodian of the nation's literary treasures—would snip out and pocket the title-page of the folio edition of Shakespeare, or of the Coverdale Bible, tickled Mr. Panizzi's fancy vastly.

In spite, however, of our rector's fiery temperament, or perhaps in consequence of it, he was remarkably susceptible to the charms of beauty. We were constantly invited to dinner and garden parties in the neighbourhood; nor was the good rector slow to return the compliment. It must be confessed that the pupil shared to the full the impressibility of the tutor; and, as it happened, unknown to both, the two were in one case rivals.

As the young lady afterwards occupied a very distinguished position in Oxford society, it can only be said that she was celebrated for her many attractions. She was then sixteen, and the younger of her suitors but two years older. As far as age was concerned, nothing could be more compatible. Nor in the matter of mutual inclination was there any disparity whatever. What, then, was the pupil's dismay when, after a dinner party at the rectory, and the company had left, the tutor, in a frantic state of excitement, seized the pupil by both hands, and exclaimed: 'She has accepted me!'

'Accepted you?' I asked. 'Who has accepted you?'

'Who? Why, Miss —, of course! Who else do you suppose would accept me?'

'No one,' said I, with doleful sincerity. 'But did you propose to her? Did she understand what you said to her? Did she deliberately and seriously say "Yes?"'

'Yes, yes, yes,' and his disordered jabot and touzled hair echoed the fatal word.

'O Smintheus of the silver bow!' I groaned. 'It is the woman's part to create delusions, and—destroy them! To think of it! after all that has passed between us these—these three weeks, next Monday! "Once and for ever." Did ever woman use such words before? And I—believed them!' 'Did you speak to the mother?' I asked in a fit of desperation.

'There was no time for that. Mrs. — was in the carriage, and I didn't pop [the odious word!] till I was helping her on with her cloak. The cloak, you see, made it less awkward. My offer was a sort of *obiter dictum*—a by-the-way, as it were.'

'To the carriage, yes. But wasn't she taken by surprise?'

'Not a bit of it. Bless you! they always know. She pretended not to understand, but that's a way they have.'

'And when you explained?'

'There wasn't time for more. She laughed, and sprang into the carriage.'

'And that was all?'

‘All! would you have had her spring into my arms?’

‘God forbid! You will have to face the mother to-morrow,’ said I, recovering rapidly from my despondency.

‘Face? Well, I shall have to call upon Mrs. —, if that’s what you mean. A mere matter of form. I shall go over after lunch. But it needn’t interfere with your work. You can go on with the “Anabasis” till I come back. And remember—*Neaniskos* is not a proper name, ha! ha! ha! The quadratics will keep till the evening.’ He was merry over his prospects, and I was not altogether otherwise.

But there was no Xenophon, no algebra, that day! Dire was the distress of my poor dominie when he found the mother as much bewildered as the daughter was frightened, by the mistake. ‘She,’ the daughter, ‘had never for a moment imagined, &c., &c.’

My tutor was not long disheartened by such caprices—so he deemed them, as Miss Jemima’s (she had a prettier name, you may be sure), and I did my best (it cost me little now) to encourage his fondest hopes. I proposed that we should drink the health of the future mistress of Warham in tea, which he cheerfully acceded to, all the more readily, that it gave him an opportunity to vent one of his old college jokes. ‘Yes, yes,’ said he, with a laugh, ‘there’s nothing like tea. *Te veniente die*, *te decedente canebam*.’ Such sallies of innocent playfulness often smoothed his path in life. He took a genuine pleasure in his own jokes. Some men do. One day I dropped a pot of marmalade on a new carpet, and should certainly have been reprimanded for carelessness, had it not occurred to him to exclaim: ‘*Jam satis terris*!’ and then laugh immoderately at his wit.

That there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, was a maxim he acted upon, if he never heard it. Within a month of the above incident he proposed to another lady upon the sole grounds that, when playing a game of chess, an exchange of pieces being contemplated, she innocently, but incautiously, observed, ‘If you take me, I will take you.’ He referred the matter next day to my ripe judgment. As I had no partiality for the lady in question, I strongly advised him to accept so obvious a challenge, and go down on his knees to her at once. I laid stress on the knees, as the accepted form of declaration, both in novels and on the stage.

In this case the beloved object, who was not embarrassed by excess of amiability, promptly desired him, when he urged his suit, ‘not to make a fool of himself.’

My tutor’s peculiarities, however, were not confined to his endeavours to meet with a lady rectoress. He sometimes surprised his hearers with the originality of his abstruse theories. One morning he called me into the stable yard to join in consultation with his gardener as to the advisability of killing a pig. There were two, and it was not easy to decide which was the fitter for the butcher. The rector selected one, I the other, and the gardener, who had nurtured both from their tenderest age, pleaded that they should be allowed to ‘put on another score.’ The point was warmly argued all round.

‘The black sow,’ said I (they were both sows, you must know)—‘The black sow had a litter of ten last time, and the white one only six. Ergo, if history repeats itself, as I have heard you say, you should keep the black, and sacrifice the white.’

‘But,’ objected the rector, ‘that was the white’s first litter, and the black’s second. Why shouldn’t the white do as well as the black next time?’

‘And better, your reverence,’ chimed in the gardener. ‘The number don’t allays depend on the sow, do it?’

‘That is neither here nor there,’ returned the rector.

‘Well,’ said the gardener, who stood to his guns, ‘if your reverence is right, as no doubt you will be, that’ll make just twenty little pigs for the butcher, come Michaelmas.’

‘We can’t kill ’em before they are born,’ said the rector.

‘That’s true, your reverence. But it comes to the same thing.’

‘Not to the pigs,’ retorted the rector.

‘To your reverence, I means.’

‘A pig at the butcher’s,’ I suggested, ‘is worth a dozen unborn.’

‘No one can deny it,’ said the rector, as he fingered the small change in his breeches pocket; and pointing with the other hand to the broad back of the black sow, exclaimed, ‘This is the one, *Duplex agitur per lumbos spina*! She’s got a back like an alderman’s chin.’

‘*Epicuri de grege porcus*,’ I assented, and the fate of the black sow was sealed.

Next day an express came from Holkham, to say that Lady Leicester had given birth to a daughter. My tutor jumped out of his chair to hand me the note. ‘Did I not anticipate the event’? he cried. ‘What a wonderful world we live in! Unconsciously I made room for the infant by sacrificing the life of that pig.’ As I never heard him allude to the doctrine of Pythagoras, as he had no leaning to Buddhism, and, as I am sure he knew nothing of the correlation of forces, it must be admitted that the conception was an original one.

Be this as it may, Mr. Collyer was an upright and conscientious man. I owe him much, and respect his memory. He died at an advanced age, an honorary canon, and—a bachelor.

Another portrait hangs amongst the many in my memory's picture gallery. It is that of his successor to the vicarage, the chaplaincy, and the librarianship, at Holkham—Mr. Alexander Napier—at this time, and until his death fifty years later, one of my closest and most cherished friends. Alexander Napier was the son of Macvey Napier, first editor of the 'Edinburgh Review.' Thus, associated with many eminent men of letters, he also did some good literary work of his own. He edited Isaac Barrow's works for the University of Cambridge, also Boswell's 'Johnson,' and gave various other proofs of his talents and his scholarship. He was the most delightful of companions; liberal-minded in the highest degree; full of quaint humour and quick sympathy; an excellent parish priest,—looking upon Christianity as a life and not a dogma; beloved by all, for he had a kind thought and a kind word for every needy or sick being in his parish.

With such qualities, the man always predominated over the priest. Hence his large-hearted charity and indulgence for the faults—nay, crimes—of others. Yet, if taken aback by an outrage, or an act of gross stupidity, which even the perpetrator himself had to suffer for, he would momentarily lose his patience, and rap out an objurgation that would stagger the straiter-laced gentlemen of his own cloth, or an outsider who knew less of him than—the recording angel.

A fellow undergraduate of Napier's told me a characteristic anecdote of his impetuosity. Both were Trinity men, and had been keeping high jinks at a supper party at Caius. The friend suddenly pointed to the clock, reminding Napier they had but five minutes to get into college before Trinity gates were closed. 'D—n the clock!' shouted Napier, and snatching up the sugar basin (it was not *eau sucrée* they were drinking), incontinently flung it at the face of the offending timepiece.

This youthful vivacity did not desert him in later years. An old college friend—also a Scotchman—had become Bishop of Edinburgh. Napier paid him a visit (he described it to me himself). They talked of books, they talked of politics, they talked of English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, of Brougham, Horner, Wilson, Macaulay, Jeffrey, of Carlyle's dealings with Napier's father—'Nosey,' as Carlyle calls him. They chatted into the small hours of the night, as boon companions, and as what Bacon calls 'full' men, are wont. The claret, once so famous in the 'land of cakes,' had given place to toddy; its flow was in due measure to the flow of soul. But all that ends is short—the old friends had spent their last evening together. Yes, their last, perhaps. It was bed-time, and quoth Napier to his lordship, 'I tell you what it is, Bishop, I am na fou', but I'll be hanged if I haven't got two left legs.'

'I see something odd about them,' says his lordship. 'We'd better go to bed.'

Who the bishop was I do not know, but I'll answer for it he was one of the right sort.

In 1846 I became an undergraduate of Trinity College, Cambridge. I do not envy the man (though, of course, one ought) whose college days are not the happiest to look back upon. One should hope that however profitably a young man spends his time at the University, it is but the preparation for something better. But happiness and utility are not necessarily concomitant; and even when an undergraduate's course is least employed for its intended purpose (as, alas! mine was)—for happiness, certainly not pure, but simple, give me life at a University.

Heaven forbid that any youth should be corrupted by my confession! But surely there are some pleasures pertaining to this unique epoch that are harmless in themselves, and are certainly not to be met with at any other. These are the first years of comparative freedom, of manhood, of responsibility. The novelty, the freshness of every pleasure, the unsatiated appetite for enjoyment, the animal vigour, the ignorance of care, the heedlessness of, or rather, the implicit faith in, the morrow, the absence of mistrust or suspicion, the frank surrender to generous impulses, the readiness to accept appearances for realities—to believe in every profession or exhibition of good will, to rush into the arms of every friendship, to lay bare one's tenderest secrets, to listen eagerly to the revelations which make us all akin, to offer one's time, one's energies, one's purse, one's heart, without a selfish afterthought—these, I say, are the priceless pleasures, never to be repeated, of healthful average youth.

What has after-success, honour, wealth, fame, or, power—burdened, as they always are, with ambitions, blunders, jealousies, cares, regrets, and failing health—to match with this enjoyment of the young, the bright, the bygone, hour? The wisdom of the worldly teacher—at least, the *carpe diem*—was practised here before the injunction was ever thought of. *Du bist so schön* was the unuttered invocation, while the *Verweile doch* was deemed unneedful.

Little, I am ashamed to own, did I add either to my small classical or mathematical attainments. But I made friendships—lifelong friendships, that I would not barter for the best of academical prizes.

Amongst my associates or acquaintances, two or three of whom have since become known—were the last Lord Derby, Sir William Harcourt, the late Lord Stanley of Alderley, Latimer Neville, late Master of Magdalen, Lord Calthorpe, of racing fame, with whom I afterwards crossed the Rocky Mountains, the last Lord Durham, my cousin, Sir Augustus Stephenson, ex-solicitor to the Treasury, Julian Fane, whose lyrics were edited by Lord Lytton, and my life-long friend Charles Barrington, private secretary to Lord Palmerston and to Lord John Russell.

But the most intimate of them was George Cayley, son of the member for the East Riding of

Yorkshire. Cayley was a young man of much promise. In his second year he won the University prize poem with his ‘Balder,’ and soon after published some other poems, and a novel, which met with merited oblivion. But it was as a talker that he shone. His quick intelligence, his ready wit, his command of language, made his conversation always lively, and sometimes brilliant. For several years after I left Cambridge I lived with him in his father’s house in Dean’s Yard, and thus made the acquaintance of some celebrities whom his fascinating and versatile talents attracted thither. As I shall return to this later on, I will merely mention here the names of such men as Thackeray, Tennyson, Frederick Locker, Stirling of Keir, Tom Taylor the dramatist, Millais, Leighton, and others of lesser note. Cayley was a member of, and regular attendant at, the Cosmopolitan Club; where he met Dickens, Foster, Shirley Brooks, John Leech, Dicky Doyle, and the wits of the day; many of whom occasionally formed part of our charming coterie in the house I shared with his father.

Speaking of Tom Taylor reminds me of a good turn he once did me in my college examination at Cambridge. Whewell was then Master of Trinity. One of the subjects I had to take up was either the ‘Amicitia’ or the ‘Senectute’ (I forget which). Whewell, more formidable and alarming than ever, opened the book at hazard, and set me on to construe. I broke down. He turned over the page; again I stuck fast. The truth is, I had hardly looked at my lesson,—trusting to my recollection of parts of it to carry me through, if lucky, with the whole.

‘What’s your name, sir?’ was the Master’s gruff inquiry. He did not catch it. But Tom Taylor—also an examiner—sitting next to him, repeated my reply, with the addition, ‘Just returned from China, where he served as a midshipman in the late war.’ He then took the book out of Whewell’s hands, and giving it to me closed, said good-naturedly: ‘Let us have another try, Mr. Coke.’ The chance was not thrown away; I turned to a part I knew, and rattled off as if my first examiner had been to blame, not I.

CHAPTER X

Before dropping the curtain on my college days I must relate a little adventure which is amusing as an illustration of my reverend friend Napier’s enthusiastic spontaneity. My own share in the farce is a subordinate matter.

During the Christmas party at Holkham I had ‘fallen in love,’ as the phrase goes, with a young lady whose uncle (she had neither father nor mother) had rented a place in the neighbourhood. At the end of his visit he invited me to shoot there the following week. For what else had I paid him assiduous attention, and listened like an angel to the interminable history of his gout? I went; and before I left, proposed to, and was accepted by, the young lady. I was still at Cambridge, not of age, and had but moderate means. As for the maiden, ‘my face is my fortune’ she might have said. The aunt, therefore, very properly pooh-poohed the whole affair, and declined to entertain the possibility of an engagement; the elderly gentleman got a bad attack of gout; and every wire of communication being cut, not an obstacle was wanting to render persistence the sweetest of miseries.

Napier was my confessor, and became as keen to circumvent the ‘old she-dragon,’ so he called her, as I was. Frequent and long were our consultations, but they generally ended in suggestions and schemes so preposterous, that the only result was an immoderate fit of laughter on both sides. At length it came to this (the proposition was not mine): we were to hire a post chaise and drive to the inn at G—. I was to write a note to the young lady requesting her to meet me at some trysting place. The note was to state that a clergyman would accompany me, who was ready and willing to unite us there and then in holy matrimony; that I would bring the licence in my pocket; that after the marriage we could confer as to ways and means; and that—she could leave the *rest* to me.

No enterprise was ever more merrily conceived, or more seriously undertaken. (Please to remember that my friend was not so very much older than I; and, in other respects, was quite as juvenile.)

Whatever was to come of it, the drive was worth the venture. The number of possible and impossible contingencies provided for kept us occupied by the hour. Furnished with a well-filled luncheon basket, we regaled ourselves and fortified our courage; while our hilarity increased as we neared, or imagined that we neared, the climax. Unanimously we repeated Dr. Johnson’s exclamation in a post chaise: ‘Life has not many things better than this.’

But where were we? Our watches told us that we had been two hours covering a distance of eleven miles.

‘Hi! Hullo! Stop!’ shouted Napier. In those days post horses were ridden, not driven; and about all we could see of the post boy was what Mistress Tabitha Bramble saw of Humphrey Clinker. ‘Where the dickens have we got to now?’

‘Don’t know, I’m sure, sir,’ says the boy; ‘never was in these ’ere parts afore.’

‘Why,’ shouts the vicar, after a survey of the landscape, ‘if I can see a church by daylight, that’s Blakeney steeple; and we are only three miles from where we started.’

Sure enough it was so. There was nothing for it but to stop at the nearest house, give the horses a rest and a feed, and make a fresh start,—better informed as to our topography.

It was past four on that summer afternoon when we reached our destination. The plan of campaign was cut and dried. I called for writing materials, and indicted my epistle as agreed upon.

'To whom are you telling her to address the answer?' asked my accomplice. 'We're *incog.* you know. It won't do for either of us to be known.'

'Certainly not,' said I. 'What shall it be? White? Black? Brown? or Green?'

'Try Browne with an E,' said he. 'The E gives an aristocratic flavour. We can't afford to risk our respectability.'

The note sealed, I rang the bell for the landlord, desired him to send it up to the hall and tell the messenger to wait for an answer.

As our host was leaving the room he turned round, with his hand on the door, and said:

'Beggin' your pardon, Mr. Cook, would you and Mr. Napeer please to take dinner here? I've soom beatiful lamb chops, and you could have a ducklin' and some nice young peas to your second course. The post-boy says the 'osses is pretty nigh done up; but by the time—'

'How did you know our names?' asked my companion.

'Law sir! The post-boy, he told me. But, beggin' your pardon, Mr. Napeer, my daughter, she lives in Holkham willage; and I've heard you preach afore now.'

'Let's have the dinner by all means,' said I.

'If the Bishop sequesters my living,' cried Napier, with solemnity, 'I'll summon the landlord for defamation of character. But time's up. You must make for the boat-house, which is on the other side of the park. I'll go with you to the head of the lake.'

We had not gone far, when we heard the sound of an approaching vehicle. What did we see but an open carriage, with two ladies in it, not a hundred yards behind us.

'The aunt! by all that's—!'

What— I never heard; for, before the sentence was completed, the speaker's long legs were scampering out of sight in the direction of a clump of trees, I following as hard as I could go.

As the carriage drove past, my Friar Lawrence was lying in a ditch, while I was behind an oak. We were near enough to discern the niece, and consequently we feared to be recognised. The situation was neither dignified nor romantic. My friend was sanguine, though big ardour was slightly damped by the ditch water. I doubted the expediency of trying the boat-house, but he urged the risk of her disappointment, which made the attempt imperative.

The padre returned to the inn to dry himself, and, in due course, I rejoined him. He met me with the answer to my note. 'The boat-house,' it declared, 'was out of the question. But so, of course, was the *possibility* of *change*. We must put our trust in *Providence*. Time could make *no* difference in *our* case, whatever it might do with *others*. *She*, at any rate, could wait for YEARS.' Upon the whole the result was comforting—especially as the 'years' dispensed with the necessity of any immediate step more desperate than dinner. This we enjoyed like men who had earned it; and long before I deposited my dear friar in his cell both of us were snoring in our respective corners of the chaise.

A word or two will complete this romantic episode. The next long vacation I spent in London, bent, needless to say, on a happy issue to my engagement. How simple, in the retrospect, is the frustration of our hopes! I had not been a week in town, had only danced once with my *fiancée*, when, one day, taking a tennis lesson from the great Barre, a forced ball grazed the frame of my racket, and broke a blood vessel in my eye.

For five weeks I was shut up in a dark room. It was two more before I again met my charmer. She did not tell me, but her man did, that their wedding day was fixed for the 10th of the following month; and he 'hoped they would have the pleasure of seeing me at the breakfast!' [I made the following note of the fact: N.B.—A woman's tears may cost her nothing; but her smiles may be expensive.]

I must, however, do the young lady the justice to state that, though her future husband was no great things as a 'man,' as she afterwards discovered, he was the heir to a peerage and great wealth. Both he and she, like most of my collaborators in this world, have long since passed into the other.

The fashions of bygone days have always an interest for the living: the greater perhaps the less remote. We like to think of our ancestors of two or three generations off—the heroes and heroines of Jane Austen, in their pantaloons and high-waisted, short-skirted frocks, their pigtails and powdered hair, their sandalled shoes, and Hessian boots. Our near connection with them entrances our self-esteem. Their prim manners, their affected bows and courtesies, the 'dear Mr. So-and-So' of the wife to her husband, the 'Sir' and 'Madam' of the children to their parents, make us wonder whether their flesh and blood were ever as warm as ours; or whether they were a race of prigs and puppets?

My memory carries me back to the remnants of these lost externals—that which is lost was nothing more; the men and women were every whit as human as ourselves. My half-sisters wore turbans with birds-of-paradise in them. My mother wore gigot sleeves; but objected to my father's pigtail, so cut it off. But my father powdered his head, and kept to his knee-breeches to the last; so did all elderly gentlemen, when I was a boy. For the matter of that, I saw an old fellow with a pigtail walking in the Park as late as 1845. He, no doubt, was an ultra-conservative.

Fashions change so imperceptibly that it is difficult for the historian to assign their initiatory date. Does the young dandy of to-day want to know when white ties came into vogue?—he knows that his great-grandfather wore a white neckcloth, and takes it for granted, may be, that his grandfather did so too. Not a bit of it. The young Englander of the Coningsby type—the Count d'Orsays of my youth, scorned the white tie alike of their fathers and their sons. At dinner-parties or at balls, they adorned themselves in satin scarfs, with a jewelled pin or chained pair of pins stuck in them. I well remember the rebellion—the protest against effeminacy—which the white tie called forth amongst some of us upon its first invasion on evening dress. The women were in favour of it, and, of course, carried the day; but not without a struggle. One night at Holkham—we were a large party, I daresay at least fifty at dinner—the men came down in black scarfs, the women in white 'chokers.' To make the contest complete, these all sat on one side of the table, and we men on the other. The battle was not renewed; both factions surrendered. But the women, as usual, got their way, and—their men.

For my part I could never endure the original white neckcloth. It was stiffly starched, and wound twice round the neck; so I abjured it for the rest of my days; now and then I got the credit of being a coxcomb—not for my pains, but for my comfort. Once, when dining at the Viceregal Lodge at Dublin, I was 'pulled up' by an aide-de-camp for my unbecoming attire; but I stuck to my colours, and was none the worse. Another time my offence called forth a touch of good nature on the part of a great man, which I hardly know how to speak of without writing me down an ass. It was at a crowded party at Cambridge House. (Let me plead my youth; I was but two-and-twenty.) Stars and garters were scarcely a distinction. White ties were then as imperative as shoes and stockings; I was there in a black one. My candid friends suggested withdrawal, my relations cut me assiduously, strangers by my side whispered at me aloud, women turned their shoulders to me; and my only prayer was that my accursed tie would strangle me on the spot. One pair of sharp eyes, however, noticed my ignominy, and their owner was moved by compassion for my sufferings. As I was slinking away, Lord Palmerston, with a *bonhomie* peculiarly his own, came up to me; and with a shake of the hand and hearty manner, asked after my brother Leicester, and when he was going to bring me into Parliament?—ending with a smile: 'Where are you off to in such a hurry?' That is the sort of tact that makes a party leader. I went to bed a proud, instead of a humiliated, man; ready, if ever I had the chance, to vote that black was white, should he but state it was so.

Beards and moustache came into fashion after the Crimean war. It would have been an outrage to wear them before that time. When I came home from my travels across the Rocky Mountains in 1851, I was still unshaven. Meeting my younger brother—a fashionable guardsman—in St. James's Street, he exclaimed, with horror and disgust at my barbarity, 'I suppose you mean to cut off that thing!'

Smoking, as indulged in now, was quite out of the question half a century ago. A man would as soon have thought of making a call in his dressing-gown as of strolling about the West End with a cigar in his mouth. The first whom I ever saw smoke a cigarette at a dining-table after dinner was the King; some forty years ago, or more perhaps. One of the many social benefits we owe to his present Majesty.

CHAPTER XI.

During my blindness I was hospitably housed in Eaten Place by Mr. Whitbread, the head of the renowned firm. After my recovery I had the good fortune to meet there Lady Morgan, the once famous authoress of the 'Wild Irish Girl.' She still bore traces of her former comeliness, and had probably lost little of her sparkling vivacity. She was known to like the company of young people, as she said they made her feel young; so, being the youngest of the party, I had the honour of sitting next her at dinner. When I recall her conversation and her pleasing manners, I can well understand the homage paid both abroad and at home to the bright genius of the Irish actor's daughter.

We talked a good deal about Byron and Lady Caroline Lamb. This arose out of my saying I had been reading 'Glenarvon,' in which Lady Caroline gives Byron's letters to herself as Glenarvon's letters to the heroine. Lady Morgan had been the confidante of Lady Caroline, had seen many of Byron's letters, and possessed many of her friend's—full of details of the extraordinary intercourse which had existed between the two.

Lady Morgan evidently did not believe (in spite of Lady Caroline's mad passion for the poet) that the liaison ever reached the ultimate stage contemplated by her lover. This opinion was strengthened by Lady Caroline's undoubted attachment to her husband—William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne—who seems to have submitted to his wife's vagaries with his habitual stoicism and good humour.

Both Byron and Lady Caroline had violent tempers, and were always quarrelling. This led to the final rupture, when, according to my informant, the poet's conduct was outrageous. He sent her some insulting lines, which Lady Morgan quoted. The only one I remember is:

> Thou false to him, thou fiend to me!

Among other amusing anecdotes she told was one of Disraeli. She had met him (I forget where), soon after his first success as the youthful author of 'Vivian Grey.' He was naturally made much of, but rather in the Bohemian world than by such queens of society as Lady Holland or Lady Jersey. 'And faith!' she added, with the piquante accent which excitement evoked, 'he took the full shine out of his janius. And how do ye think he was dressed? In a black velvet jacket and suit to match, with a red sash round his waist, in which was stuck a dagger with a richly jew'lled sheath and handle.'

The only analogous instance of self-confidence that I can call to mind was Garibaldi's costume at a huge reception at Stafford House. The *élite* of society was there, in diamonds, ribbons, and stars, to meet him. Garibaldi's uppermost and outermost garment was a red flannel shirt, nothing more nor less.

The crowd jostled and swayed around him. To get out of the way of it, I retreated to the deserted picture gallery. The only person there was one who interested me more than the scarlet patriot, Bulwer-Lytton the First. He was sauntering to and fro with his hands behind his back, looking dingy in his black satin scarf, and dejected. Was he envying the Italian hero the obsequious reverence paid to his miner's shirt? (Nine tenths of the men, and still more of the women there, knew nothing of the wearer, or his cause, beyond that.) Was he thinking of similar honours which had been lavished upon himself when *his* star was in the zenith? Was he muttering to himself the usual consolation of the 'have-beens'—*vanitas vanitatum*? Or what new fiction, what old love, was flitting through that versatile and fantastic brain? Poor Bulwer! He had written the best novel, the best play, and had made the most eloquent parliamentary oration of any man of his day. But, like another celebrated statesman who has lately passed away, he strutted his hour and will soon be forgotten—'Quand on broute sa gloire en herbe de son vivant, on ne la récolte pas en épis après sa mort.' The 'Masses,' so courted by the one, however blatant, are not the arbiters of immortal fame.

To go back a few years before I met Lady Morgan: when my mother was living at 18 Arlington Street, Sydney Smith used to be a constant visitor there. One day he called just as we were going to lunch. He had been very ill, and would not eat anything. My mother suggested the wing of a chicken.

'My dear lady,' said he, 'it was only yesterday that my doctor positively refused my request for the wing of a butterfly.'

Another time when he was making a call I came to the door before it was opened. When the footman answered the bell, 'Is Lady Leicester at home?' he asked.

'No, sir,' was the answer.

'That's a good job,' he exclaimed, but with a heartiness that fairly took Jeames' breath away.

As Sydney's face was perfectly impassive, I never felt quite sure whether this was for the benefit of myself or of the astounded footman; or whether it was the genuine expression of an absent mind. He was a great friend of my mother's, and of Mr. Ellice's, but his fits of abstraction were notorious.

He himself records the fact. 'I knocked at a door in London, asked, "Is Mrs. B— at home?" "Yes, sir; pray what name shall I say?" I looked at the man's face astonished. What name? what name? aye, that is the question. What is my name? I had no more idea who I was than if I had never existed. I did not know whether I was a dissenter or a layman. I felt as dull as Sternhold and Hopkins. At last, to my great relief, it flashed across me that I was Sydney Smith.'

In the summer of the year 1848 Napier and I stayed a couple of nights with Captain Marryat at Langham, near Blakeney. He used constantly to come over to Holkham to watch our cricket matches. His house was a glorified cottage, very comfortable and prettily decorated. The dining and sitting-rooms were hung with the original water-colour drawings—mostly by Stanfield, I think—which illustrated his minor works. Trophies from all parts of the world garnished the walls. The only inmates beside us two were his son, a strange, but clever young man with considerable artistic abilities, and his talented daughter, Miss Florence, since so well known to novel readers.

Often as I had spoken to Marryat, I never could quite make him out. Now that I was his guest his habitual reserve disappeared, and despite his failing health he was geniality itself. Even this I did not fully understand at first. At the dinner-table his amusement seemed, I won't say to make a 'butt' of me—his banter was too good-natured for that—but he treated me as Dr. Primrose treated his son after the bushel-of-green-spectacles bargain. He invented the most wonderful stories, and told them with imperturbable sedateness. Finding a credulous listener in me, he drew all the more freely upon his invention. When, however, he gravely asserted that Jonas was not the only man who had spent three days and three nights in a whale's belly, but that he himself had caught a whale with a man inside it who had lived there for more than a year on blubber, which, he declared, was better than turtle soup, it was impossible to resist the fooling, and not forget that one was the Moses of the extravaganza.

In the evening he proposed that his son and daughter and I should act a charade. Napier was the audience, and Marryat himself the orchestra—that is, he played on his fiddle such tunes as a ship's fiddler or piper plays to the heaving of the anchor, or for hoisting in cargo. Everyone was in romping spirits, and notwithstanding the cheery Captain's signs of fatigue and worn looks, which he evidently strove to conceal, the evening had all the freshness and spirit of an impromptu pleasure.

When I left, Marryat gave me his violin, with some sad words about his not being likely to play upon it more. Perhaps he knew better than we how prophetically he was speaking. Barely three weeks afterwards I learnt that the humorous creator of 'Midshipman Easy' would never make us laugh again.

In 1846 Lord John Russell succeeded Sir Robert Peel as premier. At the General Election, a brother of mine was the Liberal candidate for the seat in East Norfolk. He was returned; but was threatened with defeat through an occurrence in which I was innocently involved.

The largest landowner in this division of the county, next to my brother Leicester, was Lord Hastings—great-grandfather of the present lord. On the occasion I am referring to, he was a guest at Holkham, where a large party was then assembled. Leicester was particularly anxious to be civil to his powerful neighbour; and desired the members of his family to show him every attention. The little lord was an exceedingly punctilious man: as scrupulously dapper in manner as he was in dress. Nothing could be more courteous, more smiling, than his habitual demeanour; but his bite was worse than his bark, and nobody knew which candidate his agents had instructions to support in the coming contest. It was quite on the cards that the secret order would turn the scales.

One evening after dinner, when the ladies had left us, the men were drawn together and settled down to their wine. It was before the days of cigarettes, and claret was plentifully imbibed. I happened to be seated next to Lord Hastings on his left; on the other side of him was Spencer Lyttelton, uncle of our Colonial Secretary. Spencer Lyttelton was a notable character. He had much of the talents and amiability of his distinguished family; but he was eccentric, exceedingly comic, and dangerously addicted to practical jokes. One of these he now played upon the spruce and vigilant little potentate whom it was our special aim to win.

As the decanters circulated from right to left, Spencer filled himself a bumper, and passed the bottles on. Lord Hastings followed suit. I, unfortunately, was speaking to Lyttelton behind Lord Hastings's back, and as he turned and pushed the wine to me, the incorrigible joker, catching sight of the handkerchief sticking out of my lord's coat-tail, quick as thought drew it open and emptied his full glass into the gaping pocket. A few minutes later Lord Hastings, who took snuff, discovered what had happened. He held the dripping cloth up for inspection, and with perfect urbanity deposited it on his dessert plate.

Leicester looked furious, but said nothing till we joined the ladies. He first spoke to Hastings, and then to me. What passed between the two I do not know. To me, he said: 'Hastings tells me it was you who poured the claret into his pocket. This will lose the election. After to-morrow, I shall want your room.' Of course, the culprit confessed; and my brother got the support we hoped for. Thus it was that the political interests of several thousands of electors depended on a glass of wine.

CHAPTER XII

I HAD completed my second year at the University, when, in October 1848, just as I was about to return to Cambridge after the long vacation, an old friend—William Grey, the youngest of the ex-Prime-Minister's sons—called on me at my London lodgings. He was attached to the Vienna Embassy, where his uncle, Lord Ponsonby, was then ambassador. Shortly before this there had been serious insurrections both in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin.

Many may still be living who remember how Louis Philippe fled to England; how the infection spread over this country; how 25,000 Chartists met on Kennington Common; how the upper and middle classes of London were enrolled as special constables, with the future Emperor of the French amongst them; how the promptitude of the Iron Duke saved London, at least, from the fate of the French and Austrian capitals.

This, however, was not till the following spring. Up to October, no overt defiance of the Austrian Government had yet asserted itself; but the imminence of an outbreak was the anxious thought of the hour. The hot heads of Germany, France, and England were more than meditating—they were threatening, and preparing for, a European revolution. Bloody battles were to be fought; kings and emperors were to be dethroned and decapitated; mobs were to take the place of parliaments; the leaders of the 'people'—*i.e.* the stump orators—were to rule the world; property was to be divided and subdivided down to the shirt on a man's—a rich man's—back; and every 'po'r' man was to have his own, and—somebody else's. This was the divine law of Nature, according to the gospels of Saint Jean Jacques and Mr. Feargus O'Connor. We were all naked under our clothes, which clearly proved our equality. This was the simple, the beautiful programme; once carried out, peace, fraternal and eternal peace, would reign—till it ended, and the earthly Paradise would be an accomplished fact.

I was an ultra-Radical—a younger-son Radical—in those days. I was quite ready to share with my elder brother; I had no prejudice in favour of my superiors; I had often dreamed of becoming a leader of the 'people'—a stump orator, *i.e.*—with the handsome emoluments of ministerial office.

William Grey came to say good-bye. He was suddenly recalled in consequence of the insurrection. 'It is a most critical state of affairs,' he said. 'A revolution may break out all over the Continent at any moment. There's no saying where it may end. We are on the eve of a new epoch in the history of Europe. I wouldn't miss it on any account.'

'Most interesting! most interesting!' I exclaimed. 'How I wish I were going with you!'

'Come,' said he, with engaging brevity.

'How can I? I'm just going back to Cambridge.'

'You are of age, aren't you?'

I nodded.

'And your own master? Come; you'll never have such a chance again.'

'When do you start?'

'To-morrow morning early.'

'But it is too late to get a passport.'

'Not a bit of it. I have to go to the Foreign Office for my despatches. Dine with me to-night at my mother's—nobody else—and I'll bring your passport in my pocket.'

'So be it, then. Billy Whistle [the irreverend nickname we undergraduates gave the Master of Trinity] will rusticate me to a certainty. It can't be helped. The cause is sacred. I'll meet you at Lady Grey's to-night.'

We reached our destination at daylight on October 9. We had already heard, while changing carriages at Breslau station, that the revolution had broken out at Vienna, that the rails were torn up, the Bahn-hof burnt, the military defeated and driven from the town. William Grey's official papers, aided by his fluent German, enabled us to pass the barriers, and find our way into the city. He went straight to the Embassy, and sent me on to the 'Erzherzog Carl' in the Kärnthner Thor Strasse, at that time the best hotel in Vienna. It being still nearly dark, candles were burning in every window by order of the insurgents.

The preceding day had been an eventful one. The proletariats, headed by the students, had sacked the arsenal, the troops having made but slight resistance. They then marched to the War Office and demanded the person of the War Minister, Count Latour, who was most unpopular on account of his known appeal to Jellachich, the Ban of Croatia, to assist, if required, in putting down the disturbances. Some sharp fighting here took place. The rioters defeated the small body of soldiers on the spot, captured two guns, and took possession of the building. The unfortunate minister was found in one of the upper garrets of the palace. The ruffians dragged him from his place of concealment, and barbarously murdered him. They then flung his body from the window, and in a few minutes it was hanging from a lamp-post above the heads of the infuriated and yelling mob.

In 1848 the inner city of Vienna was enclosed within a broad and lofty bastion, fosse, and glacis. These were levelled in 1857. As soon as the troops were expelled, cannon were placed on the Bastei so as to command the approaches from without. The tunnelled gateways were built up, and barricades erected across every principal thoroughfare. Immediately after these events Ferdinand I. abdicated in favour of the present Emperor Francis Joseph, who retired with the Court to Schöbrunn. Foreigners at once took flight, and the hotels were emptied. The only person left in the 'Archduke Charles' beside myself was Mr. Bowen, afterwards Sir George, Governor of New Zealand, with whom I was glad to fraternise.

These humble pages do not aspire to the dignity of History; but a few words as to what took place are needful for the writer's purposes. The garrison in Vienna had been comparatively small; and as the National Guard had joined the students and proletariats, it was deemed advisable by the Government to await the arrival of reinforcements under Prince Windischgrätz, who, together with a strong body of Servians and Croats under Jellachich, might overawe the insurgents; or, if not, recapture the city without unnecessary bloodshed. The rebels were buoyed up by hopes of support from the Hungarians under Kossuth. But in this they were disappointed. In less than three weeks from the day of the outbreak the city was beleaguered. Fighting began outside the town on the 24th. On the 25th the soldiers occupied the Wieden and Nussdorf suburbs. Next day the Gemeinderath (Municipal Council) sent a *Parlementär* to treat with Windischgrätz. The terms were rejected, and the city was taken by storm on October 30.

A few days before the bombardment, the Austrian commander gave the usual notice to the Ambassadors to quit the town. This they accordingly did. Before leaving, Lord Ponsonby kindly sent his private secretary, Mr. George Samuel, to warn me and invite me to join him at Schönbrunn. I politely elected to stay and take my chance. After the attack on the suburbs began I had reason to regret the decision. The hotels were entered by patrols, and all efficient waiters *kommandiere'd* to work at the barricades, or carry arms. On the fourth day I settled to change sides. The constant banging of big guns, and rattle of musketry, with the impossibility of getting either air or exercise without the risk of being indefinitely deprived of both, was becoming less amusing than I had counted on. I was already provided with a *Passierschein*, which franked me inside the town, and up to the insurgents' outposts. The difficulty was how to cross the neutral ground and the two opposing lines. Broad daylight was the safest time for the purpose; the officious sentry is not then so apt to shoot his friend. With much stalking and dodging I made a bolt; and, notwithstanding violent gesticulations and threats, got myself safely seized and hurried before the nearest commanding officer.

He happened to be a general or a colonel. He was a fierce looking, stout old gentleman with a very red face, all the redder for his huge white moustache and well-filled white uniform. He began by fuming and blustering as if about to order me to summary execution. He spoke so fast, it was not easy to follow him. Probably my amateur German was as puzzling to him. The *Passierschein*, which I produced, was not in my favour; unfortunately I had forgotten my Foreign Office passport. What further added to his suspicion was his inability to comprehend why I had not availed myself of the notice, duly given to all foreigners, to leave the city before active hostilities began. How anyone, who had the choice, could be fool enough to stay and be shelled or bayoneted, was (from his point of view) no proof of respectability. I assured him he was mistaken if he thought I had a predilection for either of these alternatives.

'It was just because I desired to avoid both that I had sought, not without risk, the protection I was so sure of finding at the hands of a great and gallant soldier.'

'Dummes Zeug! dummes Zeug!' (stuff o' nonsense), he puffed. But a peppery man's good humour is often as near the surface as his bad. I detected a pleasant sparkle in his eye.

'Pardon me, Excellenz,' said I, 'my presence here is the best proof of my sincerity.'

'That,' said he sharply, 'is what every rascal might plead when caught with a rebel's pass in his pocket. Geleitsbriefe für Schurken sind Steckbriefe für die Gerechtigkeit.' (Safe-conduct passes for knaves are writs of capias to honest men.)

I answered: 'But an English gentleman is not a knave; and no one knows the difference better than your Excellenz.' The term 'Schurken' (knaves) had stirred my fire; and though I made a deferential bow, I looked as indignant as I felt.

'Well, well,' he said pacifically, 'you may go about your business. But *sehen Sie*, young man, take my advice, don't satisfy your curiosity at the cost of a broken head. Dazu gehören Kerle die eigens geschaffen sind.' As much as to say: 'Leave halters to those who are born to be hanged.' Indeed, the old fellow looked as if he had enjoyed life too well to appreciate parting with it gratuitously.

I had nothing with me save the clothes on my back. When I should again have access to the 'Erzherzcg Carl' was impossible to surmise. The only decent inn I knew of outside the walls was the 'Golden Lámm,' on the suburb side of the Donau Canal, close to the Ferdinand bridge which faces the Rothen Thurm Thor. Here I entered, and found it occupied by a company of Nassau *jägers*. A barricade was thrown up across the street leading to the bridge. Behind it were two guns. One end of the barricade abutted on the 'Golden Lámm.' With the exception of the soldiers, the inn seemed to be deserted; and I wanted both food and lodging. The upper floor was full of *jägers*. The front windows over-looked the Bastei. These were now blocked with mattresses, to protect the men from bullets. The distance from the ramparts was not more than 150 yards, and woe to the student or the fat grocer, in his National Guard uniform, who showed his head above the walls. While I was in the attics a gun above the city gate fired at the battery below. I ran down a few minutes later to see the result. One artilleryman had been killed. He was already laid under the gun-carriage, his head covered with a cloak.

The storming took place a day or two afterwards. One of the principal points of resistance had been at the bottom of the Jägerzeile. The insurgents had a battery of several guns here; and the handsome houses at the corners facing the Prater had been loop-holed and filled with students. I walked round the town after all was over, and was especially impressed with the horrors I witnessed. The beautiful houses, with their gorgeous furniture, were a mass of smoking ruins. Not a soul was to be seen, not even a prowling thief. I picked my way into one or two of them without hindrance. Here and there were a heap of bodies, some burnt to cinders, some with their clothes still smouldering. The smell of the roasted flesh was a disgusting association for a long time to come. But the whole was sickening to look at, and still more so, if possible, to reflect upon; for this was the price which so often has been, so often will be, paid for the alluring dream of liberty, and for the pursuit of that mischievous will-o'-the-wisp—jealous Equality.

CHAPTER XIII

Vienna in the early part of the last century was looked upon as the gayest capital in Europe. Even the frightful convulsion it had passed through only checked for a while its chronic pursuit of pleasure. The cynical philosopher might be tempted to contrast this not infrequent accessory of paternal rule with the purity and contentment so fondly expected from a democracy—or shall we say a demagoguey? The cherished hopes of the so-called patriots had been crushed; and many were the worse for the struggle. But the majority naturally subsided into their customary vocations—beer-drinking, pipe-smoking, music, dancing, and play-going.

The Vienna of 1848 was the Vienna described by Madame de Staël in 1810: 'Dans ce pays, l'on traite les plaisirs comme les devoirs. . . . Vous verrez des hommes et des femmes exécuter gravement, l'un vis-à-vis de l'autre, les pas d'un menuet dont ils sont imposé l'amusement, . . . comme s'il [the couple] dansait pour l'acquit de sa conscience.'

Every theatre and place of amusement was soon re-opened. There was an excellent opera; Strauss—the original—presided over weekly balls and concerts. For my part, being extremely fond of music, I worked industriously at the violin, also at German. My German master, Herr Mauthner by name, was a little hump-backed Jew, who seemed to know every man and woman (especially woman) worth knowing in Vienna. Through him I made the acquaintance of several families of the middle class,—amongst them that of a veteran musician who had been Beethoven's favourite flute-player. As my veneration for Beethoven was unbounded, I listened with awe to every trifling incident relating to the great master. I fear the conviction left on my mind was that my idol, though transcendent amongst musicians, was a bear amongst men. Pride (according to his ancient associate) was his strong point. This he vindicated by excessive rudeness to everyone whose social position was above his own. Even those that did him a good turn were suspected of patronising. Condescension was a prerogative confined to himself. In this respect, to be sure, there was nothing singular.

At the house of the old flutist we played family quartets,—he, the father, taking the first violin part on his flute, I the second, the son the 'cello, and his daughter the piano. It was an atmosphere of music that we all inhaled; and my happiness on these occasions would have been unalloyed, had not the young lady—a damsel of six-and-forty—insisted on poisoning me (out of compliment to my English tastes) with a bitter decoction she was pleased to call tea. This delicate attention, I must say, proved an effectual souvenir till we met again—I dreaded it.

Now and then I dined at the Embassy. One night I met there Prince Paul Esterhazy, so distinguished by his diamonds when Austrian Ambassador at the coronation of Queen Victoria. He talked to me of the Holkham sheep-shearing gatherings, at which from 200 to 300 guests sat down to dinner every day, including crowned heads, and celebrities from both sides of the Atlantic. He had twice assisted at these in my father's time. He also spoke of the shooting; and promised, if I would visit him in Hungary, he would show me as good sport as had ever seen in Norfolk. He invited Mr. Magenis—the Secretary of Legation—to accompany me.

The following week we two hired a *britzcka*, and posted to Eisenstadt. The lordly grandeur of this last of the feudal princes manifested itself soon after we crossed the Hungarian frontier. The first sign of it was the livery and badge worn by the postillions. Posting houses, horses and roads, were all the property of His Transparency.

Eisenstadt itself, though not his principal seat, is a large palace—three sides of a triangle. One wing is the residence, that opposite the barrack, (he had his own troops,) and the connecting base part museum and part concert-hall. This last was sanctified by the spirit of Joseph Haydn, for so many years Kapellmeister to the Esterhazy family. The conductor's stand and his spinet remained intact. Even the stools and desks in the orchestra (so the Prince assured me) were ancient. The very dust was sacred. Sitting alone in the dim space, one could fancy the great little man still there, in his snuff-coloured coat and ruffles, half buried (as on state occasions) in his '*allonge perücke*.' A tap of his magic wand starts into life his quaint old-fashioned band, and the powder flies from their wigs. Soft, distant, ghostly harmonies of the Surprise Symphony float among the rafters; and now, as in a dream, we are listening to—nay, beholding—the glorious process of Creation; till suddenly the mighty chord is struck, and we are startled from our trance by the burst of myriad voices echoing the command and its fulfilment, 'Let there be light: and there was light.'

Only a family party was assembled in the house. A Baron something, and a Graf something—both relations,—and the son, afterwards Ambassador at St. Petersburg during the Crimean War. The latter was married to Lady Sarah Villiers, who was also there. It is amusing to think that the beautiful daughter of the proud Lady Jersey should be looked upon by the Austrians as somewhat of a *mésalliance* for one of the chiefs of their nobility. Certain it is that the young Princess was received by them, till they knew her, with more condescension than enthusiasm.

An air of feudal magnificence pervaded the palace: spacious reception-rooms hung with armour and trophies of the chase; numbers of domestics in epauletted and belaced, but ill-fitting, liveries; the prodigal supply and nationality of the comestibles—wild boar with marmalade, venison and game of all sorts with excellent 'Eingemachtes' and 'Mehlspeisen' galore—a feast for a Gamache or a Gargantua. But then, all save three, remember, were Germans—and Germans! Noteworthy was the delicious Château Y'quem, of which the Prince declared he had a monopoly—meaning the best, I presume. After dinner the son, his brother-in-law, and I, smoked our meerschaums and played pools of *écarté* in the young Prince's room. Magenis, who was much our senior, had his rubber downstairs with the elders.

The life was pleasant enough, but there was one little medieval peculiarity which almost made one look for retainers in goat-skins and rushes on the floor,—there was not a bath (except the Princess's) in the palace! It was with difficulty that my English servant foraged a tub from the kitchen or the laundry. As to other sanitary arrangements, they were what they doubtless had been in the days of Almos and his son, the mighty Arped. In keeping with these venerable customs, I had a sentry at the door of my apartments; to protect me, belike, from the ghosts of predatory barons and marauders.

During the week we had two days' shooting; one in the coverts, quite equal to anything of the kind in England, the other at wild boar. For the latter, a tract of the Carpathian Mountains had been driven for some days before into a wood of about a hundred acres. At certain points there were sheltered stands, raised four or five feet from the ground, so that the sportsmen had a commanding view of the broad alley or clearing in front of him, across which the stags or boar were driven by an army of beaters.

I had my own double-barrelled rifle; but besides this, a man with a rack on his back bearing three rifles of the prince's, a loader, and a *Förster*, with a hunting knife or short sword to despatch the wounded quarry. Out of the first rush of pigs that went by I knocked over two; and, in my keenness, jumped out of the stand with the *Förster* who ran to finish them off. I was immediately collared and brought back; and as far as I could make out, was taken for a lunatic, or at least for a 'duffer,' for my rash attempt to approach unarmed a wounded tusker. When we all met at the end of the day, the bag of the five guns was forty-five wild boars. The biggest—and he was a monster—fell to the rifle of the Prince, as was of course intended.

The old man took me home in his carriage. It was a beautiful drive. One's idea of an English park—even such a park as Windsor's—dwindled into that of a pleasure ground, when compared with the boundless territory we drove through. To be sure, it was no more a park than is the New Forest; but it had all the character of the best English scenery—miles of fine turf, dotted with clumps of splendid trees, and gigantic oaks standing alone in their majesty. Now and then a herd of red deer were startled in some sequestered glade; but no cattle, no sheep, no sign of domestic care. Struck with the charm of this primeval wilderness, I made some remark about the richness of the pasture, and wondered there were no sheep to be seen. 'There,' said the old man, with a touch of pride, as he pointed to the blue range of the Carpathians; 'that is my farm. I will tell you. All the celebrities of the day who were interested in farming used to meet at Holkham for what was called the sheep-shearing. I once told your father I had more shepherds on my farm than there were sheep on his.'

CHAPTER XIV

It was with a sorry heart that I bade farewell to my Vienna friends, my musical comrades, the Legation hospitalities, and my faithful little Israelite. But the colt frisks over the pasture from sheer superfluity of energy; and between one's second and third decades instinctive restlessness—spontaneous movement—is the law of one's being. 'Tis then that 'Hope builds as fast as knowledge can destroy.' The enjoyment we abandon is never so sweet as that we seek. 'Pleasure never is at home.' Happiness means action for its own sake, change, incessant change.

I sought and found it in Bavaria, Bohemia, Russia, all over Germany, and dropped anchor one day in Cracow; a week afterwards in Warsaw. These were out-of-the-way places then; there were no tourists in those days; I did not meet a single compatriot either in the Polish or Russian town.

At Warsaw I had an adventure not unlike that which befell me at Vienna. The whole of Europe, remember, was in a state of political ferment. Poland was at least as ready to rise against its oppressor then as now; and the police was proportionately strict and arbitrary. An army corps was encamped on the right bank of the Vistula, ready for expected emergencies. Under these circumstances, passports, as may be supposed, were carefully inspected; except in those of British subjects, the person of the bearer was described—his height, the colour of his hair (if he had any), or any mark that distinguished him.

In my passport, after my name, was added '*et son domestique*.' The inspector who examined it at the frontier pointed to this, and, in indifferent German, asked me where that individual was. I replied that I had sent him with my baggage to Dresden, to await my arrival there. A consultation thereupon took place with another official, in a language I did not understand; and to my dismay I was informed that I was—in custody. The small portmanteau I had with me, together with my despatch-box, was seized; the latter contained a quantity of letters and my journal. Money only was I permitted to retain.

Quite by the way, but adding greatly to my discomfort, was the fact that since leaving Prague, where I had relinquished everything I could dispense with, I had had much night travelling amongst native passengers, who so valued cleanliness that they economised it with religious care. By the time I reached Warsaw, I may say, without metonymy, that I was itching (all over) for a bath and a change of linen. My irritation, indeed, was at its height. But there was no appeal; and on my arrival I was haled before the authorities.

Again, their head was a general officer, though not the least like my portly friend at Vienna. His business was to sit in judgment upon delinquents such as I. He was a spare, austere man, surrounded by a sharp-looking aide-de-camp, several clerks in uniform, and two or three men in mufti, whom I took to be detectives. The inspector who arrested me was present with my open despatch-box and journal. The journal he handed to the aide, who began at once to look it through while his chief was disposing of another case.

To be suspected and dragged before this tribunal was, for the time being (as I afterwards learnt) almost tantamount to condemnation. As soon as the General had sentenced my predecessor, I was accosted as a self-convicted criminal. Fortunately he spoke French like a Frenchman; and, as it presently appeared, a few words of English.

‘What country do you belong to?’ he asked, as if the question was but a matter of form, put for decency’s sake—a mere prelude to committal.

‘England, of course; you can see that by my passport.’ I was determined to fence him with his own weapons. Indeed, in those innocent days of my youth, I enjoyed a genuine British contempt for foreigners—in the lump—which, after all, is about as impartial a sentiment as its converse, that one’s own country is always in the wrong.

‘Where did you get it?’ (with a face of stone).

Prisoner (*naïvely*): ‘Where did I get it? I do not follow you.’ (Don’t forget, please, that said prisoner’s apparel was unvaleted, his hands unwashed, his linen unchanged, his hair unkempt, and his face unshaven).

General (stonily): ‘“Where did you get it?” was my question.’

Prisoner (quietly): ‘From Lord Palmerston.’

General (glancing at that Minister’s signature): ‘It says here, “et son domestique”—you have no domestique.’

Prisoner (calmly): ‘Pardon me, I have a domestic.’

General (with severity), ‘Where is he?’

Prisoner: ‘At Dresden by this time, I hope.’

General (receiving journal from aide-de-camp, who points to a certain page): ‘You state here you were caught by the Austrians in a pretended escape from the Viennese insurgents; and add, “They evidently took me for a spy” [returning journal to aide]. What is your explanation of this?’

Prisoner (shrugging shoulders disdainfully): ‘In the first place, the word “pretended” is not in my journal. In the second, although of course it does not follow, if one takes another person for a man of sagacity or a gentleman—it does not follow that he is either—still, when—’

General (with signs of impatience): ‘I have here a *Passierschein*, found amongst your papers and signed by the rebels. They would not have given you this, had you not been on friendly terms with them. You will be detained until I have further particulars.’

Prisoner (angrily): ‘I will assist you, through Her Britannic Majesty’s Consul, with whom I claim the right to communicate. I beg to inform you that I am neither a spy nor a socialist, but the son of an English peer’ (heaven help the relevancy!). ‘An Englishman has yet to learn that Lord Palmerston’s signature is to be set at naught and treated with contumacy.’

The General beckoned to the inspector to put an end to the proceedings. But the aide, who had been studying the journal, again placed it in his chief’s hands. A colloquy ensued, in which I overheard the name of Lord Ponsonby. The enemy seemed to waver, so I charged with a renewed request to see the English Consul. A pause; then some remarks in Russian from the aide; then the *General* (in suaver tones): ‘The English Consul, I find, is absent on a month’s leave. If what you state is true, you acted unadvisedly in not having your passport altered and *revisé* when you parted with your servant. How long do you wish to remain here?’

Said I, ‘Vous avez bien raison, Monsieur. Je suis évidemment dans mon tort. Ma visite à Varsovie était une aberration. As to my stay, je suis déjà tout ce qu’il y a de plus ennuyé. I have seen enough of Warsaw to last for the rest of my days.’

Eventually my portmanteau and despatch-box were restored to me; and I took up my quarters in the filthiest inn (there was no better, I believe) that it was ever my misfortune to lodge at. It was ancient, dark, dirty, and dismal. My sitting-room (I had a cupboard besides to sleep in) had but one window, looking into a gloomy courtyard. The furniture consisted of two wooden chairs and a spavined horsehair sofa. The ceiling was low and lamp-blacked; the stained paper fell in strips from the sweating walls; fortunately there was no carpet; but if anything could have added to the occupier’s depression it was the sight of his own distorted features in a shattered glass, which seemed to watch him like a detective and take notes of his movements—a real Russian mirror.

But the resources of one-and-twenty are not easily daunted, even by the presence of the *cimex lectularius* or the *pulex irritans*. I inquired for a *laquais de place*,—some human being to consort with was the most pressing of immediate wants. As luck would have it, the very article was in the dreary courtyard, lurking spider-like for the innocent traveller just arrived. Elective affinity brought us at once to friendly intercourse. He was of the Hebrew race, as the larger half of the Warsaw population still are. He was a typical Jew (all Jews are typical), though all are not so thin as was Beninsky. His eyes were sunk in sockets deepened by the sharpness of his bird-of-prey beak; a single corkscrew ringlet dropped tearfully down each cheek; and his one front tooth seemed sometimes in his upper, sometimes in his lower jaw. His skull-cap and his gabardine might have been heirlooms from the Patriarch Jacob; and his poor hands seemed made for clawing. But there was a humble and contrite spirit in his sad eyes. The history of his race was written in them; but it was modern history that one read in their hopeless and appealing look.

His cringing manner and his soft voice (we conversed in German) touched my heart. I have always had a liking for the Jews. Who shall reckon how much some of us owe them! They have always interested me as a peculiar people—admitting sometimes, as in poor Beninsky's case, of purifying, no doubt; yet, if occasionally zealous (and who is not?) of interested works—cent. per cent. works, often—yes, more often than we Christians—zealous of good works, of open-handed, large-hearted munificence, of charity in its democratic and noblest sense. Shame upon the nations which despise and persecute them for faults which they, the persecutors, have begotten! Shame on those who have extorted both their money and their teeth! I think if I were a Jew I should chuckle to see my shekels furnish all the wars in which Christians cut one another's Christian weasands.

And who has not a tenderness for the 'beautiful and well-favoured' Rachels, and the 'tender-eyed' Leahs, and the tricksy little Zilpahs, and the Rebekahs, from the wife of Isaac of Gerar to the daughter of Isaac of York? Who would not love to sit with Jessica where moonlight sleeps, and watch the patines of bright gold reflected in her heavenly orbs? I once knew a Jessica, a Polish Jessica, who—but that was in Vienna, more than half a century ago.

Beninsky's orbs brightened visibly when I bade him break his fast at my high tea. I ordered everything they had in the house I think,—a cold Pomeranian *Gänsebrust*, a garlicky *Wurst*, and *geräucherte Lachs*. I had a packet of my own Fortnum and Mason's Souchong; and when the stove gave out its glow, and the samovar its music, Beninsky's gratitude and his hunger passed the limits of restraint. Late into the night we smoked our meerschaums.

When I spoke of the Russians, he got up nervously to see the door was shut, and whispered with bated breath. What a relief it was to him to meet a man to whom he could pour out his griefs, his double griefs, as Pole and Israelite. Before we parted I made him put the remains of the sausage (!) and the goose-breast under his petticoats. I bade him come to me in the morning and show me all that was worth seeing in Warsaw. When he left, with tears in his eyes, I was consoled to think that for one night at any rate he and his *Gänsebrust* and sausage would rest peacefully in Abraham's bosom. What Abraham would say to the sausage I did not ask; nor perhaps did my poor Beninsky.

CHAPTER XV

The remainder of the year '49 has left me nothing to tell. For me, it was the inane life of that draff of Society—the young man-about-town: the tailor's, the haberdasher's, the bootmaker's, and trinket-maker's, young man; the dancing and 'hell'-frequenting young man; the young man of the 'Cider Cellars' and Piccadilly saloons; the valiant dove-slayer, the park-lounger, the young lady's young man—who puts his hat into mourning, and turns up his trousers because—because the other young man does ditto, ditto.

I had a share in the Guards' omnibus box at Covent Garden, with the privilege attached of going behind the scenes. Ah! that was a real pleasure. To listen night after night to Grisi and Mario, Alboni and Lablache, Viardot and Ronconi, Persiani and Tamburini,—and Jenny Lind too, though she was at the other house. And what an orchestra was Costa's—with Sainton leader, and Lindley and old Dragonetti, who together but alone, accompanied the *recitative* with their harmonious chords on 'cello and double-bass. Is singing a lost art? Or is that but a *temporis acti* question? We who heard those now silent voices fancy there are none to match them nowadays. Certainly there are no dancers like Taglioni, and Cerito, and Fanny Elsler, and Carlotta Grisi.

After the opera and the ball, one finished the night at Vauxhall or Ranelagh; then as gay, and exactly the same, as they were when Miss Becky Sharpe and fat Jos supped there only five-and-thirty years before.

Except at the Opera, and the Philharmonic, and Exeter Hall, one rarely heard good music. Monsieur Jullien, that prince of musical mountebanks—the 'Prince of Waterloo,' as John Ella called him, was the first to popularise classical music at his promenade concerts, by tentatively introducing a single movement of a symphony here and there in the programme of his quadrilles and waltzes and music-hall songs.

Mr. Ella, too, furthered the movement with his Musical Union and quartett parties at Willis's Rooms, where Sainton and Cooper led alternately, and the incomparable Piatti and Hill made up the four. Here Ernst, Sivori, Vieuxtemps, and Bottesini, and Mesdames Schumann, Dulcken, Arabella Goddard, and all the famous virtuosi played their solos.

Great was the stimulus thus given by Ella's energy and enthusiasm. As a proof of what he had to contend with, and what he triumphed over, Hallé's 'Life' may be quoted, where it says: 'When

Mr. Ella asked me [this was in 1848] what I wished to play, and heard that it was one of Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas, he exclaimed "Impossible!" and endeavoured to demonstrate that they were not works to be played in public.' What seven-league boots the world has stridden in within the memory of living men!

John Ella himself led the second violins in Costa's band, and had begun life (so I have been told) as a pastry-cook. I knew both him and the wonderful little Frenchman 'at home.' According to both, in their different ways, Beethoven and Mozart would have been lost to fame but for their heroic efforts to save them.

I used occasionally to play with Ella at the house of a lady who gave musical parties. He was always attuned to the highest pitch,—most good-natured, but most excitable where music was to the fore. We were rehearsing a quintett, the pianoforte part of which was played by the young lady of the house—a very pretty girl, and not a bad musician, but nervous to the point of hysteria. Ella himself was in a hypercritical state; nothing would go smoothly; and the piano was always (according to him) the peccant instrument. Again and again he made us restart the movement. There were a good many friends of the family invited to this last rehearsal, which made it worse for the poor girl, who was obviously on the brink of a breakdown. Presently Ella again jumped off his chair, and shouted: 'Not E flat! There's no E flat there; E natural! E natural! I never in my life knew a young lady so prolific of flats as you.' There was a pause, then a giggle, then an explosion; and then the poor girl, bursting into tears, rushed out of the room.

It was at Ella's house that I first heard Joachim, then about sixteen, I suppose. He had not yet performed in London. All the musical celebrities were present to hear the youthful prodigy. Two quartetts were played, Ernst leading one and Joachim the other. After it was over, everyone was enraptured, but no one more so than Ernst, who unhesitatingly predicted the fame which the great artist has so eminently achieved.

One more amusing little story belongs to my experiences of these days. Having two brothers and a brother-in-law in the Guards, I used to dine often at the Tower, or the Bank, or St. James's. At the Bank of England there is always at night an officer's guard. There is no mess, as the officer is alone. But the Bank provides dinner for two, in case the officer should invite a friend. On the occasion I speak of, my brother-in-law, Sir Archibald Macdonald, was on duty. The soup and fish were excellent, but we were young and hungry, and the usual leg of mutton was always a dish to be looked forward to.

When its cover was removed by the waiter we looked in vain; there was plenty of gravy, but no mutton. Our surprise was even greater than our dismay, for the waiter swore 'So 'elp his gawd' that he saw the cook put the leg on the dish, and that he himself put the cover on the leg. 'And what did you do with it then?' questioned my host. 'Nothing, S'Archibald. Brought it straight in 'ere.' 'Do you mean to tell me it was never out of your hands between this and the kitchen?' 'Never, but for the moment I put it down outside the door to change the plates.' 'And was there nobody in the passage?' 'Not a soul, except the sentry.' 'I see,' said my host, who was a quick-witted man. 'Send the sergeant here.' The sergeant came. The facts were related, and the order given to parade the entire guard, sentry included, in the passage.

The sentry was interrogated first. 'No, he had not seen nobody in the passage.' 'No one had touched the dish?' 'Nobody as ever he seed.' Then came the orders: 'Attention. Ground arms. Take off your bear-skins.' And the truth—*i.e.*, the missing leg—was at once revealed; the sentry had popped it into his shako. For long after that day, when the guard either for the Tower or Bank marched through the streets, the little blackguard boys used to run beside it and cry, 'Who stole the leg o' mutton?'

CHAPTER XVI

Probably the most important historical event of the year '49 was the discovery of gold in California, or rather, the great Western Exodus in pursuit of it. A restless desire possessed me to see something of America, especially of the Far West. I had an hereditary love of sport, and had read and heard wonderful tales of bison, and grisly bears, and wapitis. No books had so fascinated me, when a boy, as the 'Deer-slayer,' the 'Pathfinder,' and the beloved 'Last of the Mohicans.' Here then was a new field for adventure. I would go to California, and hunt my way across the continent. Ruxton's 'Life in the Far West' inspired a belief in self-reliance and independence only rivalled by Robinson Crusoe. If I could not find a companion, I would go alone. Little did I dream of the fortune which was in store for me, or how nearly I missed carrying out the scheme so wildly contemplated, or indeed, any scheme at all.

The only friend I could meet with both willing and able to join me was the last Lord Durham. He could not undertake to go to California; but he had been to New York during his father's reign in Canada, and liked the idea of revisiting the States. He proposed that we should spend the winter in the West Indies, and after some buffalo-shooting on the plains, return to England in the autumn.

The notion of the West Indies gave rise to an off-shoot. Both Durham and I were members of the old Garrick, then but a small club in Covent Garden. Amongst our mutual friends was Andrew

Arcedeckne—pronounced Archdeacon—a character to whom attaches a peculiar literary interest, of which anon. Arcedeckne—Archy, as he was commonly called—was about a couple of years older than we were. He was the owner of Glevering Hall, Suffolk, and nephew of Lord Huntingfield. These particulars, as well as those of his person, are note-worthy, as it will soon appear.

Archy—'Merry Andrew,' as I used to call him,—owned one of the finest estates in Jamaica—Golden Grove. When he heard of our intended trip, he at once volunteered to go with us. He had never seen Golden Grove, but had often wished to visit it. Thus it came to pass that we three secured our cabins in one of the West India mailers, and left England in December 1849.

To return to our little Suffolk squire. The description of his figure, as before said, is all-important, though the world is familiar with it, as drawn by the pencil of a master caricaturist. Arcedeckne was about five feet three inches, round as a cask, with a small singularly round face and head, closely cropped hair, and large soft eyes,—in a word, so like a seal, that he was as often called 'Phoca' as Archy.

Do you recognise the portrait? Do you need the help of 'Glevering Hall' (how curious the suggestion!). And would you not like to hear him talk? Here is a specimen in his best manner. Surely it must have been taken down by a shorthand writer, or a phonograph:

Mr. Harry Foker loquitur: 'He inquired for Rincer and the cold in his nose, told Mrs. Rincer a riddle, asked Miss Rincer when she would be prepared to marry him, and paid his compliments to Miss Brett, another young lady in the bar, all in a minute of time, and with a liveliness and facetiousness which set all these young ladies in a giggle. "Have a drop, Pen: it's recommended by the faculty, &c. Give the young one a glass, R., and score it up to yours truly."'

I fancy the great man who recorded these words was more afraid of Mr. Harry *Phoca* than of any other man in the Garrick Club—possibly for the reason that honest Harry was not the least bit afraid of him. The shy, the proud, the sensitive satirist would steal quietly into the room, avoiding notice as though he wished himself invisible. Phoca would be warming his back at the fire, and calling for a glass of 'Foker's own.' Seeing the giant enter, he would advance a step or two, with a couple of extended fingers, and exclaim, quite affably, 'Ha! Mr. Thackry! litary cove! Glad to see you, sir. How's Major Dobbings?' and likely enough would turn to the waiter, and bid him, 'Give this gent a glass of the same, and score it up to yours truly!' We have his biographer's word for it, that he would have winked at the Duke of Wellington, with just as little scruple.

Yes, Andrew Arcedeckne was the original of Harry Foker; and, from the cut of his clothes to his family connection, and to the comicality, the simplicity, the sweetness of temper (though hardly doing justice to the loveableness of the little man), the famous caricature fits him to a T.

The night before we left London we had a convivial dinner at the Garrick—we three travellers, with Albert Smith, his brother, and John Leech. It was a merry party, to which all contributed good fellowship and innocent jokes. The latest arrival at the Zoo was the first hippopotamus that had reached England,—a present from the Khedive. Someone wondered how it had been caught. I suggested a trout-fly; which so tickled John Leech's fancy that he promised to draw it for next week's 'Punch.' Albert Smith went with us to Southampton to see us off.

On our way to Jamaica we stopped a night at Barbadoes to coal. Here I had the honour of making the acquaintance of the renowned Caroline Lee!—Miss Car'line, as the negroes called her. She was so pleased at the assurance that her friend Mr. Peter Simple had spread her fame all the world over, that she made us a bowl of the most delicious iced sangaree; and speedily got up a 'dignity ball' for our entertainment. She was rather too much of an armful to dance with herself, but there was no lack of dark beauties, (not a white woman or white man except ourselves in the room.) We danced pretty nearly from daylight to daylight. The blending of rigid propriety, of the severest 'dignity,' with the sudden guffaw and outburst of wildest spirits and comic humour, is beyond description, and is only to be met with amongst these ebullient children of the sun.

On our arrival at Golden Grove, there was a great turn-out of the natives to welcome their young lord and 'massa.' Archy was touched and amused by their frantic loyalty. But their mode of exhibiting it was not so entirely to his taste. Not only the young, but the old women wanted to hug him. 'Eigh! Dat you, Massa? Dat you, sar? Me no believe him. Out o' de way, you trash! Eigh! me too much pleased like devil.' The one constant and spontaneous ejaculation was, 'Yah! Massa too muchy handsome! Garamighty! Buckra berry fat!' The latter attribute was the source of genuine admiration; but the object of it hardly appreciated its recognition, and waved off his subjects with a mixture of impatience and alarm.

We had scarcely been a week at Golden Grove, when my two companions and Durham's servant were down with yellow fever. Being 'salted,' perhaps, I escaped scot-free, so helped Archy's valet and Mr. Forbes, his factor, to nurse and to carry out professional orders. As we were thirty miles from Kingston the doctor could only come every other day. The responsibility, therefore, of attending three patients smitten with so deadly a disease was no light matter. The factor seemed to think discretion the better part of valour, and that Jamaica rum was the best specific for keeping his up. All physicians were *Sangrados* in those days, and when the Kingston doctor decided upon bleeding, the hysterical state of the darky girls (we had no men in the bungalow except Durham's and Archy's servants) rendered them worse than useless. It fell to me, therefore, to hold the basin while Archy's man was attending to his master.

Durham, who had nerves of steel, bore his lot with the grim stoicism which marked his character. But at one time the doctor considered his state so serious that he thought his lordship's family should be informed of it. Accordingly I wrote to the last Lord Grey, his uncle and guardian, stating that there was little hope of his recovery. Poor Phoca was at once tragic and comic. His medicine had to be administered every, two hours. Each time, he begged and prayed in lacrymose tones to be let off. It was doing him no good. He might as well be allowed to die in peace. If we would only spare him the beastliness this once, on his honour he would take it next time 'like a man.' We were inexorable, of course, and treated him exactly as one treats a child.

At last the crisis was over. Wonderful to relate, all three began to recover. During their convalescence, I amused myself by shooting alligators in the mangrove swamps at Holland Bay, which was within half an hour's ride of the bungalow. It was curious sport. The great saurians would lie motionless in the pools amidst the snake-like tangle of mangrove roots. They would float with just their eyes and noses out of water, but so still that, without a glass, (which I had not,) it was difficult to distinguish their heads from the countless roots and rotten logs around them. If one fired by mistake, the sport was spoiled for an hour to come.

I used to sit watching patiently for one of them to show itself, or for something to disturb the glassy surface of the dark waters. Overhead the foliage was so dense that the heat was not oppressive. All Nature seemed asleep. The deathlike stillness was rarely broken by the faintest sound,—though unseen life, amidst the heat and moisture, was teeming everywhere; life feeding upon life. For what purpose? To what end? Is this a primary law of Nature? Does cannibalism prevail in Mars? Sometimes a mocking-bird would pipe its weird notes, deepening silence by the contrast. But besides pestilent mosquitos, the only living things in sight were humming-birds of every hue, some no bigger than a butterfly, fluttering over the blossoms of the orchids, or darting from flower to flower like flashes of prismatic rays.

I killed several alligators; but one day, while stalking what seemed to be an unusual monster, narrowly escaped an accident. Under the excitement, my eye was so intently fixed upon the object, that I rather felt than saw my way. Presently over I went, just managed to save my rifle, and, to my amazement, found I had set my foot on a sleeping reptile. Fortunately the brute was as much astonished as I was, and plunged with a splash into the adjacent pool.

A Cambridge friend, Mr. Walter Shirley, owned an estate at Trelawny, on the other side of Jamaica; while the invalids were recovering, I paid him a visit; and was initiated into the mysteries of cane-growing and sugar-making. As the great split between the Northern and Southern States on the question of slavery was pending, the life, condition, and treatment of the negro was of the greatest interest. Mr. Shirley was a gentleman of exceptional ability, and full of valuable information on these subjects. He passed me on to other plantations; and I made the complete round of the island before returning to my comrades at Golden Grove. A few weeks afterwards I stayed with a Spanish gentleman, the Marquis d'Iznaga, who owned six large sugar plantations in Cuba; and rode with his son from Casilda to Cienfuegos, from which port I got a steamer to the Havana. The ride afforded abundant opportunities of comparing the slave with the free negro. But, as I have written on the subject elsewhere, I will pass to matters more entertaining.

CHAPTER XVII

On my arrival at the Havana I found that Durham, who was still an invalid, had taken up his quarters at Mr. Crauford's, the Consul-General. Phoca, who was nearly well again, was at the hotel, the only one in the town. And who should I meet there but my old Cambridge ally, Fred, the last Lord Calthorpe. This event was a fruitful one,—it determined the plans of both of us for a year or more to come.

Fred—as I shall henceforth call him—had just returned from a hunting expedition in Texas, with another sportsman whom he had accidentally met there. This gentleman ultimately became of even more importance to me than my old friend. I purposely abstain from giving either his name or his profession, for reasons which will become obvious enough by-and-by; the outward man may be described. He stood well over six feet in his socks; his frame and limbs were those of a gladiator; he could crush a horseshoe in one hand; he had a small head with a bull-neck, purely Grecian features, thick curly hair with crisp beard and silky moustache. He so closely resembled a marble Hercules that (as he must have a name) we will call him Samson.

Before Fred stumbled upon him, he had spent a winter camping out in the snows of Canada, bear and elk shooting. He was six years or so older than either of us—*i.e.* about eight-and-twenty.

As to Fred Calthorpe, it would be difficult to find a more 'manly' man. He was unacquainted with fear. Yet his courage, though sometimes reckless, was by no means of the brute kind. He did not run risks unless he thought the gain would compensate them; and no one was more capable of weighing consequences than he. His temper was admirable, his spirits excellent; and for any enterprise where danger and hardship were to be encountered few men could have been better qualified. By the end of a week these two had agreed to accompany me across the Rocky Mountains.

Before leaving the Havana, I witnessed an event which, though disgusting in itself, gives rise to serious reflections. Every thoughtful reader is conversant enough with them; if, therefore, he should find them out of place or trite, apology is needless, as he will pass them by without the asking.

The circumstance referred to is a public execution. Mr. Sydney Smith, the vice-consul, informed me that a criminal was to be garrotted on the following morning; and asked me whether I cared to look over the prison and see the man in his cell that afternoon. We went together. The poor wretch bore the stamp of innate brutality. His crime was the most revolting that a human being is capable of—the violation and murder of a mere child. When we were first admitted he was sullen, merely glaring at us; but, hearing the warder describe his crime, he became furiously abusive, and worked himself into such a passion that, had he not been chained to the wall, he would certainly have attacked us.

At half-past six next morning I went with Mr. Smith to the Campo del Marte, the principal square. The crowd had already assembled, and the tops of the houses were thronged with spectators. The women, dressed as if for a bull-fight or a ball, occupied the front seats. By squeezing and pushing we contrived to get within eight or nine yards of the machine, where I had not long been before the procession was seen moving up the Passeo. A few mounted troops were in front to clear the road; behind them came the Host, with a number of priests and the prisoner on foot, dressed in white; a large guard brought up the rear. The soldiers formed an open square. The executioner, the culprit, and one priest ascended the steps of the platform.

The garrotte is a short stout post, at the top of which is an iron crook, just wide enough to admit the neck of a man seated in a chair beneath it. Through the post, parallel with the crook, is the loop of a rope, whose ends are fastened to a bar held by the executioner. The loop, being round the throat of the victim, is so powerfully tightened from behind by half a turn of the bar, that an extra twist would sever a man’s head from his body.

The murderer showed no signs of fear; he quietly seated himself, but got up again to adjust the chair and make himself comfortable! The executioner then arranged the rope round his neck, tied his legs and his arms, and retired behind the post. At a word or a look from the priest the wrench was turned. For a single instant the limbs of the victim were convulsed, and all was over.

No exclamation, no whisper of horror escaped from the lookers on. Such a scene was too familiar to excite any feeling but morbid curiosity; and, had the execution taken place at the usual spot instead of in the town, few would have given themselves the trouble to attend it.

It is impossible to see or even to think of what is here described without gravely meditating on its suggestions. Is capital punishment justifiable? This is the question I purpose to consider in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII

All punishments or penal remedies for crime, except capital punishment, may be considered from two points of view: First, as they regard Society; secondly, as they regard the offender.

Where capital punishment is resorted to, the sole end in view is the protection of Society. The malefactor being put to death, there can be no thought of his amendment. And so far as this particular criminal is concerned, Society is henceforth in safety.

But (looking to the individual), as equal security could be obtained by his imprisonment for life, the extreme measure of putting him to death needs justification. This is found in the assumption that death being the severest of all punishments now permissible, no other penalty is so efficacious in preventing the crime or crimes for which it is inflicted. Is the assumption borne out by facts, or by inference?

For facts we naturally turn to statistics. Switzerland abolished capital punishment in 1874; but cases of premeditated murder having largely increased during the next five years, it was restored by Federal legislation in 1879. Still there is nothing conclusive to be inferred from this fact. We must seek for guidance elsewhere.

Reverting to the above assumption, we must ask: First, Is the death punishment the severest of all evils, and to what extent does the fear of it act as a preventive? Secondly, Is it true that no other punishment would serve as powerfully in preventing murder by intimidation?

Is punishment by death the most dreaded of all evils? ‘This assertion,’ says Bentham, ‘is true with respect to the majority of mankind; it is not true with respect to the greatest criminals.’ It is pretty certain that a malefactor steeped in crime, living in extreme want, misery and apprehension, must, if he reflects at all, contemplate a violent end as an imminent possibility. He has no better future before him, and may easily come to look upon death with brutal insensibility and defiance. The indifference exhibited by the garrotted man getting up to adjust his chair is probably common amongst criminals of his type.

Again, take such a crime as that of the Cuban’s: the passion which leads to it is the fiercest and most ungovernable which man is subject to. Sexual jealousy also is one of the most frequent causes of murder. So violent is this passion that the victim of it is often quite prepared to sacrifice life rather than forego indulgence, or allow another to supplant him; both men and women will gloat over the murder of a rival, and gladly accept death as its penalty, rather than survive the possession of the desired object by another.

Further, in addition to those who yield to fits of passion, there is a class whose criminal promptings are hereditary: a large number of unfortunates of whom it may almost be said that they were destined to commit crimes. ‘It is unhappily a fact,’ says Mr. Francis Galton (‘Inquiries into Human Faculty’), ‘that fairly distinct types of criminals breeding true to their kind have become established.’ And he gives extraordinary examples, which fully bear out his affirmation. We may safely say that, in a very large number of cases, the worst crimes are perpetrated by beings for whom the death penalty has no preventive terrors.

But it is otherwise with the majority. Death itself, apart from punitive aspects, is a greater evil to those for whom life has greater attractions. Besides this, the permanent disgrace of capital punishment, the lasting injury to the criminal’s family and to all who are dear to him, must be far more cogent incentives to self-control than the mere fear of ceasing to live.

With the criminal and most degraded class—with those who are actuated by violent passions and hereditary taints, the class by which most murders are committed—the death punishment would seem to be useless as an intimidation or an example.

With the majority it is more than probable that it exercises a strong and beneficial influence. As no mere social distinction can eradicate innate instincts, there must be a large proportion of the majority, the better-to-do, who are both occasionally and habitually subject to criminal propensities, and who shall say how many of these are restrained from the worst of crimes by fear of capital punishment and its consequences?

On these grounds, if they be not fallacious, the retention of capital punishment may be justified.

Secondly. Is the assumption tenable that no other penalty makes so strong an impression or is so pre-eminently exemplary? Bentham thus answers the question: ‘It appears to me that the contemplation of perpetual imprisonment, accompanied with hard labour and occasional solitary confinement, would produce a deeper impression on the minds of persons in whom it is more eminently desirable that that impression should be produced than even death itself. . . . All that renders death less formidable to them renders laborious restraint proportionably more irksome.’ There is doubtless a certain measure of truth in these remarks. But Bentham is here speaking of the degraded class; and is it likely that such would reflect seriously upon what they never see and only know by hearsay? Think how feeble are their powers of imagination and reflection, how little they would be impressed by such additional seventies as ‘occasional solitary confinement,’ the occurrence and the effects of which would be known to no one outside the jail.

As to the ‘majority,’ the higher classes, the fact that men are often imprisoned for offences—political and others—which they are proud to suffer for, would always attenuate the ignominy attached to ‘imprisonment.’ And were this the only penalty for all crimes, for first-class misdemeanants and for the most atrocious of criminals alike, the distinction would not be very finely drawn by the interested; at the most, the severest treatment as an alternative to capital punishment would always savour of extenuating circumstances.

There remain two other points of view from which the question has to be considered: one is what may be called the Vindictive, the other, directly opposed to it, the Sentimental argument. The first may be dismissed with a word or two. In civilised countries torture is for ever abrogated; and with it, let us hope, the idea of judicial vengeance.

The *lex talionis*—the Levitic law—‘Eye for eye, tooth for tooth,’ is befitting only for savages. Unfortunately the Christian religion still promulgates and passionately clings to the belief in Hell as a place or state of everlasting torment—that is to say, of eternal torture inflicted for no ultimate end save that of implacable vengeance. Of all the miserable superstitions ever hatched by the brain of man this, as indicative of its barbarous origin, is the most degrading. As an ordinance ascribed to a Being worshipped as just and beneficent, it is blasphemous.

The Sentimental argument, like all arguments based upon feeling rather than reason, though not without merit, is fraught with mischief which far outweighs it. There are always a number of people in the world who refer to their feelings as the highest human tribunal. When the reasoning faculty is not very strong, the process of ratiocination irksome, and the issue perhaps unacceptable, this course affords a convenient solution to many a complicated problem. It commends itself, moreover, to those who adopt it, by the sense of chivalry which it involves. There is something generous and noble, albeit quixotic, in siding with the weak, even if they be in the wrong. There is something charitable in the judgment, ‘Oh! poor creature, think of his adverse circumstances, his ignorance, his temptation. Let us be merciful and forgiving.’ In practice, however, this often leads astray. Thus in most cases, even where premeditated murder is proved to the hilt, the sympathy of the sentimentalist is invariably with the murderer, to the complete oblivion of the victim’s family.

Bentham, speaking of the humanity plea, thus words its argument: ‘Attend not to the sophistries of reason, which often deceive, but be governed by your hearts, which will always lead you right. I reject without hesitation the punishment you propose: it violates natural feelings, it harrows up the susceptible mind, it is tyrannical and cruel.’ Such is the language of your sentimental orators.

'But abolish any one penal law merely because it is repugnant to the feelings of a humane heart, and, if consistent, you abolish the whole penal code. There is not one of its provisions that does not, in a more or less painful degree, wound the sensibility.'

As this writer elsewhere observes: 'It is only a virtue when justice has done its work, &c. Before this, to forgive injuries is to invite their perpetration—is to be, not the friend, but the enemy of society. What could wickedness desire more than an arrangement by which offences should be always followed by pardon?'

Sentiment is the *ultima ratio feminarum*, and of men whose natures are of the epicene gender. It is a luxury we must forego in the face of the stern duties which evil compels us to encounter.

There is only one other argument against capital punishment that is worth considering.

The objection so strenuously pleaded by Dickens in his letters to the 'Times'—viz. the brutalising effects upon the degraded crowds which witnessed public executions—is no longer apposite. But it may still be urged with no little force that the extreme severity of the sentence induces all concerned in the conviction of the accused to shirk the responsibility. Informers, prosecutors, witnesses, judges, and jurymen are, as a rule, liable to reluctance as to the performance of their respective parts in the melancholy drama.' The consequence is that 'the benefit of the doubt,' while salving the consciences of these servants of the law, not unfrequently turns a real criminal loose upon society; whereas, had any other penalty than death been feasible, the same person would have been found guilty.

Much might be said on either side, but on the whole it would seem wisest to leave things—in this country—as they are; and, for one, I am inclined to the belief that,

> Mercy murders, pardoning those that kill.

CHAPTER XIX

We were nearly six weeks in the Havana, being detained by Lord Durham's illness. I provided myself with a capital Spanish master, and made the most of him. This, as it turned out, proved very useful to me in the course of my future travels. About the middle of March we left for Charlestown in the steamer *Isabel*, and thence on to New York. On the passage to Charlestown, we were amused one evening by the tricks of a conjuror. I had seen the man and his wife perform at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly. She was called the 'Mysterious Lady.' The papers were full of speculations as to the nature of the mystery. It was the town talk and excitement of the season.

This was the trick. The lady sat in the corner of a large room, facing the wall, with her eyes bandaged. The company were seated as far as possible from her. Anyone was invited to write a few words on a slip of paper, and hand it to the man, who walked amongst the spectators. He would simply say to the woman 'What has the gentleman (or lady) written upon this paper?' Without hesitation she would reply correctly. The man was always the medium. One person requested her, through the man, to read the number on his watch, the figures being, as they always are, very minute. The man repeated the question: 'What is the number on this watch?' The woman, without hesitation, gave it correctly. A friend at my side, a young Guardsman, took a cameo ring from his finger, and asked for a description of the figures in relief. There was a pause. The woman was evidently perplexed. She confessed at last that she was unable to answer. The spectators murmured. My friend began to laugh. The conjuror's bread was at stake, but he was equal to the occasion. He at once explained to the company that the cameo represented 'Leeder and the Swan in a hambigious position, which the lady didn't profess to know nothing about.' This apology, needless to say, completely re-established the lady's character.

Well, recognising my friend of the Egyptian Hall, I reminded him of the incident. He remembered it perfectly; and we fell to chatting about the wonderful success of the 'mystery,' and about his and the lady's professional career. He had begun life when a boy as a street acrobat, had become a street conjuror, had married the 'mysterious lady' out of the 'saw-dust,' as he expressed it—meaning out of a travelling circus. After that, 'things had gone 'ard' with them. They had exhausted their resources in every sense. One night, lying awake, and straining their brains to devise some means of subsistence, his wife suddenly exclaimed, 'How would it be if we were to try so and so?' explaining the trick just described. His answer was: 'Oh! that's too silly. They'd see through it directly.' This was all I could get out of him: this, and the fact that the trick, first and last, had made them fairly comfortable for the rest of their days.

Now mark what follows, for it is the gist and moral of my little story about this conjuror, and about two other miracle workers whom I have to speak of presently.

Once upon a time, I was discussing with an acquaintance the not unfamiliar question of Immortality. I professed Agnosticism—strongly impregnated with incredulity. My friend had no misgivings, no doubts on the subject whatever. Absolute certainty is the prerogative of the orthodox. He had taken University honours, and was a man of high position at the Bar. I was curious to learn upon what grounds such an one based his belief. His answer was: 'Upon the phenomena of electro-biology, and the psychic phenomena of mesmerism.' His 'first convictions were established by the manifestations of the soul as displayed through a woman called "The Mysterious Lady," who, &c., &c.'

When we have done with our thaumaturgist on board the *Isabel*, I will give another instance, precisely similar to this, of the simple origin of religious beliefs.

The steamer was pretty full; and the conjuror begged me to obtain the patronage of my noble friend and the rest of our party for an entertainment he proposed to give that evening. This was easily secured, and a goodly sum was raised by dollar tickets. The sleight-of-hand was excellent. But the special performance of the evening deserves description in full. It was that of a whist-playing dog. Three passengers—one of us taking a hand—played as in dummy whist, dummy's hand being spread in a long row upon the deck of the saloon cabin. The conjuror, as did the other passengers, walked about behind the players, and saw all the players' hands, but not a word was spoken. The dog played dummy's hand. When it came to his turn he trotted backwards and forwards, smelling each card that had been dealt to him. He sometimes hesitated, then comically shaking his head, would leave it to smell another. The conjuror stood behind the dog's partner, and never went near the animal. There was no table—the cards were thrown on the deck. They were dealt by the players; the conjuror never touched them. When the dog's mind was made up, he took his card in his mouth and laid it on the others. His play was infallible. He and his partner won the rubber with ease.

Now, to those ignorant of the solution, this must, I think, seem inexplicable. How was collusion managed between the animal and its master? One of the conditions insisted upon by the master himself was silence. He certainly never broke it. I bought the trick—must I confess it? for twenty dollars. How transparent most things are when—seen through! When the dog smelt at the right card, the conjuror, who saw all four hands, and had his own in his pocket, clicked his thumb-nail against a finger-nail. The dog alone could hear it, and played the card accordingly.

The other story: A few years after my return to England, a great friend called upon me, and, in an excited state, described a *séance* he had had with a woman who possessed the power of 'invoking' spirits. These spirits had correctly replied to questions, the answers to which were only known to himself. The woman was an American. I am sorry to say I have forgotten her name, but I think she was the first of her tribe to visit this country. As in the case spoken of, my friend was much affected by the results of the *séance*. He was a well-educated and intelligent man. Born to wealth, he had led a somewhat wildish life in his youth. Henceforth he became more serious, and eventually turned Roman Catholic. He entreated me to see the woman, which I did.

I wrote to ask for an appointment. She lived in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square; but on the day after the morrow she was to change her lodgings to Queen Anne Street, where she would receive me at 11 A.M. I was punctual to a minute, and was shown into an ordinary furnished room. The maid informed me that Mrs. — had not yet arrived from Charlotte Street, but she was sure to come before long, as she had an engagement (so she said) with a gentleman.

Nothing could have suited me better. I immediately set to work to examine the room and the furniture with the greatest care. I looked under and moved the sofa, tables, and armchairs. I looked behind the curtains, under the rug, and up the chimney. I could discover nothing. There was not the vestige of a spirit anywhere. At last the medium entered—a plain, middle-aged matron with nothing the least spiritual about her. She seated herself opposite to me at the round table in the centre of the room, and demurely asked what I wanted. 'To communicate with the spirits,' I replied. She did not know whether that was possible. It depended upon the person who sought them. She would ask the spirits whether they would confer with me. Whereupon she put the question: 'Will the spirits converse with this gentleman?' At all events, thought I, the term 'gentleman' applies to the next world, which is a comfort. She listened for the answer. Presently three distinct raps on the table signified assent. She then took from her reticule a card whereon were printed the alphabet, and numerals up to 10. The letters were separated by transverse lines. She gave me a pencil with these instructions: I was to think, not utter, my question, and then put the pencil on each of the letters in succession. When the letters were touched which spelt the answer, the spirits would rap, and the words could be written down.

My friend had told me this much, so I came prepared. I began by politely begging the lady to move away from the table at which we were seated, and take a chair in the furthest corner of the room. She indignantly complied, asking if I suspected her. I replied that 'all ladies were dangerous, when they were charming,' which put us on the best of terms. I placed my hat so as to intercept her view of my operations, and thus pursued them.

Thinking the matter over beforehand, I concluded that when the questioner, of either sex, was young, love would very probably be the topic; the flesh, not the spirit, would be the predominant interest. Being an ingenuous young man of the average sort, and desperately in love with Susan, let us say, I should naturally assist the supernatural being, if at a loss, to understand that the one thing wanted was information about Susan. I therefore mentally asked the question: 'Who is the most lovely angel without wings, and with the means of sitting down?' and proceeded to pass the pencil over the letters, pausing nowhere. I now and then got a doubtful rap on or under the table,—how delivered I know not—but signifying nothing. It was clear the spirits needed a cue. I put the pencil on the letter S, and kept it there. I got a tentative rap. I passed at once to U. I got a more confident rap. Then to S. Rap, rap, without hesitation. A and N were assented to almost before I touched them. Susan was an angel—the angel. What more logical proof could I have of the immortality of the soul?

Mrs. — asked me whether I was satisfied. I said it was miraculous; so much so indeed, that I could hardly believe the miracle, until corroborated by another. Would the spirits be kind enough to suspend this pencil in the air? 'Oh! that was nonsense. The spirits never lent themselves to mere frivolity.' 'I beg the spirits' pardon, I am sure,' said I. 'I have heard that they often move heavy tables. I thought perhaps the pencil would save them trouble. Will they move this round table up to this little one?' I had, be it observed, when alone, moved and changed the relative positions of both tables; and had determined to make this my crucial test. To my astonishment, Mrs. — replied that she could not say whether they would or not. She would ask them. She did so, and the spirits rapped 'Yes.'

I drew my chair aside. The woman remained seated in the corner. I watched everything. Nothing happened. After a while, I took out my watch, and said: 'I fear the spirits do not intend to keep their word. I have an appointment twenty minutes hence, and can only give them ten minutes more.' She calmly replied she had nothing to do with it. I had heard what the spirits said. I had better wait a little longer. Scarcely were the words out of her mouth, when the table gave a distinct crack, as if about to start. The medium instantly called my attention to it. I jumped out of my seat, passed between the two tables, when of a sudden the large table moved in the direction of the smaller one, and did not stop till it had pushed the little one over. I make no comments. No explanation to me is conceivable. I simply narrate what happened as accurately as I am able.

One other case deserves to be added to the above. I have connected both of the foregoing with religious persuasions. The *séance* I am about to speak of was for the express purpose of bringing a brokenhearted and widowed mother into communication with the soul of her only son—a young artist of genius whom I had known, and who had died about a year before. The occasion was, of course, a solemn one. The interest of it was enhanced by the presence of the great apostle of Spiritualism—Sir William Crookes. The medium was Miss Kate Fox, again an American. The *séance* took place in the house of a very old friend of mine, the late Dr. George Bird. He had spiritualistic tendencies, but was supremely honest and single-minded; utterly incapable of connivance with deception of any kind. As far as I know, the medium had never been in the room before. The company present were Dr. Bird's intimate friend Sir William Crookes—future President of the Royal Society—Miss Bird, Dr. Bird's daughter, and her husband—Mr. Ionides—and Mrs. —, the mother of the young artist. The room, a large one, was darkened; the last light being extinguished after we had taken our places round the dining-table. We were strenuously enjoined to hold one another's hands. Unless we did so the *séance* would fail.

Before entering the room, I secretly arranged with Mr. Ionides, who shared my scepticism, that we should sit side by side; and so each have one hand free. It is not necessary to relate what passed between the unhappy mother and the medium, suffice it to say that she put questions to her son; and the medium interpreted the rappings which came in reply. These, I believe, were all the poor lady could wish for. To the rest of us, the astounding events of the *séance* were the dim lights, accompanied by faint sounds of an accordion, which floated about the room over our heads. And now comes, to me, the strangest part of the whole performance. All the while I kept my right arm extended under the table, moving my hand to and fro. Presently it touched something. I make a grab, and caught, but could not hold for an instant, another hand. It was on the side away from Mr. Ionides. I said nothing, except to him, and the *séance* was immediately broken up.

It may be thought by some that this narration is a biassed one. But those acquainted with the charlatanry in these days of what is called 'Christian Science,' and know the extent to which crass ignorance and predisposed credulity can be duped by childish delusions, may have some 'idea how acute was the spirit-rapping epidemic some forty or fifty years ago. 'At this moment,' writes Froude, in 'Fraser's Magazine,' 1863, 'we are beset with reports of conversations with spirits, of tables miraculously lifted, of hands projecting out of the world of shadows into this mortal life. An unusually able, accomplished person, accustomed to deal with common-sense facts, a celebrated political economist, and notorious for business-like habits, assured this writer that a certain mesmerist, who was my informer's intimate friend, had raised a dead girl to life.' Can we wonder that miracles are still believed in? Ah! no. The need, the dire need, of them remains, and will remain with us for ever.

CHAPTER XX

We must move on; we have a long and rough journey before us. Durham had old friends in New York, Fred Calthorpe had letters to Colonel Fremont, who was then a candidate for the Presidency, and who had discovered the South Pass; and Mr. Ellice had given me a letter to John Jacob Astor—*the* American millionaire of that day. We were thus well provided with introductions; and nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality of our American friends.

But time was precious. It was already mid May, and we had everything to get—wagons, horses, men, mules, and provisions. So that we were anxious not to waste a day, but hurry on to St. Louis as fast as we could. Durham was too ill to go with us. Phoca had never intended to do so. Fred, Samson, and I, took leave of our companions, and travelling via the Hudson to Albany, Buffalo, down Lake Erie, and across to Chicago, we reached St. Louis in about eight days. As a single illustration of what this meant before railroads, Samson and I, having to stop a day at Chicago, hired a buggy and drove into the neighbouring woods, or wilderness, to hunt for wild turkeys.

Our outfit, the whole of which we got at St. Louis, consisted of two heavy wagons, nine mules, and eight horses. We hired eight men, on the nominal understanding that they were to go with us as far as the Rocky Mountains on a hunting expedition. In reality all seven of them, before joining us, had separately decided to go to California.

Having published in 1852 an account of our journey, entitled ‘A Ride over the Rocky Mountains,’ I shall not repeat the story, but merely give a summary of the undertaking, with a few of the more striking incidents to show what travelling across unknown America entailed fifty or sixty years ago.

A steamer took us up the Missouri to Omaha. Here we disembarked on the confines of occupied territory. From near this point, where the Platte river empties into the Missouri, to the mouth of the Columbia, on the Pacific—which we ultimately reached—is at least 1,500 miles as the crow flies; for us (as we had to follow watercourses and avoid impassable ridges) it was very much more. Some five-and-forty miles from our starting-place we passed a small village called Savannah. Between it and Vancouver there was not a single white man’s abode, with the exception of three trading stations—mere mud buildings—Fort Laramie, Fort Hall, and Fort Boisé.

The vast prairies on this side of the Rocky Mountains were grazed by herds of countless bison, wapiti, antelope, and deer of various species. These were hunted by moving tribes of Indians—Pawnees, Omahaws, Cheyennes, Ponkaws, Sioux, &c. On the Pacific side of the great range, a due west course—which ours was as near as we could keep it—lay across a huge rocky desert of volcanic débris, where hardly any vegetation was to be met with, save artemisia—a species of wormwood—scanty blades of gramma grass, and occasional osiers by river-banks. The rivers themselves often ran through cañons or gulches, so deep that one might travel for days within a hundred feet of water yet perish (some of our animals did so) for the want of a drop to drink. Game was here very scarce—a few antelope, wolves, and abundance of rattlesnakes, were nearly the only living things we saw. The Indians were mainly fishers of the Shoshone—or Great Snake River—tribe, feeding mostly on salmon, which they speared with marvellous dexterity; and Root-diggers, who live upon wild roots. When hard put to it, however, in winter, the latter miserable creatures certainly, if not the former, devoured their own children. There was no map of the country. It was entirely unexplored; in fact, Bancroft the American historian, in his description of the Indian tribes, quotes my account of the Root-diggers; which shows how little was known of this region up to this date. I carried a small compass fastened round my neck. That and the stars (we travelled by night when in the vicinity of Indians) were my only guides for hundreds of dreary miles.

Such then was the task we had set ourselves to grapple with. As with life itself, nothing but the magic powers of youth and ignorance could have cajoled us to face it with heedless confidence and eager zest. These conditions given, with health—the one essential of all enjoyment—added, the first escape from civilised restraint, the first survey of primordial nature as seen in the boundless expanse of the open prairie, the habitat of wild men and wild animals,—exhilarate one with emotions akin to the schoolboy’s rapture in the playground, and the thoughtful man’s contemplation of the stars. Freedom and change, space and the possibilities of the unknown, these are constant elements of our day-dreams; now and then actual life dangles visions of them before our eyes, alas! only to teach us that the aspirations which they inspire are, for the most part, illusory.

Brief indeed, in our case, were the pleasures of novelty. For the first few days the business was a continuous picnic for all hands. It was a pleasure to be obliged to help to set up the tents, to cut wood, to fetch water, to harness the mules, and work exactly as the paid men worked. The equality in this respect—that everything each wanted done had to be done with his own hands—was perfect; and never, from first to last, even when starvation left me bare strength to lift the saddle on to my horse, did I regret the necessity, or desire to be dependent on another man. But the bloom soon wore off the plum; and the pleasure consisted not in doing but in resting when the work was done.

For the reason already stated, a sample only of the daily labour will be given. It may be as well first to bestow a few words upon the men; for, in the long run, our fellow beings are the powerful factors, for good or ill, in all our worldly enterprises.

We had two ordinary mule-drivers—Potter and Morris, a little acrobat out of a travelling circus, a *metif* or half-breed Indian named Jim, two French Canadians—Nelson and Louis (the latter spoke French only); Jacob, a Pennsylvanian auctioneer whose language was a mixture of Dutch, Yankee, and German; and (after we reached Fort Laramie) another Nelson—‘William’ as I shall call him—who offered his services gratis if we would allow him to go with us to California.

Jacob the Dutch Yankee was the most intelligent and the most useful of the lot, and was unanimously elected cook for the party. The Canadian Nelson was a hard-working good young fellow, with a passionate temper. Louis was a hunter by profession, Gallic to the tip of his moustache—fond of slapping his breast and telling of the mighty deeds of *nous autres en haut*. Jim, the half-breed was Indian by nature—idle, silent, treacherous, but a crafty hunter. William deserves special mention, not from any idiosyncrasy of the man, but because he was concerned soon after he joined us in the most disastrous of my adventures throughout the expedition.

To look at, William Nelson might have sat for the portrait of Leatherstocking. He was a tall gaunt man who had spent his youth bringing rafts of timber down the Wabash river, from Fort Wayne to Maumee, in Ohio. For the last six years (he was three-and-thirty) he had been trapping musk rats and beaver, and dealing in pelts generally. At the time of our meeting he was engaged to a Miss Mary something—the daughter of an English immigrant, who would not consent to the marriage until William was better off. He was now bound for California, where he hoped to make the required fortune. The poor fellow was very sentimental about his Mary; but, despite his weatherbeaten face, hardy-looking frame, and his 'longue carabine,' he was scarcely the hero which, no doubt, Miss Mary took him for.

Yes, the novelty soon wore off. We had necessaries enough to last to California. We also had enough unnecessaries to bring us to grief in a couple of weeks. Our wagons were loaded to the roof. And seeing there was no road nor so much as a track, that there were frequent swamps and small rivers to be crossed, that our Comanche mules were wilder than the Indians who had owned them, it may easily be believed that our rate of progress did not average more than six or seven miles a day; sometimes it took from dawn to dusk to cross a stream by ferrying our packages, and emptied wagons, on such rafts as could be extemporised. Before the end of a fortnight, both wagons were shattered, wheels smashed, and axles irreparable. The men, who were as refractory as the other animals, helped themselves to provisions, tobacco and whisky, at their own sweet will, and treated our remonstrances with resentment and contempt.

Heroic measures were exigent. The wagons were broken up and converted into pack saddles. Both tents, masses of provisions, 100 lbs. of lead for bullets, kegs of powder, warm clothing, mackintoshes, waterproof sheeting, tarpaulins, medicine chest, and bags of sugar, were flung aside to waste their sweetness on the desert soil. Not one of us had ever packed a saddle before; and certainly not one of the mules had ever carried, or to all appearances, ever meant to carry, a pack. It was a fight between man and beast every day—twice a day indeed, for we halted to rest and feed, and had to unpack and repack our remaining impedimenta in payment for the indulgence.

Let me cite a page from my diary. It is a fair specimen of scores of similar entries.

'*June* 24*th*.—My morning watch. Up at 1 A.M. Roused the men at 3.30. Off at 7.30. Rained hard all day. Packs slipped or kicked off eighteen times before halt. Men grumbling. Nelson and Jim both too ill to work. When adjusting pack, Nelson and Louis had a desperate quarrel. Nelson drew his knife and nearly stabbed Louis. I snatched a pistol out of my holster, and threatened to shoot Nelson unless he shut up. Fred, of course, laughed obstreperously at the notion of my committing murder, which spoilt the dramatic effect.

'Oh! these devils of mules! After repacking, they rolled, they kicked and bucked, they screamed and bit, as though we were all in Hell, and didn't know it. It took four men to pack each one; and the moment their heads were loosed, away they went into the river, over the hills, and across country as hard as they could lay legs to ground. It was a cheerful sight!—the flour and biscuit stuff swimming about in the stream, the hams in a ditch full of mud, the trailed pots and pans bumping and rattling on the ground until they were as shapeless as old wide-awakes. And, worst of all, the pack-saddles, which had delayed us a week to make—nothing now but a bundle of splinters.

'25*th*.—What a night! A fearful storm broke over us. All round was like a lake. Fred and I sat, back to back, perched on a flour bag till daylight, with no covering but our shooting jackets, our feet in a pool, and bodies streaming like cascades. Repeated lightning seemed to strike the ground within a few yards of us. The animals, wild with terror, stampeded in all directions. In the morning, lo and behold! Samson on his back in the water, insensibly drunk. At first I thought he was dead; but he was only dead drunk. We can't move till he can, unless we bequeath him to the wolves, which are plentiful. This is the third time he has served us the same trick. I took the liberty to ram my heel through the whisky keg (we have kept a small one for emergencies) and put it empty under his head for a pillow.'

There were plenty of days and nights to match these, but there were worse in store for us.

One evening, travelling along the North Platte river, before reaching Laramie, we overtook a Mormon family on their way to Salt Lake city. They had a light covered wagon with hardly anything in it but a small supply of flour and bacon. It was drawn by four oxen and two cows. Four milch cows were driven. The man's name was Blazzard—a Yorkshireman from the Wolds, whose speech was that of Learoyd. He had only his wife and a very pretty daughter of sixteen or seventeen with him. We asked him how he became a Mormon. He answered: 'From conviction,' and entreated us to be baptized in the true faith at his hands. The offer was tempting, for the pretty little milkmaid might have become one of one's wives on the spot. In truth the sweet nymph urged conversion more persuasively than her papa—though with what views who shall say? The old farmer's acquaintance with the Bible was remarkable. He quoted it at every sentence, and was eloquent upon the subject of the meaning and the origin of the word 'Bible.' He assured us the name was given to the Holy Book from the circumstance of its contents having passed a synod of prophets, just as an Act of Parliament passes the House of Commons—*by Bill*. Hence its title. It was this historical fact that guaranteed the authenticity of the sacred volume. There are various reasons for believing—this is one of them.

The next day, being Sunday, was spent in sleep. In the afternoon I helped the Yorkshire lassie to herd her cattle, which had strayed a long distance amongst the rank herbage by the banks of the Platte. The heat was intense, well over 120 in the sun; and the mosquitos rose in clouds at every step in the wet grass. It was an easy job for me, on my little grey, to gallop after the cows and drive them home, (it would have been a wearisome one for her,) and she was very grateful, and played Dorothea to my Hermann. None of our party wore any upper clothing except a flannel shirt; I had cut off the sleeves of mine at the elbow. This was better for rough work, but the broiling sun had raised big blisters on my arms and throat which were very painful. When we got back to camp, Dorothea laved the burns for me with cool milk. Ah! she was very pretty; and, what 'blackguard' Heine, as Carlyle dubs him, would have called 'naïve schmutzig.' When we parted next morning I thought with a sigh that before the autumn was over, she would be in the seraglio of Mr. Brigham Young; who, Artemus Ward used to say, was 'the most married man he ever knew.'

CHAPTER XXI

SPORT had been the final cause of my trip to America—sport and the love of adventure. As the bison—buffalo, as they are called—are now extinct, except in preserved districts, a few words about them as they then were may interest game hunters of the present day.

No description could convey an adequate conception of the numbers in which they congregated. The admirable illustrations in Catlin's great work on the North American Indians, afford the best idea to those who have never seen the wonderful sight itself. The districts they frequented were vast sandy uplands sparsely covered with the tufty buffalo or gramma grass. These regions were always within reach of the water-courses; to which morning and evening the herds descended by paths, after the manner of sheep or cattle in a pasture. Never shall I forget the first time I witnessed the extraordinary event of the evening drink. Seeing the black masses galloping down towards the river, by the banks of which our party were travelling, we halted some hundred yards short of the tracks. To have been caught amongst the animals would have been destruction; for, do what they would to get out of one's way, the weight of the thousands pushing on would have crushed anything that impeded them. On the occasion I refer to we approached to within safe distance, and fired into them till the ammunition in our pouches was expended.

As examples of our sporting exploits, three days taken almost at random will suffice. The season was so far advanced that, unless we were to winter at Fort Laramie, it was necessary to keep going. It was therefore agreed that whoever left the line of march—that is, the vicinity of the North Platte—for the purpose of hunting should take his chance of catching up the rest of the party, who were to push on as speedily as possible. On two of the days which I am about to record this rule nearly brought me into trouble. I quote from my journal:

'Left camp to hunt by self. Got a shot at some deer lying in long grass on banks of a stream. While stalking, I could hardly see or breathe for mosquitos; they were in my eyes, nose, and mouth. Steady aim was impossible; and, to my disgust, I missed the easiest of shots. The neck and flanks of my little grey are as red as if painted. He is weak from loss of blood. Fred's head is now so swollen he cannot wear his hard hat; his eyes are bunged up, and his face is comic to look at. Several deer and antelopes; but ground too level, and game too wild to let one near. Hardly caring what direction I took, followed outskirts of large wood, four or five miles away from the river. Saw a good many summer lodges; but knew, by the quantity of game, that the Indians had deserted them. In the afternoon came suddenly upon deer; and singling out one of the youngest fawns, tried to run it down. The country being very rough, I found it hard work to keep between it and the wood. First, my hat blew off; then a pistol jumped out of the holster; but I was too near to give up,—meaning to return for these things afterwards. Two or three times I ran right over the fawn, which bleated in the most piteous manner, but always escaped the death-blow from the grey's hoofs. By degrees we edged nearer to the thicket, when the fawn darted down the side of a bluff, and was lost in the long grass and brushwood, I followed at full speed; but, unable to arrest the impetus of the horse, we dashed headlong into the thick scrub, and were both thrown with violence to the ground. I was none the worse; but the poor beast had badly hurt his shoulder, and for the time was dead lame.

'For an hour at least I hunted, for my pistol. It was much more to me than my hat. It was a huge horse pistol, that threw an ounce ball of exactly the calibre of my double rifle. I had shot several buffaloes with it, by riding close to them in a chase; and when in danger of Indians I loaded it with slugs. At last I found it. It was getting late; and I didn't rightly know where I was. I made for the low country. But as we camped last night at least two miles from the river, on account of the swamps, the difficulty was to find the tracks. The poor little grey and I hunted for it in vain. The wet ground was too wet, the dry ground too hard, to show the tracks in the now imperfect light.

'The situation was a disagreeable one: it might be two or three days before I again fell in with my friends. I had not touched food since the early morning, and was rather done. To return to the high ground was to give up for the night; but that meant another day behind the cavalcade, with diminished chance of overtaking it. Through the dusk I saw what I fancied was something moving on a mound ahead of me which arose out of the surrounding swamp. I spurred on, but only to find the putrid carcase of a buffalo, with a wolf supping on it. The brute was gorged, and looked as sleek as "die schöne Frau Giermund"; but, unlike Isegrim's spouse, she was free to escape, for she wasn't worth a bullet. I was so famished, that I examined the carcase with the hope of finding a cut that would last for a day or two; my nose wouldn't have it. I plodded on, the water up to the saddle-girths. The mosquitos swarmed in millions, and the poor little grey could hardly get one leg before the other. I, too, was so feverish that, ignorant of bacteria, I filled my round hat with the filthy stagnant water, and drank it at a draught.

'At last I made for higher ground. It was too dark to hunt for tracks, so I began to look out for a level bed. Suddenly my beast, who jogged along with his nose to the ground, gave a loud neigh. We had struck the trail. I threw the reins on his neck, and left matters to his superior instincts. In less than half an hour the joyful light of a camp fire gladdened my eyes. Fred told me he had halted as soon as he was able, not on my account only, but because he, too, had had a severe fall, and was suffering great pain from a bruised knee.'

Here is an ordinary example of buffalo shooting:

'*July* 2*nd*.—Fresh meat much wanted. With Jim the half-breed to the hills. No sooner on high ground than we sighted game. As far as eye could reach, right away to the horizon, the plain was black with buffaloes, a truly astonishing sight. Jim was used to it. I stopped to spy them with amazement. The nearest were not more than half a mile off, so we picketed our horses under the sky line; and choosing the hollows, walked on till crawling became expedient. As is their wont, the outsiders were posted on bluffs or knolls in a commanding position; these were old bulls. To my inexperience, our chance of getting a shot seemed small; for we had to cross the dipping ground under the brow whereon the sentinels were lying. Three extra difficulties beset us—the prairie dogs (a marmot, so called from its dog-like bark when disturbed) were all round us, and bolted into their holes like rabbits directly they saw us coming; two big grey wolves, the regular camp followers of a herd, were prowling about in a direct line between us and the bulls; lastly, the cows, though up and feeding, were inconveniently out of reach. (The meat of the young cow is much preferred to that of the bull.) Jim, however, was confident. I followed my leader to a wink. The only instruction I didn't like when we started crawling on the hot sand was "Look out for rattlesnakes."

'The wolves stopped, examined us suspiciously, then quietly trotted off. What with this and the alarm of the prairie dogs, an old bull, a patriarch of the tribe, jumped up and walked with majestic paces to the top of the knoll. We lay flat on our faces, till he, satisfied with the result of his scrutiny, resumed his recumbent posture; but with his head turned straight towards us. Jim, to my surprise, stealthily crawled on. In another minute or two we had gained a point whence we could see through the grass without being seen. Here we rested to recover breath. Meanwhile, three or four young cows fed to within sixty or seventy yards of us. Unluckily we both selected the same animal, and both fired at the same moment. Off went the lot helter skelter, all save the old bull, who roared out his rage and trotted up close to our hiding place.

'"Look out for a bolt," whispered Jim, "but don't show yourself nohow till I tell you."

'For a minute or two the suspense was exciting. One hardly dared to breathe. But his majesty saw us not, and turned again to his wives. We instantly reloaded; and the startled herd, which had only moved a few yards, gave us the chance of a second shot. The first cow had fallen dead almost where she stood. The second we found at the foot of the hill, also with two bullet wounds behind the shoulder. The tongues, humps, and tender loins, with some other choice morsels, were soon cut off and packed, and we returned to camp with a grand supply of beef for Jacob's larder.

CHAPTER XXII

At the risk of being tedious, I will tell of one more day's buffalo hunting, to show the vicissitudes of this kind of sport. Before doing so we will glance at another important feature of prairie life, a camp of Sioux Indians.

One evening, after halting on the banks of the Platte, we heard distant sounds of tomtoms on the other side of the river. Jim, the half-breed, and Louis differed as to the tribe, and hence the friendliness or hostility, of our neighbours. Louis advised saddling up and putting the night between us; he regaled us to boot with a few blood-curdling tales of Indian tortures, and of *nous autres en haut*. Jim treated these with scorn, and declared he knew by the 'tunes' (!) that the pow-wow was Sioux. Just now, he asserted, the Sioux were friendly, and this 'village' was on its way to Fort Laramie to barter 'robes' (buffalo skins) for blankets and ammunition. He was quite willing to go over and talk to them if we had no objection.

Fred, ever ready for adventure, would have joined him in a minute; but the river, which was running strong, was full of nasty currents, and his injured knee disabled him from swimming. No one else seemed tempted; so, following Jim's example, I stripped to my flannel shirt and moccasins, and crossed the river, which was easier to get into than out of, and soon reached the 'village.' Jim was right,—they were Sioux, and friendly. They offered us a pipe of kinik (the dried bark of the red willow), and jabbered away with their kinsman, who seemed almost more at home with them than with us.

Seeing one of their 'braves' with three fresh scalps at his belt, I asked for the history of them. In Sioux gutturals the story was a long one. Jim's translation amounted to this: The scalps were 'lifted' from two Crows and a Ponkaw. The Crows, it appeared, were the Sioux' natural enemies 'anyhow,' for they occasionally hunted on each other's ranges. But the Ponkaw, whom he would not otherwise have injured, was casually met by him on a horse which the Sioux recognised for a white man's. Upon being questioned how he came by it, the Ponkaw simply replied that it was his own. Whereupon the Sioux called him a liar; and proved it by sending an arrow through his body.

I didn't quite see it. But then, strictly speaking, I am no collector of scalps. To preserve my own, I kept the hair on it as short as a tooth-brush.

Before we left, our hosts fed us on raw buffalo meat. This, cut in slices, and dried crisp in the sun, is excellent. Their lodges were very comfortable, most of them large enough to hold a dozen people. The ground inside was covered with buffalo robes; and the sewn skins, spread tight upon the converging poles, formed a tent stout enough to defy all weathers. In winter the lodge can be entirely closed; and when a fire is kindled in the centre, the smoke escaping at a small hole where the poles join, the snugness is complete.

At the entrance of one of these lodges I watched a squaw and her child prepare a meal. When the fuel was collected, a fat puppy, playing with the child, was seized by the squaw, and knocked on the throat—not head—with a stick. The puppy was then returned, kicking, to the tender mercies of the infant; who exerted its small might to add to the animal's miseries, while the mother fed the fire and filled a kettle for the stew. The puppy, much more alive than dead, was held by the hind leg over the flames as long as the squaw's fingers could stand them. She then let it fall on the embers, where it struggled and squealed horribly, and would have wriggled off, but for the little savage, who took good care to provide for the satisfactory singeing of its playmate.

Considering the length of its lineage, how remarkably hale and well preserved is our own barbarity!

We may now take our last look at the buffaloes, for we shall see them no more. Again I quote my journal:

'*July* 5*th*.—Men sulky because they have nothing to eat but rancid ham, and biscuit dust which has been so often soaked that it is mouldy and sour. They are a dainty lot! Samson and I left camp early with the hopes of getting meat. While he was shooting prairie dogs his horse made off, and cost me nearly an hour's riding to catch. Then, accidentally letting go of my mustang, he too escaped; and I had to run him down with the other. Towards evening, spied a small band of buffaloes, which we approached by leading our horses up a hollow. They got our wind, however, and were gone before we were aware of it. They were all young, and so fast, it took a twenty minutes' gallop to come up with them. Samson's horse put his foot in a hole, and the cropper they both got gave the band a long start, as it became a stern chase, and no heading off.

'At length I managed to separate one from the herd by firing my pistol into the "brown," and then devoted my efforts to him alone. Once or twice he turned and glared savagely through his mane. When quite isolated he pulled up short, so did I. We were about sixty yards apart. I flung the reins upon the neck of the mustang, who was too blown to stir, and handling my rifle, waited for the bull to move so that I might see something more than the great shaggy front, which screened his body. But he stood his ground, tossing up the sand with his hoofs. Presently, instead of turning tail, he put his head down, and bellowing with rage, came at me as hard as he could tear. I had but a moment for decision,—to dig spurs into the mustang, or risk the shot. I chose the latter; paused till I was sure of his neck, and fired when he was almost under me. In an instant I was sent flying; and the mustang was on his back with all four legs in the air.

'The bull was probably as much astonished as we were. His charge had carried him about thirty yards, at most, beyond us. There he now stood; facing me, pawing the ground and snorting as before. Badly wounded I knew him to be,—that was the worst of it; especially as my rifle, with its remaining loaded barrel, lay right between us. To hesitate for a second only, was to lose the game. There was no time to think of bruises; I crawled, eyes on him, straight for my weapon: got it—it was already cocked, and the stock unbroken—raised my knee for a rest. We were only twenty yards apart (the shot meant death for one of the two), and just catching a glimpse of his shoulder-blade, I pulled. I could hear the thud of the heavy bullet, and—what was sweeter music—the ugh! of the fatal groan. The beast dropped on his knees, and a gush of blood spurted from his nostrils.

'But the wild devil of a mustang? that was my first thought now. Whenever one dismounted, it was necessary to loosen his long lariat, and let it trail on the ground. Without this there was no chance of catching him. I saw at once what had happened: by the greatest good fortune, at the last moment, he must have made an instinctive start, which probably saved his life, and mine too. The bull's horns had just missed his entrails and my leg,—we were broadside on to the charge,—and had caught him in the thigh, below the hip. There was a big hole, and he was bleeding plentifully. For all that, he wouldn't let me catch him. He could go faster on three legs than I on two.

'It was getting dark, I had not touched food since starting, nor had I wetted my lips. My thirst was now intolerable. The travelling rule, about keeping on, was an ugly incubus. Samson would go his own ways—he had sense enough for that—but how, when, where, was I to quench my thirst? Oh! for the tip of Lazarus' finger—or for choice, a bottle of Bass—to cool my tongue! Then too, whither would the mustang stray in the night if I rested or fell asleep? Again and again I tried to stalk him by the starlight. Twice I got hold of his tail, but he broke away. If I drove him down to the river banks the chance of catching him would be no better, and I should lose the dry ground to rest on.

'It was about as unpleasant a night as I had yet passed. Every now and then I sat down, and dropped off to sleep from sheer exhaustion. Every time this happened I dreamed of sparkling drinks; then woke with a start to a lively sense of the reality, and anxious searches for the mustang.

'Directly the day dawned I drove the animal, now very stiff, straight down for the Platte. He wanted water fully as much as his master; and when we sighted it he needed no more driving. Such a hurry was he in that, in his rush for the river, he got bogged in the muddy swamp at its edge. I seized my chance, and had him fast in a minute. We both plunged into the stream; I, clothes and all, and drank, and drank, and drank.'

That evening I caught up the cavalcade.

How curious it is to look back upon such experiences from a different stage of life's journey! How would it have fared with me had my rifle exploded with the fall? it was knocked out of my hands at full cock. How if the stock had been broken? It had been thrown at least ten yards. How if the horn had entered my thigh instead of the horse's? How if I had fractured a limb, or had been stunned, or the bull had charged again while I was creeping up to him? Any one, or more than one, of these contingencies were more likely to happen than not. But nothing did happen, save—the best.

Not a thought of the kind ever crossed my mind, either at the time or afterwards. Yet I was not a thoughtless man, only an average man. Nine Englishmen out of ten with a love of sport—as most Englishmen are—would have done, and have felt, just as I did. I was bruised and still; but so one is after a run with hounds. I had had many a nastier fall hunting in Derbyshire. The worst that could happen did not happen; but the worst never—well, so rarely does. One might shoot oneself instead of the pigeon, or be caught picking forbidden fruit. Narrow escapes are as good as broad ones. The truth is, when we are young, and active, and healthy, whatever happens, of the pleasant or lucky kind, we accept as a matter of course.

Ah! youth! youth! If we only knew when we were well off, when we were happy, when we possessed all that this world has to give! If we but knew that love is only a matter of course so long as youth and its bounteous train is ours, we might perhaps make the most of it, and give up looking for—something better. But what then? Give up the 'something better'? Give up pursuit, —the effort that makes us strong? 'Give up the sweets of hope'? No! 'tis better as it is, perhaps. The kitten plays with its tail, and the nightingale sings; but they think no more of happiness than the rose-bud of its beauty. May be happiness comes not of too much knowing, or too much thinking either.

CHAPTER XXIII

Fort Laramie was a military station and trading post combined. It was a stone building in what they called a 'compound' or open space, enclosed by a palisade. When we arrived there, it was occupied by a troop of mounted riflemen under canvas, outside the compound. The officers lived in the fort; and as we had letters to the Colonel — Somner — and to the Captain — Rhete, they were very kind and very useful to us.

We pitched our camp by the Laramie river, four miles from the fort. Nearer than that there was not a blade of grass. The cavalry horses and military mules needed all there was at hand. Some of the mules we were allowed to buy, or exchange for our own. We accordingly added six fresh ones to our cavalcade, and parted with two horses; which gave us a total of fifteen mules and six horses. Government provisions were not to be had, so that we could not replenish our now impoverished stock. This was a serious matter, as will be seen before long. Nor was the evil lessened by my being laid up with a touch of fever—the effect, no doubt, of those drenches of stagnant water. The regimental doctor was absent. I could not be taken into the fort. And, as we had no tent, and had thrown away almost everything but the clothes we wore, I had to rough it and take my chance. Some relics of our medicine chest, together with a tough constitution, pulled me through. But I was much weakened, and by no means fit for the work before us. Fred did his best to persuade me from going further. He confessed that he was utterly sick of the expedition; that his injured knee prevented him from hunting, or from being of any use in packing and camp work; that the men were a set of ruffians who did just as they chose—they grumbled at the hardships, yet helped themselves to the stores without restraint; that we had the Rocky Mountains yet to cross; after that, the country was unknown. Colonel Somner had strongly advised us to turn back. Forty of his men had tried two months ago to carry despatches to the regiment's headquarters in Oregon. Only five had got through; the rest had been killed and scalped. Finally, that we had something like 1,200 miles to go, and were already in the middle of August. It would be folly, obstinacy, madness, to attempt it. He would stop and hunt where we were, as long as I liked; or he would go back with me. He would hire fresh good men, and buy new horses; and, now that we knew the country, we could get to St. Louis before the end of September, and—. There was no reasonable answer to be made. I simply told him I had thought it over, and had decided to go on. Like the plucky fellow and staunch friend that he was, he merely shrugged his shoulders, and quietly said, 'Very well. So be it.'

Before leaving Fort Laramie a singular incident occurred, which must seem so improbable, that its narration may be taken for fiction. It was, however, a fact. There was plenty of game near our camping ground; and though the weather was very hot, one of the party usually took the trouble to bring in something to keep the pot supplied. The sage hens, the buffalo or elk meat were handed over to Jacob, who made a stew with bacon and rice, enough for the evening meal and the morrow's breakfast. After supper, when everyone had filled his stomach, the large kettle, covered with its lid, was taken off the fire, and this allowed to burn itself out.

For four or five mornings running the kettle was found nearly empty, and all hands had to put up with a cup of coffee and mouldy biscuit dust. There was a good deal of unparliamentary language. Everyone accused everyone else of filthy greediness. It was disgusting that after eating all he could, a man hadn't the decency to wait till the morning. The pot had been full for supper, and, as every man could see, it was never half emptied—enough was always left for breakfast. A resolution was accordingly passed that each should take his turn of an hour's watch at night, till the glutton was caught in the act.

My hour happened to be from 11 to 12 P.M. I strongly suspected the thief to be an Indian, and loaded my big pistol with slugs on the chance. It was a clear moonlight night. I propped myself comfortably with a bag of hams; and concealed myself as well as I could in a bush of artemisia, which was very thick all round. I had not long been on the look-out when a large grey wolf prowled slowly out of the bushes. The night was bright as day; but every one of the men was sound asleep in a circle round the remains of the camp fire. The wolf passed between them, hesitating as it almost touched a covering blanket. Step by step it crept up to the kettle, took the handle of the lid between its jaws, lifted it off, placed it noiselessly on the ground, and devoured the savoury stew.

I could not fire, because of the men. I dared not move, lest I should disturb the robber. I was even afraid the click of cocking the pistol would startle him and prevent my getting a quiet shot. But patience was rewarded. When satiated, the brute retired as stealthily as he had advanced; and as he passed within seven or eight yards of me I let him have it. Great was my disappointment to see him scamper off. How was it possible I could have missed him? I must have fired over his back. The men jumped to their feet and clutched their rifles; but, though astonished at my story, were soon at rest again. After this the kettle was never robbed. Four days later we were annoyed with such a stench that it was a question of shifting our quarters. In hunting for the nuisance amongst the thicket of wormwood, the dead wolf was discovered not twenty yards from our centre.

The reader would not thank me for an account of the monotonous drudgery, the hardships, the quarrellings, which grew worse from day to day after we left Fort Laramie. Fred and I were about the only two who were on speaking terms; we clung to each other, as a sort of forlorn security against coming disasters. Gradually it was dawning on me that, under the existing circumstances, the fulfilment of my hopes would be (as Fred had predicted) an impossibility; and that to persist in the attempt to realise them was to court destruction. As yet, I said nothing of this to him. Perhaps I was ashamed to. Perhaps I secretly acknowledged to myself that he had been wiser than I, and that my stubbornness was responsible for the life itself of every one of the party.

Doubtless thoughts akin to these must often have haunted the mind of my companion; but he never murmured; only uttered a hasty objurgation when troubles reached a climax, and invariably ended with a burst of cheery laughter which only the sulkiest could resist. It was after a day of severe trials he proposed that we should go off by ourselves for a couple of nights in search of game, of which we were much in need. The men were easily persuaded to halt and rest. Samson had become a sort of nonentity. Dysentery had terribly reduced his strength, and with it such intelligence as he could boast of. We started at daybreak, right glad to be alone together and away from the penal servitude to which we were condemned. We made for the Sweetwater, not very far from the foot of the South Pass, where antelope and black-tailed deer abounded. We failed, however, to get near them—stalk after stalk miscarried.

Disappointed and tired, we were looking out for some snug little hollow where we could light a fire without its being seen by the Indians, when, just as we found what we wanted, an antelope trotted up to a brow to inspect us. I had a fairly good shot at him and missed. This disheartened us both. Meat was the one thing we now sorely needed to save the rapidly diminishing supply of hams. Fred said nothing, but I saw by his look how this trifling accident helped to depress him. I was ready to cry with vexation. My rifle was my pride, the stag of my life—my *alter ego*. It was never out of my hands; every day I practised at prairie dogs, at sage hens, at a mark even if there was no game. A few days before we got to Laramie I had killed, right and left, two wild ducks, the second on the wing; and now, when so much depended on it, I could not hit a thing as big as a donkey. The fact is, I was the worse for illness. I had constant returns of fever, with bad shivering fits, which did not improve the steadiness of one's hand. However, we managed to get a supper. While we were examining the spot where the antelope had stood, a leveret jumped up, and I knocked him over with my remaining barrel. We fried him in the one tin plate we had brought with us, and thought it the most delicious dish we had had for weeks.

As we lay side by side, smoke curling peacefully from our pipes, we chatted far into the night, of other days—of Cambridge, of our college friends, of London, of the opera, of balls, of women—the last a fruitful subject—and of the future. I was vastly amused at his sudden outburst as some start of one of the horses picketed close to us reminded us of the actual present. 'If ever I get out of this d—d mess,' he exclaimed, 'I'll never go anywhere without my own French cook.' He kept his word, to the end of his life, I believe.

It was a delightful repose, a complete forgetting, for a night at any rate, of all impending care. Each was cheered and strengthened for the work to come. The spirit of enterprise, the love of adventure restored for the moment, believed itself a match for come what would. The very animals seemed invigorated by the rest and the abundance of rich grass spreading as far as we could see. The morning was bright and cool. A delicious bath in the Sweetwater, a breakfast on fried ham and coffee, and once more in our saddles on the way back to camp, we felt (or fancied that we felt) prepared for anything.

That is just what we were not. Samson and the men, meeting with no game where we had left them, had moved on that afternoon in search of better hunting grounds. The result was that when we overtook them, we found five mules up to their necks in a muddy creek. The packs were sunk to the bottom, and the animals nearly drowned or strangled. Fred and I rushed to the rescue. At once we cut the ropes which tied them together; and, setting the men to pull at tails or heads, succeeded at last in extricating them.

Our new-born vigour was nipped in the bud. We were all drenched to the skin. Two packs containing the miserable remains of our wardrobe, Fred's and mine, were lost. The catastrophe produced a good deal of bad language and bad blood. Translated into English it came to this: 'They had trusted to us, taking it for granted we knew what we were about. What business had we to "boss" the party if we were as ignorant as the mules? We had guaranteed to lead them through to California [!] and had brought them into this "almighty fix" to slave like niggers and to starve.' There was just truth enough in the Jeremiad to make it sting. It would not have been prudent, nay, not very safe, to return curse for curse. But the breaking point was reached at last. That night I, for one, had not much sleep. I was soaked from head to foot, and had not a dry rag for a change. Alternate fits of fever and rigor would alone have kept me awake; but renewed ponderings upon the situation and confirmed convictions of the peremptory necessity of breaking up the party, forced me to the conclusion that this was the right, the only, course to adopt.

For another twenty-four hours I brooded over my plans. Two main difficulties confronted me: the announcement to the men, who might mutiny; and the parting with Fred, which I dreaded far the most of the two. Would he not think it treacherous to cast him off after the sacrifices he had made for me? Implicitly we were as good as pledged to stand by each other to the last gasp. Was it not mean and dastardly to run away from the battle because it was dangerous to fight it out? Had friendship no claims superior to personal safety? Was not my decision prompted by sheer selfishness? Could anything be said in its defence?

Yes; sentiment must yield to reason. To go on was certain death for all. It was not too late to return, for those who wished it. And when I had demonstrated, as I could easily do, the impossibility of continuance, each one could decide for himself. The men were as reckless as they were ignorant. However they might execrate us, we were still their natural leaders: their blame, indeed, implied they felt it. No sentimental argument could obscure this truth, and this conviction was decisive.

The next night and the day after were, from a moral point of view, the most trying perhaps, of the whole journey. We had halted on a wide, open plain. Due west of us in the far distance rose the snowy peaks of the mountains. And the prairie on that side terminated in bluffs, rising gradually to higher spurs of the range. When the packs were thrown off, and the men had turned, as usual, to help themselves to supper, I drew Fred aside and imparted my resolution to him. He listened to it calmly—much more so than I had expected. Yet it was easy to see by his unusual seriousness that he fully weighed the gravity of the purpose. All he said at the time was, 'Let us talk it over after the men are asleep.'

We did so. We placed our saddles side by side—they were our regular pillows—and, covering ourselves with the same blanket, well out of ear-shot, discussed the proposition from every practical aspect. He now combated my scheme, as I always supposed he would, by laying stress upon our bond of friendship. This was met on my part by the arguments already set forth. He then proposed an amendment, which almost upset my decision. 'It is true,' he admitted, 'that we cannot get through as we are going now; the provisions will not hold out another month, and it is useless to attempt to control the men. But there are two ways out of the difficulty: we can reach Salt Lake City and winter there; or, if you are bent on going to California, why shouldn't we take Jacob and Nelson (the Canadian), pay off the rest of the brutes, and travel together,—us four?'

Whether 'das ewig Wirkende' that shapes our ends be beneficent or malignant is not easy to tell, till after the event. Certain it is that sometimes we seem impelled by latent forces stronger than ourselves—if by self be meant one’s will. We cannot give a reason for all we do; the infinite chain of cause and effect, which has had no beginning and will have no end, is part of the reckoning,—with this, finite minds can never grapple.

It was destined (my stubbornness was none of my making) that I should remain obdurate. Fred’s last resource was an attempt to persuade me (he really believed: I, too, thought it likely) that the men would show fight, annex beasts and provisions, and leave us to shift for ourselves. There were six of them, armed as we were, to us three, or rather us two, for Samson was a negligible quantity. ‘We shall see,’ said I; and by degrees we dropped asleep.

CHAPTER XXIV

Before the first streak of dawn I was up and off to hunt for the horses and mules, which were now allowed to roam in search of feed. On my return, the men were afoot, taking it easy as usual. Some artemisia bushes were ablaze for the morning’s coffee. No one but Fred had a suspicion of the coming crisis. I waited till each one had lighted his pipe; then quietly requested the lot to gather the provision packs together, as it was desirable to take stock, and make some estimate of demand and supply. Nothing loth, the men obeyed. ‘Now,’ said I, ‘turn all the hams out of their bags, and let us see how long they will last.’ When done: ‘What!’ I exclaimed, with well—feigned dismay, ‘that’s not all, surely? There are not enough here to last a fortnight. Where are the rest? No more? Why, we shall starve.’ The men’s faces fell; but never a murmur, nor a sound. ‘Turn out the biscuit bags. Here, spread these empty ham sacks, and pour the biscuit on to them. Don’t lose any of the dust. We shall want every crumb, mouldy or not.’ The gloomy faces grew gloomier. What’s to be done?’ Silence. ‘The first thing, as I think all will agree, is to divide what is left into nine equal shares—that’s our number now—and let each one take his ninth part, to do what he likes with. You yourselves shall portion out the shares, and then draw lots for choice.’

This presentation of the inevitable compelled submission. The whole, amounting to twelve light mule packs (it had been fifteen fairly heavy ones after our purchases at Fort Laramie), was still a goodly bulk to look at. The nine peddling dividends, when seen singly, were not quite what the shareholders had anticipated.

Why were they still silent? Why did they not rebel, and visit their wrath upon the directors? Because they knew in their hearts that we had again and again predicted the catastrophe. They knew we had warned them scores and scores of times of the consequences of their wilful and reckless improvidence. They were stupefied, aghast, at the ruin they had brought upon themselves. To turn upon us, to murder us, and divide our three portions between them, would have been suicidal. In the first place, our situation was as desperate as theirs. We should fight for our lives; and it was not certain, in fact it was improbable, that either Jacob or William would side against us. Without our aid—they had not a compass among them—they were helpless. The instinct of self-preservation bade them trust to our good will.

So far, then, the game was won. Almost humbly they asked what we advised them to do. The answer was prompt and decisive: ‘Get back to Fort Laramie as fast as you can.’ ‘But how? Were they to walk? They couldn’t carry their packs.’ ‘Certainly not; we were English gentlemen, and would behave as such. Each man should have his own mule; each, into the bargain, should receive his pay according to agreement.’ They were agreeably surprised. I then very strongly counselled them not to travel together. Past experience proved how dangerous this must be. To avoid the temptation, even the chance, of this happening, the surest and safest plan would be for each party to start separately, and not leave till the last was out of sight. For my part I had resolved to go alone.

It was a melancholy day for everyone. And to fill the cup of wretchedness to overflowing, the rain, beginning with a drizzle, ended with a downpour. Consultations took place between men who had not spoken to one another for weeks. Fred offered to go on, at all events to Salt Lake City, if Nelson the Canadian and Jacob would go with him. Both eagerly closed with the offer. They would be so much nearer to the ‘diggings,’ and were, moreover, fond of their leader. Louis would go back to Fort Laramie. Potter and Morris would cross the mountains, and strike south for the Mormon city if their provisions and mules threatened to give out. William would try his luck alone in the same way. And there remained no one but Samson, undecided and unprovided for. The strong weak man sat on the ground in the steady rain, smoking pipe after pipe; watching first the preparations, then the departures, one after the other, at intervals of an hour or so. First the singles, then the pair; then, late in the afternoon, Fred and his two henchmen.

It is needless to depict our separation. I do not think either expected ever to see the other again. Yet we parted after the manner of trueborn Britons, as if we should meet again in a day or two. ‘Well, good-bye, old fellow. Good luck. What a beastly day, isn’t it?’ But emotions are only partially suppressed by subduing their expression. The hearts of both were full.

I watched the gradual disappearance of my dear friend, and thought with a sigh of my loss in Jacob and Nelson, the two best men of the band. It was a comfort to reflect that they had joined Fred. Jacob especially was full of resource; Nelson of energy and determination. And the courage and cool judgment of Fred, and his presence of mind in emergencies, were all pledges for the safety of the trio.

As they vanished behind a distant bluff, I turned to the sodden wreck of the deserted camp, and began actively to pack my mules. Samson seemed paralysed by imbecility.

‘What had I better do?’ he presently asked, gazing with dull eyes at his two mules and two horses.

‘I don’t care what you do. It is nothing to me. You had better pack your mules before it is dark, or you may lose them.’

‘I may as well go with you, I think. I don’t care much about going back to Laramie.’

He looked miserable. I was so. I had held out under a long and heavy strain. Parting with Fred had, for the moment, staggered my resolution. I was sick at heart. The thought of packing two mules twice a day, single-handed, weakened as I was by illness, appalled me. And though ashamed of the perversity which had led me to fling away the better and accept the worse, I yielded.

‘Very well then. Make haste. Get your traps together. I’ll look after the horses.’

It took more than an hour before the four mules were ready. Like a fool, I left Samson to tie the led horses in a string, while I did the same with the mules. He started, leading the horses. I followed with the mule train some minutes later. Our troubles soon began. The two spare horses were nearly as wild as the mules. I had not got far when I discerned through the rain a kicking and plunging and general entanglement of the lot ahead of me. Samson had fastened the horses together with slip knots; and they were all doing their best to strangle one another and themselves. To leave the mules was dangerous, yet two men were required to release the maddened horses. At last the labour was accomplished; and once more the van pushed on with distinct instructions as to the line of march, it being now nearly dark. The mules had naturally vanished in the gloom; and by the time I was again in my saddle, Samson was—I knew not where. On and on I travelled, far into the night. But failing to overtake my companion, and taking for granted that he had missed his way, I halted when I reached a stream, threw off the packs, let the animals loose, rolled myself in my blanket, and shut my eyes upon a trying day.

Nothing happens but the unexpected. Daylight woke me. Samson, still in his rugs, was but a couple of hundred yards further up the stream. In the afternoon of the third day we fell in with William. He had cut himself a long willow wand and was fishing for trout, of which he had caught several in the upper reaches of the Sweetwater. He threw down his rod, hastened to welcome our arrival, and at once begged leave to join us. He was already sick of solitude. He had come across Potter and Morris, who had left him that morning. They had been visited by wolves in the night, (I too had been awakened by their howlings,) and poor William did not relish the thought of the mountains alone, with his one little white mule—which he called ‘Cream.’ He promised to do his utmost to help with the packing, and ‘not cost us a cent.’ I did not tell him how my heart yearned towards him, and how miserably my courage had oozed away since we parted, but made a favour of his request, and granted it. The gain, so long as it lasted, was incalculable.

The summit of the South Pass is between 8000 and 9000 feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico. The Pass itself is many miles broad, undulating on the surface, but not abruptly. The peaks of the Wind River Chain, immediately to the north, are covered with snow; and as we gradually got into the misty atmosphere we felt the cold severely. The lariats—made of raw hide—became rods of ice; and the poor animals, whose backs were masses of festering raws, suffered terribly from exposure. It was interesting to come upon proofs of the ‘divide’ within a mile of the most elevated point in the pass. From the Hudson to this spot, all waters had flowed eastward; now suddenly every little rivulet was making for the Pacific.

The descent is as gradual as the rise. On the first day of it we lost two animals, a mule and Samson’s spare horse. The latter, never equal to the heavy weight of its owner, could go no further; and the dreadful state of the mule’s back rendered packing a brutality. Morris and Potter, who passed us a few days later, told us they had seen the horse dead, and partially eaten by wolves; the mule they had shot to put it out of its misery.

In due course we reached Fort Hall, a trading post of the Hudson’s Bay Company, some 200 miles to the north-west of the South Pass. Sir George Simpson, Chairman of that Company, had given me letters, which ensured the assistance of its servants. It was indeed a rest and a luxury to spend a couple of idle days here, and revive one’s dim recollection of fresh eggs and milk. But we were already in September. Our animals were in a deplorable condition; and with the exception of a little flour, a small supply of dried meat, and a horse for Samson, Mr. Grant, the trader, had nothing to sell us. He told us, moreover, that before we reached Fort Boisé, their next station, 300 miles further on, we had to traverse a great rocky desert, where we might travel four-and-twenty hours after leaving water, before we met with it again. There was nothing for it but to press onwards. It was too late now to cross the Sierra Nevada range, which lay between us and California; and with the miserable equipment left to us, it was all we could hope to do to reach Oregon before the passage of the Blue Mountains was blocked by the winter’s snow.

Mr. Grant’s warnings were verified to the foot of the letter. Great were our sufferings, and almost worse were those of the poor animals, from the want of water. Then, too, unlike the desert of Sahara, where the pebbly sand affords a solid footing, the soil here is the calcined powder of volcanic débris, so fine that every step in it is up to one's ankles; while clouds of it rose, choking the nostrils, and covering one from head to heel. Here is a passage from my journal:

'Road rocky in places, but generally deep in the finest floury sand. A strong and biting wind blew dead in our teeth, smothering us in dust, which filled every pore. William presented such a ludicrous appearance that Samson and I went into fits over it. An old felt hat, fastened on by a red cotton handkerchief, tied under his chin, partly hid his lantern-jawed visage; this, naturally of a dolorous cast, was screwed into wrinkled contortions by its efforts to resist the piercing gale. The dust, as white as flour, had settled thick upon him, the extremity of his nasal organ being the only rosy spot left; its pearly drops lodged upon a chin almost as prominent. His shoulders were shrugged to a level with his head, and his long legs dangled from the back of little "Cream" till they nearly touched the ground.'

We laughed at him, it is true, but he was so good-natured, so patient, so simple-minded, and, now and then, when he and I were alone, so sentimental and confidential about Mary, and the fortune he meant to bring her back, that I had a sort of maternal liking for him; and even a vicarious affection for Mary herself, the colour of whose eyes and hair—nay, whose weight avoirdupois—I was now accurately acquainted with. No, the honest fellow had not quite the grit of a 'Leatherstocking.'

One night, when we had halted after dark, he went down to a gully (we were not then in the desert) to look for water for our tea. Samson, armed with the hatchet, was chopping wood. I stayed to arrange the packs, and spread the blankets. Suddenly I heard a voice from the bottom of the ravine, crying out, 'Bring the guns for God's sake! Make haste! Bring the guns!' I rushed about in the dark, tumbling over the saddles, but could nowhere lay my hands on a rifle. Still the cry was for 'Guns!' My own, a muzzle-loader, was discharged, but a rifle none the less. Snatching up this, and one of my pistols, which, by the way, had fallen into the river a few hours before, I shouted for Samson, and ran headlong to the rescue. Before I got to the bottom of the hill I heard groans, which sounded like the last of poor William. I holloaed to know where he was, and was answered in a voice that discovered nothing worse than terror.

It appeared that he had met a grizzly bear drinking at the very spot where he was about to fill his can; that he had bolted, and the bear had pursued him; but that he had 'cobbled the bar with rocks,' had hit it in the eye, or nose, he was not sure which, and thus narrowly escaped with his life. I could not help laughing at his story, though an examination of the place next morning so far verified it, that his footprints and the bear's were clearly intermingled on the muddy shore of the stream. To make up for his fright, he was extremely courageous when restored by tea and a pipe. 'If we would follow the trail with him, he'd go right slick in for her anyhow. If his rifle didn't shoot plum, he'd a bowie as 'ud rise her hide, and no mistake. He'd be darn'd if he didn't make meat of that bar in the morning.'

CHAPTER XXV

We were now steering by compass. Our course was nearly north-west. This we kept, as well as the formation of the country and the watercourses would permit. After striking the great Shoshone, or Snake River, which eventually becomes the Columbia, we had to follow its banks in a southerly direction. These are often supported by basaltic columns several hundred feet in height. Where that was the case, though close to water, we suffered most from want of it. And cold as were the nights—it was the middle of September—the sun was intensely hot. Every day, every mile, we were hoping for a change—not merely for access to the water, but that we might again pursue our westerly course. The scenery was sometimes very striking. The river hereabouts varies from one hundred to nearly three hundred yards in width; sometimes rushing through narrow gorges, sometimes descending in continuous rapids, sometimes spread out in smooth shallow reaches. It was for one of these that we were in search, for only at such points was the river passable.

It was night-time when we came to one of the great falls. We were able here to get at water; and having halted through the day, on account of the heat, kept on while our animals were refreshed. We had to ascend the banks again, and wind along the brink of the precipice. From this the view was magnificent. The moon shone brightly upon the dancing waves hundreds of feet below us, and upon the rapids which extended as far as we could see. The deep shade of the high cliffs contrasted in its impenetrable darkness with the brilliancy of the silvery foam. The vast plain which we overlooked, fading in the soft light, rose gradually into a low range of distant hills. The incessant roar of the rapids, and the desert stillness of all else around, though they lulled one's senses, yet awed one with a feeling of insignificance and impotence in the presence of such ruthless force, amid such serene and cold indifference. Unbidden, the consciousness was there, that for some of us the coming struggle with those mighty waters was fraught with life or death.

At last we came upon a broad stretch of the river which seemed to offer the possibilities we sought for. Rather late in the afternoon we decided to cross here, notwithstanding William's strong reluctance to make the venture. Part of his unwillingness was, I knew, due to apprehension, part to his love of fishing. Ever since we came down upon the Snake River we had seen quantities of salmon. He persisted in the belief that they were to be caught with the rod. The day before, all three of us had waded into the river, and flogged it patiently for a couple of hours, while heavy fish were tumbling about above and below us. We caught plenty of trout, but never pricked a salmon. Here the broad reach was alive with them, and William begged hard to stop for the afternoon and pursue the gentle sport. It was not to be.

The tactics were as usual. Samson led the way, holding the lariat to which the two spare horses were attached. In crossing streams the mules would always follow the horses. They were accordingly let loose, and left to do so. William and I brought up the rear, driving before us any mule that lagged. My journal records the sequel:

'At about equal distances from each other and the main land were two small islands. The first of these we reached without trouble. The second was also gained; but the packs were wetted, the current being exceedingly rapid. The space remaining to be forded was at least two hundred yards; and the stream so strong that I was obliged to turn my mare's head up it to prevent her being carried off her legs. While thus resting, William with difficulty,—the water being over his knees,—sidled up to me. He wanted to know if I still meant to cross. For all answer, I laughed at him. In truth I had not the smallest misgiving. Strong as was the current, the smooth rocky bottom gave a good foothold to the animals; and, judging by the great width of the river, there was no reason to suppose that its shallowness would not continue.

'We paused for a few minutes to observe Samson, who was now within forty or fifty yards of the opposite bank; and, as I concluded, past all danger. Suddenly, to the astonishment of both of us, he and his horse and the led animals disappeared under water; the next instant they were struggling and swimming for the bank. Tied together as they were, there was a deal of snorting and plunging; and Samson (with his habitual ingenuity) had fastened the lariat either to himself or his saddle; so that he was several times dragged under before they all got to the bank in safety.

'These events were watched by William with intense anxiety. With a pitiable look of terror he assured me he could not swim a yard; it was useless for him to try to cross; he would turn back, and find his way to Salt Lake City.

'"But," I remonstrated, "if you turn back, you will certainly starve; everything we possess is over there with the mules; your blanket, even your rifle, are with the packs. It is impossible to get the mules back again. Give little Cream her head, sit still in your saddle, and she'll carry you through that bit of deep water with ease."

'"I can live by fishing," he plaintively answered. He still held his long rod, and the incongruity of it added to the pathos of his despair. I reminded him of a bad river we had before crossed, and how his mule had swum it safely with him on her back. I promised to keep close to him, and help him if need were, though I was confident if he left everything to Cream there would be no danger. "Well, if he must, he must. But, if anything happened to him, would I write and tell Mary? I knew her address; leastways, if I didn't, it was in his bag on the brown mule. And tell her I done my best."

'The water was so clear one could see every crack in the rock beneath. Fortunately, I took the precaution to strip to my shirt; fastened everything, even my socks, to the saddle; then advanced cautiously ahead of William to the brink of the chasm. We were, in fact, upon the edge of a precipice. One could see to an inch where the gulf began. As my mare stepped into it I slipped off my saddle; when she rose I laid hold of her tail, and in two or three minutes should have been safe ashore.

'Looking back to see how it had fared with William, I at once perceived his danger. He had clasped his mule tightly round the neck with his arms, and round the body with his long legs. She was plunging violently to get rid of her load. Already the pair were forty or fifty yards below me. Instantly I turned and swam to his assistance. The struggles of the mule rendered it dangerous to get at him. When I did so he was partially dazed; his hold was relaxed. Dragging him away from the hoofs of the animal, I begged him to put his hands on my shoulders or hips. He was past any effort of the kind. I do not think he heard me even. He seemed hardly conscious of anything. His long wet hair plastered over the face concealed his features. Beyond stretching out his arms, like an infant imploring help, he made no effort to save himself.

'I seized him firmly by the collar,—unfortunately, with my right hand, leaving only my left to stem the torrent. But how to keep his face out of the water? At every stroke I was losing strength; we were being swept away, for him, to hopeless death. At length I touched bottom, got both hands under his head, and held it above the surface. He still breathed, still puffed the hair from his lips. There was still a hope, if I could but maintain my footing. But, alas! each instant I was losing ground—each instant I was driven back, foot by foot, towards the gulf. The water, at first only up to my chest, was now up to my shoulders, now up to my neck. My strength was gone. My arms ached till they could bear no more. They sank involuntarily. William glided from my hands. He fell like lead till his back lay stretched upon the rock. His arms were spread out, so that his body formed a cross. I paddled above it in the clear, smooth water, gazing at his familiar face, till two or three large bubbles burst upon the surface; then, hardly knowing what I was doing, floated mechanically from the trapper's grave.

. . . .

'My turn was now to come. At first, the right, or western, bank being within sixty or seventy yards, being also my proper goal, I struck out for it with mere eagerness to land as soon as possible. The attempt proved unsuccessful. Very well, then, I would take it quietly—not try to cross direct, but swim on gently, keeping my head that way. By degrees I got within twenty yards of the bank, was counting joyfully on the rest which a few more strokes would bring me, when—wsh—came a current, and swept me right into the middle of the stream again.

‘I began to be alarmed. I must get out of this somehow or another; better on the wrong side than not at all. So I let myself go, and made for the shore we had started from.

‘Same fate. When well over to the left bank I was carried out again. What! was I too to be drowned? It began to look like it. I was getting cold, numb, exhausted. And—listen! What is that distant sound? Rapids? Yes, rapids. My flannel shirt stuck to, and impeded me; I would have it off. I got it over my head, but hadn’t unbuttoned the studs—it stuck, partly over my head. I tugged to tear it off. Got a drop of water into my windpipe; was choking; tugged till I got the shirt right again. Then tried floating on my back—to cough and get my breath. Heard the rapids much louder. It was getting dark now. The sun was setting in glorious red and gold. I noticed this, noticed the salmon rolling like porpoises around me, and thought of William with his rod. Strangest of all, for I had not noticed her before, little Cream was still struggling for dear life not a hundred yards below me; sometimes sinking, sometimes reappearing, but on her way to join her master, as surely as I thought that I was.

‘In my distress, the predominant thought was the loneliness of my fate, the loneliness of my body after death. There was not a living thing to see me die.

‘For the first time I felt, not fear, but loss of hope. I could only beat the water with feeble and futile splashes. I was completely at its mercy. And—as we all then do—I prayed—prayed for strength, prayed that I might be spared. But my strength was gone. My legs dropped powerless in the water. I could but just keep my nose or mouth above it. My legs sank, and my feet—touched bottom.

‘In an instant, as if from an electric shock, a flush of energy suffused my brain and limbs. I stood upright in an almost tranquil pool. An eddy had lodged me on a sandbank. Between it and the land was scarcely twenty yards. Through this gap the stream ran strong as ever. I did not want to rest; I did not pause to think. In I dashed; and a single spurt carried me to the shore. I fell on my knees, and with a grateful heart poured out gratitude for my deliverance.

. . . .

‘I was on the wrong side, the side from which we started. The river was yet to cross. I had not tasted food since our early meal. How long I had been swimming I know not, but it was dark now, starlight at least. The nights were bitterly cold, and my only clothing a wet flannel shirt. And oh! the craving for companionship, someone to talk to—even Samson. This was a stronger need than warmth, or food, or clothing; so strong that it impelled me to try again.

‘The poor sandy soil grew nothing but briars and small cactuses. In the dark I kept treading on the little prickly plants, but I hurried on till I came in sight of Samson’s fire. I could see his huge form as it intercepted the comfortable blaze. I pictured him making his tea, broiling some of William’s trout, and spreading his things before the fire to dry. I could see the animals moving around the glow. It was my home. How I yearned for it! How should I reach it, if ever? In this frame of mind the attempt was irresistible. I started as near as I could from opposite the two islands. As on horseback, I got pretty easily to the first island. Beyond this I was taken off my feet by the stream; and only with difficulty did I once more regain the land.

My next object was to communicate with Samson. By putting both hands to my mouth and shouting with all my force I made him hear. I could see him get up and come to the water’s edge; though he could not see me, his stentorian voice reached me plainly. His first words were:

‘“Is that you, William? Coke is drowned.”

‘I corrected him, and thus replied:

‘“Do you remember a bend near some willows, where you wanted to cross yesterday?”

‘“Yes.”

‘“About two hours higher up the river?”

‘“I remember.”

‘“Would you know the place again?”

‘“Yes.”

‘“Are you sure?”

‘“Yes, yes.”

‘“You will see me by daylight in the morning. When I start, you will take my mare, my clothes, and some food; make for that place and wait till I come. I will cross there.”

‘“All right.”

‘“Keep me in sight as long as you can. Don’t forget the food.”

'It will be gathered from my words that definite instructions were deemed necessary; and the inference—at least it was mine—will follow, that if a mistake were possible Samson would avail himself of it. The night was before me. The river had yet to be crossed. But, strange as it now seems to me, I had no misgivings! My heart never failed me. My prayer had been heard. I had been saved. How, I knew not. But this I knew, my trust was complete. I record this as a curious psychological occurrence; for it supported me with unfailing energy through the severe trial which I had yet to undergo.'

CHAPTER XXVI

Our experiences are little worth unless they teach us to reflect. Let us then pause to consider this hourly experience of human beings—this remarkable efficacy of prayer. There can hardly be a contemplative mind to which, with all its difficulties, the inquiry is not familiar.

To begin with, 'To pray is to expect a miracle.' 'Prayer in its very essence,' says a thoughtful writer, 'implies a belief in the possible intervention of a power which is above nature.' How was it in my case? What was the essence of my belief? Nothing less than this: that God would have permitted the laws of nature, ordained by His infinite wisdom to fulfil His omniscient designs and pursue their natural course in accordance with His will, had not my request persuaded Him to suspend those laws in my favour.

The very belief in His omniscience and omnipotence subverts the spirit of such a prayer. It is on the perfection of God that Malebranche bases his argument that 'Dieu n'agit pas par des volontés particulières.' Yet every prayer affects to interfere with the divine purposes.

It may here be urged that the divine purposes are beyond our comprehension. God's purposes may, in spite of the inconceivability, admit the efficacy of prayer as a link in the chain of causation; or, as Dr. Mozely holds, it may be that 'a miracle is not an anomaly or irregularity, but part of the system of the universe.' We will not entangle ourselves in the abstruse metaphysical problem which such hypotheses involve, but turn for our answer to what we do know—to the history of this world, to the daily life of man. If the sun rises on the evil as well as on the good, if the wicked 'become old, yea, are mighty in power,' still, the lightning, the plague, the falling chimney-pot, smite the good as well as the evil. Even the dumb animal is not spared. 'If,' says Huxley, 'our ears were sharp enough to hear all the cries of pain that are uttered in the earth by man and beasts we should be deafened by one continuous scream.' 'If there are any marks at all of special design in creation,' writes John Stuart Mill, 'one of the things most evidently designed is that a large proportion of all animals should pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals. They have been lavishly fitted out with the instruments for that purpose.' Is it credible, then, that the Almighty Being who, as we assume, hears this continuous scream—animal-prayer, as we may call it—and not only pays no heed to it, but lavishly fits out animals with instruments for tormenting and devouring one another, that such a Being should suspend the laws of gravitation and physiology, should perform a miracle equal to that of arresting the sun—for all miracles are equipollent—simply to prolong the brief and useless existence of such a thing as man, of one man out of the myriads who shriek, and—shriek in vain?

To pray is to expect a miracle. Then comes the further question: Is this not to expect what never yet has happened? The only proof of any miracle is the interpretation the witness or witnesses put upon what they have seen. (Traditional miracles—miracles that others have been told, that others have seen—we need not trouble our heads about.) What that proof has been worth hitherto has been commented upon too often to need attention here. Nor does the weakness of the evidence for miracles depend solely on the fact that it rests, in the first instance, on the senses, which may be deceived; or upon inference, which may be erroneous. It is not merely that the infallibility of human testimony discredits the miracles of the past. The impossibility that human knowledge, that science, can ever exhaust the possibilities of Nature, precludes the immediate reference to the Supernatural for all time. It is pure sophistry to argue, as do Canon Row and other defenders of miracles, that 'the laws of Nature are no more violated by the performance of a miracle than they are by the activities of a man.' If these arguments of the special pleaders had any force at all, it would simply amount to this: 'The activities of man' being a part of nature, we have no evidence of a supernatural being, which is the sole *raison d'être* of miracle.

Yet thousands of men in these days who admit the force of these objections continue, in spite of them, to pray. Huxley, the foremost of 'agnostics,' speaks with the utmost respect of his friend Charles Kingsley's conviction from experience of the efficacy of prayer. And Huxley himself repeatedly assures us, in some form or other, that 'the possibilities of "may be" are to me infinite.' The puzzle is, in truth, on a par with that most insolvable of all puzzles—Free Will or Determinism. Reason and the instinct of conscience are in both cases irreconcilable. We are conscious that we are always free to choose, though not to act; but reason will have it that this is a delusion. There is no logical clue to the *impasse*. Still, reason notwithstanding, we take our freedom (within limits) for granted, and with like inconsequence we pray.

It must, I think, be admitted that the belief, delusive or warranted, is efficacious in itself. Whether generated in the brain by the nerve centres, or whatever may be its origin, a force coincident with it is diffused throughout the nervous system, which converts the subject of it, just paralysed by despair, into a vigorous agent, or, if you will, automaton.

Now, those who admit this much argue, with no little force, that the efficacy of prayer is limited to its reaction upon ourselves. Prayer, as already observed, implies belief in supernatural intervention. Such belief is competent to beget hope, and with it courage, energy, and effort. Suppose contrition and remorse induce the sufferer to pray for Divine aid and mercy, suppose suffering is the natural penalty of his or her own misdeeds, and suppose the contrition and the prayer lead to resistance of similar temptations, and hence to greater happiness,—can it be said that the power to resist temptation or endure the penalty are due to supernatural aid? Or must we not infer that the fear of the consequences of vice or folly, together with an earnest desire and intention to amend, were adequate in themselves to account for the good results?

Reason compels us to the latter conclusion. But what then? Would this prove prayer to be delusive? Not necessarily. That the laws of Nature (as argued above) are not violated by miracle, is a mere perversion of the accepted meaning of ‘miracle,’ an *ignoratio elenchi*. But in the case of prayer that does not ask for the abrogation of Nature’s laws, it ceases to be a miracle that we pray for or expect: for are not the laws of the mind also laws of Nature? And can we explain them any more than we can explain physical laws? A psychologist can formulate the mental law of association, but he can no more explain it than Newton could explain the laws of attraction and repulsion which pervade the world of matter. We do not know, we cannot know, what the conditions of our spiritual being are. The state of mind induced by prayer may, in accordance with some mental law, be essential to certain modes of spiritual energy, specially conducive to the highest of all moral or spiritual results: taken in this sense, prayer may ask, not the suspension, but the enactment, of some natural law.

Let it, however, be granted, for argument’s sake, that the belief in the efficacy of prayer is delusive, and that the beneficial effects of the belief—the exalted state of mind, the enhanced power to endure suffering and resist temptation, the happiness inseparable from the assurance that God hears, and can and will befriend us—let it be granted that all this is due to sheer hallucination, is this an argument against prayer? Surely not. For, in the first place, the incontestable fact that belief does produce these effects is for us an ultimate fact as little capable of explanation as any physical law whatever; and may, therefore, for aught we know, or ever can know, be ordained by a Supreme Being. Secondly, all the beneficial effects, including happiness, are as real in themselves as if the belief were no delusion.

It may be said that a ‘fool’s paradise’ is liable to be turned into a hell of disappointment; and that we pay the penalty of building happiness on false foundations. This is true in a great measure; but it is absolutely without truth as regards our belief in prayer, for the simple reason that if death dispel the delusion, it at the same time dispels the deluded. However great the mistake, it can never be found out. But they who make it will have been the better and the happier while they lived.

For my part, though immeasurably preferring the pantheism of Goethe, or of Renan (without his pessimism), to the anthropomorphic God of the Israelites, or of their theosophic legatees, the Christians, however inconsistent, I still believe in prayer. I should not pray that I may not die ‘for want of breath’; nor for rain, while ‘the wind was in the wrong quarter.’ My prayers would not be like those overheard, on his visit to Heaven, by Lucian’s Menippus: ‘O Jupiter, let me become a king!’ ‘O Jupiter, let my onions and my garlic thrive!’ ‘O Jupiter, let my father soon depart from hence!’ But when the workings of my moral nature were concerned, when I needed strength to bear the ills which could not be averted, or do what conscience said was right, then I should pray. And, if I had done my best in the same direction, I should trust in the Unknowable for help.

Then too, is not gratitude to Heaven the best of prayers? Unhappy he who has never felt it! Unhappier still, who has never had cause to feel it!

It may be deemed unwarrantable thus to draw the lines between what, for want of better terms, we call Material and Spiritual. Still, reason is but the faculty of a very finite being; and, as in the enigma of the will, utterly incapable of solving any problems beyond those whose data are furnished by the senses. Reason is essentially realistic. Science is its domain. But science demonstratively proves that things are not what they seem; their phenomenal existence is nothing else than their relation to our special intelligence. We speak and think as if the discoveries of science were absolutely true, true in themselves, not relatively so for us only. Yet, beings with senses entirely different from ours would have an entirely different science. For them, our best established axioms would be inconceivable, would have no more meaning than that ‘Abracadabra is a second intention.’

Science, supported by reason, assures us that the laws of nature—the laws of realistic phenomena—are never suspended at the prayers of man. To this conclusion the educated world is now rapidly coming. If, nevertheless, men thoroughly convinced of this still choose to believe in the efficacy of prayer, reason and science are incompetent to confute them. The belief must be tried elsewhere,—it must be transferred to the tribunal of conscience, or to a metaphysical court, in which reason has no jurisdiction.

This by no means implies that reason, in its own province, is to yield to the ‘feeling’ which so many cite as the infallible authority for their ‘convictions.’

We must not be asked to assent to contradictory propositions. We must not be asked to believe that injustice, cruelty, and implacable revenge, are not execrable because the Bible tells us they were habitually manifested by the tribal god of the Israelites. The fables of man's fall and of the redemption are fraught with the grossest violation of our moral conscience, and will, in time, be repudiated accordingly. It is idle to say, as the Church says, 'these are mysteries above our human reason.' They are fictions, fabrications which modern research has traced to their sources, and which no unperverted mind would entertain for a moment. Fanatical belief in the truth of such dogmas based upon 'feeling' have confronted all who have gone through the severe ordeal of doubt. A couple of centuries ago, those who held them would have burnt alive those who did not. Now, they have to console themselves with the comforting thought of the fire that shall never be quenched. But even Job's patience could not stand the self-sufficiency of his pious reprovers. The sceptic too may retort: 'No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.'

Conviction of this kind is but the convenient substitute for knowledge laboriously won, for the patient pursuit of truth at all costs—a plea in short, for ignorance, indolence, incapacity, and the rancorous bigotry begotten of them.

The distinction is not a purely sentimental one—not a belief founded simply on emotion. There is a physical world—the world as known to our senses, and there is a psychical world—the world of feeling, consciousness, thought, and moral life.

Granting, if it pleases you, that material phenomena may be the causes of mental phenomena, that 'la pensée est le produit du corps entier,' still the two cannot be thought of as one. Until it can be proved that 'there is nothing in the world but matter, force, and necessity,'—which will never be, till we know how we lift our hands to our mouths,—there remains for us a world of mystery, which reason never can invade.

It is a pregnant thought of John Mill's, apropos of material and mental interdependence or identity, 'that the uniform coexistence of one fact with another does not make the one fact a part of the other, or the same with it.'

A few words of Renan's may help to support the argument. 'Ce qui révèle le vrai Dieu, c'est le sentiment moral. Si l'humanité n'était qu'intelligente, elle serait athée. Le devoir, le dévouement, le sacrifice, toutes choses dont l'histoire est pleine, sont inexplicables sans Dieu.' For all these we need help. Is it foolishness to pray for it? Perhaps so. Yet, perhaps not; for 'Tout est possible, même Dieu.'

Whether possible, or impossible, this much is absolutely certain: man must and will have a religion as long as this world lasts. Let us not fear truth. Criticism will change men's dogmas, but it will not change man's nature.

CHAPTER XXVII

My confidence was restored, and with it my powers of endurance. Sleep was out of the question. The night was bright and frosty; and there was not heat enough in my body to dry my flannel shirt. I made shift to pull up some briar bushes; and, piling them round me as a screen, got some little shelter from the light breeze. For hours I lay watching Alpha Centauri—the double star of the Great Bear's pointers—dipping under the Polar star like the hour hand of a clock. My thoughts, strange to say, ran little on the morrow; they dwelt almost solely upon William Nelson. How far was I responsible, to what extent to blame, for leading him, against his will, to death? I re-enacted the whole event. Again he was in my hands, still breathing when I let him go, knowing, as I did so, that the deed consigned him living to his grave. In this way I passed the night.

Just as the first streaks of the longed-for dawn broke in the East, I heard distant cries which sounded like the whoops of Indians. Then they ceased, but presently began again much nearer than before. There was no mistake about them now,—they were the yappings of a pack of wolves, clearly enough, upon our track of yesterday. A few minutes more, and the light, though still dim, revealed their presence coming on at full gallop. In vain I sought for stick or stone. Even the river, though I took to it, would not save me if they meant mischief. When they saw me they slackened their pace. I did not move. They then halted, and forming a half-moon some thirty yards off, squatted on their haunches, and began at intervals to throw up their heads and howl.

My chief hope was in the coming daylight. They were less likely to attack a man then than in the dark. I had often met one or two together when hunting; these had always bolted. But I had never seen a pack before; and I knew a pack meant that they were after food. All depended on their hunger.

When I kept still they got up, advanced a yard or two, then repeated their former game. Every minute the light grew stronger; its warmer tints heralded the rising sun. Seeing, however, that my passivity encouraged them, and convinced that a single step in retreat would bring the pack upon me, I determined in a moment of inspiration to run amuck, and trust to Providence for the consequences. Flinging my arms wildly into the air, and frantically yelling with all my lungs, I dashed straight in for the lot of them. They were, as I expected, taken by surprise. They jumped to their feet and turned tail, but again stopped—this time farther off, and howled with vexation at having to wait till their prey succumbed.

The sun rose. Samson was on the move. I shouted to him, and he to me. Finding me thus reinforced the enemy slunk off, and I was not sorry to see the last of my ugly foes. I now repeated my instructions about our trysting place, waited patiently till Samson had breakfasted (which he did with the most exasperating deliberation), saw him saddle my horse and leave his camp. I then started upon my travels up the river, to meet him. After a mile or so, the high ground on both banks obliged us to make some little detour. We then lost sight of each other; nor was he to be seen when I reached the appointed spot.

Long before I did so I began to feel the effects of my labours. My naked feet were in a terrible state from the cactus thorns, which I had been unable to avoid in the dark; occasional stones, too, had bruised and made them very tender. Unable to shuffle on at more than two miles an hour at fastest, the happy thought occurred to me of tearing up my shirt and binding a half round each foot. This enabled me to get on much better; but when the September sun was high, my unprotected skin and head paid the penalty. I waited for a couple of hours, I dare say, hoping Samson would appear. But concluding at length that he had arrived long before me, through the slowness of my early progress, and had gone further up the river—thinking perhaps that I had meant some other place—I gave him up; and, full of internal ‘d—n’ at his incorrigible consistency, plodded on and on for—I knew not where.

Why, it may be asked, did I not try to cross where I had intended? I must confess my want of courage. True, the river here was not half, not a third, of the width of the scene of my disasters; but I was weak in body and in mind. Had anything human been on the other side to see me—to see how brave I was, (alas! poor human nature!)—I could have plucked up heart to risk it. It would have been such a comfort to have some one to see me drown! But it is difficult to play the hero with no spectators save oneself. I shall always have a fellow-feeling with the Last Man: practically, my position was about as uncomfortable as his will be.

One of the worst features of it was, what we so often suffered from before—the inaccessibility of water. The sun was broiling, and the and soil reflected its scorching rays. I was feverish from exhaustion, and there was nothing, nothing to look forward to. Mile after mile I crawled along, sometimes half disposed to turn back, and try the deep but narrow passage; then that inexhaustible fountain of last hopes—the Unknown—tempted me to go forward. I persevered; when behold! as I passed a rock, an Indian stood before me.

He was as naked as I was. Over his shoulder he carried a spear as long as a salmon rod. Though neither had foreseen the other, he was absolutely unmoved, showed no surprise, no curiosity, no concern. He stood still, and let me come up to him. My only, or rather my uppermost, feeling was gladness. Of course the thought crossed me of what he might do if he owed the white skins a grudge. If any white man had ever harmed one of his tribe, I was at his mercy; and it was certain that he would show me none. He was a tall powerful man, and in my then condition he could have done what he pleased with me. Friday was my model; the red man was Robinson Crusoe. I kneeled at his feet, and touched the ground with my forehead. He did not seem the least elated by my humility: there was not a spark of vanity in him. Indeed, except for its hideousness and brutality, his face was without expression.

I now proceeded to make a drawing, with my finger, in the sand, of a mule in the water; while I imitated by pantomime the struggles of the drowning. I then pointed to myself; and, using my arms as in swimming, shook my head and my finger to signify that I could not swim. I worked an imaginary paddle, and made him understand that I wanted him to paddle me across the river. Still he remained unmoved; till finally I used one argument which interested him more than all the rest of my story. I untied a part of the shirt round one foot and showed him three gold studs. These I took out and gave to him. I also made a drawing of a rifle in the sand, and signified that he would get the like if he went with me to my camp. Whereupon he turned in the direction I was going; and, though unbidden by a look, I did not hesitate to follow.

I thought I must have dropped before we reached his village. This was an osier-bed at the water’s side, where the whole river rushed through a rocky gorge not more than fifty to sixty yards broad. There were perhaps nearly a hundred Indians here, two-thirds of whom were women and children. Their habitations were formed by interlacing the tops of the osiers. Dogs’ skins spread upon the ground and numerous salmon spears were their only furniture. In a few minutes my arrival created a prodigious commotion. The whole population turned out to stare at me. The children ran into the bushes to hide. But feminine curiosity conquered feminine timidity. Although I was in the plight of the forlorn Odysseus after his desperate swim, I had no ‘blooming foliage’ to wind *περὶ χροῒ μήδεα φωτός*. Unlike the Phæacian maidens, however, the tawny nymphs were all as brave as Princess Nausicaa herself. They stared, and pointed, and buzzed, and giggled, and even touched my skin with the tips of their fingers—to see, I suppose, if the white would come off.

But ravenous hunger turned up its nose at flirtation. The fillets of drying salmon suspended from every bough were a million times more seductive than the dark Naiads who had dressed them. Slice after slice I tore down and devoured, as though my maw were as compendious as Jack the Giant Killer’s. This so astonished and delighted the young women that they kept supplying me,—with the expectation, perhaps, that sooner or later I must share the giant’s fate.

While this was going on, a conference was being held; and I had the satisfaction of seeing some men pull up a lot of dead rushes, dexterously tie them into bundles, and truss these together by means of spears. They had no canoes, for the very children were amphibious, living, so it seemed, as much in the water as out of it. When the raft was completed, I was invited to embark. My original friend, who had twisted a tow-rope, took this between his teeth, and led the way. Others swam behind and beside me to push and to pull. The force of the water was terrific; but they seemed to care no more for that than fish. My weight sunk the rush bundles a good bit below the surface; and to try my nerves, my crew every now and then with a wild yell dived simultaneously, dragging the raft and me under water. But I sat tight; and with genuine friendliness they landed me safely on the desired shore.

It was quite dark before we set forth. Robinson Crusoe walked on as if he knew exactly where my camp was. Probably the whole catastrophe had by this time been bruited for miles above and below the spot. Five other stalwart young fellows kept us company, each with salmon spear in hand. The walk seemed interminable; but I had shipped a goodly cargo of latent energy.

When I got home, instead of Samson, I found the camp occupied by half a dozen Indians. They were squatted round a fire, smoking. Each one, so it seemed, had appropriated some article of our goods. Our blankets were over their shoulders. One had William's long rifle in his lap. Another was sitting upon mine. A few words were exchanged with the newcomers, who seated themselves beside their friends; but no more notice was taken of me than of the mules which were eating rushes close to us. How was I, single-handed, to regain possession? That was the burning question. A diplomatic course commanded itself as the only possible one. There were six men who expected rewards, but the wherewithal was held in seisin by other six. The fight, if there were one, should be between the two parties. I would hope to prove, that when thieves fall out honest men come by their own.

There is one adage whose truth I needed no further proof of. Its first line apostrophises the 'Gods and little fishes.' My chief need was for the garment which completes the rhyme. Indians, having no use for corduroy small clothes, I speedily donned mine. Next I quietly but quickly snatched up William's rifle, and presented it to Robinson Crusoe, patting him on the back as if with honours of knighthood. The dispossessed was not well pleased, but Sir Robinson was; and, to all appearances, he was a man of leading, if of darkness. While words were passing between the two, I sauntered round to the gentleman who sat cross-legged upon my weapon. He was as heedless of me as I, outwardly, of him. When well within reach, mindful that '*de l'audace*' is no bad motto, in love and war, I suddenly placed my foot upon his chest, tightened the extensor muscle of my leg, and sent him heels over head. In an instant the rifle was mine, and both barrels cocked. After yesterday's immersion it might not have gone off, but the offended Indian, though furious, doubtless inferred from the histrionic attitude which I at once struck, that I felt confident it would. With my rifle in hand, with my suite looking to me to transfer the plunder to them, my position was now secure. I put on a shirt—the only one left to me, by the way—my shoes and stockings, and my shooting coat; and picking out William's effects, divided these, with his ammunition, his carpet-bag, and his blankets, amongst my original friends. I was beginning to gather my own things together, when Samson, leading my horse, unexpectedly rode into the midst of us. The night was far advanced. The Indians took their leave; and added to the obligation by bequeathing us a large fresh salmon, which served us for many a day to come.

As a postscript I may add that I found poor Mary's address on one of her letters, and faithfully kept my promise as soon as I reached pen and ink.

CHAPTER XXVIII

What remains to be told will not take long. Hardships naturally increased as the means of bearing them diminished. I have said the salmon held out for many days. We cut it in strips, and dried it as well as we could; but the flies and maggots robbed us of a large portion of it. At length we were reduced to two small hams; nothing else except a little tea. Guessing the distance we had yet to go, and taking into account our slow rate of travelling, I calculated the number of days which, with the greatest economy, these could be made to last. Allowing only one meal a day, and that of the scantiest, I scored the hams as a cook scores a leg of roast pork, determined under no circumstances to exceed the daily ration.

No little discipline was requisite to adhere to this resolution. Samson broke down under the exposure and privation; superadded dysentery rendered him all but helpless, and even affected his mind. The whole labour of the camp then devolved on me. I never roused him in the morning till the mules were packed—with all but his blanket and the pannikin for his tea—and until I had saddled his horse for him. Not till we halted at night did we get our ration of ham. This he ate, or rather bolted, raw, like a wild beast. My share I never touched till after I lay down to sleep. And so tired have I been, that once or twice I woke in the morning with my hand at my mouth, the unswallowed morsel between my teeth. For three weeks we went on in this way, never exchanging a word. I cannot say how I might have behaved had Fred been in Samson's place. I hope I should have been at least humane. But I was labouring for my life, and was not over tender-hearted.

Certainly there was enough to try the patience of a better man. Take an instance. Unable one morning to find my own horse, I saddled his and started him off, so as not to waste time, with his spare animal and the three mules. It so happened that our line of march was rather tortuous, owing to some hills we had to round. Still, as there were high mountains in the distance which we were making for, it seemed impossible that anyone could miss his way. It was twenty minutes, perhaps, before I found my horse; this would give him about a mile or more start of me. I hurried on, but failed to overtake him. At the end of an hour I rode to the top of a hill which commanded a view of the course he should have taken. Not a moving speck was to be seen. I knew then that he had gone astray. But in which direction?

My heart sank within me. The provisions and blankets were with him. I do not think that at any point of my journey I had ever felt fear—panic that is—till now. Starvation stared me in the face. My wits refused to suggest a line of action. I was stunned. I felt then what I have often felt since, what I still feel, that it is possible to wrestle successfully with every difficulty that man has overcome, but not with that supreme difficulty—man’s stupidity. It did not then occur to me to give a name to the impatience that seeks to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles.

I turned back, retraced my steps till I came to the track of the mules. Luckily the ground retained the footprints, though sometimes these would be lost for a hundred yards or so. Just as I anticipated—Samson had wound round the base of the very first hill he came to; then, instead of correcting the deviation, and steering for the mountains, had simply followed his nose, and was now travelling due east,—in other words, was going back over our track of the day before. It was past noon when I overtook him, so that a precious day’s labour was lost.

I said little, but that little was a sentence of death.

‘After to-day,’ I began, ‘we will travel separately.’

At first he seemed hardly to take in my meaning. I explained it.

‘As well as I can make out, before we get to the Dalles, where we ought to find the American outposts, we have only about 150 miles to go. This should not take more than eight or nine days. I can do it in a week alone, but not with you. I have come to the conclusion that with you I may not be able to do it at all. We have still those mountains’—pointing to the Blue Mountain range in the distance—‘to cross. They are covered with snow, as you see. We may find them troublesome. In any case our food will only last eight or nine days more, even at the present rate. You shall have the largest half of what is left, for you require more than I do. But I cannot, and will not, sacrifice my life for your sake. I have made up my mind to leave you.’

It must always be a terrible thing for a judge to pass the sentence of death. But then he is fulfilling a duty, merely carrying out a law which is not of his making. Moreover, he has no option—the responsibility rests with the jury; last of all, the sufferer is a criminal. Between the judge’s case and mine there was no analogy. My act was a purely selfish one—justifiable I still think, though certainly not magnanimous. I was quite aware of this at the time, but a starving man is not burdened with generosity.

I dismounted, and, without unsaddling the mules, took off their packs, now reduced to a few pounds, which was all the wretched, raw-backed, and half-dead, animals could stagger under; and, putting my blanket, the remains of a ham, and a little packet of tea—some eight or ten tea-spoonfuls—on one mule, I again prepared to mount my horse and depart.

I took, as it were, a sneaking glance at Samson. He was sitting upon the ground, with his face between his knees, sobbing.

At three-and-twenty the heart of a man, or of a woman—if either has any, which, of course, may be doubtful—is apt to play the dynamite with his or her resolves. Water-drops have ever been formidable weapons of the latter, as we all know; and, not being so accustomed to them then as I have become since, the sight of the poor devil’s abject woe and destitution, the thought that illness and suffering were the causes, the secret whisper that my act was a cowardly one, forced me to follow the lines of least resistance, and submit to the decrees of destiny.

One more page from my ‘Ride,’ and the reader will, I think, have a fair conception of its general character. For the last two hours the ascent of the Blue Mountains had been very steep. We were in a thick pine forest. There was a track—probably made by Indians. Near the summit we found a spring of beautiful water. Here we halted for the night. It was a snug spot. But, alas! there was nothing for the animals to eat except pine needles. We lighted our fire against the great up-torn roots of a fallen tree; and, though it was freezing hard, we piled on such masses of dead boughs that the huge blaze seemed to warm the surrounding atmosphere.

I must here give the words of my journal, for one exclamation in it has a sort of schoolboy ring that recalls the buoyancy of youthful spirits, the spirits indeed to which in early life we owe our enterprise and perseverance:

‘As I was dozing off, a pack of hungry wolves that had scented us out set up the most infernal chorus ever heard. In vain I pulled the frozen buffalo-robe over my head, and tried to get to sleep. The demons drew nearer and nearer, howling, snarling, fighting, moaning, and making a row in the perfect stillness which reigned around, as if hell itself were loose. For some time I bore it with patience. At length, jumping up, I yelled in a voice that made the valley ring: You devils! will you be quiet? The appeal was immediately answered by silence; but hearing them tuning up for a second concert, I threw some wood on the blazing fire and once more retired to my lair. For a few minutes I lay awake to admire a brilliant Aurora Borealis shooting out its streams of electric light. Then, turning over on my side, I never moved again till dawn.'

The first objects that caught my eye were the animals. They were huddled together within a couple of yards of where we lay. It was a horrible sight. Two out of the three mules, and Samson's horse, had been attacked by the wolves. The flanks of the horse were terribly torn, and the entrails of both the mules were partially hanging out. Though all three were still standing with their backs arched, they were rapidly dying from loss of blood. My dear little 'Strawberry'—as we called him to match William's 'Cream' and my mare were both intact.

A few days after this, Samson's remaining horse gave out. I had to surrender what remained of my poor beast in order to get my companion through. The last fifty miles of the journey I performed on foot; sometimes carrying my rifle to relieve the staggering little mule of a few pounds extra weight. At long last the Dalles hove in sight. And our cry, 'The tents! the tents!' echoed the joyous 'Thalassa! Thalassa!' of the weary Greeks.

CHAPTER XXIX

'Where is the tent of the commanding officer?' I asked of the first soldier I came across.

He pointed to one on the hillside. 'Ags for Major Dooker,' was the Dutch-accented answer.

Bidding Samson stay where he was, I made my way as directed. A middle-aged officer in undress uniform was sitting on an empty packing-case in front of his tent, whittling a piece of its wood.

'Pray sir,' said I in my best Louis Quatorze manner, 'have I the pleasure of speaking to Major Dooker?'

'Tucker, sir. And who the devil are you?'

Let me describe what the Major saw: A man wasted by starvation to skin and bone, blackened, almost, by months of exposure to scorching suns; clad in the shreds of what had once been a shirt, torn by every kind of convict labour, stained by mud and the sweat and sores of mules; the rags of a shooting coat to match; no head covering; hands festering with sores, and which for weeks had not touched water—if they could avoid it. Such an object, in short, as the genius of a Phil May could alone have depicted as the most repulsive object he could imagine.

'Who the devil are you?'

'An English gentleman, sir, travelling for pleasure.'

He smiled. 'You look more like a wild beast.'

'I am quite tame, sir, I assure you—could even eat out of your hand if I had a chance.'

'Is your name Coke?'

'Yes,' was my amazed reply.

'Then come with me—I will show you something that may surprise you.'

I followed him to a neighbouring tent. He drew aside the flap of it, and there on his blanket lay Fred Calthorpe, snoring in perfect bliss.

Our greetings were less restrained than our parting had been. We were truly glad to meet again. He had arrived just two days before me, although he had been at Salt Lake City. But he had been able there to refit, had obtained ample supplies and fresh animals. Curiously enough, his Nelson—the French-Canadian—had also been drowned in crossing the Snake River. His place, however, had been filled by another man, and Jacob had turned out a treasure. The good fellow greeted me warmly. And it was no slight compensation for bygone troubles to be assured by him that our separation had led to the final triumphal success.

Fred and I now shared the same tent. To show what habit will do, it was many days before I could accustom myself to sleep under cover of a tent even, and in preference slept, as I had done for five months, under the stars. The officers liberally furnished us with clothing. But their excessive hospitality more nearly proved fatal to me than any peril I had met with. One's stomach had quite lost its discretion. And forgetting that

> Famished people must be slowly nursed,
> And fed by spoonfuls, else they always burst,

one never knew when to leave off eating. For a few days I was seriously ill.

An absurd incident occurred to me here which might have had an unpleasant ending. Every evening, after dinner in the mess tent, we played whist. One night, quite by accident, Fred and I happened to be partners. The Major and another officer made up the four. The stakes were rather high. We two had had an extraordinary run of luck. The Major's temper had been smouldering for some time. Presently the deal fell to me; and as bad luck would have it, I dealt myself a handful of trumps, and—all four honours. As the last of these was played, the now blazing Major dashed his cards on the table, and there and then called me out. The cooler heads of two or three of the others, with whom Fred had had time to make friends, to say nothing of the usual roar of laughter with which he himself heard the challenge, brought the matter to a peaceful issue. The following day one of the officers brought me a graceful apology.

As may readily be supposed, we had no hankering for further travels such as we had gone through. San Francisco was our destination; but though as unknown to us as Charles Lamb's 'Stranger,' we 'damned' the overland route 'at a venture'; and settled, as there was no alternative, to go in a trading ship to the Sandwich Islands thence, by the same means, to California.

On October 20 we procured a canoe large enough for seven or eight persons; and embarking with our light baggage, Fred, Samson, and I, took leave of the Dalles. For some miles the great river, the Columbia, runs through the Cascade Mountains, and is confined, as heretofore, in a channel of basaltic rock. Further down it widens, and is ornamented by groups of small wooded islands. On one of these we landed to rest our Indians and feed. Towards evening we again put ashore, at an Indian village, where we camped for the night. The scenery here is magnificent. It reminded me a little of the Danube below Linz, or of the finest parts of the Elbe in Saxon Switzerland. But this is to compare the full-length portrait with the miniature. It is the grandeur of the scale of the best of the American scenery that so strikes the European. Variety, however, has its charms; and before one has travelled fifteen hundred miles on the same river—as one may easily do in America—one begins to sigh for the Rhine, or even for a trip from London to Greenwich, with a white-bait dinner at the end of it.

The day after, we descended the Cascades. They are the beginning of an immense fall in the level, and form a succession of rapids nearly two miles long. The excitement of this passage is rather too great for pleasure. It is like being run away with by a 'motor' down a steep hill. The bow of the canoe is often several feet below the stern, as if about to take a 'header.' The water, in glassy ridges and dark furrows, rushes headlong, and dashes itself madly against the reefs which crop up everywhere. There is no time, one thinks, to choose a course, even if steerage, which seems absurd, were possible. One is hurled along at railway speed. The upreared rock, that a moment ago seemed a hundred yards off, is now under the very bow of the canoe. One clenches one's teeth, holds one's breath, one's hour is surely come. But no—a shout from the Indians, a magic stroke of the paddle in the bow, another in the stern, and the dreaded crag is far above out heads, far, far behind; and, for the moment, we are gliding on—undrowned.

At the lower end of the rapids (our Indians refusing to go further), we had to debark. A settler here was putting up a zinc house for a store. Two others, with an officer of the Mounted Rifles—the regiment we had left at the Dalles—were staying with him. They welcomed our arrival, and insisted on our drinking half a dozen of poisonous stuff they called champagne. There were no chairs or table in the 'house,' nor as yet any floor; and only the beginning of a roof. We sat on the ground, so that I was able surreptitiously to make libations with my share, to the earth.

According to my journal: 'In a short time the party began to be a noisy one. Healths were drunk, toasts proposed, compliments to our respective nationalities paid in the most flattering terms. The Anglo-Saxon race were destined to conquer the globe. The English were the greatest nation under the sun—that is to say, they had been. America, of course, would take the lead in time to come. We disputed this. The Americans were certain of it, in fact this was already an accomplished fact. The big officer—a genuine "heavy"—wanted to know where the man was that would give him the lie! Wasn't the Mounted Rifles the crack regiment of the United States army? And wasn't the United States army the finest army in the universe? Who that knew anything of history would compare the Peninsular Campaign to the war in Mexico? Talk of Waterloo—Britishers were mighty fond of swaggering about Waterloo! Let 'em look at Chepultapec. As for Wellington, he couldn't shine nohow with General Scott, nor old Zack neither!'

Then, *we* wished for a war, just to let them see what our crack cavalry regiments could do. Mounted Rifles forsooth! Mounted costermongers! whose trade it was to sell 'nutmegs made of wood, and clocks that wouldn't figure.' Then some pretty forcible profanity was vented, fists were shaken, and the zinc walls were struck, till they resounded like the threatened thunder of artillery.

But Fred's merry laughter diverted the tragic end. It was agreed that there had been too much tall talk. Britishers and Americans were not such fools as to quarrel. Let everybody drink everybody else's health. A gentleman in the corner (he needed the support of both walls) thought it wasn't good to 'liquor up' too much on an empty stomach; he put it to the house that we should have supper. The motion was carried *nem. con.*, and a Dutch cheese was produced with much *éclat*. Samson coupled the ideas of Dutch cheeses and Yankee hospitality. This revived the flagging spirit of emulation. On one side, it was thought that British manners were susceptible of amendment. Confusion was then respectively drunk to Yankee hospitality, English manners, and—this was an addition of Fred's—to Dutch cheeses. After which, to change the subject, a song was called for, and a gentleman who shall be nameless, for there was a little mischief in the choice, sang 'Rule Britannia.' Not being encored, the singer drank to the flag that had braved the battle and the breeze for nearly ninety years. 'Here's to Uncle Sam, and his stars and stripes.' The mounted officer rose to his legs (with difficulty) and declared 'that he could not, and would not, hear his country insulted any longer. He begged to challenge the "crowd." He regretted the necessity, but his feelings had been wounded, and he could not—no, he positively could not stand it.' A slight push from Samson proved the fact—the speaker fell, to rise no more. The rest of the company soon followed his example, and shortly afterwards there was no sound but that of the adjacent rapids.

Early next morning the settler's boat came up, and took us a mile down the river, where we found a larger one to convey us to Fort Vancouver. The crew were a Maltese sailor and a man who had been in the United States army. Each had his private opinions as to her management. Naturally, the Maltese should have been captain, but the soldier was both supercargo and part owner, and though it was blowing hard and the sails were fully large, the foreigner, who was but a poor little creature, had to obey orders.

As the river widened and grew rougher, we were wetted from stem to stern at every plunge; and when it became evident that the soldier could not handle the sails if the Maltese was kept at the helm, the heavy rifleman who was on board, declaring that he knew the river, took upon himself to steer us. In a few minutes the boat was nearly swamped. The Maltese prayed and blasphemed in language which no one understood. The oaths of the soldier were intelligible enough. The 'heavy,' now alarmed, nervously asked what had better be done. My advice was to grease the bowsprit, let go the mast, and splice the main brace. 'In another minute or two,' I added, 'you'll steer us all to the bottom.'

Fred, who thought it no time for joking, called the rifleman a 'damned fool,' and authoritatively bade him give up the tiller; saying that I had been in Her Majesty's Navy, and perhaps knew a little more about boats than he did. To this the other replied that 'he didn't want anyone to learn him; he reckon'd he'd been raised to boating as well as the next man, and he'd be derned if he was going to trust his life to anybody!' Samson, thinking no doubt of his own, took his pipe out of his mouth, and towering over the steersman, flung him like a child on one side. In an instant I was in his place.

It was a minute or two before the boat had way enough to answer the helm. By that time we were within a dozen yards of a reef. Having noticed, however, that the little craft was quick in her stays, I kept her full till the last, put the helm down, and round she spun in a moment. Before I could thank my stars, the pintle, or hook on which the rudder hangs, broke off. The tiller was knocked out of my hand, and the boat's head flew into the wind. 'Out with the sweeps,' I shouted. But the sweeps were under the gear. All was confusion and panic. The two men cursed in the names of their respective saints. The 'heavy' whined, 'I told you how it w'd be.' Samson struggled valiantly to get at an oar, while Fred, setting the example, begged all hands to be calm, and be ready to fend the stern off the rocks with a boathook. As we drifted into the surf I was wondering how many bumps she would stand before she went to pieces. Happily the water shallowed, and the men, by jumping overboard, managed to drag the boat through the breakers under the lee of the point. We afterwards drew her up on to the beach, kindled a fire, got out some provisions, and stayed till the storm was over.

CHAPTER XXX

What was then called Fort Vancouver was a station of the Hudson's Bay Company. We took up our quarters here till one of the company's vessels—the 'Mary Dare,' a brig of 120 tons, was ready to sail for the Sandwich Islands. This was about the most uncomfortable trip I ever made. A sailing merchant brig of 120 tons, deeply laden, is not exactly a pleasure yacht; and 2,000 miles is a long voyage. For ten days we lay at anchor at the mouth of the Columbia, detained by westerly gales. A week after we put to sea, all our fresh provisions were consumed, and we had to live on our cargo—dried salmon. We three and the captain more than filled the little hole of a cabin. There wasn't even a hammock, and we had to sleep on the deck, or on the lockers. The fleas, the cockroaches, and the rats, romped over and under one all night. Not counting the time it took to go down the river, or the ten days we were kept at its mouth, we were just six weeks at sea before we reached Woahoo, on Christmas Day.

How beautiful the islands looked as we passed between them, with a fair wind and studding sails set alow and aloft. Their tropical charms seemed more glowing, the water bluer, the palm trees statelier, the vegetation more libertine than ever. On the south the land rises gradually from the shore to a range of lofty mountains. Immediately behind Honolulu—the capital—a valley with a road winding up it leads to the north side of the island. This valley is, or was then, richly cultivated, principally with *taro*, a large root not unlike the yam. Here and there native huts were dotted about, with gardens full of flowers, and abundance of tropical fruit. Higher up, where it becomes too steep for cultivation, growth of all kind is rampant. Acacias, oranges, maples, bread-fruit, and sandal-wood trees, rear their heads above the tangled ever-greens. The high peaks, constantly in the clouds, arrest the moisture of the ocean atmosphere, and countless rills pour down the mountain sides, clothing everything in perpetual verdure. The climate is one of the least changeable in the world; the sea breeze blows day and night, and throughout the year the day temperature does not vary more than five or six degrees, the average being about eighty-three degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. In 1850 the town of Honolulu was little else than a native village of grass and mat huts. Two or three merchants had good houses. In one of these Fred and Samson were domiciled; there was no such thing as a hotel. I was the guest of General Miller, the Consul-General. What changes may have taken place since the above date I have no means of knowing. So far as the natives go, the change will assuredly have been for the worse; for the aborigines, in all parts of the world, lose their primitive simplicity and soon acquire the worst vices of civilisation.

Even King Tamehameha III. was not innocent of one of them. General Miller offered to present us at court, but he had to give several days' notice in order that his Majesty might be sufficiently sober to receive us. A negro tailor from the United States fitted us out with suits of black, and on the appointed day we put ourselves under the shade of the old General's cocked hat, and marched in a body to the palace. A native band, in which a big drum had the leading part, received us with 'God save the Queen'—whether in honour of King Tamy, or of his visitors, was not divulged. We were first introduced to a number of chiefs in European uniforms—except as to their feet, which were mostly bootless. Their names sounded like those of the state officers in Mr. Gilbert's 'Mikado.' I find in my journal one entered as Tovey-tovey, another as Kanakala. We were then conducted to the presence chamber by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Wiley, a very pronounced Scotch gentleman with a star of the first magnitude on his breast. The King was dressed as an English admiral. The Queen, whose ample undulations also reminded one of the high seas, was on his right; while in perfect gradation on her right again were four princesses in short frocks and long trousers, with plaited tails tied with blue ribbon, like the Miss Kenwigs. A little side dispute arose between the stiff old General and the Foreign Minister as to whose right it was to present us. The Consul carried the day; but the Scot, not to be beaten, informed Tamehameha, in a long prefatory oration, of the object of the ceremony. Taking one of us by the hand (I thought the peppery old General would have thrust him aside), Mr. Wiley told the King that it was seldom the Sandwich Islands were 'veesited' by strangers of such 'desteenction'—that the Duke of this (referring to Fred's relations), and Lord the other, were the greatest noblemen in the world; then, with much solemnity, quoted a long speech from Shakespeare, and handed us over to his rival.

His Majesty, who did not understand a word of English, or Scotch, looked grave and held tight to the arm of the throne; for the truth is, that although he had relinquished his bottle for the hour, he had brought its contents with him. My salaam was soon made; but as I retired backwards I had the misfortune to set my heel on the toes of a black-and-tan terrier, a privileged pet of the General's. The shriek of the animal and the loss of my equilibrium nearly precipitated me into the arms of a trousered princess; but the amiable young lady only laughed. Thus ended my glimpse of the Hawaian Court. Mr. Wiley afterwards remarked to me: 'We do things in a humble way, ye'll obsairve; but royalty is royalty all over the world, and His Majesty Tamehameha is as much Keng of his ain domeenions as Victoria is Queen of Breetain.' The relativity of greatness was not to be denied.

The men—Kanakas, as they are called—are fine stalwart fellows above our average height. The only clothing they then wore was the *maro*, a cloth made by themselves of the acacia bark. This they pass between the legs, and once or twice round the loins. The *Wyheenes*—women—formerly wore nothing but a short petticoat or kilt of the same material. By persuasion of the missionaries they have exchanged this simple garment for a chemise of printed calico, with the waist immediately under the arms so as to conceal the contour of the figure. Other clothing have they none.

Are they the more chaste? Are they the less seductive? Hear what M. Anatole France says in his apostrophe to the sex: 'Pour faire de vous la terrible merveille que vous êtes aujourd'hui, pour devenir la cause indifférente et souveraine des sacrifices et des crimes, il vous a fallu deux choses: la civilisation qui vous donna des voiles, et la religion qui vous donna des scrupules.' The translation of which is (please take note of it, my dear young ladies with 'les épaules qui ne finissent pas'):

> 'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter.'

Be this as it may, these chocolate-skinned beauties, with their small and regular features, their rosy lips, their perfect teeth—of which they take great care—their luxurious silky tresses, their pretty little hands and naked feet, and their exquisite forms, would match the matchless Cleopatra.

Through the kindness of Fred's host, the principal merchant in the island, we were offered an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the *élite* of the Honolulu nymphs. Mr. S. invited us to what is called a *Loohou* feast got up by him for their entertainment. The head of one of the most picturesque valleys in Woahoo was selected for the celebration of this ancient festival. Mounted on horses with which Mr. S. had furnished us, we repaired in a party to the appointed spot. It was early in the afternoon when we reached it; none of the guests had arrived, excepting a few Kanakas, who were engaged in thatching an old shed as shelter from the sun, and strewing the ground with a thick carpet of palm-leaves. Ere long, a cavalcade of between thirty and forty amazons—they all rode astride—came racing up the valley at full speed, their merry shouts proclaiming their approach. Gaudy strips of *maro* were loosely folded around their legs for skirts. Their pretty little straw hats trimmed with ribbons, or their uncovered heads with their long hair streaming in the wind, confined only by a wreath of fresh orange flowers, added to their irresistible charm. Certainly, the bravest soldiers could not have withstood their charge. No men, however, were admitted, save those who had been expressly invited; but each lady of importance was given a *carte blanche* to bring as many of her own sex as she pleased, provided they were both pretty and respectable.

As they rode up, we cavaliers, with becoming gallantry, offered our assistance while they dismounted. Smitten through and through by the bright eyes of one little houri who possessed far more than her share of the first requirement, and, taking the second for granted, I courteously prepared to aid her to alight; when, to my discomfiture, instead of a gracious acknowledgment of my services, she gave me a sharp cut with her whip. As, however, she laughed merrily at my wry faces, I accepted the act as a scratch of the kitten's claws; at least, it was no sign of indifference, and giving myself the benefit of the doubt, lifted her from her saddle without further chastisement, except a coquettish smile that wounded, alas! more than it healed.

The feast was thus prepared: poultry, sucking-pigs, and puppies—the last, after being scalded and scraped, were stuffed with vegetables and spices, rolled in plantain leaves, and placed in the ground upon stones already heated. More stones were then laid over them, and fires lighted on the top of all. While the cooking was in progress, the Kanakas ground *taro* roots for the paste called 'poe'; the girls danced and sang. The songs were devoid of melody, being musical recitations of imaginary love adventures, accompanied by swayings of the body and occasional choral interruptions, all becoming more and more excited as the story or song approached its natural climax. Sometimes this was varied by a solitary dancer starting from the circle, and performing the wildest bacchanalian antics, to the vocal incitement of the rest. This only ended with physical exhaustion, or collapse from feminine hysteria.

The food was excellent; the stuffed puppy was a dish for an epicure. Though knives and forks were unknown, and each helped herself from the plantain leaf, one had not the least objection to do likewise, for the most scrupulous cleanliness is one of the many merits of these fascinating creatures. Before every dip into the leaf, the dainty little fingers were plunged into bowls of fresh water provided for the purpose. Delicious fruit followed the substantial fare; a small glass of *kava*—a juice extracted from a root of the pepper tribe—was then served to all alike. Having watched the process of preparing the beverage, I am unable to speak as to its flavour. The making of it is remarkable. A number of women sit on the ground, chew the root, and spit its juice into a bowl. The liquor is kept till it ferments, after which it becomes highly intoxicating. I regret to say that its potency was soon manifested on this occasion. No sooner did the poison set their wild blood tingling, than a free fight began for the remaining gourds. Such a scratching, pulling of hair, clawing, kicking, and crying, were never seen. Only by main force did we succeed in restoring peace. It is but fair to state that, except on the celebration of one or two solemn and sacred rites such as that of the *Loohou*, these island Thyades never touch fermented liquors.

CHAPTER XXXI

It was an easier task when all was over to set the little Amazons on their horses than to keep them there, for by the time we had perched one on her saddle, or pad rather, and adjusted her with the greatest nicety, another whom we had just left would lose her balance and fall with a scream to the ground. It was almost as difficult as packing mules on the prairie. For my part it must be confessed that I left the completion of the job to others. Curious and entertaining as the feast was, my whole attention was centred and absorbed in Arakeeta, which that artful little enchantress had the gift to know, and lashed me accordingly with her eyes more cruelly than she had done with her whip. I had got so far, you see, as to learn her name, the first instalment of an intimacy which my demolished heart was staked on perfecting. I noticed that she refused the *kava* with real or affected repugnance; and when the passage of arms, and legs, began, she slipped away, caught her animal, and with a parting laugh at me, started off for home. There was not the faintest shadow of encouragement in her saucy looks to follow her. Still, she was a year older than Juliet, who was nearly fourteen; so, who could say what those looks might veil? Besides:

> Das Naturell der Frauen
> Ist so nah mit Kunst verwandt,

that one might easily be mistaken. Anyhow, flight provoked pursuit; I jumped on to my horse, and raced along the plain like mad. She saw me coming, and flogged the more, but being the better mounted of the two, by degrees I overhauled her. As I ranged alongside, neither slackened speed; and reaching out to catch her bridle, my knee hooked under the hollow of hers, twisted her clean off her pad, and in a moment she lay senseless on the ground. I flung myself from my horse, and laid her head upon my lap. Good God! had I broken her neck! She did not stir; her eyes were closed, but she breathed, and her heart beat quickly. I was wild with terror and remorse. I looked back for aid, but the others had not started; we were still a mile or more from Honolulu. I knew not what to do. I kissed her forehead, I called her by her name. But she lay like a child asleep. Presently her dazed eyes opened and stared with wonderment, and then she smiled. The tears, I think, were on my cheeks, and seeing them, she put her arms around my neck and—forgave me.

She had fallen on her head and had been stunned. I caught the horses while she sat still, and we walked them slowly home. When we got within sight of her hut on the outskirts of the town, she would not let me go further. There was sadness in her look when we parted. I made her understand (I had picked up two or three words) that I would return to see her. She at once shook her head with an expression of something akin to fear. I too felt sorrowful, and worse than sorrowful, jealous.

When the night fell I sought her hut. It was one of the better kind, built like others mainly with matting; no doors or windows, but with an extensive verandah which protected the inner part from rain and sun. Now and again I caught glimpses of Arakeeta's fairy form flitting in, or obscuring, the lamplight. I could see two other women and two men. Who and what were they? Was one of those dark forms an Othello, ready to smother his Desdemona? Or were either of them a Valentine between my Marguerite and me? Though there was no moon, I dared not venture within the lamp's rays, for her sake; for my own, I was reckless now—I would have thanked either of them to brain me with his hoe. But Arakeeta came not.

In the day-time I roamed about the district, about the *taro* fields, in case she might be working there. Every evening before sundown, many of the women and some of the well-to-do men, and a few whites, used to ride on the plain that stretches along the shore between the fringe of palm groves and the mountain spurs. I had seen Arakeeta amongst them before the *Loohou* feast. She had given this up now, and why? Night after night I hovered about the hut. When she was in the verandah I whispered her name. She started and peered into the dark, hesitated, then fled. Again the same thing happened. She had heard me, she knew that I was there, but she came not; no, wiser than I, she came not. And though I sighed:

What is worth
The rest of Heaven, the rest of earth?

the shrewd little wench doubtless told herself: 'A quiet life, without the fear of the broomstick.'

Fred was impatient to be off, I had already trespassed too long on the kind hospitality of General Miller, neither of us had heard from England for more than a year, and the opportunities of trading vessels to California seldom offered. A rare chance came—a fast-sailing brig, the 'Corsair,' was to leave in a few days for San Francisco. The captain was an Englishman, and had the repute of being a boon companion and a good caterer. We—I, passively—settled to go. Samson decided to remain. He wanted to visit Owyhee. He came on board with us, however; and, with a parting bumper of champagne, we said 'Good-bye.' That was the last I ever saw of him. The hardships had broken him down. He died not long after.

The light breeze carried us slowly away—for the first time for many long months with our faces to the east. But it was not 'merry' England that filled my juvenile fancies. I leaned upon the taffrail and watched this lovely land of the 'flowery food' fade slowly from my sight. I had eaten of the Lotus, and knew no wish but to linger on, to roam no more, to return no more, to any home that was not Arakeeta's.

This sort of feeling is not very uncommon in early life. And 'out of sight, out of mind,' is also a known experience. Long before we reached San Fr'isco I was again eager for adventure.

How magnificent is the bay! One cannot see across it. How impatient we were to land! Everything new. Bearded dirty heterogeneous crowds busy in all directions,—some running up wooden and zinc houses, some paving the streets with planks, some housing over ships beached for temporary dwellings. The sandy hills behind the infant town are being levelled and the foreshore filled up. A 'water surface' of forty feet square is worth 5,000 dollars. So that here and there the shop-fronts are ships' broadsides. Already there is a theatre. But the chief feature is the gambling saloons, open night and day. These large rooms are always filled with from 300 to 400 people of every description—from 'judges' and 'colonels' (every man is one or the other, who is nothing else) to Parisian cocottes, and escaped convicts of all nationalities. At one end of the saloon is a bar, at the other a band. Dozens of tables are ranged around. Monte, faro, rouge-et-noir, are the games. A large proportion of the players are diggers in shirt-sleeves and butcher-boots, belts round their waists for bowie knife and 'five shooters,' which have to be surrendered on admittance. They come with their bags of nuggets or 'dust,' which is duly weighed, stamped, and sealed by officials for the purpose.

I have still several specimens of the precious metal which I captured, varying in size from a grain of wheat to a mustard seed.

The tables win enormously, and so do the ladies of pleasure; but the winnings of these go back again to the tables. Four times, while we were here, differences of opinion arose concerning points of 'honour,' and were summarily decided by revolvers. Two of the four were subsequently referred to Judge 'Lynch.'

Wishing to see the 'diggings,' Fred and I went to Sacramento—about 150 miles up the river of that name. This was but a pocket edition of San Francisco, or scarcely that. We therefore moved to Marysville, which, from its vicinity to the various branches of the Sacramento river, was the chief depot for the miners of the 'wet diggin's' in Northern California. Here we were received by a Mr. Massett—a curious specimen of the waifs and strays that turn up all over the world in odd places, and whom one would be sure to find in the moon if ever one went there. He owned a little one-roomed cabin, over the door of which was painted 'Offices of the Marysville Herald.' He was his own contributor and 'correspondent,' editor and printer, (the press was in a corner of the room). Amongst other avocations he was a concert-giver, a comic reader, a tragic actor, and an auctioneer. He had the good temper and sanguine disposition of a Mark Tapley. After the golden days of California he spent his life wandering about the globe; giving ‘entertainments’ in China, Japan, India, Australia. Wherever the English language is spoken, Stephen Massett had many friends and no enemies.

Fred slept on the table, I under it, and next morning we hired horses and started for the ‘Forks of the Yuba.’ A few hours’ ride brought us to the gold-hunters. Two or three hundred men were at work upon what had formerly been the bed of the river. By unwritten law, each miner was entitled to a certain portion of the ‘bar,’ as it was called, in which the gold is found. And, as the precious metal has to be obtained by washing, the allotments were measured by thirty feet on the banks of the river and into the dry bed as far as this extends; thus giving each man his allowance of water. Generally three or four combined to possess a ‘claim.’ Each would then attend to his own department: one loosened the soil, another filled the barrow or cart, a third carried it to the river, and the fourth would wash it in the ‘rocker.’ The average weight of gold got by each miner while we were at the ‘wet diggin’s,’ *i.e.* where water had to be used, was nearly half an ounce or seven dollars’ worth a day. We saw three Englishmen who had bought a claim 30 feet by 100 feet, for 1,400 dollars. It had been bought and sold twice before for considerable sums, each party supposing it to be nearly ‘played out.’ In three weeks the Englishmen paid their 1,400 dollars and had cleared thirteen dollars a day apiece for their labour.

Our presence here created both curiosity and suspicion, for each gang and each individual was very shy of his neighbour. They did not believe our story of crossing the plains; they themselves, for the most part, had come round the Horn; a few across the isthmus. Then, if we didn’t want to dig, what did we want? Another peculiarity about us—a great one—was, that, so far as they could see, we were unarmed. At night the majority, all except the few who had huts, slept in a zinc house or sort of low-roofed barn, against the walls of which were three tiers of bunks. There was no room for us, even if we had wished it, but we managed to hire a trestle. Mattress or covering we had none. As Fred and I lay side by side, squeezed together in a trough scarcely big enough for one, we heard two fellows by the door of the shed talking us over. They thought no doubt that we were fast asleep, they themselves were slightly fuddled. We nudged each other and pricked up our ears, for we had already canvassed the question of security, surrounded as we were by ruffians who looked quite ready to dispose of babes in the wood. They discussed our ‘portable property’ which was nil; one decided, while the other believed, that we must have money in our pockets. The first remarked that, whether or no, we were unarmed; the other wasn’t so sure about that—it wasn’t likely we’d come there to be skinned for the asking. Then arose the question of consequences, and it transpired that neither of them had the courage of his rascality. After a bit, both agreed they had better turn in. Tired as we were, we fell asleep. How long we had slumbered I know not, but all of a sudden I was seized by the beard, and was conscious of a report which in my dreams I took for a pistol-shot. I found myself on the ground amid the wrecks of the trestle. Its joints had given way under the extra weight, and Fred’s first impulse had been to clutch at my throat.

On the way back to San Francisco we stayed for a couple of nights at Sacramento. It was a miserable place, with nothing but a few temporary buildings except those of the Spanish settlers. In the course of a walk round the town I noticed a crowd collected under a large elm-tree in the horse-market. On inquiry I was informed that a man had been lynched on one of its boughs the night before last. A piece of the rope was still hanging from the tree. When I got back to the ‘hotel’—a place not much better than the shed at Yuba Forks—I found a newspaper with an account of the affair. Drawing a chair up to the stove, I was deep in the story, when a huge rowdy-looking fellow in digger-costume interrupted me with:

‘Say, stranger, let’s have a look at that paper, will ye?’

‘When I’ve done with it,’ said I, and continued reading. He lent over the back of my chair, put one hand on my shoulder, and with the other raised the paper so that he could read.

‘Caint see rightly. Ah, reckon you’re readen ’baout Jim, ain’t yer?’

‘Who’s Jim?’

‘Him as they sus-spended yesterday mornin’. Jim was a purticler friend o’ mine, and I help’d to hang him.’

‘A friendly act! What was he hanged for?’

‘When did you come to Sacramenty City?’

‘Day before yesterday.’

‘Wal, I’ll tell yer haow’t was then. Yer see, Jim was a Britisher, he come from a place they call Botany Bay, which belongs to Victoria, but ain’t ’xactly in the Old Country. I judge, when he first come to Californy, ’baout six months back, he warn’t acquainted none with any boys hereaway, so he took to diggin’ by hisself. It was up to Cigar Bar whar he dug, and I chanst to be around there too, that’s haow we got to know one another. Jim hadn’t been here not a fortnight ’fore one of the boys lost 300 dollars as he’d made a cache of. Somehow suspicions fell on Jim. More’n one of us thought he’d been a diggin’ for bags instead of for dust; and the man as lost the money swore he’d hev a turn with him; so Jim took my advice not to go foolin’ around, an’ sloped.’

‘Well,’ said I, as my friend stopped to adjust his tobacco plug, ‘he wasn’t hanged for that?’

‘’Tain’t likely! Till last week nobody know’d whar he’d gone to. When he come to Sacramenty this time, he come with a pile, an’ no mistake. All day and all night he used to play at faro an’ a heap o’ other games. Nobody couldn’t tell how he made his money hold out, nor whar he got it from; but sartin sure the crowd reckoned as haow Jim was considerable of a loafer. One day a blacksmith as lives up Broad Street, said he found out the way he done it, and ast me to come with him and show up Jim for cheatin’. Naow, whether it was as Jim suspicioned the blacksmith I cain’t say, but he didn’t cheat, and lost his money in consequence. This riled him bad, so wantin’ to get quit of the blacksmith he began a quarrel. The blacksmith was a quick-tempered man, and after some language struck Jim in the mouth. Jim jumps up, and whippin’ out his revolver, shoots the t’other man dead on the spot. I was the first to lay hold on him, but ef it hadn’t ’a’ been for me they’d ’a’ torn him to pieces.

‘“Send for Judge Parker,” says some.

‘“Let’s try him here,” says others.

‘“I don’t want to be tried at all,” says Jim. “You all know bloody well as I shot the man. And I knows bloody well as I’ll hev to swing for it. Gi’ me till daylight, and I’ll die like a man.”

‘But we wasn’t going to hang him without a proper trial; and as the trial lasted two hours, it—’

‘Two hours! What did you want two hours for?’

‘There was some as wanted to lynch him, and some as wanted him tried by the reg’lar judges of the Crim’nal Court. One of the best speakers said lynch-law was no law at all, and no innocent man’s life was safe with it. So there was a lot of speakin’, you bet. By the time it was over it was just daylight, and the majority voted as he should die at onc’t. So they took him to the horse-market, and stood him on a table under the big elm. I kep’ by his side, and when he was getting on the table he ast me to lend him my revolver to shoot the foreman of the jury. When I wouldn’t, he ast me to tie the knot so as it wouldn’t slip. “It ain’t no account, Jim,” says I, “to talk like that. You’re bound to die; and ef they didn’t hang yer I’d shoot yer myself.”

‘“Well then,” says he, “gi’ me hold of the rope, and I’ll show you how little I keer for death.” He snatches the cord out o’ my hands, pulls hisself out o’ reach o’ the crowd, and sat cross-legged on the bough. Half a dozen shooters was raised to fetch him down, but he tied a noose in the rope, put it round his neck, slipped it puty tight, and stood up on the bough and made ’em a speech. What he mostly said was as he hated ’em all. He cussed the man he shot, then he cussed the world, then he cussed hisself, and with a terr’ble oath he jumped off the bough, and swung back’ards and for’ards with his neck broke.’

‘An Englishman,’ I reflected aloud.

He nodded. ‘You’re a Britisher, I reckon, ain’t yer?’

‘Yes; why?’

‘Wal, you’ve a puty strong accent.’

‘Think so?’

‘Wal, I could jest tie a knot in it.’

This is a vulgar and repulsive story. But it is not fiction; and any picture of Californian life in 1850, without some such faithful touch of its local colour, would be inadequate and misleading.

CHAPTER XXXII

A STEAMER took us down to Acapulco. It is probably a thriving port now. When we were there, a few native huts and two or three stone buildings at the edge of the jungle constituted the ‘town.’ We bought some horses, and hired two men—a Mexican and a Yankee—for our ride to the city of Mexico. There was at that time nothing but a mule-track, and no public conveyance of any kind. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the scenery. Within 160 miles, as the crow flies, one rises up to the city of Mexico some 12,000 feet, with Popocatepetl overhanging it 17,500 feet high. In this short space one passes from intense tropical heat and vegetation to pines and laurels and the proximity of perpetual snows. The path in places winds along the brink of precipitous declivities, from the top of which one sees the climatic gradations blending one into another. So narrow are some of the mountain paths that a mule laden with ore has often one panier overhanging the valley a thousand feet below it. Constantly in the long trains of animals descending to the coast, a slip of the foot or a charge from behind, for they all come down the steep track with a jolting shuffle, sends mule and its load over the ledge. We found it very difficult in places to get out of the way in time to let the trains pass. Flocks of parrots and great macaws screeching and flying about added to the novelty of the scene.

The villages, inhabited by a cross between the original Indians and the Spaniards, are about twenty miles apart. At one of these we always stayed for the night, sleeping in grass hammocks suspended between the posts of the verandah. The only travellers we fell in with were a party of four Americans, returning to the Eastern States from California with the gold they had won there. They had come in our steamer to Acapulco, and had left it a few hours before we did. As the villages were so far apart we necessarily had to stop at night in the same one. The second time this happened they, having arrived first, had quartered themselves on the Alcalde or principal personage of the place. Our guide took us to the same house; and although His Worship, who had a better supply of maize for the horses, and a few more chickens to sell than the other natives, was anxious to accommodate us, the four Americans, a very rough-looking lot and armed to the teeth, wouldn't hear of it, but peremptorily bade us put up elsewhere. Our own American, who was much afraid of them, obeyed their commands without more ado. It made not the slightest difference to us, for one grass hammock is as soft as another, and the Alcalde's chickens were as tough as ours.

Before the morning start, two of the diggers, rifles in hand, came over to us and plainly told us they objected to our company. Fred, with perfect good humour, assured them we had no thought of robbing them, and that as the villages were so far apart we had no choice in the matter. However, as they wished to travel separate from us, if there should be two villages at all within suitable distances, they could stop at one and we at the other. There the matter rested. But our guide was more frightened than ever. They were four to two, he argued, for neither he nor the Mexican were armed. And there was no saying, etc., etc. . . . In short we had better stay where we were till they got through. Fred laughed at the fellow's alarm, and told him he might stop if he liked, but we meant to go on.

As usual, when we reached the next stage, the diggers were before us; and when our men began to unsaddle at a hut about fifty yards from where they were feeding their horses, one of them, the biggest blackguard to look at of the lot, and though the fiercest probably the greatest cur, shouted at us to put the saddles on again and 'get out of that.' He had warned us in the morning that they'd had enough of us, and, with a volley of oaths, advised us to be off. Fred, who was in his shirt-sleeves, listened at first with a look of surprise at such cantankerous unreasonableness; but when the ruffian fell to swear and threaten, he burst into one of his contemptuous guffaws, turned his back and began to feed his horse with a corncob. Thus insulted, the digger ran into the hut (as I could see) to get his rifle. I snatched up my own, which I had been using every day to practise at the large iguanas and macaws, and, well protected by my horse, called out as I covered him, 'This is a double-barrelled rifle. If you raise yours I'll drop you where you stand.' He was forestalled and taken aback. Probably he meant nothing but bravado. Still, the situation was a critical one. Obviously I could not wait till he had shot my friend. But had it come to shooting there would have been three left, unless my second barrel had disposed of another. Fortunately the 'boss' of the digging party gauged the gravity of the crisis at a glance; and instead of backing him up as expected, swore at him for a 'derned fool,' and ordered him to have no more to do with us.

After that, as we drew near to the city, the country being more thickly populated, we no longer clashed.

This is not a guide-book, and I have nothing to tell of that readers would not find better described in their 'Murray.' We put up in an excellent hotel kept by M. Arago, the brother of the great French astronomer. The only other travellers in it besides ourselves were the famous dancer Cerito, and her husband the violin virtuoso, St. Leon. Luckily for me our English Minister was Mr. Percy Doyle, whom I had known as *attaché* at Paris when I was at Larue, and who was a great friend of the De Cubriers. We were thus provided with many advantages for 'sight-seeing' in and about the city, and also for more distant excursions through credentials from the Mexican authorities. Under these auspices we visited the silver mines at Guadalajara, Potosi, and Guanajuata.

The life in Mexico city was delightful, after a year's tramp. The hotel, as I have said, was to us luxurious. My room under the verandah opened on to a large and beautiful garden partially enclosed on two sides. As I lay in bed of a morning reading Prescott's 'History of Mexico,' or watching the brilliant humming birds as they darted from flower to flower, and listened to the gentle plash of the fountain, my cup of enjoyment and romance was brimming over.

Just before I left, an old friend of mine arrived from England. This was Mr. Joseph Clissold. He was a schoolfellow of mine at Sheen. He had pulled in the Cambridge boat, and played in the Cambridge eleven. He afterwards became a magistrate either in Australia or New Zealand. He was the best type of the good-natured, level-headed, hard-hitting Englishman. Curiously enough, as it turned out, the greater part of the only conversation we had (I was leaving the day after he came) was about the brigandage on the road between Mexico and Vera Cruz. He told me the passengers in the diligence which had brought him up had been warned at Jalapa that the road was infested by robbers; and should the coach be stopped they were on no account to offer resistance, for the robbers would certainly shoot them if they did.

Fred chose to ride down to the coast, I went by coach. This held six inside and two by the driver. Three of the inside passengers sat with backs to the horses, the others facing them. My coach was full, and stifling hot and stuffy it was before we had done with it. Of the five others two were fat priests, and for twenty hours my place was between them. But in one way I had my revenge: I carried my loaded rifle between my knees, and a pistol in my belt. The dismay, the terror, the panic, the protestations, the entreaties and execrations of all the five, kept us at least from *ennui* for many a weary mile. I doubt whether the two priests ever thumbed their breviaries so devoutly in their lives. Perhaps that brought us salvation. We reached Vera Cruz without adventure, and in the autumn of '51 Fred and I landed safely at Southampton.

Two months after I got back, I read an account in the 'Times' of 'Joe' Clissold's return trip from Mexico. The coach in which he was travelling was stopped by robbers. Friend Joseph was armed with a double-barrelled smooth-bore loaded with slugs. He considered this on the whole more suitable than a rifle. When the captain of the brigands opened the coach door and, pistol in hand, politely proffered his request, Mr. Joe was quite ready for him, and confided the contents of one barrel to the captain's bosom. Seeing the fate of their commander, and not knowing what else the dilly might contain, the rest of the band dug spurs into their horses and fled. But the sturdy oarsman and smart cricketer was too quick for one of them—the horse followed his friends, but the rider stayed with his chief.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The following winter, my friend, George Cayley, was ordered to the south for his health. He went to Seville. I joined him there; and we took lodgings and remained till the spring. As Cayley published an amusing account of our travels, 'Las Aforjas, or the Bridle Roads of Spain,' as this is more than fifty years ago—before the days of railways and tourists—and as I kept no journal of my own, I will make free use of his.

A few words will show the terms we were on.

I had landed at Cadiz, and had gone up the Guadalquivir in a steamer, whose advent at Seville my friend was on the look-out for. He describes his impatience for her arrival. By some mistake he is misinformed as to the time; he is a quarter of an hour late.

'A remnant of passengers yet bustled around the luggage, arguing, struggling and bargaining with a contentious company of porters. Alas! H. was not to be seen among them. There was still a chance; he might be one of the passengers who had got ashore before my coming down, and I was preparing to rush back to the city to ransack the hotels. Just then an internal convulsion shook the swarm around the luggage pile; out burst a little Gallego staggering under a huge British portmanteau, and followed by its much desired, and now almost despaired of, proprietor.

'I saw him come bowling up the slope with his familiar gait, evidently unconscious of my presence, and wearing that sturdy and almost hostile demeanour with which a true Briton marches into a strange city through the army of officious importunates who never fail to welcome the true Briton's arrival. As he passed the barrier he came close to me in the crowd, still without recognising me, for though straight before his nose I was dressed in the costume of the people. I touched his elbow and he turned upon me with a look of impatient defiance, thinking me one persecutor more.

'How quickly the expression changed, etc., etc. We rushed into each other's arms, as much as the many great coats slung over his shoulders, and the deep folds of cloak in which I was enveloped, would mutually permit. Then, saying more than a thousand things in a breath, or rather in no breath at all, we set off in great glee for my lodgings, forgetting in the excitement the poor little porter who was following at full trot, panting and puffing under the heavy portmanteau. We got home, but were no calmer. We dined, but could not eat. We talked, but the news could not be persuaded to come out quick enough.'

Who has not known what is here described? Who does not envy the freshness, the enthusiasm, of such bubbling of warm young hearts? Oh, the pity of it! if these generous emotions should prove as transient as youth itself. And then, when one of those young hearts is turned to dust, and one is left to think of it—why then, 'tis not much comfort to reflect that—nothing in the world is commoner.

We got a Spanish master and worked industriously, also picked up all the Andalusian we could, which is as much like pure Castilian as wold-Yorkshire is to English. I also took lessons on the guitar. Thus prepared, I imitated my friend and adopted the ordinary costume of the Andalusian peasant: breeches, ornamented with rows of silvered buttons, gaiters, a short jacket with a red flower-pot and blue lily on the back, and elbows with green and scarlet patterns, a red *faja* or sash, and the sombrero which I believe is worn nowhere except in the bull-ring. The whole of this picturesque dress is now, I think, given up. I have spent the last two winters in the south of Spain, but have not once seen it.

It must not be supposed that we chose this 'get-up' to gratify any æsthetic taste of our own or other people's; it was long before the days of the 'Too-toos,' whom Mr. Gilbert brought to a timely end. We had settled to ride through Spain from Gibraltar to Bayonne, choosing always the bridle-roads so as to avoid anything approaching a beaten track. We were to visit the principal cities and keep more or less a northerly course, staying on the way at such places as Malaga, Cordova, Toledo, Madrid, Valladolid, and Burgos. The rest was to be left to chance. We were to take no map; and when in doubt as to diverging roads, the toss of a coin was to settle it. This programme was conscientiously adhered to. The object of the dress then was obscurity. For safety (brigands abounded) and for economy, it was desirable to pass unnoticed. We never knew in what dirty *posada* or road-side *venta* we should spend the night. For the most part it was at the resting-place of the muleteers, which would be nothing but a roughly paved dark chamber, one end occupied by mules and the other by their drivers. We made our own omelets and salad and chocolate; with the exception of the never failing *bacallao*, or salt fish, we rarely had anything else; and rolling ourselves into our cloaks, with saddles for pillows, slept amongst the muleteers on the stone flags. We had bought a couple of ponies in the Seville market for 7*l.* and 8*l.* Our *alforjas* or saddlebags contained all we needed. Our portmanteaus were sent on from town to town, wherever we had arranged to stop. Rough as the life was, we saw the people of Spain as no ordinary travellers could hope to see them. The carriers, the shepherds, the publicans, the travelling merchants, the priests, the barbers, the *molineras* of Antequera, the Maritornes', the Sancho Panzas—all just as they were seen by the immortal knight.

From the *mozos de la cuadra* (ostlers) and *arrieros*, upwards and downwards, nowhere have I met, in the same class, with such natural politeness. This is much changed for the worse now; but before the invasion of tourists one never passed a man on the road who did not salute one with a 'Vaya usted con Dios.' Nor would the most indigent vagabond touch the filthy *bacallao* which he drew from his wallet till he had courteously addressed the stranger with the formula 'Quiere usted comer?' ('Will your Lordship please to eat?') The contrast between the people and the nobles in this respect was very marked. We saw something of the latter in the club at Seville, where one met men whose high-sounding names and titles have come down to us from the greatest epochs of Spanish history. Their ignorance was surprising. Not one of them had been farther than Madrid. Not one of them knew a word of any language but his own, nor was he acquainted with the rudiments even of his country's history. Their conversation was restricted to the bull-ring and the cockpit, to cards and women. Their chief aim seemed to be to stagger us with the number of quarterings they bore upon their escutcheons; and they appraised others by a like estimate.

Cayley, tickled with the humour of their childish vanity, painted an elaborate coat of arms, which he stuck in the crown of his hat, and by means of which he explained to them that he too was by rights a Spanish nobleman. With the utmost gravity he delivered some such medley as this: His Iberian origin dated back to the time of Hannibal, who, after his defeat of the Papal forces and capture of Rome, had, as they well knew, married Princess Peri Banou, youngest daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. The issue of the marriage was the famous Cardinal Chicot, from whom he—George Cayley—was of direct male descent. When Chicot was slain by Oliver Cromwell at the battle of Hastings, his descendants, foiled in their attempt to capture England with the Spanish Armada, settled in the principality of Yorkshire, adopted the noble name of Cayley, and still governed that province as members of the British Parliament.

From that day we were treated with every mark of distinction.

Here is another of my friend's pranks. I will let Cayley speak; for though I kept no journal, we had agreed to write a joint account of our trip, and our notebooks were common property.

After leaving Malaga we met some beggars on the road, to one of whom, 'an old hag with one eye and a grizzly beard,' I threw the immense sum of a couple of 2-cuarto pieces. An old man riding behind us on an ass with empty panniers, seeing fortunes being scattered about the road with such reckless and unbounded profusion, came up alongside, and entered into a piteous detail of his poverty. When he wound up with plain begging, the originality and boldness of the idea of a mounted beggar struck us in so humorous a light that we could not help laughing. As we rode along talking his case over, Cayley said, 'Suppose we rob him. He has sold his market produce in Malaga, and depend upon it, has a pocketful of money.' We waited for him to come up. When he got fairly between us, Cayley pulled out his revolver (we both carried pistols) and thus addressed him:

'Impudent old scoundrel! stand still. If thou stirr'st hand or foot, or openest thy mouth, I will slay thee like a dog. Thou greedy miscreant, who art evidently a man of property and hast an ass to ride upon, art not satisfied without trying to rob the truly poor of the alms we give them. Therefore hand over at once the two dollars for which thou hast sold thy cabbages for double what they were worth.'

The old culprit fell on his knees, and trembling violently, prayed Cayley for the love of the Virgin to spare him.

'One moment, *caballeros*,' he cried, 'I will give you all I possess. But I am poor, very poor, and I have a sick wife at the disposition of your worships.'

'Wherefore art thou fumbling at thy foot? Thou carriest not thy wife in thy shoe?'

'I cannot untie the string—my hand trembles; will your worships permit me to take out my knife?'

He did so, and cutting the carefully knotted thong of a leather bag which had been concealed in the leg of his stocking, poured out a handful of small coin and began to weep piteously.

Said Cayley, 'Come, come, none of that, or we shall feel it our duty to shoot thy donkey that thou may'st have something to whimper for.'

The genuine tears of the poor old fellow at last touched the heart of the jester.

'We know now that thou art poor,' said he, 'for we have taken all thou hadst. And as it is the religion of the Ingleses, founded on the practice of their celebrated saint, Robino Hoodo, to levy funds from the rich for the benefit of the needy, hold out thy sombero, and we will bestow a trifle upon thee.'

So saying he poured back the plunder; to which was added, to the astonishment of the receiver, some supplementary pieces that nearly equalled the original sum.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Before setting out from Seville we had had our Foreign Office passports duly *viséd*. Our profession was given as that of travelling artists, and the *visé* included the permission to carry arms. More than once the sight of our pistols caused us to be stopped by the *carabineros*. On one occasion these road-guards disputed the wording of the *visé*. They protested that 'armas' meant 'escopetas,' not pistols, which were forbidden. Cayley indignantly retorted, 'Nothing is forbidden to Englishmen. Besides, it is specified in our passports that we are 'personas de toda confianza,' which checkmated them.

We both sketched, and passed ourselves off as 'retratistas' (portrait painters), and did a small business in this way—rather in the shape of caricatures, I fear, but which gave much satisfaction. We charged one peseta (seven-pence), or two, a head, according to the means of the sitter. The fiction that we were earning our bread wholesomely tended to moderate the charge for it.

Passing through the land of Don Quixote's exploits, we reverentially visited any known spot which these had rendered famous. Amongst such was the *venta* of Quesada, from which, or from Quixada, as some conjecture, the knight derived his surname. It was here, attracted by its castellated style, and by two 'ladies of pleasure' at its door—whose virginity he at once offered to defend, that he spent the night of his first sally. It was here that, in his shirt, he kept guard till morning over the armour he had laid by the well. It was here that, with his spear, he broke the head of the carrier whom he took for another knight bent on the rape of the virgin princesses committed to his charge. Here, too, it was that the host of the *venta* dubbed him with the coveted knighthood which qualified him for his noble deeds.

To Quesada we wended our way. We asked the Señor Huesped whether he knew anything of the history of his *venta*. Was it not very ancient?

'Oh no, it was quite modern. But on the site of it had stood a fine *venta* which was burnt down at the time of the war.'

'An old building?'

'Yes, indeed! *a cosa de siempre*—thing of always. Nothing, was left of it now but that well, and the stone trough.'

These bore marks of antiquity, and were doubtless as the gallant knight had left them. Curiously, too, there were remains of an outhouse with a crenellated parapet, suggestive enough of a castle.

From Quesada we rode to Argamasilla del Alba, where Cervantes was imprisoned, and where the First Part of Don Quixote was written.

In his Life of Cervantes, Don Gregorio Mayano throws some doubt upon this. Speaking of the attacks of his contemporary, the 'Aragonian,' Don Gregorio writes (I give Ozell's translation): 'As for this scandalous fellow's saying that Cervantes wrote his First Part of "Don Quixote" in a prison, and that that might make it so dull and incorrect, Cervantes did not think fit to give any answer concerning his being imprisoned, perhaps to avoid giving offence to the ministers of justice; for certainly his imprisonment must not have been ignominious, since Cervantes himself voluntarily mentions it in his Preface to the First Part of "Don Quixote."'

This reasoning, however, does not seem conclusive; for the only reference to the subject in the preface is as follows: 'What could my sterile and uncultivated genius produce but the history of a child, meagre, adust, and whimsical, full of various wild imaginations never thought of before; like one you may suppose born in a prison, where every inconvenience keeps its residence, and every dismal sound its habitation?'

We took up our quarters in the little town at the 'Posada de la Mina.' While our *olla* was being prepared; we asked the hostess whether she had ever heard of the celebrated Don Miguel de Cervantes, who had been imprisoned there? (I will quote Cayley).

'No, Señores; I think I have heard of one Cervantes, but he does not live here at present.'

'Do you know anything of Don Quixote?'

'Oh, yes. He was a great *caballero*, who lived here some years ago. His house is over the way, on the other side of the *plaza*, with the arms over the door. The father of the Alcalde is the oldest man in the *pueblo*; perhaps he may remember him.'

We were amused at his hero's fame outliving that of the author. But is it not so with others—the writers of the Book of Job, of the Pentateuch, and perhaps, too, of the 'Iliad,' if not of the 'Odyssey'?

But, to let Cayley speak:

‘While we were undressing to go to bed, three gentlemen were announced and shown in. We begged them to be seated. . . . We sat opposite on the ends of our respective beds to hear what they might have to communicate. A venerable old man opened the conference.

‘“We have understood, gentlemen, that you have come hither seeking for information respecting the famous Don Quixote, and we have come to give you such information as we may; but, perhaps you will understand me better if I speak in Latin.”

‘“We have learnt the Latin at our schools, but are more accustomed to converse in Castilian; pray proceed.”

‘“I am the Medico of the place, an old man, as you see; and what little I know has reached me by tradition. It is reported that Cervantes was paying his addresses to a young lady, whose name was Quijana or Quijada. The Alcalde, disapproving of the suit, put him into a dungeon under his house, and kept him there a year. Once he escaped and fled, but he was taken in Toboso, and brought back. Cervantes wrote ‘Don Quixote’ as a satire on the Alcalde, who was a very proud man, full of chivalresque ideas. You can see the dungeon to-morrow; but you should see the *batanes* (water-mills) of the Guadiana, whose ‘golpear’ so terrified Sancho Panza. They are at about three leagues distance.”’

The old gentleman added that he was proud to receive strangers who came to do honour to the memory of his illustrious townsman; and hoped we would visit him next day, on our return from the fulling-mills, when he would have the pleasure of conducting us to the house of the Quijanas, in the cellars of which Cervantes was confined.

To the *batanes* we went next morning. Their historical importance entitles them to an accurate description. None could be more lucid than that of my companion. ‘These clumsy, ancient machines are composed of a couple of huge wooden mallets, slung in a timber framework, which, being pushed out of the perpendicular by knobs on a water-wheel, clash back again alternately in two troughs, pounding severely whatever may be put in between the face of the mallet and the end of the trough into which the water runs.’

It will be remembered that, after a copious meal, Sancho having neglected to replenish the gourd, both he and his master suffered greatly from thirst. It was now ‘so dark,’ says the history, ‘that they could see nothing; but they had not gone two hundred paces when a great noise of water reached their ears. . . . The sound rejoiced them exceedingly; and, stopping to listen from whence it came, they heard on a sudden another dreadful noise, which abated their pleasure occasioned by that of the water, especially Sancho’s. . . . They heard a dreadful din of irons and chains rattling across one another, and giving mighty strokes in time and measure which, together with the furious noise of the water, would have struck terror into any other heart than that of Don Quixote.’ For him it was but an opportunity for some valorous achievement. So, having braced on his buckler and mounted Rosinante, he brandished his spear, and explained to his trembling squire that by the will of Heaven he was reserved for deeds which would obliterate the memory of the Platirs, Tablantes, the Olivantes, and Belianesas, with the whole tribe of the famous knights-errant of times past.

‘Wherefore, straighten Rosinante’s girths a little,’ said he, ‘and God be with you. Stay for me here three days, and no more; if I do not return in that time you may go to Toboso, where you shall say to my incomparable Lady Dulcinea that her enthralled knight died in attempting things that might have made him worthy to be styled “hers.”’

Sancho, more terrified than ever at the thoughts of being left alone, reminded his master that it was unwise to tempt God by undertaking exploits from which there was no escaping but by a miracle; and, in order to emphasize this very sensible remark, secretly tied Rosinante’s hind legs together with his halter. Seeing the success of his contrivance, he said: ‘Ah, sir! behold how Heaven, moved by my tears and prayers, has ordained that Rosinante cannot go,’ and then warned him not to set Providence at defiance. Still Sancho was much too frightened by the infernal clatter to relax his hold of the knight’s saddle. For some time he strove to beguile his own fears with a very long story about the goatherd Lope Ruiz, who was in love with the shepherdess Torralva—‘a jolly, strapping wench, a little scornful, and somewhat masculine.’ Now, whether owing to the cold of the morning, which was at hand, or whether to some lenitive diet on which he had supped, it so befell that Sancho . . . what nobody could do for him. The truth is, the honest fellow was overcome by panic, and under no circumstances would, or did, he for one instant leave his master’s side. Nay, when the knight spurred his steed and found it could not move, Sancho reminded him that the attempt was useless, since Rosinante was restrained by enchantment. This the knight readily admitted, but stoutly protested that he himself was anything but enchanted by the close proximity of his squire.

We all remember the grave admonitions of Don Quixote, and the ingenious endeavours of Sancho to lay the blame upon the knight. But the final words of the Don contain a moral apposite to so many other important situations, that they must not be omitted here. ‘Apostare, replicó Sancho, que pensa vuestra merced que yo he hecho de mi persona alguna cosa que no deba.’ ‘I will lay a wager,’ replied Sancho, ‘that your worship thinks that I have &c.’ The brief, but memorable, answer was: ‘Peor es meneallo, amigo Sancho,’ which, as no translation could do justice to it, must be left as it stands. *Quieta non movere*.

We were nearly meeting with an adventure here. While I was busy making a careful drawing of the *batanes*, Cayley’s pony was as much alarmed by the rushing waters as had been Sancho

Panza. In his endeavours to picket the animal, my friend dropped a pistol which I had lent him to practise with, although he carried a revolver of his own. Not till he had tied up the pony at some little distance did he discover the loss. In vain he searched the spot where he knew the pistol must have escaped from his *faja*. Near it, three rough-looking knaves in shaggy goatskin garments, with guns over their shoulders, were watching the progress of my sketch. On his return Cayley asked two of these (the third moved away as he came up) whether they had seen the pistol. They declared they had not; upon which he said he must search them. He was not a man to be trifled with, and although they refused at first, they presently submitted. He then overtook the third, and at once accused him of the theft. The man swore he knew nothing of the lost weapon, and brought his gun to the charge. As he did so, Cayley caught sight of the pistol under the fellow's sheepskin jacket, and with characteristic promptitude seized it, while he presented a revolver at the thief's head. All this he told me with great glee a minute or two later.

When we got back to Argamasilla the Medico was already awaiting us. He conducted us to the house of the Quijanas, where an old woman-servant, lamp in hand, showed the way down a flight of steps into the dungeon. It was a low vaulted chamber, eight feet high, ten broad, and twenty-four long, dimly lighted by a lancet window six feet from the ground. She confidently informed us that Cervantes was in the habit of writing at the farthest end, and that he was allowed a lamp for the purpose. We accepted the information with implicit faith; silently picturing on our mental retinas the image of him whose genius had brightened the dark hours of millions for over three hundred years. One could see the spare form of the man of action pacing up and down his cell, unconscious of prison walls, roaming in spirit through the boundless realms of Fancy, his piercing eyes intent upon the conjured visions of his brain. One noted his vast expanse of brow, his short, crisp, curly hair, his high cheek-bones and singularly high-bridged nose, his refined mouth, small projecting chin and pointed beard. One noticed, too, as he turned, the stump of the left wrist clasped by the remaining hand. Who could stand in such a presence and fail to bow with veneration before this insulted greatness! Potentates pass like Ozymandias, but not the men who, through the ages, help to save us from this tread-mill world, and from ourselves.

We visited Cuenca, Segovia, and many an out-of-the-way spot. If it be true, as Don Quixote declares, that 'No hay libro tan malo que no tenga alguna cosa buena' ('there is no book so worthless that has not some good in it'), still more true is this of a country like Spain. And the pleasantest places are just those which only by-roads lead to. In and near the towns every other man, if not by profession still by practice, is a beggar. From the seedy-looking rascal in the street, of whom you incautiously ask the way, and who piteously whines 'para zapatos'—for the wear and tear of shoe leather, to the highest official, one and all hold out their hands for the copper *cuarto* or the eleemosynary sinecure. As it was then, so is it now; the Government wants support, and it is always to be had, at a price; deputies always want 'places.' For every duty the functionary performs, or ought to perform, he receives his bribe. The Government is too poor to keep him honest, but his *pour-boires* are not measured by his scruples. All is winked at, if the Ministry secures a vote.

Away in the pretty rural districts, in the little villages amid the woods and the mountains, with their score or so of houses and their little chapel with its tinkling old bell and its poverty-stricken curate, the hard-working, simple-minded men are too proud and too honest to ask for more than a pinch of tobacco for the *cigarillo*. The maidens are comely, and as chaste as—can reasonably be expected.

Madrid is worth visiting—not for its bull-fights, which are disgusting proofs of man's natural brutality, but for its picture gallery. No one knows what Velasquez could do, or has done, till he has seen Madrid; and Charles V. was practically master of Europe when the collection was in his hands. The Escurial's chief interests are in its associations with Charles V. and Philip II. In the dark and gloomy little bedroom of the latter is a small window opening into the church, so that the King could attend the services in bed if necessary.

It cannot be said of Philip that he was nothing if not religious, for Nero even was not a more indefatigable murderer, nor a more diabolical specimen of cruelty and superstition. The very thought of the wretch tempts one to revolt at human piety, at any rate where priestcraft and its fabrications are at the bottom of it.

When at Madrid we met Mr. Arthur Birch. He had been with Cayley at Eton, as captain of the school. While we were together, he received and accepted the offer of an Eton mastership. We were going by diligence to Toledo, and Birch agreed to go with us. I mention the fact because the place reminds me of a clever play upon its name by the Eton scholar. Cayley bought a Toledo sword-blade, and asked Birch for a motto to engrave upon it. In a minute or two he hit off this: TIMETOLETUM, which reads Time Toletum=Honour Toledo, or Timeto Letum=Fear death. Cayley's attempts, though not so neat, were not bad. Here are a couple of them:—

> Though slight I am, no slight I stand,
> Saying my master's sleight of hand.

or:—

> Come to the point; unless you do,
> The point will shortly come to you.

Birch got the Latin poem medal at Cambridge the same year that Cayley got the English one.

Before we set forth again upon our gipsy tramp, I received a letter from Mr. Ellice bidding me hasten home to contest the Borough of Cricklade in the General Election of 1852. Under these circumstances we loitered but little on the Northern roads. At the end of May we reached Yrun. Here we sold our ponies—now quite worn out—for twenty-three dollars—about five guineas. So that a thousand miles of locomotion had cost us a little over five guineas apiece. Not counting hotels at Madrid and such smart places, our daily cost for selves and ponies rarely exceeded six pesetas, or three shillings each all told. The best of it was, the trip restored the health of my friend.

CHAPTER XXXV

In February of this year, 1852, Lord Palmerston, aided by an incongruous force of Peelites and Protectionists, turned Lord John Russell out of office on his Militia Bill. Lord Derby, with Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, came into power on a cry for Protection.

Not long after my return to England, I was packed off to canvas the borough of Cricklade. It was then a very extensive borough, including a large agricultural district, as well as Swindon, the headquarters of the Great Western Railway. For many years it had returned two Conservative members, Messrs. Nield and Goddard. It was looked upon as an impregnable Tory stronghold, and the fight was little better than a forlorn hope.

My headquarters were at Coleshill, Lord Radnor’s. The old lord had, in his Parliamentary days, been a Radical; hence, my advanced opinions found great favour in his eyes. My programme was—Free Trade, Vote by Ballot, and Disestablishment. Two of these have become common-places (one perhaps effete), and the third is nearer to accomplishment than it was then.

My first acquaintance with a constituency, amongst whom I worked enthusiastically for six weeks, was comic enough. My instructions were to go to Swindon; there an agent, whom I had never seen, would join me. A meeting of my supporters had been arranged by him, and I was to make my maiden speech in the market-place.

My address, it should be stated—ultra-Radical, of course—was mainly concocted for me by Mr. Cayley, an almost rabid Tory, and then member for the North Riding of Yorkshire, but an old Parliamentary hand; and, in consequence of my attachment to his son, at that time and until his death, like a father to me.

When the train stopped at Swindon, there was a crowd of passengers, but not a face that I knew; and it was not till all but one or two had left, that a business-looking man came up and asked if I were the candidate for Cricklade. He told me that a carriage was in attendance to take us up to the town; and that a procession, headed by a band, was ready to accompany us thither. The procession was formed mainly of the Great Western boiler-makers and artisans. Their enthusiasm seemed slightly disproportioned to the occasion; and the vigour of the brass, and especially of the big drum, so filled my head with visions of Mr. Pickwick and his friend the Honourable Samuel Slumkey, that by the time I reached the market-place, I had forgotten every syllable of the speech which I had carefully learnt by heart. Nor was it the band alone that upset me; going up the hill the carriage was all but capsized by the frightened horses and the breaking of the pole. The gallant boiler-makers, however, at once removed the horses, and dragged the carriage with cheers of defiance into the crowd awaiting us.

My agent had settled that I was to speak from a window of the hotel. The only available one was an upper window, the lower sash of which could not be persuaded to keep up without being held. The consequence was, just as I was getting over the embarrassment of extemporary oration, down came the sash and guillotined me. This put the crowd in the best of humours; they roared with laughter, and after that we got on capitally together.

A still more inopportune accident happened to me later in the day, when speaking at Shrivenham. A large yard enclosed by buildings was chosen for the meeting. The difficulty was to elevate the speaker above the heads of the assembly. In one corner of the yard was a water-butt. An ingenious elector got a board, placed it on the top of the butt—which was full of water—and persuaded me to make this my rostrum. Here, again, in the midst of my harangue—perhaps I stamped to emphasize my horror of small loaves and other Tory abominations—the board gave way; and I narrowly escaped a ducking by leaping into the arms of a ‘supporter.’

The end of it all was that my agent at the last moment threw up the sponge. The farmers formed a serried phalanx against Free Trade; it was useless to incur the expense of a poll. Then came the bill. It was a heavy one; for in addition to my London agent—a professional electioneering functionary—were the local agents at towns like Malmesbury, Wootton Bassett, Shrivenham, &c., &c. My eldest brother, who was a soberer-minded politician than I, although very liberal to me in other ways, declined to support my political opinions. I myself was quite unable to pay the costs. Knowing this, Lord Radnor called me into his study as I was leaving Coleshill, and expressed himself warmly with respect to my labours; regretting the victory of the other side, he declared that, as the question of Protection would be disposed of, one of the two seats would be safe upon a future contest.

‘And who,’ asked the old gentleman, with a benevolent grin on his face, ‘who is going to pay your expenses?’

‘Goodness knows, sir,’ said I; ‘I hope they won’t come down upon me. I haven’t a thousand pounds in the world, unless I tap my fortune.’

‘Well,’ said his Lordship, with a chuckle, ‘I haven’t paid my subscription to Brooks’s yet, so I’ll hand it over to you,’ and he gave me a cheque for £500.

The balance was obtained through Mr. Ellice from the patronage Secretary to the Treasury. At the next election, as Lord Radnor predicted, Lord Ashley, Lord Shaftesbury’s eldest son, won one of the two seats for the Liberals with the greatest ease.

As Coleshill was an open house to me from that time as long as Lord Radnor lived, I cannot take leave of the dear old man without an affectionate word at parting. Creevey has an ill-natured fling at him, as he has at everybody else, but a kinder-hearted and more perfect gentleman would be difficult to meet with. His personality was a marked one. He was a little man, with very plain features, a punch-like nose, an extensive mouth, and hardly a hair on his head. But in spite of these peculiarities, his face was pleasant to look at, for it was invariably animated by a sweet smile, a touch of humour, and a decided air of dignity. Born in 1779, he dressed after the orthodox Whig fashion of his youth, in buff and blue, his long-tailed coat reaching almost to his heels. His manner was a model of courtesy and simplicity. He used antiquated expressions: called London ‘Lunnun,’ Rome ‘Room,’ a balcony a ‘balcöny’; he always spoke of the clergyman as the ‘pearson,’ and called his daughter Lady Mary, ‘Meary.’ Instead of saying ‘this day week’ he would say this day sen’nit’ (for sen’night).

The independence of his character was very noticeable. As an instance: A party of twenty people, say, would be invited for a given day. Abundance of carriages would be sent to meet the trains, so that all the guests would arrive in ample time for dinner. It generally happened that some of them, not knowing the habits of the house, or some duchess or great lady who might assume that clocks were made for her and not she for clocks, would not appear in the drawing-room till a quarter of an hour after the dinner gong had sounded. If anyone did so, he or she would find that everybody else had got through soup and fish. If no one but Lady Mary had been down when dinner was announced, his Lordship would have offered his arm to his daughter, and have taken his seat at the table alone. After the first night, no one was ever late. In the morning he read prayers to the household before breakfast with the same precise punctuality.

Lady Mary Bouverie, his unmarried daughter, was the very best of hostesses. The house under her management was the perfection of comfort. She married an old and dear friend of mine, Sir James Wilde, afterwards the Judge, Lord Penzance. I was his ‘best man.’

My ‘Ride over the Rocky Mountains’ was now published; and, as the field was a new one, the writer was rewarded, for a few weeks, with invitations to dinner, and the usual tickets for ‘drums’ and dances. To my astonishment, or rather to my alarm, I received a letter from the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society (Charles Fox, or perhaps Sir George Simpson had, I think, proposed me—I never knew), to say that I had been elected a member. Nothing was further from my ambition. The very thought shrivelled me with a sense of ignorance and insignificance. I pictured to myself an assembly of old fogies crammed with all the ‘ologies. I broke into a cold perspiration when I fancied myself called upon to deliver a lecture on the comparative sea-bottomy of the Oceanic globe, or give my theory of the simultaneous sighting by ‘little Billee’ of ‘Madagascar, and North, and South Amerikee.’ Honestly, I had not the courage to accept; and, young Jackanapes as I was, left the Secretary’s letter unanswered.

But a still greater honour—perhaps the greatest compliment I ever had paid me—was to come. I had lodgings at this time in an old house, long since pulled down, in York Street. One day, when I was practising the fiddle, who should walk into my den but Rogers the poet! He had never seen me in his life. He was in his ninetieth year, and he had climbed the stairs to the first floor to ask me to one of his breakfast parties. To say nothing of Rogers’ fame, his wealth, his position in society, those who know what his cynicism and his worldliness were, will understand what such an effort, physical and moral, must have cost him. He always looked like a death’s head, but his ghastly pallor, after that Alpine ascent, made me feel as if he had come—to stay.

These breakfasts were entertainments of no ordinary distinction. The host himself was of greater interest than the most eminent of his guests. All but he, were more or less one’s contemporaries: Rogers, if not quite as dead as he looked, was ancient history. He was old enough to have been the father of Byron, of Shelley, of Keats, and of Moore. He was several years older than Scott, or Wordsworth, or Coleridge, and only four years younger than Pitt. He had known all these men, and could, and did, talk as no other could talk, of all of them. Amongst those whom I met at these breakfasts were Cornewall Lewis, Delane, the Grotes, Macaulay, Mrs. Norton, Monckton Milnes, William Harcourt (the only one younger than myself), but just beginning to be known, and others of scarcely less note.

During the breakfast itself, Rogers, though seated at table in an armchair, took no part either in the repast or in the conversation; he seemed to sleep until the meal was over. His servant would then place a cup of coffee before him, and, like a Laputian flapper, touch him gently on the shoulder. He would at once begin to talk, while others listened. The first time I witnessed this curious resurrection, I whispered something to my neighbour, at which he laughed. The old man’s eye was too sharp for us.

‘You are laughing at me,’ said he; ‘I dare say you young gentlemen think me an old fellow; but there are younger than I who are older. You should see Tommy Moore. I asked him to breakfast, but he’s too weak—weak here, sir,’ and he tapped his forehead. ‘I’m not that.’ (This was the year that Moore died.) He certainly was not; but his whole discourse was of the past. It was as though he would not condescend to discuss events or men of the day. What were either to the days and men that he had known—French revolutions, battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, a Nelson and a Buonaparte, a Pitt, a Burke, a Fox, a Johnson, a Gibbon, a Sheridan, and all the men of letters and all the poets of a century gone by? Even Macaulay had for once to hold his tongue; and could only smile impatiently at what perhaps he thought an old man’s astonishing garrulity. But if a young and pretty woman talked to him, it was not his great age that he vaunted, nor yet the ‘pleasures of memory’—one envied the adroitness of his flattery, and the gracefulness of his repartee.

My friend George Cayley had a couple of dingy little rooms between Parliament Street and the river. Much of my time was spent there with him. One night after dinner, quite late, we were building castles amidst tobacco clouds, when, following a ‘May I come in?’ Tennyson made his appearance. This was the first time I had ever met him. We gave him the only armchair in the room; and pulling out his dudeen and placing afoot on each side of the hob of the old-fashioned little grate, he made himself comfortable before he said another word. He then began to talk of pipes and tobacco. And never, I should say, did this important topic afford so much ingenious conversation before. We discussed the relative merits of all the tobaccos in the world—of moist tobacco and dry tobacco, of old tobacco and new tobacco, of clay pipes and wooden pipes and meerschaum pipes. What was the best way to colour them, the advantages of colouring them, the beauty of the ‘culotte,’ the coolness it gave to the smoke, &c. We listened to the venerable sage—he was then forty-three and we only five or six and twenty—as we should have listened to a Homer or an Aristotle, and he thoroughly enjoyed our appreciation of his jokes.

Some of them would have startled such of his admirers who knew him only by his poems; for his stories were anything but poetical—rather humorous one might say, on the whole. Here’s one of them: he had called last week on the Duchess of Sutherland at Stafford House. Her two daughters were with her, the Duchess of Argyll and the beautiful Lady Constance Grosvenor, afterwards Duchess of Westminster. They happened to be in the garden. After strolling about for a while, the Mama Duchess begged him to recite some of his poetry. He chose ‘Come into the garden, Maud’—always a favourite of the poet’s, and, as may be supposed, many were the fervid exclamations of ‘How beautiful!’ When they came into the house, a princely groom of the chambers caught his eye and his ear, and, pointing to his own throat, courteously whispered: ‘Your dress is not quite as you would wish it, sir.’

‘I had come out without a necktie; and there I was, spouting my lines to the three Graces, as *décolleté* as a strutting turkey cock.’

The only other allusion to poetry or literature that night was a story I told him of a Mr. Thomas Wrightson, a Yorkshire banker, and a fanatical Swedenborgian. Tommy Wrightson, who was one of the most amiable and benevolent of men, spent his life in making a manuscript transcript of Swedenborg’s works. His writing was a marvel of calligraphic art; he himself, a curiosity. Swedenborg was for him an avatar; but if he had doubted of Tennyson’s ultimate apotheosis, I think he would have elected to seek him in ‘the other place.’ Anyhow, Mr. Wrightson avowed to me that he repeated ‘Locksley Hall’ every morning of his life before breakfast. This I told Tennyson. His answer was a grunt; and in a voice from his boots, ‘Ugh! enough to make a dog sick!’ I did my utmost to console him with the assurance that, to the best of my belief, Mr. Wrightson had once fallen through a skylight.

As illustrating the characters of the admired and his admirer, it may be related that the latter, wishing for the poet’s sign-manual, wrote and asked him for it. He addressed Tennyson, whom he had never seen, as ‘My dear Alfred.’ The reply, which he showed to me, was addressed ‘My dear Tom.’

CHAPTER XXXVI

My stepfather, Mr. Ellice, having been in two Ministries—Lord Grey’s in 1830, and Lord Melbourne’s in 1834—had necessarily a large parliamentary acquaintance; and as I could always dine at his house in Arlington Street when I pleased, I had constant opportunities of meeting most of the prominent Whig politicians, and many other eminent men of the day. One of the dinner parties remains fresh in my memory—not because of the distinguished men who happened to be there, but because of the statesman whose name has since become so familiar to the world.

Some important question was before the House in which Mr. Ellice was interested, and upon which he intended to speak. This made him late for dinner, but he had sent word that his son was to take his place, and the guests were not to wait. When he came Lord John Russell greeted him with—

‘Well, Ellice, who’s up?’

‘A younger son of Salisbury’s,’ was the reply; ‘Robert Cecil, making his maiden speech. If I hadn’t been in a hurry I should have stopped to listen to him. Unless I am very much mistaken, he’ll make his mark, and we shall hear more of him.’

There were others dining there that night whom it is interesting to recall. The Grotes were there. Mrs. Grote, scarcely less remarkable than her husband; Lord Mahon, another historian (who married a niece of Mr. Ellice’s), Lord Brougham, and two curious old men both remarkable, if for nothing else, for their great age. One was George Byng, father of the first Lord Strafford, and ‘father’ of the House of Commons; the other Sir Robert Adair, who was Ambassador at Constantinople when Byron was there. Old Mr. Byng looked as aged as he was, and reminded one of Mr. Smallweed doubled up in his porter’s chair. Quite different was his compeer. We were standing in the recess of the drawing-room window after dinner when Sir Robert said to me:

‘Very shaky, isn’t he! Ah! he was my fag at Eton, and I’ve got the best of it still.’

Brougham having been twice in the same Government with Mr. Ellice, and being devoted to young Mrs. Edward Ellice, his charming daughter-in-law, was a constant visitor at 18 Arlington Street. Mrs. Ellice often told me of his peculiarities, which must evidently have been known to others. Walter Bagehot, speaking of him, says:

‘Singular stories of eccentricity and excitement, even of something more than either of these, darken these latter years.’

What Mrs. Ellice told me was, that she had to keep a sharp watch on Lord Brougham if he sat near her writing-table while he talked to her; for if there was any pretty little knick-knack within his reach he would, if her head were turned, slip it into his pocket. The truth is perhaps better than the dark hint, for certainly we all laughed at it as nothing but eccentricity.

But the man who interested me most (for though when in the Navy I had heard a hundred legends of his exploits, I had never seen him before) was Lord Dundonald. Mr. Ellice presented me to him, and the old hero asked why I had left the Navy.

‘The finest service in the world; and likely, begad, to have something to do before long.’

This was only a year before the Crimean war. With his strong rough features and tousled mane, he looked like a grey lion. One expected to see him pick his teeth with a pocket boarding-pike.

The thought of the old sailor always brings before me the often mooted question raised by the sentimentalists and humanitarians concerning the horrors of war. Not long after this time, the papers—the sentimentalist papers—were furious with Lord Dundonald for suggesting the adoption by the Navy of a torpedo which he himself, I think, had invented. The bare idea of such wholesale slaughter was revolting to a Christian world. He probably did not see much difference between sinking a ship with a torpedo, and firing a shell into her magazine; and likely enough had as much respect for the opinions of the woman-man as he had for the man-woman.

There is always a large number of people in the world who suffer from emotional sensitiveness and susceptibility to nervous shocks of all kinds. It is curious to observe the different and apparently unallied forms in which these characteristics manifest themselves. With some, they exhibit extreme repugnance to the infliction of physical pain for whatever end; with others there seems to be a morbid dread of violated pudicity. Strangely enough the two phases are frequently associated in the same individual. Both tendencies are eminently feminine; the affinity lies in a hysterical nature. Thus, excessive pietism is a frequent concomitant of excessive sexual passion; this, though notably the case with women, is common enough with men of unduly neurotic temperaments.

Only the other day some letters appeared in the ‘Times’ about the flogging of boys in the Navy. And, as a sentimental argument against it, we were told by the Humanitarian Leaguers that it is ‘obscene.’ This is just what might be expected, and bears out the foregoing remarks. But such saintly simplicity reminds us of the kind of squeamishness of which our old acquaintance Mephisto observes:

> Man darf das nicht vor keuschen Ohren nennen,
> Was keusche Herzen nicht entbehren können.
>
> (Chaste ears find nothing but the devil in
> What nicest fancies love to revel in.)

The same astute critic might have added:

> And eyes demure that look away when seen,
> Lose ne’er a chance to peep behind the screen.

It is all of a piece. We have heard of the parlour-maid who fainted because the dining-table had ‘ceder legs,’ but never before that a ‘switching’ was ‘obscene.’ We do not envy the unwholesomeness of a mind so watchful for obscenity.

Be that as it may, so far as humanity is concerned, this hypersensitive effeminacy has but a noxious influence; and all the more for the twofold reason that it is sometimes sincere, though more often mere cant and hypocrisy. At the best, it is a perversion of the truth; for emotion combined with ignorance, as it is in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, is a serious obstacle in the path of rational judgment.

Is sentimentalism on the increase? It seems to be so, if we are to judge by a certain portion of the Press, and by speeches in Parliament. But then, this may only mean that the propensity finds easier means of expression than it did in the days of dearer paper and fewer newspapers, and also that speakers find sentimental humanity an inexhaustible fund for political capital. The excess of emotional attributes in man over his reasoning powers must, one would think, have been at least as great in times past as it is now. Yet it is doubtful whether it showed itself then so conspicuously as it does at present. Compare the Elizabethan age with our own. What would be said now of the piratical deeds of such men as Frobisher, Raleigh, Gilbert, and Richard Greville? Suppose Lord Roberts had sent word to President Kruger that if four English soldiers, imprisoned at Pretoria, were molested, he would execute 2,000 Boers and send him their heads? The clap-trap cry of ‘Barbaric Methods’ would have gone forth to some purpose; it would have carried every constituency in the country. Yet this is what Drake did when four English sailors were captured by the Spaniards, and imprisoned by the Spanish Viceroy in Mexico.

Take the Elizabethan drama, and compare it with ours. What should we think of our best dramatist if, in one of his tragedies, a man’s eyes were plucked out on the stage, and if he that did it exclaimed as he trampled on them, ‘Out, vile jelly! where is thy lustre now?’ or of a Titus Andronicus cutting two throats, while his daughter ‘’tween her stumps doth hold a basin to receive their blood’?

‘Humanity,’ says Taine, speaking of these times, ‘is as much lacking as decency. Blood, suffering, does not move them.’

Heaven forbid that we should return to such brutality! I cite these passages merely to show how times are changed; and to suggest that with the change there is a decided loss of manliness. Are men more virtuous, do they love honour more, are they more chivalrous, than the Miltons, the Lovelaces, the Sidneys of the past? Are the women chaster or more gentle? No; there is more puritanism, but not more true piety. It is only the outside of the cup and the platter that are made clean, the inward part is just as full of wickedness, and all the worse for its hysterical fastidiousness.

To what do we owe this tendency? Are we degenerating morally as well as physically? Consider the physical side of the question. Fifty years ago the standard height for admission to the army was five feet six inches. It is now lowered to five feet. Within the last ten years the increase in the urban population has been nearly three and a half millions. Within the same period the increase in the rural population is less than a quarter of one million. Three out of five recruits for the army are rejected; a large proportion of them because their teeth are gone or decayed. Do these figures need comment? Can you look for sound minds in such unsound bodies? Can you look for manliness, for self-respect, and self-control, or anything but animalistic sentimentality?

It is not the character of our drama or of our works of fiction that promotes and fosters this propensity; but may it not be that the enormous increase in the number of theatres, and the prodigious supply of novels, may have a share in it, by their exorbitant appeal to the emotional, and hence neurotic, elements of our nature? If such considerations apply mainly to dwellers in overcrowded towns, there is yet another cause which may operate on those more favoured,—the vast increase in wealth and luxury. Wherever these have grown to excess, whether in Babylon, or Nineveh, or Thebes, or Alexandria, or Rome, they have been the symptoms of decadence, and forerunners of the nation’s collapse.

Let us be humane, let us abhor the horrors of war, and strain our utmost energies to avert them. But we might as well forbid the use of surgical instruments as the weapons that are most destructive in warfare. If a limb is rotting with gangrene, shall it not be cut away? So if the passions which occasion wars are inherent in human nature, we must face the evil stout-heartedly; and, for one, I humbly question whether any abolition of dum-dum bullets or other attempts to mitigate this disgrace to humanity, do, in the end, more good than harm.

It is elsewhere that we must look for deliverance,—to the overwhelming power of better educated peoples; to closer intercourse between the nations; to the conviction that, from the most selfish point of view even, peace is the only path to prosperity; to the restraint of the baser Press which, for mere pelf, spurs the passions of the multitude instead of curbing them; and, finally, to deliverance from the ‘all-potent wills of Little Fathers by Divine right,’ and from the ignoble ambition of bullet-headed uncles and brothers and cousins—a curse from which England, thank the Gods! is, and let us hope, ever will be, free. But there are more countries than one that are not so—just now; and the world may ere long have to pay the bitter penalty.

CHAPTER XXXVII

It is curious if one lives long enough to watch the change of taste in books. I have no lending-library statistics at hand, but judging by the reading of young people, or of those who read merely for their amusement, the authors they patronise are nearly all living or very recent. What we old stagers esteemed as classical in fiction and *belles-lettres* are sealed books to the present generation. It is an exception, for instance, to meet with a young man or young woman who has

read Walter Scott. Perhaps Balzac's reason is the true one. Scott, says he, 'est sans passion; il l'ignore, ou peut-être lui était-elle interdite par les mœurs hypocrites de son pays. Pour lui la femme est le devoir incarné. A de rares exceptions près, ses héroïnes sont absolument les mêmes . . . La femme porte le désordre dans la société par la passion. La passion a des accidents infinis. Peignez donc les passions, vous aurez les sources immenses dont s'est privé ce grand génie pour être lu dans toutes les familles de la prude Angleterre.' Does not Thackeray lament that since Fielding no novelist has dared to face the national affectation of prudery? No English author who valued his reputation would venture to write as Anatole France writes, even if he could. Yet I pity the man who does not delight in the genius that created M. Bergeret.

A well-known author said to me the other day, he did not believe that Thackeray himself would be popular were he writing now for the first time—not because of his freedom, but because the public taste has altered. No present age can predict immortality for the works of its day; yet to say that what is intrinsically good is good for all time is but a truism. The misfortune is that much of the best in literature shares the fate of the best of ancient monuments and noble cities; the cumulative rubbish of ages buries their splendours, till we know not where to find them. The day may come when the most valuable service of the man of letters will be to unearth the lost treasures and display them, rather than add his grain of dust to the ever-increasing middens.

Is Carlyle forgotten yet, I wonder? How much did my contemporaries owe to him in their youth? How readily we followed a leader so sure of himself, so certain of his own evangel. What an aid to strength to be assured that the true hero is the morally strong man. One does not criticise what one loves; one didn't look too closely into the doctrine that, might is right, for somehow he managed to persuade us that right makes the might—that the strong man is the man who, for the most part, does act rightly. He is not over-patient with human frailty, to be sure, and is apt, as Herbert Spencer found, to fling about his scorn rather recklessly. One fancies sometimes that he has more respect for a genuine bad man than for a sham good one. In fact, his 'Eternal Verities' come pretty much to the same as Darwin's 'Law of the advancement of all organic bodies'; 'let the strong live, and the weakest die.' He had no objection to seeing 'the young cuckoo ejecting its foster-brothers, or ants making slaves.' But he atones for all this by his hatred of cant and hypocrisy. It is for his manliness that we love him, for his honesty, for his indifference to any mortal's approval save that of Thomas Carlyle. He convinces us that right thinking is good, but that right doing is much better. And so it is that he does honour to men of action like his beloved Oliver, and Fritz,—neither of them paragons of wisdom or of goodness, but men of doughty deeds.

Just about this time I narrowly missed a longed-for chance of meeting this hero of my *penates*. Lady Ashburton—Carlyle's Lady Ashburton—knowing my admiration, kindly invited me to The Grange, while he was there. The house was full—mainly of ministers or ex-ministers,—Cornewall Lewis, Sir Charles Wood, Sir James Graham, Albany Fonblanque, Mr. Ellice, and Charles Buller—Carlyle's only pupil; but the great man himself had left an hour before I got there. I often met him afterwards, but never to make his acquaintance. Of course, I knew nothing of his special friendship for Lady Ashburton, which we are told was not altogether shared by Mrs. Carlyle; but I well remember the interest which Lady Ashburton seemed to take in his praise, how my enthusiasm seemed to please her, and how Carlyle and his works were topics she was never tired of discussing.

The South Western line to Alresford was not then made, and I had to post part of the way from London to The Grange. My chaise companion was a man very well known in 'Society'; and though not remarkably popular, was not altogether undistinguished, as the following little tale will attest. Frederick Byng, one of the Torrington branch of the Byngs, was chiefly famous for his sobriquet 'The Poodle'; this he owed to no special merit of his own, but simply to the accident of his thick curly head of hair. Some, who spoke feelingly of the man, used to declare that he had fulfilled the promises of his youth. What happened to him then may perhaps justify the opinion.

The young Poodle was addicted to practical jokes—as usual, more amusing to the player than to the playee. One of his victims happened to be Beau Brummell, who, except when he bade 'George ring the bell,' was as perfect a model of deportment as the great Mr. Turveydrop himself. His studied decorum possibly provoked the playfulness of the young puppy; and amongst other attempts to disturb the Beau's complacency, Master Byng ran a pin into the calf of that gentleman's leg, and then he ran away. A few days later Mr. Brummell, who had carefully dissembled his wrath, invited the unwary youth to breakfast, telling him that he was leaving town, and had a present which his young friend might have, if he chose to fetch it. The boy kept the appointment, and the Beau his promise. After an excellent breakfast, Brummell took a whip from his cupboard, and gave it to the Poodle in a way the young dog was not likely to forget.

The happiest of my days then, and perhaps of my life, were spent at Mr. Ellice's Highland Lodge, at Glenquoich. For sport of all kinds it was and is difficult to surpass. The hills of the deer forest are amongst the highest in Scotland; the scenery of its lake and glens, especially the descent to Loch Hourne, is unequalled. Here were to be met many of the most notable men and women of the time. And as the house was twenty miles from the nearest post-town, and that in turn two days from London, visitors ceased to be strangers before they left. In the eighteen years during which this was my autumn home, I had the good fortune to meet numbers of distinguished people of whom I could now record nothing interesting but their names. Still, it is a privilege to have known such men as John Lawrence, Guizot, Thiers, Landseer, Mérimée, Comte de Flahault, Doyle, Lords Elgin and Dalhousie, Duc de Broglie, Pélissier, Panizzi, Motley, Delane, Dufferin; and of gifted women, the three Sheridans, Lady Seymour—the Queen of Beauty, afterwards

Duchess of Somerset—Mrs. Norton, and Lady Dufferin. Amongst those who have a retrospective interest were Mr. and Lady Blanche Balfour, parents of Mr. Arthur Balfour, who came there on their wedding tour in 1843. Mr. Arthur Balfour's father was Mrs. Ellice's first cousin.

It would be easy to lengthen the list; but I mention only those who repeated their visits, and who fill up my mental picture of the place and of the life. Some amongst them impressed me quite as much for their amiability—their loveableness, I may say—as for their renown; and regard for them increased with coming years. Panizzi was one of these. Dufferin, who was just my age, would have fascinated anyone with the singular courtesy of his manner. Dicky Doyle was necessarily a favourite with all who knew him. He was a frequent inmate of my house after I married, and was engaged to dine with me, alas! only eight days before he died. Motley was a singularly pleasant fellow. My friendship with him began over a volume of Sir W. Hamilton's Lectures. He asked what I was reading—I handed him the book.

'Ah,' said he, 'there's no mental gymnastic like metaphysics.'

Many a battle we afterwards had over them. When I was at Cannes in 1877 I got a message from him one day saying he was ill, and asking me to come and see him. He did not say how ill, so I put off going. Two days after I heard he was dead.

Mérimée's cynicism rather alarmed one. He was a capital caricaturist, though, to our astonishment, he assured us he had never drawn, or used a colour-box, till late in life. He had now learnt to use it, in a way that did not invariably give satisfaction. Landseer always struck me as sensitive and proud, a Diogenes-tempered individual who had been spoilt by the toadyism of great people. He was agreeable if made much of, or almost equally so if others were made little of.

But of all those named, surely John Lawrence was the greatest. I wish I had read his life before it ended. Yet, without knowing anything more of him than that he was Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, which did not convey much to my understanding, one felt the greatness of the man beneath his calm simplicity. One day the party went out for a deer-drive; I was instructed to place Sir John in the pass below mine. To my disquietude he wore a black overcoat. I assured him that not a stag would come within a mile of us, unless he covered himself with a grey plaid, or hid behind a large rock there was, where I assured him he would see nothing.

'Have the deer to pass me before they go on to you?' he asked.

'Certainly they have,' said I; 'I shall be up there above you.'

'Well then,' was his answer, 'I'll get behind the rock—it will be more snug out of the wind.'

One might as well have asked the deer not to see him, as try to persuade John Lawrence not to sacrifice himself for others. That he did so here was certain, for the deer came within fifty yards of him, but he never fired a shot.

Another of the Indian viceroys was the innocent occasion of great discomfort to me, or rather his wife was. Lady Elgin had left behind her a valuable diamond necklace. I was going back to my private tutor at Ely a few days after, and the necklace was entrusted to me to deliver to its owner on my way through London. There was no railway then further north than Darlington, except that between Edinburgh and Glasgow. When I reached Edinburgh by coach from Inverness, my portmanteau was not to be found. The necklace was in a despatch-box in my portmanteau; and by an unlucky oversight, I had put my purse into my despatch-box. What was to be done? I was a lad of seventeen, in a town where I did not know a soul, with seven or eight shillings at most in my pocket. I had to break my journey and to stop where I was till I could get news of the necklace; this alone was clear to me, for the necklace was the one thing I cared for.

At the coach office all the comfort I could get was that the lost luggage might have gone on to Glasgow; or, what was more probable, might have gone astray at Burntisland. It might not have been put on board, or it might not have been taken off the ferry-steamer. This could not be known for twenty-four hours, as there was no boat to or from Burntisland till the morrow. I decided to try Glasgow. A return third-class ticket left me without a copper. I went, found nothing, got back to Edinburgh at 10 P.M., ravenously hungry, dead tired, and so frightened about the necklace that food, bed, means of continuing my journey, were as mere death compared with irreparable dishonour. What would they all think of me? How could I prove that I had not stolen the diamonds? Would Lord Elgin accuse me? How could I have been such an idiot as to leave them in my portmanteau! Some rascal might break it open, and then, goodbye to my chance for ever! Chance? what chance was there of seeing that luggage again? There were so many 'mights.' I couldn't even swear that I had seen it on the coach at Inverness. Oh dear! oh dear! What was to be done? I walked about the streets; I glanced woefully at door-steps, whereon to pass the night; I gazed piteously through the windows of a cheap cook's shop, where solid wedges of baked pudding, that would have stopped digestion for a month, were advertised for a penny a block. How rich should I have been if I had had a penny in my pocket! But I had to turn away in despair.

At last the inspiration came. I remembered hearing Mr. Ellice say that he always put up at Douglas' Hotel when he stayed in Edinburgh. I had very little hope of success, but I was too miserable to hesitate. It was very late, and everybody might be gone to bed. I rang the bell. 'I want to see the landlord.'

‘Any name?’ the porter asked.

‘No.’ The landlord came, fat, amiable looking. ‘May I speak to you in private?’ He showed the way to an unoccupied room. ‘I think you know Mr. Ellice?’

‘Glenquoich, do you mean?’

‘Yes.’

‘Oh, very well—he always stays here on his way through.’

‘I am his step-son; I left Glenquoich yesterday. I have lost my luggage, and am left without any money. Will you lend me five pounds?’ I believe if I were in the same strait now, and entered any strange hotel in the United Kingdom at half-past ten at night, and asked the landlord to give me five pounds upon a similar security, he would laugh in my face, or perhaps give me in charge of a policeman.

My host of Douglas’ did neither; but opened both his heart and his pocket-book, and with the greatest good humour handed me the requested sum. What good people there are in this world, which that crusty old Sir Peter Teazle calls ‘a d—d wicked one.’ I poured out all my trouble to the generous man. He ordered me an excellent supper, and a very nice room. And on the following day, after taking a great deal of trouble, he recovered my lost luggage and the priceless treasure it contained. It was a proud and happy moment when I returned his loan, and convinced him, of what he did not seem to doubt, that I was positively not a swindler.

But the roofless night and the empty belly, consequent on an empty pocket, was a lesson which I trust was not thrown away upon me. It did not occur to me to do so, but I certainly might have picked a pocket, if—well, if I had been brought up to it. Honesty, as I have often thought since, is dirt cheap if only one can afford it.

Before departing from my beloved Glenquoich, I must pay a passing tribute to the remarkable qualities of Mrs. Edward Ellice and of her youngest sister Mrs. Robert Ellice, the mother of the present member for St. Andrews. It was, in a great measure, the bright intelligence, the rare tact, and social gifts of these two ladies that made this beautiful Highland resort so attractive to all comers.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The winter of 1854–55 I spent in Rome. Here I made the acquaintance of Leighton, then six-and-twenty. I saw a good deal of him, as I lived almost entirely amongst the artists, taking lessons myself in water colours of Leitch. Music also brought us into contact. He had a beautiful voice, and used to sing a good deal with Mrs. Sartoris—Adelaide Kemble—whom he greatly admired, and whose portrait is painted under a monk’s cowl, in the Cimabue procession.

Calling on him one morning, I found him on his knees buttering and rolling up this great picture, preparatory to sending it to the Academy. I made some remark about its unusual size, saying with a sceptical smile, ‘It will take up a lot of room.’

‘If they ever hang it,’ he replied; ‘but there’s not much chance of that.’

Seeing that his reputation was yet to win, it certainly seemed a bold venture to make so large a demand for space to begin with. He did not appear the least sanguine. But it was accepted; and Prince Albert bought it before the Exhibition opened.

Gibson also I saw much of. He had executed a large alto-rilievo monument of my mother, which is now in my parish church, and the model of which is on the landing of one of the staircases of the National Gallery. His studio was always an interesting lounge, for he was ever ready to lecture upon antique marbles. To listen to him was like reading the ‘Laocoon,’ which he evidently had at his fingers’ ends. My companion through the winter was Mr. Reginald Cholmondeley, a Cambridge ally, who was studying painting. He was the uncle of Miss Cholmondeley the well-known authoress, whose mother, by the way, was a first cousin of George Cayley’s, and also a great friend of mine.

On my return to England I took up my abode in Dean’s Yard, and shared a house there with Mr. Cayley, the Yorkshire member, and his two sons, the eldest a barrister, and my friend George. Here for several years we had exceedingly pleasant gatherings of men more or less distinguished in literature and art. Tennyson was a frequent visitor—coming late, after dinner hours, to smoke his pipe. He varied a good deal, sometimes not saying a word, but quietly listening to our chatter. Thackeray also used to drop in occasionally.

George Cayley and I, with the assistance of his father and others, had started a weekly paper called ‘The Realm.’ It was professedly a currency paper, and also supported a fiscal policy advocated by Mr. Cayley and some of his parliamentary clique. Coming in one day, and finding us hard at work, Thackeray asked for information. We handed him a copy of the paper. ‘Ah,’ he exclaimed, with mock solemnity, ‘“The Rellum,” should be printed on vellum.’ He too, like Tennyson, was variable. But this depended on whom he found. In the presence of a stranger he was grave and silent. He would never venture on puerile jokes like this of his 'Rellum'—a frequent playfulness, when at his ease, which contrasted so unexpectedly with his impenetrable exterior. He was either gauging the unknown person, or feeling that he was being gauged. Monckton Milnes was another. Seeing me correcting some proof sheets, he said, 'Let me give you a piece of advice, my young friend. Write as much as you please, but the less you print the better.'

'For me, or for others?'

'For both.'

George Cayley had a natural gift for, and had acquired considerable skill, in the embossing and working of silver ware. Millais so admired his art that he commissioned him to make a large tea-tray; Millais provided the silver. Round the border of the tray were beautifully modelled sea-shells, cray-fish, crabs, and fish of quaint forms, in high relief. Millais was so pleased with the work that he afterwards painted, and presented to Cayley, a fine portrait in his best style of Cayley's son, a boy of six or seven years old.

Laurence Oliphant was one of George Cayley's friends. Attractive as he was in many ways, I had little sympathy with his religious opinions, nor did I comprehend Oliphant's exalted inspirations; I failed to see their practical bearing, and, at that time I am sorry to say, looked upon him as an amiable faddist. A special favourite with both of us was William Stirling of Keir. His great work on the Spanish painters, and his 'Cloister Life of Charles the Fifth,' excited our unbounded admiration, while his *bonhomie* and radiant humour were a delight we were always eager to welcome.

George Cayley and I now entered at Lincoln's Inn. At the end of three years he was duly called to the Bar. I was not; for alas, as usual, something 'turned up,' which drew me in another direction. For a couple of years, however, I 'ate' my terms—not unfrequently with William Harcourt, with whom Cayley had a Yorkshire intimacy even before our Cambridge days.

Old Mr. Cayley, though not the least strait-laced, was a religious man. A Unitarian by birth and conviction, he began and ended the day with family prayers. On Sundays he would always read to us, or make us read to him, a sermon of Channing's, or of Theodore Parker's, or what we all liked better, one of Frederick Robertson's. He was essentially a good man. He had been in Parliament all his life, and was a broad-minded, tolerant, philosophical man-of-the-world. He had a keen sense of humour, and was rather sarcastical; but, for all that, he was sensitively earnest, and conscientious. I had the warmest affection and respect for him. Such a character exercised no small influence upon our conduct and our opinions, especially as his approval or disapproval of these visibly affected his own happiness.

He was never easy unless he was actively engaged in some benevolent scheme, the promotion of some charity, or in what he considered his parliamentary duties, which he contrived to make very burdensome to his conscience. As his health was bad, these self-imposed obligations were all the more onerous; but he never spared himself, or his somewhat scanty means. Amongst other minor tasks, he used to teach at the Sunday-school of St. John's, Westminster; in this he persuaded me to join him. The only other volunteer, not a clergyman, was Page Wood—a great friend of Mr. Cayley's—afterwards Lord Chancellor Hatherley. In spite of Mr. Cayley's Unitarianism, like Frederick the Great, he was all for letting people 'go to Heaven in their own way,' and was moreover quite ready to help them in their own way. So that he had no difficulty in hearing the boys repeat the day's collect, or the Creed, even if Athanasian, in accordance with the prescribed routine of the clerical teachers.

This was right, at all events for him, if he thought it right. My spirit of nonconformity did not permit me to follow his example. Instead thereof, my teaching was purely secular. I used to take a volume of Mrs. Marcet's 'Conversations' in my pocket; and with the aid of the diagrams, explain the application of the mechanical forces,—the inclined plane, the screw, the pulley, the wedge, and the lever. After two or three Sundays my class was largely increased, for the children keenly enjoyed their competitive examinations. I would also give them bits of poetry to get by heart for the following Sunday—lines from Gray's 'Elegy,' from Wordsworth, from Pope's 'Essay on Man'—such in short as had a moral rather than a religious tendency.

After some weeks of this, the boys becoming clamorous in their zeal to correct one another, one of the curates left his class to hear what was going on in mine. We happened at the moment to be dealing with geography. The curate, evidently shocked, went away and brought another curate. Then the two together departed, and brought back the rector—Dr. Jennings, one of the Westminster Canons—a most kind and excellent man. I went on as if unconscious of the censorship, the boys exerting themselves all the more eagerly for the sake of the 'gallery.' When the hour was up, Canon Jennings took me aside, and in the most polite manner thanked me for my 'valuable assistance,' but did not think that the 'Essay on Man,' or especially geography, was suited for the teaching in a Sunday-school. I told him I knew it was useless to contend with so high a canonical authority; personally I did not see the impiety of geography, but then, as he already knew, I was a confirmed latitudinarian. He clearly did not see the joke, but intimated that my services would henceforth be dispensed with.

Of course I was wrong, though I did not know it then, for it must be borne in mind that there were no Board Schools in those days, and general education, amongst the poor, was deplorably deficient. At first, my idea was to give the children (they were all boys) a taste for the ‘humanities,’ which might afterwards lead to their further pursuit. I assumed that on the Sunday they would be thinking of the baked meats awaiting them when church was over, or of their week-day tops and tipcats; but I was equally sure that a time would come when these would be forgotten, and the other things remembered. The success was greater from the beginning than could be looked for; and some years afterwards I had reason to hope that the forecast was not altogether too sanguine.

While the Victoria Tower was being built, I stopped one day to watch the masons chiselling the blocks of stone. Presently one of them, in a flannel jacket and a paper cap, came and held out his hand to me. He was a handsome young fellow with a big black beard and moustache, both powdered with his chippings.

‘You don’t remember me, sir, do you?’

‘Did I ever see you before?’

‘My name is Richards; don’t you remember, sir? I was one of the boys you used to teach at the Sunday-school. It gave me a turn for mechanics, which I followed up; and that’s how I took to this trade. I’m a master mason now, sir; and the whole of this lot is under me.’

‘I wonder what you would have been,’ said I, ‘if we’d stuck to the collects?’

‘I don’t think I should have had a hand in this little job,’ he answered, looking up with pride at the mighty tower, as though he had a creative share in its construction.

All this while I was working hard at my own education, and trying to make up for the years I had wasted (so I thought of them), by knocking about the world. I spent laborious days and nights in reading, dabbling in geology, chemistry, physiology, metaphysics, and what not. On the score of dogmatic religion I was as restless as ever. I had an insatiable thirst for knowledge; but was without guidance. I wanted to learn everything; and, not knowing in what direction to concentrate my efforts, learnt next to nothing. All knowledge seemed to me equally important, for all bore alike upon the great problems of belief and of existence. But what to pursue, what to relinquish, appeared to me an unanswerable riddle. Difficult as this puzzle was, I did not know then that a long life’s experience would hardly make it simpler. The man who has to earn his bread must fain resolve to adapt his studies to that end. His choice not often rests with him. But the unfortunate being cursed in youth with the means of idleness, yet without genius, without talents even, is terribly handicapped and perplexed.

And now, with life behind me, how should I advise another in such a plight? When a young lady, thus embarrassed, wrote to Carlyle for counsel, he sympathetically bade her ‘put her drawers in order.’

Here is the truth to be faced at the outset: ‘Man has but the choice to go a little way in many paths, or a great way in only one.’ ’Tis thus John Mill puts it. Which will he, which should he, choose? Both courses lead alike to incompleteness. The universal man is no specialist, and has to generalise without his details. The specialist sees only through his microscope, and knows about as much of cosmology as does his microbe. Goethe, the most comprehensive of Seers, must needs expose his incompleteness by futile attempts to disprove Newton’s theory of colour. Newton must needs expose his, by a still more lamentable attempt to prove the Apocalypse as true as his own discovery of the laws of gravitation. All science nowadays is necessarily confined to experts. Without illustrating the fact by invidious hints, I invite anyone to consider the intellectual cost to the world which such limitation entails; nor is the loss merely negative; the specialist is unfortunately too often a bigot, when beyond his contracted sphere.

This, you will say, is arguing in a circle. The universal must be given up for the detail, the detail for the universal; we leave off where we began. Yes, that is the dilemma. Still, the gain to science through a devotion of a whole life to a mere group of facts, in a single branch of a single science, may be an incalculable acquisition to human knowledge, to the intellectual capital of the race—a gain that sometimes far outweighs the loss. Even if we narrow the question to the destiny of the individual, the sacrifice of each one for the good of the whole is doubtless the highest aim the one can have.

But this conclusion scarcely helps us; for remember, the option is not given to all. Genius, or talent, or special aptitude, is a necessary equipment for such an undertaking. Great discoverers must be great observers, dexterous manipulators, ingenious contrivers, and patient thinkers.

The difficulty we started with was, what you and I, my friend, who perhaps have to row in the same boat, and perhaps ‘with the same sculls,’ without any of these provisions, what we should do? What point of the compass should we steer for? ‘Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’ Truly there could be no better advice. But the ‘finding’ is the puzzle; and like the search for truth it must, I fear, be left to each one’s power to do it. And then—and then the countless thousands who have the leisure without the means—who have hands at least, and yet no work to put them to—what is to be done for these? Not in your time or mine, dear friend, will that question be answered. For this, I fear we must wait till by the ‘universal law of adaptation’ we reach ‘the ultimate development of the ideal man.’ ‘Colossal optimism,’ exclaims the critic.

CHAPTER XXXIX

In February, 1855, Roebuck moved for a select committee to inquire into the condition of the Army before Sebastopol. Lord John Russell, who was leader of the House, treated this as a vote of censure, and resigned. Lord Palmerston resisted Roebuck's motion, and generously defended the Government he was otherwise opposed to. But the motion was carried by a majority of 157, and Lord Aberdeen was turned out of office. The Queen sent for Lord Derby, but without Lord Palmerston he was unable to form a Ministry. Lord John was then appealed to, with like results; and the premiership was practically forced upon Palmerston, in spite of his unpopularity at Court. Mr. Horsman was made Chief Secretary for Ireland; and through Mr. Ellice I became his private secretary.

Before I went to the Irish Office I was all but a stranger to my chief. I had met him occasionally in the tennis court; but the net was always between us. He was a man with a great deal of manner, but with very little of what the French call 'conviction.' Nothing keeps people at a distance more effectually than simulated sincerity; Horsman was a master of the art. I was profoundly ignorant of my duties. But though this was a great inconvenience to me at first, it led to a friendship which I greatly prized until its tragic end. For all information as to the writers of letters, as to Irish Members who applied for places for themselves, or for others, I had to consult the principal clerk. He was himself an Irishman of great ability; and though young, was either personally or officially acquainted, so it seemed to me, with every Irishman in the House of Commons, or out of it. His name is too well known—it was Thomas Bourke, afterwards Under Secretary, and one of the victims of the Fenian assassins in the Phœnix Park. His patience and amiability were boundless; and under his guidance I soon learnt the tricks of my trade.

During the session we remained in London; and for some time it was of great interest to listen to the debates. When Irish business was before the House, I had often to be in attendance on my chief in the reporters' gallery. Sometimes I had to wait there for an hour or two before our questions came on, and thus had many opportunities of hearing Bright, Gladstone, Disraeli, and all the leading speakers. After a time the pleasure, when compulsory, began to pall; and I used to wonder what on earth could induce the ruck to waste their time in following, sheeplike, their bell-wethers, or waste their money in paying for that honour. When Parliament was up we moved to Dublin. I lived with Horsman in the Chief Secretary's lodge. And as I had often stayed at Castle Howard before Lord Carlisle became Viceroy, between the two lodges I saw a great deal of pleasant society.

Amongst those who came to stay with Horsman was Sidney Herbert, then Colonial Secretary, a man of singular nobility of nature. Another celebrity for the day, but of a very different character, was Lord Cardigan. He had just returned from the Crimea, and was now in command of the forces in Ireland. This was about six months after the Balaklava charge. Horsman asked him one evening to give a description of it, with a plan of the battle. His Lordship did so; no words could be more suited to the deed. If this was 'pell-mell, havock, and confusion,' the account of it was proportionately confounded. The noble leader scrawled and inked and blotted all the phases of the battle upon the same scrap of paper, till the batteries were at the starting-point of the charge, the Light Brigade on the far side of the guns, and all the points of the compass, attack and defence, had changed their original places; in fact, the gallant Earl brandished his pen as valiantly as he had his sword. When quite bewildered, like everybody else, I ventured mildly to ask, 'But where were you, Lord Cardigan, and where were our men when it came to this?'

'Where? Where? God bless my soul! How should I know where anybody was?' And this, no doubt, described the situation to a nicety.

My office was in the Castle, and the next room to mine was that of the Solicitor-General Keogh, afterwards Judge. We became the greatest of friends. It was one of Horsman's peculiarities to do business circuitously. He was fond of mysteries and of secrets, secrets that were to be kept from everyone, but which were generally known to the office messengers. When Keogh and I met in the morning he would say, with admirable imitation of Horsman's manner, 'Well, it is all settled; the Viceroy has considered the question, and has decided to act upon my advice. Mind you don't tell anyone—it is a profound secret,' then, lowering his voice and looking round the room, 'His Excellency has consented to score at the next cricket match between the garrison and the Civil Service.' If it were a constabulary appointment, or even a village post-office, the Attorney or the Solicitor-General would be strictly enjoined not to inform me, and I received similar injunctions respecting them. In spite of his apparent attention to details, Mr. Horsman hunted three days a week, and stated in the House of Commons that the office of Chief Secretary was a farce, meaning when excluded from the Cabinet. All I know is, that his private secretary was constantly at work an hour before breakfast by candle-light, and never got a single day's holiday throughout the winter.

Horsman had hired a shooting—Balnaboth in Scotland; here, too, I had to attend upon him in the autumn, mainly for the purpose of copying voluminous private correspondence about a sugar estate he owned at Singapore, then producing a large income, but the subsequent failure of which was his ruin. One year Sir Alexander Cockburn, the Lord Chief Justice, came to stay with him; and excellent company he was. Horsman had sometimes rather an affected way of talking; and referring to some piece of political news, asked Cockburn whether he had seen it in the 'Courier.' This he pronounced with an accent on the last syllable, like the French 'Courrier.' Cockburn, with a slight twinkle in his eye, answered in his quiet way, 'No, I didn't see it in the "Courrier," perhaps it is in the "Morning Post,"' also giving the French pronunciation to the latter word.

Sir Alexander told us an amusing story about Disraeli. He and Bernal Osborne were talking together about Mrs. Disraeli, when presently Osborne, with characteristic effrontery, exclaimed: ‘My dear Dizzy, how could you marry such a woman?’ The answer was; ‘My dear Bernal, you never knew what gratitude was, or you would not ask the question.’

The answer was a gracious one, and doubtless sincere. But, despite his cynicism, no one could be more courteous or say prettier things than Disraeli. Here is a little story that was told me at the time by my sister-in-law, who was a woman of the bedchamber, and was present on the occasion. When her Majesty Queen Alexandra was suffering from an accident to her knee, and had to use crutches, Disraeli said to her: ‘I have heard of a devil on two sticks, but never before knew an angel to use them.’

Keogh, Bourke, and I, made several pleasant little excursions to such places as Bray, the Seven Churches, Powerscourt, &c., and, with a chosen car-driver, the wit and fun of the three clever Irishmen was no small treat. The last time I saw either of my two friends was at a dinner-party which Bourke gave at the ‘Windham.’ We were only four, to make up a whist party; the fourth was Fred Clay, the composer. It is sad to reflect that two of the lot came to violent ends—Keogh, the cheeriest of men in society, by his own hands. Bourke I had often spoken to of the danger he ran in crossing the Phœnix Park nightly on his way home, on foot and unarmed. He laughed at me, and rather indignantly—for he was a very vain man, though one of the most good-natured fellows in the world. In the first place, he prided himself on his physique—he was a tall, well-built, handsome man, and a good boxer and fencer to boot. In the next place, he prided himself above all things on being a thorough-bred Irishman, with a sneaking sympathy with even Fenian grievances. ‘They all know *me*,’ he would say. ‘The rascals know I’m the best friend they have. I’m the last man in the world they’d harm, for political reasons. Anyway, I can take care of myself.’ And so it was he fell.

The end of Horsman’s secretaryship is soon told. A bishopric became vacant, and almost as much intrigue was set agoing as we read of in the wonderful story of ‘L’Anneau d’Améthyste.’ Horsman, at all times a profuse letter-writer, wrote folios to Lord Palmerston on the subject, each letter more exuberant, more urgent than the last. But no answer came. Finally, the whole Irish vote, according to the Chief Secretary, being at stake—not to mention the far more important matter of personal and official dignity—Horsman flew off to London, boiling over with impatience and indignation. He rushed to 10 Downing Street. His Lordship was at the Foreign office, but was expected every minute; would Mr. Horsman wait? Mr. Horsman was shown into his Lordship’s room. Piles of letters, opened and unopened, were lying upon the table. The Chief Secretary recognised his own signatures on the envelopes of a large bundle, all amongst the ‘un’s.’ The Premier came in, an explanation *extrêmement vive* followed; on his return to Dublin Mr. Horsman resigned his post, and from that moment became one of Lord Palmerston’s bitterest opponents.

CHAPTER XL

The lectures at the Royal Institution were of some help to me. I attended courses by Owen, Tyndall, Huxley, and Bain. Of these, Huxley was *facile princeps*, though both Owen and Tyndall were second to no other. Bain was disappointing. I was a careful student of his books, and always admired the logical lucidity of his writing. But to the mixed audience he had to lecture to—fashionable young ladies in their teens, and drowsy matrons in charge of them, he discreetly kept clear of transcendentals. In illustration perhaps of some theory of the relation of the senses to the intellect, he would tell an amusing anecdote of a dog that had had an injured leg dressed at a certain house, after which the recovered dog brought a canine friend to the same house to have his leg—or tail—repaired. Out would come all the tablets and pretty pencil cases, and every young lady would be busy for the rest of the lecture in recording the marvellous history. If the dog’s name had been ‘Spot’ or ‘Bob,’ the important psychological fact would have been faithfully registered. As to the theme of the discourse, that had nothing to do with—millinery. And Mr. Bain doubtless did not overlook the fact.

Owen was an accomplished lecturer; but one’s attention to him depended on two things—a primary interest in the subject, and some elementary acquaintance with it. If, for example, his subject were the comparative anatomy of the cycloid and ganoid fishes, the difference in their scales was scarcely of vital importance to one’s general culture. But if he were lecturing on fish, he would stick to fish; it would be essentially a *jour maigre*.

With Huxley, the suggestion was worth more than the thing said. One thought of it afterwards, and wondered whether his words implied all they seemed to imply. One knew that the scientist was also a philosopher; and one longed to get at him, at the man himself, and listen to the lessons which his work had taught him. At one of these lectures I had the honour of being introduced to him by a great friend of mine, John Marshall, then President of the College of Surgeons. In later years I used to meet him constantly at the Athenæum.

Looking back to the days of one’s plasticity, two men are pre-eminent among my Dii Majores. To John Stuart Mill and to Thomas Huxley I owe more, educationally, than to any other teachers. Mill’s logic was simply a revelation to me. For what Kant calls ‘discipline,’ I still know no book, unless it be the ‘Critique’ itself, equal to it. But perhaps it is the men themselves, their earnestness, their splendid courage, their noble simplicity, that most inspired one with reverence. It was Huxley’s aim to enlighten the many, and he enlightened them. It was Mill’s lot to help thinkers, and he helped them. *Sapere aude* was the motto of both. How few there are who dare to adopt it! To love truth is valiantly professed by all; but to pursue it at all costs, to ‘dare to be wise’ needs daring of the highest order.

Mill had the enormous advantage, to start with, of an education unbiassed by any theological creed; and he brought exceptional powers of abstract reasoning to bear upon matters of permanent and supreme importance to all men. Yet, in spite of his ruthless impartiality, I should not hesitate to call him a religious man. This very tendency which no imaginative mind, no man or woman with any strain of poetical feeling, can be without, invests Mill’s character with a clash of humanity which entitles him to a place in our affections. It is in this respect that he so widely differs from Mr. Herbert Spencer. Courageous Mr. Spencer was, but his courage seems to have been due almost as much to absence of sympathy or kinship with his fellow-creatures, and to his contempt of their opinions, as from his dispassionate love of truth, or his sometimes passionate defence of his own tenets.

My friend Napier told me an amusing little story about John Mill when he was in the East India Company’s administration. Mr. Macvey Napier, my friend’s elder brother, was the senior clerk. On John Mill’s retirement, his co-officials subscribed to present him with a silver standish. Such was the general sense of Mill’s modest estimate of his own deserts, and of his aversion to all acknowledgment of them, that Mr. Napier, though it fell to his lot, begged others to join in the ceremony of presentation. All declined; the inkstand was left upon Mill’s table when he himself was out of the room.

Years after the time of which I am writing, when Mill stood for Westminster, I had the good fortune to be on the platform at St. James’s Hall, next but one to him, when he made his first speech to the electors. He was completely unknown to the public, and, though I worshipped the man, I had never seen him, nor had an idea what he looked like. To satisfy my curiosity I tried to get a portrait of him at the photographic shop in Regent Street.

‘I want a photograph of Mr. Mill.’

‘Mill? Mill?’ repeated the shopman, ‘Oh yes, sir, I know—a great sporting gent,’ and he produced the portrait of a sportsman in top boots and a hunting cap.

Very different from this was the figure I then saw. The hall and the platform were crowded. Where was the principal personage? Presently, quite alone, up the side steps, and unobserved, came a thin but tallish man in black, with a tail coat, and, almost unrecognised, took the vacant front seat. He might have been, so far as dress went, a clerk in a counting-house, or an undertaker. But the face was no ordinary one. The wide brow, the sharp nose of the Burke type, the compressed lips and strong chin, were suggestive of intellect and of suppressed emotion. There was no applause, for nothing was known to the crowd, even of his opinions, beyond the fact that he was the Liberal candidate for Westminster. He spoke with perfect ease to himself, never faltering for the right word, which seemed to be always at his command. If interrupted by questions, as he constantly was, his answers could not have been amended had he written them. His voice was not strong, and there were frequent calls from the far end to ‘speak up, speak up; we can’t hear you.’ He did not raise his pitch a note. They might as well have tried to bully an automaton. He was doing his best, and he could do no more. Then, when, instead of the usual adulations, instead of declamatory appeals to the passions of a large and a mixed assembly, he gave them to understand, in very plain language, that even socialists are not infallible,—that extreme and violent opinions, begotten of ignorance, do not constitute the highest political wisdom; then there were murmurs of dissent and disapproval. But if the ignorant and the violent could have stoned him, his calm manner would still have said, ‘Strike, but hear me.’

Mr. Robert Grosvenor—the present Lord Ebury—then the other Liberal member for Westminster, wrote to ask me to take the chair at Mill’s first introduction to the Pimlico electors. Such, however, was my admiration of Mill, I did not feel sure that I might not say too much in his favour; and mindful of the standish incident, I knew, that if I did so, it would embarrass and annoy him.

Under these circumstances I declined the honour.

When Owen was delivering a course of lectures at Norwich, my brother invited him to Holkham. I was there, and we took several long walks together. Nothing seemed to escape his observation. My brother had just completed the recovery of many hundred acres of tidal marsh by embankments. Owen, who was greatly interested, explained what would be the effect upon the sandiest portion of this, in years to come; what the chemical action of the rain would be, how the sand would eventually become soil, how vegetation would cover it, and how manure render it cultivable. The splendid crops now grown there bear testimony to his foresight. He had always something instructive to impart, stopping to contemplate trifles which only a Zadig would have noticed.

‘I observe,’ said he one day, ‘that your prevailing wind here is north-west.’

‘How do you know?’ I asked.

‘Look at the roots of all these trees; the large roots are invariably on the north-west side. This means that the strain comes on this side. The roots which have to bear it loosen the soil, and the loosened soil favours the extension and the growth of the roots. Nature is beautifully scientific.'

Some years after this, I published a book called 'Creeds of the Day.' My purpose was to show, in a popular form, the bearings of science and speculative thought upon the religious creeds of the time. I sent Owen a copy of the work. He wrote me one of the most interesting letters I ever received. He had bought the book, and had read it. But the important content of the letter was the confession of his own faith. I have purposely excluded all correspondence from these Memoirs, but had it not been that a forgotten collector of autographs had captured it, I should have been tempted to make an exception in its favour. The tone was agnostic; but timidly agnostic. He had never freed himself from the shackles of early prepossessions. He had not the necessary daring to clear up his doubts. Sometimes I fancy that it was this difference in the two men that lay at the bottom of the unfortunate antagonism between Owen and Huxley. There is in Owen's writing, where he is not purely scientific, a touch of the apologist. He cannot quite make up his mind to follow evolution to its logical conclusions. Where he is forced to do so, it is to him like signing the death warrant of his dearest friend. It must not be forgotten that Owen was born more than twenty years before Huxley; and great as was the offence of free-thinking in Huxley's youth, it was nothing short of anathema in Owen's. When I met him at Holkham, the 'Origin of Species' had not been published; and Napier and I did all we could to get Owen to express some opinion on Lamarck's theory, for he and I used to talk confidentially on this fearful heresy even then. But Owen was ever on his guard. He evaded our questions and changed the subject.

Whenever I pass near the South Kensington Museum I step aside to look at the noble statues of the two illustrious men. A mere glance at them, and we appreciate at once their respective characters. In the one we see passive wisdom, in the other militant force.

CHAPTER XLI

Before I went to America, I made the acquaintance of Dr. George Bird; he continued to be one of my most intimate friends till his death, fifty years afterwards. When I first knew him, Bird was the medical adviser and friend of Leigh Hunt, whose family I used often to meet at his house. He had been dependent entirely upon his own exertions; had married young; and had had a pretty hard fight at starting to provide for his children and for himself. His energy, his abilities, his exceeding amiability, and remarkable social qualities, gradually procured him a large practice and hosts of devoted friends. He began looking for the season for sprats—the cheapest of fish—to come in; by middle life he was habitually and sumptuously entertaining the celebrities of art and literature. With his accomplished sister, Miss Alice Bird, to keep house for him, there were no pleasanter dinner parties or receptions in London. His *clientèle* was mainly amongst the artistic world. He was a great friend of Miss Ellen Terry's, Mr. Marcus Stone and his sisters were frequenters of his house, so were Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Woolner the sculptor—of whom I was not particularly fond—Horace Wigan the actor, and his father, the Burtons, who were much attached to him—Burton dedicated one volume of his 'Arabian Nights' to him—Sir William Crookes, Mr. Justin Macarthy and his talented son, and many others.

The good doctor was a Radical and Home Ruler, and attended professionally the members of one or two labouring men's clubs for fees which, as far as I could learn, were rigorously nominal. His great delight was to get an order for the House of Commons, especially on nights when Mr. Gladstone spoke; and, being to the last day of his life as simple-minded as a child, had a profound belief in the statemanship and integrity of that renowned orator.

As far as personality goes, the Burtons were, perhaps, the most notable of the above-named. There was a mystery about Burton which was in itself a fascination. No one knew what he had done; or consequently what he might not do. He never boasted, never hinted that he had done, or could do, anything different from other men; and, in spite of the mystery, one felt that he was transparently honest and sincere. He was always the same, always true to himself; but then, that 'self' was a something *per se*, which could not be categorically classed—precedent for guidance was lacking. There is little doubt Burton had gipsy blood in his veins; there was something Oriental in his temperament, and even in his skin.

One summer's day I found him reading the paper in the Athenæum. He was dressed in a complete suit of white—white trousers, a white linen coat, and a very shabby old white hat. People would have stared at him anywhere.

'Hullo, Burton!' I exclaimed, touching his linen coat, 'Do you find it so hot—*déjà*?'

Said he: 'I don't want to be mistaken for other people.'

'There's not much fear of that, even without your clothes,' I replied.

Such an impromptu answer as his would, from any other, have implied vanity. Yet no man could have been less vain, or more free from affectation. It probably concealed regret at finding himself conspicuous.

After dinner at the Birds' one evening we fell to talking of garrotters. About this time the police reports were full of cases of garrotting. The victim was seized from behind, one man gagged or burked him, while another picked his pocket.

'What should you do, Burton?' the Doctor asked, 'if they tried to garrotte you?'

'I'm quite ready for 'em,' was the answer; and turning up his sleeve he partially pulled out a dagger, and shoved it back again.

We tried to make him tell us what became of the Arab boy who accompanied him to Mecca, and whose suspicions threatened Burton's betrayal, and, of consequence, his life. I don't think anyone was present except us two, both of whom he well knew to be quite shock-proof, but he held his tongue.

'You would have been perfectly justified in saving your own life at any cost. You would hardly have broken the sixth commandment by doing so in this case,' I suggested.

'No,' said he gravely, 'and as I had broken all the ten before, it wouldn't have so much mattered.'

The Doctor roared. It should, however, be stated that Burton took no less delight in his host's boyish simplicity, than the other in what he deemed his guest's superb candour.

'Come, tell us,' said Bird, 'how many men have you killed?'

'How many have you, Doctor?' was the answer.

Richard Burton was probably the most extraordinary linguist of his day. Lady Burton mentions, I think, in his Life, the number of languages and dialects her husband knew. That Mahometans should seek instruction from him in the Koran, speaks of itself for his astonishing mastery of the greatest linguistic difficulties. With Indian languages and their variations, he was as completely at home as Miss Youghal's Sais; and, one may suppose, could have played the *rôle* of a fakir as perfectly as he did that of a Mecca pilgrim. I asked him what his method was in learning a fresh language. He said he wrote down as many new words as he could learn and remember each day; and learnt the construction of the language colloquially, before he looked at a grammar.

Lady Burton was hardly less abnormal in her way than Sir Richard. She had shared his wanderings, and was intimate, as no one else was, with the eccentricities of his thoughts and deeds. Whatever these might happen to be, she worshipped her husband notwithstanding. For her he was the standard of excellence; all other men were departures from it. And the singularity is, her religious faith was never for an instant shaken—she remained as strict a Roman Catholic as when he married her from a convent. Her enthusiasm and cosmopolitanism, her *naïveté* and the sweetness of her disposition made her the best of company. She had lived so much the life of a Bedouin, that her dress and her habits had an Eastern glow. When staying with the Birds, she was attended by an Arab girl, one of whose duties it was to prepare her mistress' chibouk, which was regularly brought in with the coffee. On one occasion, when several other ladies were dining there, some of them yielded to Lady Burton's persuasion to satisfy their curiosity. The Arab girl soon provided the means; and it was not long before there were four or five faces as white as Mrs. Alfred Wigan's, under similar circumstances, in the 'Nabob.'

Alfred Wigan's father was an unforgettable man. To describe him in a word, he was Falstag *redivivus*. In bulk and stature, in age, in wit and humour, and morality, he was Falstaff. He knew it and gloried in it. He would complain with zest of 'larding the lean earth' as he walked along. He was as partial to whisky as his prototype to sack. He would exhaust a Johnsonian vocabulary in describing his ailments; and would appeal pathetically to Miss Bird, as though at his last gasp, for 'just a tea-spoonful' of the grateful stimulant. She served him with a liberal hand, till he cried 'Stop!' But if she then stayed, he would softly insinuate 'I didn't mean it, my dear.' Yet he was no Costigan. His brain was stronger than casks of whisky. And his powers of digestion were in keeping. Indeed, to borrow the well-known words applied to a great man whom we all love, 'He tore his dinner like a famished wolf, with the veins swelling in his forehead, and the perspiration running down his cheeks.' The trend of his thoughts, though he was eminently a man of intellect, followed the dictates of his senses. Walk with him in the fields and, from the full stores of a prodigious memory, he would pour forth pages of the choicest poetry. But if you paused to watch the lambs play, or disturbed a young calf in your path, he would almost involuntarily exclaim: 'How deliciously you smell of mint, my pet!' or 'Bless your innocent face! What sweetbreads you will provide!'

James Wigan had kept a school once. The late Serjeant Ballantine, who was one of his pupils, mentions him in his autobiography. He was a good scholar, and when I first knew him, used to teach elocution. Many actors went to him, and not a few members of both Houses of Parliament. He could recite nearly the whole of several of Shakespeare's plays; and, with a dramatic art I have never known equalled by any public reader.

His later years were passed at Sevenoaks, where he kept an establishment for imbeciles, or weak-minded youths. I often stayed with him (not as a patient), and a very comfortable and pretty place it was. Now and then he would call on me in London; and, with a face full of theatrical woe, tell me, with elaborate circumlocution, how the Earl of This, or the Marquis of That, had implored him to take charge of young Lord So-and-So, his son; who, as all the world knew, had—well, had 'no guts in his brains.' Was there ever such a chance? Just consider what it must lead to! Everybody knew—no, nobody knew—the enormous number of idiots there were in noble families. And, such a case as that of young Lord Dash—though of course his residence at Sevenoaks would be a profound secret, would be patent to the whole peerage; and, my dear sir, a fortune to your humble servant, if—ah! if he could only secure it!'

'But I thought you said you had been implored to take him?'

'I did say so. I repeat it. His Lordship's father came to me with tears in his eyes. "My dear Wigan," were that nobleman's words, "do me this one favour and trust me, you will never regret it!" But—' he paused to remove the dramatic tear, 'but, I hardly dare go on. Yes—yes, I know your kindness' (seizing my hand) 'I know how ready you are to help me'—(I hadn't said a word)—'but—'

'How much is it this time? and what is it for?'

'For? I have told you what it is for. The merest trifle will suffice. I have the room—a beautiful room, the best aspect in the house. It is now occupied by young Rumagee Bumagee the great Bombay millionaire's son. Of course he can be moved. But a bed—there positively is not a spare bed in the house. This is all I want—a bed, and perhaps a tuppenny ha'penny strip of carpet, a couple of chairs, a—let me see; if you give me a slip of paper I can make out in a minute what it will come to.'

'Never mind that. Will a ten-pound note serve your purposes?'

'Dear boy! Dear boy! But on one condition, on one condition only, can I accept it—this is a loan, a loan mind! and not a gift. No, no—it is useless to protest; my pride, my sense of honour, forbids my acceptance upon any other terms.'

A day or two afterwards I would learn from George Bird that he and Miss Alice had accepted an invitation to meet me at Sevenoaks. Mr. Donovan, the famous phrenologist, was to be of the party; the Rector of Sevenoaks, and one or two local magnates, had also been invited to dine. We Londoners were to occupy the spare rooms, for this was in the coaching days.

We all knew what we had to expect—a most enjoyable banquet of conviviality. Young Mrs. Wigan, his second wife, was an admirable housekeeper, and nothing could have been better done. The turbot and the haunch of venison were the pick of Grove's shop, the champagne was iced to perfection, and there was enough of it, as Mr. Donovan whispered to me, casting his eyes to the ceiling, 'to wash an omnibus, bedad.' Mr. Donovan, though he never refused Mr. Wigan's hospitality, balanced the account by vilipending his friend's extravagant habits. While Mr. Wigan, probably giving him full credit for his gratitude, always spoke of him as 'Poor old Paddy Donovan.'

With Alfred Wigan, the eldest son, I was on very friendly terms. Nothing could be more unlike his father. His manner in his own house was exactly what it was on the stage. Albany Fonblanque, whose experiences began nearly forty years before mine, and who was not given to waste his praise, told me he considered Alfred Wigan the best 'gentleman' he had ever seen on the stage. I think this impression was due in a great measure to Wigan's entire absence of affectation, and to his persistent appeal to the 'judicious' but never to the 'groundlings.' Mrs. Alfred Wigan was also a consummate artiste.

CHAPTER XLII

THROUGH George Bird I made the acquaintance of the leading surgeons and physicians of the North London Hospital, where I frequently attended the operations of Erichsen, John Marshall, and Sir Henry Thompson, following them afterwards in their clinical rounds. Amongst the physicians, Professor Sydney Ringer remains one of my oldest friends. Both surgery and therapeutics interested me deeply. With regard to the first, curiosity was supplemented by the incidental desire to overcome the natural repugnance we all feel to the mere sight of blood.

Chemistry I studied in the laboratory of a professional friend of Dr. Bird's. After a while my teacher would leave me to carry out small commissions of a simple character which had been put into his hands, such as the analysis of water, bread, or other food-stuffs. He himself often had engagements elsewhere, and would leave me in possession of the laboratory, with a small urchin whom he had taught to be useful. This boy was of the meekest and mildest disposition. Whether his master had frightened him or not I do not know. He always spoke in a whisper, and with downcast eyes. He handled everything as if it was about to annihilate him, or he it, and looked as if he wouldn't bite—even a tartlet.

One day when I had finished my task, and we were alone, I bethought me of making some laughing gas, and trying the effect of it on the gentle youth. I offered him a shilling for the experiment, which, however, proved more expensive than I had bargained for. I filled a bladder with the gas, and putting a bit of broken pipe-stem in its neck for a mouthpiece, gave it to the boy to suck—and suck he did. In a few seconds his eyes dilated, his face became lividly white, and I had some trouble to tear the intoxicating bladder from his clutches. The moment I had done so, the true nature of the gutter-snipe exhibited itself. He began by cutting flip-flaps and turning windmills all round the room; then, before I could stop him, swept an armful of valuable apparatus from the tables, till the whole floor was strewn with wreck and poisonous solutions. The dismay of the chemist when he returned may be more easily imagined than described.

Some years ago, there was a well-known band of amateur musicians called the ‘Wandering Minstrels.’ This band originated in my rooms in Dean’s Yard. Its nucleus was composed of the following members: Seymour Egerton, afterwards Lord Wilton, Sir Archibald Macdonald my brother-in-law, Fred Clay, Bertie Mitford (the present Lord Redesdale—perhaps the finest amateur cornet and trumpet player of the day), and Lord Gerald Fitzgerald. Our concerts were given in the Hanover Square Rooms, and we played for charities all over the country.

To turn from the musical art to the art—or science is it called?—of self-defence, once so patronised by the highest fashion, there was at this time a famous pugilistic battle—the last of the old kind—fought between the English champion, Tom Sayers, and the American champion, Heenan. Bertie Mitford and I agreed to go and see it.

The Wandering Minstrels had given a concert in the Hanover Square Rooms. The fight was to take place on the following morning. When the concert was over, Mitford and I went to some public-house where the ‘Ring’ had assembled, and where tickets were to be bought, and instructions received. Fights when gloves were not used, and which, especially in this case, might end fatally, were of course illegal; and every precaution had been taken by the police to prevent it. A special train was to leave London Bridge Station about 6 A.M. We sat up all night in my room, and had to wait an hour in the train before the men with their backers arrived. As soon as it was daylight, we saw mounted police galloping on the roads adjacent to the line. No one knew where the train would pull up. Ten minutes after it did so, a ring was formed in a meadow close at hand. The men stripped, and tossed for places. Heenan won the toss, and with it a considerable advantage. He was nearly a head taller than Sayers, and the ground not being quite level, he chose the higher side of the ring. But this was by no means his only ‘pull.’ Just as the men took their places the sun began to rise. It was in Heenan’s back, and right in the other’s face.

Heenan began the attack at once with scornful confidence; and in a few minutes Sayers received a blow on the forehead above his guard which sent him slithering under the ropes; his head and neck, in fact, were outside the ring. He lay perfectly still, and in my ignorance, I thought he was done for. Not a bit of it. He was merely reposing quietly till his seconds put him on his legs. He came up smiling, but not a jot the worse. But in the course of another round or two, down he went again. The fight was going all one way. The Englishman seemed to be completely at the mercy of the giant. I was so disgusted that I said to my companion: ‘Come along, Bertie, the game’s up. Sayers is good for nothing.’

But now the luck changed. The bull-dog tenacity and splendid condition of Sayers were proof against these violent shocks. The sun was out of his eyes, and there was not a mark of a blow either on his face or his body. His temper, his presence of mind, his defence, and the rapidity of his movements, were perfect. The opening he had watched for came at last. He sprang off his legs, and with his whole weight at close quarters, struck Heenan’s cheek just under the eye. It was like the kick of a cart-horse. The shouts might have been heard half-a-mile off. Up till now, the betting called after each round had come to ‘ten to one on Heenan’; it fell at once to evens.

Heenan was completely staggered. He stood for a minute as if he did not know where he was or what had happened. And then, an unprecedented thing occurred. While he thus stood, Sayers put both hands behind his back, and coolly walked up to his foe to inspect the damage he had inflicted. I had hold of the ropes in Heenan’s corner, consequently could not see his face without leaning over them. When I did so, and before time was called, one eye was completely closed. What kind of generosity prevented Sayers from closing the other during the pause, is difficult to conjecture. But his forbearance did not make much difference. Heenan became more fierce, Sayers more daring. The same tactics were repeated; and now, no longer to the astonishment of the crowd, the same success rewarded them. Another sledge-hammer blow from the Englishman closed the remaining eye. The difference in the condition of the two men must have been enormous, for in five minutes Heenan was completely sightless.

Sayers, however, had not escaped scot-free. In countering the last attack, Heenan had broken one of the bones of Sayers’ right arm. Still the fight went on. It was now a brutal scene. The blind man could not defend himself from the other’s terrible punishment. His whole face was so swollen and distorted, that not a feature was recognisable. But he evidently had his design. Each time Sayers struck him and ducked, Heenan made a swoop with his long arms, and at last he caught his enemy. With gigantic force he got Sayers’ head down, and heedless of his captive’s pounding, backed step by step to the ring. When there, he forced Sayers’ neck on to the rope, and, with all his weight, leant upon the Englishman’s shoulders. In a few moments the face of the strangled man was black, his tongue was forced out of his mouth, and his eyes from their sockets. His arms fell powerless, and in a second or two more he would have been a corpse. With a wild yell the crowd rushed to the rescue. Warning cries of ‘The police! The police!’ mingled with the shouts. The ropes were cut, and a general scamper for the waiting train ended this last of the greatest prize-fights.

We two took it easily, and as the mob were scuttling away from the police, we saw Sayers with his backers, who were helping him to dress. His arm seemed to hurt him a little, but otherwise, for all the damage he had received, he might have been playing at football or lawn tennis.

We were quietly getting into a first-class carriage, when I was seized by the shoulder and roughly spun out of the way. Turning to resent the rudeness, I found myself face to face with Heenan. One of his seconds had pushed me on one side to let the gladiator get in. So completely blind was he, that the friend had to place his foot upon the step. And yet neither man had won the fight.

We still think—profess to think—the barbarism of the 'Iliad' the highest flight of epic poetry; if Homer had sung this great battle, how glorious we should have thought it! Beyond a doubt, man 'yet partially retains the characteristics that adapted him to an antecedent state.'

CHAPTER XLIII

Through the Cayley family, I became very intimate with their near relatives the Worsleys of Hovingham, near York. Hovingham has now become known to the musical world through its festivals, annually held at the Hall under the patronage of its late owner, Sir William Worsley. It was in his father's time that this fine place, with its delightful family, was for many years a home to me. Here I met the Alisons, and at the kind invitation of Sir Archibald, paid the great historian a visit at Possil, his seat in Scotland. As men who had achieved scientific or literary distinction inspired me with far greater awe than those of the highest rank—of whom from my childhood I had seen abundance—Alison's celebrity, his courteous manner, his oracular speech, his voluminous works, and his voluminous dimensions, filled me with too much diffidence and respect to admit of any freedom of approach. One listened to him, as he held forth of an evening when surrounded by his family, with reverential silence. He had a strong Scotch accent; and, if a wee bit prosy at times, it was sententious and polished prose that he talked; he talked invariably like a book. His family were devoted to him; and I felt that no one who knew him could help liking him.

When Thackeray was giving readings from 'The Four Georges,' I dined with Lady Grey and Landseer, and we three went to hear him. I had heard Dickens read 'The Trial of Bardell against Pickwick,' and it was curious to compare the style of the two great novelists. With Thackeray, there was an entire absence of either tone or colour. Of course the historical nature of his subject precluded the dramatic suggestion to be looked for in the Pickwick trial, thus rendering comparison inapposite. Nevertheless one was bound to contrast them. Thackeray's features were impassive, and his voice knew no inflection. But his elocution in other respects was perfect, admirably distinct and impressive from its complete obliteration of the reader.

The selection was from the reign of George the Third; and no part of it was more attentively listened to than his passing allusion to himself. 'I came,' he says, 'from India as a child, and our ship touched at an island on the way home, where my black servant took me a long walk over rocks and hills until we reached a garden, where we saw a man walking. "That is he," said the black man, "that is Bonaparte! He eats three sheep every day, and all the little children he can lay hands on!"' One went to hear Thackeray, to see Thackeray; and the child and the black man and the ogre were there on the stage before one. But so well did the lecturer perform his part, that ten minutes later one had forgotten him, and saw only George Selwyn and his friend Horace Walpole, and Horace's friend, Miss Berry—whom by the way I too knew and remember. One saw the 'poor society ghastly in its pleasures, its loves, its revelries,' and the redeeming vision of 'her father's darling, the Princess Amelia, pathetic for her beauty, her sweetness, her early death, and for the extreme passionate tenderness with which her father loved her.' The story told, as Thackeray told it, was as delightful to listen to as to read.

Not so with Dickens. He disappointed me. He made no attempt to represent the different characters by varied utterance; but whenever something unusually comic was said, or about to be said, he had a habit of turning his eyes up to the ceiling; so that, knowing what was coming, one nervously anticipated the upcast look, and for the moment lost the illusion. In both entertainments, the reader was naturally the central point of interest. But in the case of Dickens, when curiosity was satisfied, he alone possessed one; Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell were put out of court.

Was it not Charles Lamb, or was it Hazlitt, that could not bear to see Shakespeare upon the stage? I agree with him. I have never seen a Falstaff that did not make me miserable. He is even more impossible to impersonate than Hamlet. A player will spoil you the character of Hamlet, but he cannot spoil his thoughts. Depend upon it, we are fortunate not to have seen Shakespeare in his ghost of Royal Denmark.

In 1861 I married Lady Katharine Egerton, second daughter of Lord Wilton, and we took up our abode in Warwick Square, which, by the way, I had seen a few years before as a turnip field. My wife was an accomplished pianiste, so we had a great deal of music, and saw much of the artist world. I may mention one artistic dinner amongst our early efforts at housekeeping, which nearly ended with a catastrophe.

Millais and Dicky Doyle were of the party; music was represented by Joachim, Piatti, and Hallé. The late Lord and Lady de Ros were also of the number. Lady de Ros, who was a daughter of the Duke of Richmond, had danced at the ball given by her father at Brussels the night before Waterloo. As Lord de Ros was then Governor of the Tower, it will be understood that he was a veteran of some standing. The great musical trio were enchanting all ears with their faultless performance, when the sweet and soul-stirring notes of the Adagio were suddenly interrupted by a loud crash and a shriek. Old Lord de Ros was listening to the music on a sofa at the further end of the room. Over his head was a large picture in a heavy frame. What vibrations, what careless hanging, what mischievous Ate or Discord was at the bottom of it, who knows? Down came the picture on the top of the poor old General's head, and knocked him senseless on the floor. He had to be carried upstairs and laid upon a bed. Happily he recovered without serious injury. There were many exclamations of regret, but the only one I remember was Millais'. All he said was: 'And it is a good picture too.'

Sir Arthur Sullivan was one of our musical favourites. My wife had known him as a chorister boy in the Chapel Royal; and to the end of his days we were on terms of the closest intimacy and friendship. Through him we made the acquaintance of the Scott Russells. Mr. Scott Russell was the builder of the Crystal Palace. He had a delightful residence at Sydenham, the grounds of which adjoined those of the Crystal Palace, and were beautifully laid out by his friend Sir Joseph Paxton. One of the daughters, Miss Rachel Russell, was a pupil of Arthur Sullivan's. She had great musical talent, she was remarkably handsome, exceedingly clever and well-informed, and altogether exceptionally fascinating. Quite apart from Sullivan's genius, he was in every way a charming fellow. The teacher fell in love with the pupil; and, as naturally, his love was returned. Sullivan was but a youth, a poor and struggling music-master. And, very naturally again, Mrs. Scott Russell, who could not be expected to know what magic bâton the young maestro carried in his knapsack, thought her brilliant daughter might do better. The music lessons were put a stop to, and correspondence between the lovers was prohibited.

Once a week or so, either the young lady or the young gentleman would, quite unexpectedly, pay us a visit about tea or luncheon time. And, by the strangest coincidence, the other would be sure to drop in while the one was there. This went on for a year or two. But destiny forbade the banns. In spite of the large fortune acquired by Mr. Scott Russell—he was the builder of the 'Great Eastern' as well as the Crystal Palace—ill-advised or unsuccessful ventures robbed him of his well-earned wealth. His beautiful place at Sydenham had to be sold; and the marriage of Miss Rachel with young Arthur Sullivan was abandoned. She ultimately married an Indian official.

Her story may here be told to the end. Some years later she returned to England to bring her two children home for their education, going back to India without them, as Indian mothers have to do. The day before she sailed, she called to take leave of us in London. She was terribly depressed, but fought bravely with her trial. She never broke down, but shunted the subject, talking and laughing with flashes of her old vivacity, about music, books, friends, and 'dear old dirty London,' as she called it. When she left, I opened the street-door for her, and with both her hands in mine, bade her 'Farewell.' Then the tears fell, and her parting words were: 'I am leaving England never to see it again.' She was seized with cholera the night she reached Bombay, and died the following day.

To return to her father, the eminent engineer. He was distinctly a man of genius, and what is called 'a character.' He was always in the clouds—not in the vapour of his engine-rooms, nor busy inventing machines for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, but musing on metaphysical problems and abstract speculations about the universe generally. In other respects a perfectly simple-minded man.

It was in his palmy days that he invited me to run down to Sheerness with him, and go over the 'Great Eastern' before she left with the Atlantic cable. This was in 1865. The largest ship in the world, and the first Atlantic cable, were both objects of the greatest interest. The builder did not know the captain—Anderson—nor did the captain know the builder. But clearly, each would be glad to meet the other.

As the leviathan was to leave in a couple of days, everything on board her was in the wildest confusion. Russell could not find anyone who could find the Captain; so he began poking about with me, till we accidentally stumbled on the Commander. He merely said that he was come to take a parting glance at his 'child,' which did not seem of much concern to the over-busy captain. He never mentioned his own name, but introduced me as 'my friend Captain Cole.' Now, in those days, Captain Cole was well known as a distinguished naval officer. To Russell's absent and engineering mind, 'Coke' had suggested 'Cole,' and 'Captain' was inseparable from the latter. It was a name to conjure with. Captain Anderson took off his cap, shook me warmly by the hand, expressed his pleasure at making my acquaintance, and hoped I, and my friend Mr.—ahem—would come into his cabin and have luncheon, and then allow him to show me over his ship. Scott Russell was far too deeply absorbed in his surroundings to note any peculiarity in this neglect of himself and marked respect for 'Captain Cole.' We made the round of the decks, then explored the engine room. Here the designer found himself in an earthly paradise. He button-holed the engineer and inquired into every crank, and piston, and valve, and every bolt, as it seemed to me, till the officer in charge unconsciously began to ask opinions instead of offering explanations. By degrees the captain was equally astonished at the visitor's knowledge, and when at last my friend asked what had become of some fixture or other which he missed, Captain Anderson turned to him and exclaimed, 'Why, you seem to know more about the ship than I do.'

'Well, so I ought,' says my friend, never for a moment supposing that Anderson was in ignorance of his identity.

'Indeed! Who then are you, pray?'

'Who? Why, Scott Russell of course, the builder!'

There was a hearty laugh over it all. I managed to spare the captain's feelings by preserving my incognito, and so ended a pleasant day.

CHAPTER XLIV

In November, 1862, my wife and I received an invitation to spend a week at Compiègne with their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of the French. This was due to the circumstance that my wife's father, Lord Wilton, as Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron, had entertained the Emperor during his visit to Cowes.

We found an express train with the imperial carriages awaiting the arrival of the English guests at the station du Nord. The only other English besides ourselves were Lord and Lady Winchilsea with Lady Florence Paget, and Lord and Lady Castlerosse, now Lord and Lady Kenmare. These, however, had preceded us, so that with the exception of M. Drouyn de Lhuys, we had the saloon carriage to ourselves.

The party was a very large one, including the Walewskis, the Persignys, the Metternichs—he, the Austrian Ambassador—Prince Henri VII. of Reuss, Prussian Ambassador, the Prince de la Moskowa, son of Marshal Ney, and the Labedoyères, amongst the historical names. Amongst those of art and literature, of whom there were many, the only one whom I made the acquaintance of was Octave Feuillet. I happened to have brought his 'Comédies et Proverbes' and another of his books with me, never expecting to meet him; this so pleased him that we became allies. I was surprised to find that he could not even read English, which I begged him to learn for the sake of Shakespeare alone.

We did not see their Majesties till dinner-time. When the guests were assembled, the women and the men were arranged separately on opposite sides of the room. The Emperor and Empress then entered, each respectively welcoming those of their own sex, shaking hands and saying some conventional word in passing. Me, he asked whether I had brought my guns, and hoped we should have a good week's sport. To each one a word. Every night during the week we sat down over a hundred to dinner. The Army was largely represented. For the first time I tasted here the national frog, which is neither fish nor flesh. The wine was, of course, supreme; but after every dish a different wine was handed round. The evening entertainments were varied. There was the theatre in the Palace, and some of the best of the Paris artistes were requisitioned for the occasion. With them came Dèjazet, then nearly seventy, who had played before Buonaparte.

Almost every night there was dancing. Sometimes the Emperor would walk through a quadrille, but as a rule he would retire with one of his ministers, though only to a smaller boudoir at the end of the suite, where a couple of whist-tables were ready for the more sedate of the party. Here one evening I found Prince Metternich showing his Majesty a chess problem, of which he was the proud inventor. The Emperor asked whether I was fond of chess. I was very fond of chess, was one of the regular *habitués* of St. George's Chess Club, and had made a study of the game for years. The Prince challenged me to solve his problem in four moves. It was not a very profound one. I had the hardihood to discover that three, rather obvious moves, were sufficient. But as I was not Gil Blas, and the Prince was not the Archbishop of Grenada, it did not much matter. Like the famous prelate, his Excellency proffered his felicitations, and doubtless also wished me 'un peu plus de goût' with the addition of 'un peu moins de perspicacité.'

One of the evening performances was an exhibition of *poses-plastiques*, the subjects being chosen from celebrated pictures in the Louvre. Theatrical costumiers, under the command of a noted painter, were brought from Paris. The ladies of the court were carefully rehearsed, and the whole thing was very perfectly and very beautifully done. All the English ladies were assigned parts. But, as nearly all these depended less upon the beauties of drapery than upon those of nature, the English ladies were more than a little staggered by the demands of the painter and of the—*un*dressers. To the young and handsome Lady Castlerosse, then just married, was allotted the figure of Diana. But when informed that, in accordance with the original, the drapery of one leg would have to be looped up above the knee, her ladyship used very firm language; and, though of course perfectly ladylike, would, rendered into masculine terms, have signified that she would 'see the painter d—d first.' The celebrated 'Cruche cassée' of Greuze, was represented by the reigning beauty, the Marquise de Gallifet, with complete fidelity and success.

There was one stage of the performance which neither I nor Lord Castlerosse, both of us newly married, at all appreciated. This was the privileges of the Green-room, or rather of the dressing-rooms. The exhibition was given in the ball-room. On one side of this, until the night of the performances, an enclosure was boarded off. Within it, were compartments in which the ladies dressed and—undressed. At this operation, as we young husbands discovered, certain young gentlemen of the court were permitted to assist—I think I am not mistaken in saying that his Majesty was of the number. What kind of assistance was offered or accepted, Castlerosse and I, being on the wrong side of the boarding, were not in a position to know.

There was a door in the boarding, over which one expected to see, 'No admittance except on business,' or perhaps, 'on pleasure.' At this door I rapped, and rapped again impatiently. It was opened, only as wide as her face, by the empress.

'What do you want, sir?' was the angry demand.

'To see my wife, madame,' was the submissive reply.

‘You can’t see her; she is rehearsing.’

‘But, madame, other gentlemen—’

‘Ah! Mais, c’est un enfantillage! Allez-vous-en.’

And the door was slammed in my face.

‘Well,’ thought I, ‘the right woman is in the right place there, at all events.’

Another little incident at the performance itself also recalled the days and manners of the court of Louis XV. Between each tableau, which was lighted solely from the raised stage, the lights were put out, and the whole room left in complete darkness. Whenever this happened, the sounds of immoderate kissing broke out in all directions, accompanied by little cries of resistance and protestation. Until then, I had always been under the impression that humour of this kind was confined to the servants’ hall. One could not help thinking of another court, where things were managed differently.

But the truth is, these trivial episodes were symptomatic of a pervading tone. A no inconsiderable portion of the ladies seemed to an outsider to have been invited for the sake of their personal charms. After what has just been related, one could not help fancying that there were some amongst them who had availed themselves of the privilege which, according to Tacitus, was claimed by Vistilia before the Ædiles. So far, however, from any of these noble ladies being banished to the Isle of Seriphos, they seemed as much attached to the court as the court to them; and whatever the Roman Emperor might have done, the Emperor of the French was all that was most indulgent.

There were two days’ shooting, one day’s stag hunting, an expedition to Pierrefonds, and a couple of days spent in riding and skating. The shooting was very much after the fashion of that already described at Prince Esterhazy’s, though of a much more Imperial character. As in Hungary, the game had been driven into coverts cut down to the height of the waist, with paths thirty to forty yards apart, for the guns.

The weather was cold, with snow on the ground, but it was a beautifully sunny day. This was the party: the two ambassadors, the Prince de la Moskowa, Persigny, Walewski—Bonaparte’s natural son, and the image of his father—the Marquis de Toulongeon, Master of the Horse, and we three Englishmen. We met punctually at eleven in the grand saloon. Here the Emperor joined us, with his cigarette in his mouth, shook hands with each, and bade us take our places in the char-a-bancs. Four splendid Normandy greys, with postilions in the picturesque old costume, glazed hats and huge jack-boots, took us through the forest at full gallop, and in half an hour we were at the covert side. The Emperor was very cheery all the way. He cautioned me not to shoot back for the beaters’ sakes, and asked me how many guns I had brought.

‘Two only? that’s not enough, I will lend you some of mine.’

Arrived at our beat—‘Tire de Royallieu,’ we found a squadron of dismounted cavalry drawn up in line, ready to commence operations. They were in stable dress, with canvas trousers and spurs to their boots. Several officers were galloping about giving orders, the whole being under the command of a mounted chief in green uniform and cocked hat! The place of each shooter had been settled by M. de Toulongeon. I, being the only Nobody of the lot, was put on the extreme outside. The Emperor was in the middle; and although, as I noticed, he made some beautiful shots at rocketers, he was engaged much of the time in talking to ministers who walked behind, or beside, him.

Our servants were already in the places allotted to their masters, and each of us had two keepers to carry spare guns (the Emperor had not forgotten to send me two of his, which I could not shoot with, and never used), and a sergeant with a large card to prick off each head of game, not as it fell to the gun, but only after it was picked up. This conscientious scoring amused me greatly; for, as it chanced, my bag was a heavy one, and the Emperor’s marker sent constant messages to mine to compare notes, and so arrange, as it transpired, to keep His Majesty at the top of the score.

About half-past one we reached a clearing where *déjeuner* was awaiting us. The scene presented was striking. Around a tent in which every delicacy was spread out were numbers of little charcoal fires, where a still greater number of cooks in white caps and jackets were preparing dainty dishes; while the Imperial footmen bustling about brightened the picture with colour. After coffee all the cards were brought to his Majesty. When he had scanned them, he said to me across the table:

‘I congratulate you, Mr. Coke, upon having killed the most.’

My answer was, ‘After you, Sir.’

‘Yes,’ said he, giving his moustache an upward twist, but with perfect gravity, ‘I always kill the most.’

Just then the Empress and the whole court drove up. Presently she came into the tent and, addressing her husband, exclaimed:

‘Avez-vous bientôt fini, vous autres? Ah! que vous êtes des gourmands!’

Till the finish, she and the rest walked with the shooters. By four it was over. The total score was 1,387 head. Mine was 182, which included thirty-six partridges, two woodcocks, and four roedeer. This, in three and a half hours' shooting, with two muzzle-loaders (breech-loaders were not then in use), was an unusually good bag.

Fashion is capricious. When lunch was over I went to one of the charcoal fires, quite in the background, to light a cigarette. An aide-de-camp immediately pounced upon me, with the information that this was not permitted in company with the Empress. It reminded one at once of the ejaculation at Oliver Twist's bedside, 'Ladies is present, Mr. Giles.' After the shooting, I was told to go to tea with the Empress—a terrible ordeal, for one had to face the entire feminine force of the palace, nearly every one of whom, from the highest to the lowest, was provided with her own *cavaliere servente*.

The following night, when we assembled for dinner, I received orders to sit next to the Empress. This was still more embarrassing. It is true, one does not speak to a sovereign unless one is spoken to; but still one is permitted to make the initiative easy. I found that I was expected to take my share of the task; and by a happy inspiration, introduced the subject of the Prince Imperial, then a child of eight years old. The *mondaine* Empress was at once merged in the adoring mother; her whole soul was wrapped up in the boy. It was easy enough then to speculate on his career, at least so far as the building of castles in the air for fantasies to roam in. What a future he had before him!—to consolidate the Empire! to perfect the great achievement of his father, and render permanent the foundation of the Napoleonic dynasty! to build a superstructure as transcendent for the glories of Peace, as those of his immortal ancestor had been for War!

It was not difficult to play the game with such court cards in one's hand. Nor was it easy to coin these *phrases de sucrecandi* without sober and earnest reflections on the import of their contents. What, indeed, might or might not be the consequences to millions, of the wise or unwise or evil development of the life of that bright and handsome little fellow, now trotting around the dessert table, with the long curls tumbling over his velvet jacket, and the flowers in his hand for some pretty lady who was privileged to kiss him? Who could foretell the cruel doom—heedless of such favours and such splendid promises—that awaited the pretty child? Who could hear the brave young soldier's last shrieks of solitary agony? Who could see the forsaken body slashed with knives and assegais? Ah! who could dream of that fond mother's heart, when the end came, which eclipsed even the disasters of a nation!

One by-day, when my wife and I were riding with the Emperor through the forest of Compiègne, a rough-looking man in a blouse, with a red comforter round his neck, sprang out from behind a tree; and before he could be stopped, seized the Emperor's bridle. In an instant the Emperor struck his hand with a heavy hunting stock; and being free, touched his horse with the spur and cantered on. I took particular notice of his features and his demeanour, from the very first moment of the surprise. Nothing happened but what I have described. The man seemed fierce and reckless. The Emperor showed not the faintest signs of discomposure. All he said was, turning to my wife, 'Comme il avait l'air sournois, cet homme!' and resumed the conversation at the point where it was interrupted.

Before we had gone a hundred yards I looked back to see what had become of the offender. He was in the hands of two *gens d'armes*, who had been invisible till then.

'Poor devil,' thought I, 'this spells dungeon for you.'

Now, with Kinglake's acrimonious charge of the Emperor's personal cowardice running in my head, I felt that this exhibition of *sang froid*, when taken completely unawares, went far to refute the imputation. What happened later in the day strongly confirmed this opinion.

After dark, about six o'clock, I took a stroll by myself through the town of Compiègne. Coming home, when crossing the bridge below the Palace, I met the Emperor arm-in-arm with Walewski. Not ten minutes afterwards, whom should I stumble upon but the ruffian who had seized the Emperor's bridle? The same red comforter was round his neck, the same wild look was in his face. I turned after he had passed, and at the same moment he turned to look at me.

Would this man have been at large but for the Emperor's orders? Assuredly not. For, supposing he were crazy, who could have answered for his deeds? Most likely he was shadowed; and to a certainty the Emperor would be so. Still, what could save the latter from a pistol-shot? Yet, here he was, sauntering about the badly lighted streets of a town where his kenspeckle figure was familiar to every inhabitant. Call this fatalism if you will; but these were not the acts of a coward. I told this story to a friend who was well 'posted' in the club gossip of the day. He laughed.

'Don't you know the meaning of Kinglake's spite against the Emperor?' said he. '*Cherchez la femme*. Both of them were in love with Mrs. —'

This is the way we write our histories.

Wishing to explore the grounds about the palace before anyone was astir, I went out one morning about half-past eight. Seeing what I took to be a mausoleum, I walked up to it, found the door opened, and peeped in. It turned out to be a museum of Roman antiquities, and the Emperor was inside, arranging them. I immediately withdrew, but he called to me to come in.

He was at this time busy with his Life of Cæsar; and, in his enthusiasm, seemed pleased to have a listener to his instructive explanations; he even encouraged the curiosity which the valuable collection and his own remarks could not fail to awaken.

Not long ago, I saw some correspondence in the Times' and other papers about what Heine calls 'Das kleine welthistorische Hûtchen,' which the whole of Europe knew so well, to its cost. Some six or seven of the Buonaparte hats, so it appears, are still in existence. But I noticed, that though all were located, no mention was made of the one in the Luxembourg.

When we left Compiègne for Paris we were magnificently furnished with orders for royal boxes at theatres, and for admission to places of interest not open to the public. Thus provided, we had access to many objects of historical interest and of art—amongst the former, the relics of the great conqueror. In one glass case, under lock and key, was the 'world-historical little hat.' The official who accompanied us, having stated that we were the Emperor's guests, requested the keeper to take it out and show it to us. I hope no Frenchman will know it, but, I put the hat upon my head. In one sense it was a 'little' hat—that is to say, it fitted a man with a moderate sized skull—but the flaps were much larger than pictures would lead one to think, and such was the weight that I am sure it would give any ordinary man accustomed to our head-gear a still neck to wear it for an hour. What has become of this hat if it is not still in the Luxembourg?

CHAPTER XLV

Some few years later, while travelling with my family in Switzerland, we happened to be staying at Baveno on Lago Maggiore at the same time, and in the same hotel, as the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany. Their Imperial Highnesses occupied a suite of apartments on the first floor. Our rooms were immediately above them. As my wife was known to the Princess, occasional greetings passed from balcony to balcony.

One evening while watching two lads rowing from the shore in the direction of Isola Bella, I was aroused from my contemplation of a gathering storm by angry vociferations beneath me. These were addressed to the youths in the boat. The anxious father had noted the coming tempest; and, with hands to his mouth, was shouting orders to the young gentlemen to return. Loud and angry as cracked the thunder, the imperial voice o'ertopped it. Commands succeeded admonitions, and as the only effect on the rowers was obvious recalcitrancy, oaths succeeded both: all in those throat-clearing tones to which the German language so consonantly lends itself. In a few minutes the boat was immersed in the down-pour which concealed it.

The elder of the two oarsmen was no other than the future firebrand peacemaker, Miching Mallecho, our fierce little Tartarin de Berlin. One wondered how he, who would not be ruled, would come in turn to rule? That question is a burning one; and may yet set the world in flames to solve it.

A comic little incident happened here to my own children. There was but one bathing-machine. This, the two—a schoolboy and his sister—used in the early morning. Being rather late one day, they found it engaged; and growing impatient the boy banged at the door of the machine, with a shout in schoolboy's vernacular: 'Come, hurry up; we want to dip.' Much to the surprise of the guilty pair, an answer, also in the best of English, came from the inside: 'Go away, you naughty boy.' The occupant was the Imperial Princess. Needless to say the children bolted with a mingled sense of mischief and alarm.

About this time I joined a society for the relief of distress, of which Bromley Davenport was the nominal leader. The 'managing director,' so to speak, was Dr. Gilbert, father of Mr. W. S. Gilbert. To him I went for instructions. I told him I wanted to see the worst. He accordingly sent me to Bethnal Green. For two winters and part of a third I visited this district twice a week regularly. What I saw in the course of those two years was matter for a thoughtful—ay, or a thoughtless—man to think of for the rest of his days.

My system was to call first upon the clergyman of the parish, and obtain from him a guide to the severest cases of destitution. The guide would be a Scripture reader, and, as far as I remember, always a woman. I do not know whether the labours of these good creatures were gratuitous—they themselves were certainly poor, yet singularly earnest and sympathetic. The society supplied tickets for coal, blankets, and food. Needless to say, had these supplies been a thousand-fold as great, they would have done as little permanent good as those at my command.

In Bethnal Green the principal industry is, or was, silk-weaving by hand looms. Nearly all the houses were ancient and dilapidated. A weaver and his family would occupy part of a flat, consisting of two rooms perhaps, one of which would contain his loom. The room might be about seven feet high, nearly dark, lighted only by a lattice window, half of the panes of which would be replaced by dirty rags or old newspaper. As the loom was placed against the window the light was practically excluded. The foulness of the air and filth which this entailed may be too easily imagined. A couple of cases, taken almost at random, will sample scores as bad.

It is one of the darkest days of December. The Thames is nearly frozen at Waterloo Bridge. On the second floor of an old house in — Lane, in an unusually spacious room (or does it only look spacious because there is nothing in it save four human beings?) are a father, a mother, and a grown-up son and daughter. They scowl at the visitor as the Scripture reader opens the door. What is the meaning of the intrusion? Is he too come with a Bible instead of bread? The four are seated side by side on the floor, leaning against the wall, waiting for—death. Bedsteads, chairs, table, and looms have been burnt this week or more for fuel. The grate is empty now, and lets the freezing draught blow down the chimney. The temporary relief is accepted, but not with thanks. These four stubbornly prefer death to the work-house.

One other case. It is the same hard winter. The scene: a small garret in the roof, a low slanting little skylight, now covered six inches deep in snow. No fireplace here, no ventilation, so put your scented cambric to your nose, my noble Dives. The only furniture a scanty armful of—what shall we call it? It was straw once. A starving woman and a baby are lying on it, notwithstanding. The baby surely will not be there to-morrow. It has a very bad cold—and the mucus, and the—pah! The woman in a few rags—just a few—is gnawing a raw carrot. The picture is complete. There’s nothing more to paint. The rest—the whole indeed, that is the consciousness of it—was, and remains, with the Unseen.

You will say, ‘Such things cannot be’; you will say, ‘There are relieving officers, whose duty, etc., etc.’ May be. I am only telling you what I myself have seen. There is more goes on in big cities than even relieving officers can cope with. And who shall grapple with the causes? That’s the point.

Here is something else that I have seen. I have seen a family of six in one room. Of these, four were brothers and sisters, all within, none over, their teens. There were three beds between the six. When I came upon them they were out of work,—the young ones in bed to keep warm. I took them for very young married couples. It was the Scripture reader who undeceived me. This is not the exception to the rule, look you, but the rule itself. How will you deal with it? It is with Nature, immoral Nature and her heedless instincts that you have to deal. With what kind of fork will you expel her? It is with Nature’s wretched children, the *bêtes humaines*,

Quos venerem incertam rapientes more ferarum,

that your account lies. Will they cease to listen to her maddening whispers: ‘Unissez-vous, multipliez, il n’est d’autre loi, d’autre but, que l’amour?’ What care they for her aside—‘Et durez après, si vous le pouvez; cela ne me regarde plus’? It doesn’t regard them either.

The infallible panacea, so the ‘Progressive’ tell us, is education—lessons on the piano, perhaps? Doctor Malthus would be more to the purpose; but how shall we administer his prescriptions? One thing we might try to teach to advantage, and that is the elementary principles of hygiene. I am heart and soul with the Progressive as to the ultimate remedial powers of education. Moral advancement depends absolutely on the humanising influences of intellectual advancement. The foreseeing of consequences is a question of intelligence. And the appreciation of consequences which follow is the basis of morality. But we must not begin at the wrong end. The true foundation and condition of intellectual and moral progress postulates material and physical improvement. The growth of artificial wants is as much the cause as the effect of civilisation: they proceed *pari passu*. A taste of comfort begets a love of comfort. And this kind of love militates, not impotently, against the other; for self-interest is a persuasive counsellor, and gets a hearing when the blood is cool. Life must be more than possible, it must be endurable; man must have some leisure, some repose, before his brain-needs have a chance with those of his belly. He must have a coat to his back before he can stick a rose in its button-hole. The worst of it is, he begins—in Bethnal Green at least—with the rose-bud; and indulges, poor devil! in a luxury which is just the most expensive, and—in our Bethnal Greens—the most suicidal he could resort to.

There was one method I adopted with a show of temporary success now and then. It frequently happens that a man succumbs to difficulties for which he is not responsible, and which timely aid may enable him to overcome. An artisan may have to pawn or sell the tools by which he earns his living. The redemption of these, if the man is good for anything, will often set him on his legs. Thus, for example, I found a cobbler one day surrounded by a starving family. His story was common enough, severe illness being the burden of it. He was an intelligent little fellow, and, as far as one could judge, full of good intentions. His wife seemed devoted to him, and this was the best of vouchers. ‘If he had but a shilling or two to redeem his tools, and buy two or three old cast-off shoes in the rag-market which he could patch up and sell, he wouldn’t ask anyone for a copper.’

We went together to the pawnbroker’s, then to the rag-market, and the little man trotted home with an armful of old boots and shoes, some without soles, some without uppers; all, as I should have thought, picked out of dust-bins and rubbish heaps, his sunken eyes sparkling with eagerness and renovated hope. I looked in upon him about three weeks later. The family were sitting round a well provided tea-table, close to a glowing fire, the cheeks of the children smeared with jam, and the little cobbler hammering away at his last, too busy to partake of the bowl of hot tea which his wife had placed beside him.

The same sort of treatment was sometimes very successful with a skilful workman—like a carpenter, for instance. Here a double purpose might be served. Nothing more common in Bethnal Green than broken looms, and consequent disaster. There you had the ready-made job for the reinstated carpenter; and good could be done in a small way, at very little cost. Of coarse much discretion is needed; still, the Scripture readers or the relieving officers would know the characters of the destitute, and the visitor himself would soon learn to discriminate.

A system similar to this was the basis of the aid rendered by the Royal Society for the Assistance of Discharged Prisoners, which was started by my friend, Mr. Whitbread, the present owner of Southill, and which I joined in its early days at his instigation. The earnings of the prisoner were handed over by the gaols to the Society, and the Society employed them for his advantage—always, in the case of an artisan, by supplying him with the needful implements of his trade. But relief in which the pauper has no productive share, of which he is but a mere consumer, is of no avail.

One cannot but think that if instead of the selfish principles which govern our trades-unions, and which are driving their industries out of the country, trade-schools could be provided—such, for instance, as the cheap carving schools to be met with in many parts of Germany and the Tyrol—much might be done to help the bread-earners. Why could not schools be organised for the instruction of shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, smiths of all kinds, and the scores of other trades which in former days were learnt by compulsory apprenticeship? Under our present system of education the greater part of what the poor man’s children learn is clean forgotten in a few years; and if not, serves mainly to create and foster discontent, which vents itself in a passion for mass-meetings and the fuliginous oratory of our Hyde Parks.

The emigration scheme for poor-law children as advocated by Mrs. Close is the most promising, in its way, yet brought before the public, and is deserving of every support.

In the absence of any such projects as these, the hopelessness of the task, and the depressing effect of the contact with much wretchedness, wore me out. I had a nursery of my own, and was not justified in risking infectious diseases. A saint would have been more heroic, and could besides have promised that sweetest of consolations to suffering millions—the compensation of Eternal Happiness. I could not give them even hope, for I had none to spare. The root-evil I felt to be the overcrowding due to the reckless intercourse of the sexes; and what had Providence to do with a law of Nature, obedience to which entailed unspeakable misery?

CHAPTER XLVI

In the autumn following the end of the Franco-German war, Dr. Bird and I visited all the principal battlefields. In England the impression was that the bloodiest battle was fought at Gravelotte. The error was due, I believe, to our having no war correspondent on the spot. Compared with that on the plains between St. Marie and St. Privat, Gravelotte was but a cavalry skirmish. We were fortunate enough to meet a German artillery officer at St. Marie who had been in the action, and who kindly explained the distribution of the forces. Large square mounds were scattered about the plain where the German dead were buried, little wooden crosses being stuck into them to denote the regiment they had belonged to. At Gravelotte we saw the dogs unearthing the bodies from the shallow graves. The officer told us he did not think there was a family in Germany unrepresented in the plains of St. Privat.

It was interesting so soon after the event, to sit quietly in the little summer-house of the Château de Bellevue, commanding a view of Sedan, where Bismarck and Moltke and General de Wimpfen held their memorable Council. ‘Un terrible homme,’ says the story of the ‘Débâcle,’ ‘ce général de Moltke, qui gagnait des batailles du fond de son cabinet à coups d’algèbre.’

We afterwards made a walking tour through the Tyrol, and down to Venice. On our way home, while staying at Lucerne, we went up the Rigi. Soon after leaving the Kulm, on our descent to the railway, which was then uncompleted, we lost each other in the mist. I did not get to Vitznau till late at night, but luckily found a steamer just starting for Lucerne. The cabin was crammed with German students, each one smoking his pipe and roaring choruses to alternate singers. All of a sudden, those who were on their legs were knocked off them. The panic was instantaneous, for every one of us knew it was a collision. But the immediate peril was in the rush for the deck. Violent with terror, rough by nature, and full of beer, these wild young savages were formidable to themselves and others. Having arrived late, I had not got further than the cabin door, and was up the companion ladder at a bound. It was pitch dark, and piteous screams came up from the surrounding waters. At first it was impossible to guess what had happened. Were we rammed, or were we rammers? I pulled off my coats ready for a swim. But it soon became apparent that we had run into and sunk another boat.

The next morning the doctor and I went on to England. A week after I took up the ‘Illustrated News.’ There was an account of the accident, with an illustration of the cabin of the sunken boat. The bodies of passengers were depicted as the divers had found them.

On the very day the peace was signed I chanced to call on Sir Anthony Rothschild in New Court. He took me across the court to see his brother Lionel, the head of the firm. Sir Anthony bowed before him as though the great man were Plutus himself. He sat at a table alone, not in his own room, but in the immense counting-room, surrounded by a brigade of clerks. This was my first introduction to him. He took no notice of his brother, but received me as Napoleon received the emperors and kings at Erfurt—in other words, as he would have received his slippers from his valet, or as he did receive the telegrams which were handed to him at the rate of about one a minute.

The King of Kings was in difficulties with a little slip of black sticking-plaster. The thought of Gumpelino's Hyacinthos, *alias* Hirsch, flashed upon me. Behold! the mighty Baron Nathan come to life again; but instead of Hyacinthos paring his mightiness's *Hühneraugen*, he himself, in paring his own nails, had contrived to cut his finger.

'Come to buy Spanish?' he asked, with eyes intent upon the sticking-plaster.

'Oh no,' said I, 'I've no money to gamble with.'

'Hasn't Lord Leicester bought Spanish?'—never looking off the sticking-plaster, nor taking the smallest notice of the telegrams.

'Not that I know of. Are they good things?'

'I don't know; some people think so.'

Here a message was handed in, and something was whispered in his ear.

'Very well, put it down.'

'From Paris,' said Sir Anthony, guessing perhaps at its contents.

But not until the plaster was comfortably adjusted did Plutus read the message. He smiled and pushed it over to me. It was the terms of peace, and the German bill of costs.

'£200,000,000!' I exclaimed. 'That's a heavy reckoning. Will France ever be able to pay it?'

'Pay it? Yes. If it had been twice as much!' And Plutus returned to his sticking-plaster. That was of real importance.

Last autumn—1904, the literary world was not a little gratified by an announcement in the 'Times' that the British Museum had obtained possession of the original manuscript of Keats's 'Hyperion.' Let me tell the story of its discovery. During the summer of last year, my friend Miss Alice Bird, who was paying me a visit at Longford, gave me this account of it.

When Leigh Hunt's memoirs were being edited by his son Thornton in 1861, he engaged the services of three intimate friends of the family to read and collate the enormous mass of his father's correspondence. Miss Alice Bird was one of the chosen three. The arduous task completed, Thornton Hunt presented each of his three friends with a number of autographic letters, which, according to Miss Bird's description, he took almost at random from the eliminated pile. Amongst the lot that fell to Miss Bird's share was a roll of stained paper tied up with tape. This she was led to suppose—she never carefully examined it—might be either a copy or a draft of some friend's unpublished poem.

The unknown treasure was put away in a drawer with the rest. Here it remained undisturbed for forty-three years. Having now occasion to remove these papers, she opened the forgotten scroll, and was at once struck both with the words of the 'Hyperion,' and with the resemblance of the writing to Keats's.

She forthwith consulted the Keepers of the Manuscripts in the British Museum, with the result that her *trouvaille* was immediately identified as the poet's own draft of the 'Hyperion.' The responsible authorities soon after, offered the fortunate possessor five hundred guineas for the manuscript, but courteously and honestly informed her that, were it put up to auction, some American collector would be almost sure to give a much larger sum for it.

Miss Bird's patriotism prevailed over every other consideration. She expressed her wish that the poem should be retained in England; and generously accepted what was indubitably less than its market value.

CHAPTER XLVII

A MAN whom I had known from my school-days, Frederick Thistlethwayte, coming into a huge fortune when a subaltern in a marching regiment, had impulsively married a certain Miss Laura Bell. In her early days, when she made her first appearance in London and in Paris, Laura Bell's extraordinary beauty was as much admired by painters as by men of the world. Amongst her reputed lovers were Dhuleep Singh, the famous Marquis of Hertford, and Prince Louis Napoleon. She was the daughter of an Irish constable, and began life on the stage at Dublin. Her Irish wit and sparkling merriment, her cajolery, her good nature and her feminine artifice, were attractions which, in the eyes of the male sex, fully atoned for her youthful indiscretions.

My intimacy with both Mr. and Mrs. Thistlethwayte extended over many years; and it is but justice to her memory to aver that, to the best of my belief, no wife was ever more faithful to her husband. I speak of the Thistlethwaytes here for two reasons—absolutely unconnected in themselves, yet both interesting in their own way. The first is, that at my friend's house in Grosvenor Square I used frequently to meet Mr. Gladstone, sometimes alone, sometimes at dinner. As may be supposed, the dinner parties were of men, but mostly of men eminent in public life. The last time I met Mr. Gladstone there the Duke of Devonshire and Sir W. Harcourt were both present. I once dined with Mrs. Thistlethwayte in the absence of her husband, when the only others were Munro of Novar—the friend of Turner, and the envied possessor of a splendid gallery of his pictures—and the Duke of Newcastle—then a Cabinet Minister. Such were the notabilities whom the famous beauty gathered about her.

But it is of Mr. Gladstone that I would say a word. The fascination which he exercised over most of those who came into contact with him is incontestable; and everyone is entitled to his own opinion, even though unable to account for it. This, at least, must be my plea, for to me, Mr. Gladstone was more or less a Dr. Fell. Neither in his public nor in his private capacity had I any liking for him. Nobody cares a button for what a ‘man in the street’ like me says or thinks on subject matters upon which they have made up their minds. I should not venture, even as one of the crowd, to deprecate a popularity which I believe to be fast passing away, were it not that better judges and wiser men think as I do, and have represented opinions which I sincerely share. ‘He was born,’ says Huxley, ‘to be a leader of men, and he has debased himself to be a follower of the masses. If working men were to-day to vote by a majority that two and two made five, to-morrow Gladstone would believe it, and find them reasons for it which they had never dreamt of.’ Could any words be truer? Yes; he was not born to be a leader of men. He was born to be, what he was—a misleader of men. Huxley says he could be made to believe that two and two made five. He would try to make others believe it; but would he himself believe it? His friends will plead, ‘he might deceive himself by the excessive subtlety of his mind.’ This is the charitable view to take. But some who knew him long and well put another construction upon this facile self-deception. There were, and are, honourable men of the highest standing who failed to ascribe disinterested motives to the man who suddenly and secretly betrayed his colleagues, his party, and his closest friends, and tried to break up the Empire to satisfy an inordinate ambition, and an insatiable craving for power. ‘He might have been mistaken, but he acted for the best’?   Was he acting conscientiously for the best in persuading the ‘masses’ to look upon the ‘classes’—the war cries are of his coining—as their natural enemies, and worthy only of their envy and hatred? Is this the part of a statesman, of a patriot?

And for what else shall we admire Mr. Gladstone? Walter Bagehot, alluding to his egotism, wrote of him in his lifetime, ‘He longs to pour forth his own belief; he cannot rest till he has contradicted everyone else.’ And what was that belief worth? ‘He has scarcely,’ says the same writer, ‘given us a sentence that lives in the memory.’

Even his eloquent advocate, Mr. Morley, confesses surprise at his indifference to the teaching of evolution; in other words, his ignorance of, and disbelief in, a scientific theory of nature which has modified the theological and moral creeds of the civilised world more profoundly than did the Copernican system of the Universe.

The truth is, Mr. Gladstone was half a century behind the age in everything that most deeply concerned the destiny of man. He was a politician, and nothing but a politician; and had it not been for his extraordinary gift of speech, we should never have heard of him save as a writer of scholia, or as a college don, perhaps. Not for such is the temple of Fame.

> Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa.

Whatever may be thought now, Mr. Gladstone is not the man whom posterity will ennoble with the title of either ‘great’ or ‘good.’

My second reason for mentioning Frederick Thistlethwayte was one which at first sight may seem trivial, and yet, when we look into it, is of more importance than the renown of an ex-Prime Minister. If these pages are ever read, what follows will be as distasteful to some of my own friends as the above remarks to Mr. Gladstone’s.

Pardon a word about the writer himself—it is needed to emphasise and justify these *obiter dicta*. I was brought up as a sportsman: I cannot remember the days when I began to shoot. I had a passion for all kinds of sport, and have had opportunities of gratifying it such as fall to the lot of few. After the shootings of Glenquoich and Invergarry were lost to me through the death of Mr. Ellice, I became almost the sole guest of Mr. Thistlethwayte for twelve years at his Highland shooting of Kinlochmohr, not very far from Fort William. He rented the splendid deer forest of Mamore, extensive grouse moors, and a salmon river within ten minutes’ walk of the lodge. His marriage and his eccentricities of mind and temper led him to shun all society. We often lived in bothies at opposite ends of the forest, returning to the lodge on Saturday till Monday morning. For a sportsman, no life could be more enjoyable. I was my own stalker, taking a couple of gillies for the ponies, but finding the deer for myself—always the most difficult part of the sport—and stalking them for myself.

I may here observe that, not very long after I married, qualms of conscience smote me as to the justifiability of killing, *and wounding*, animals for amusement’s sake. The more I thought of it, the less it bore thinking about. Finally I gave it up altogether. But I went on several years after this with the deer-stalking; the true explanation of this inconsistency would, I fear, be that I had had enough of the one, but would never have enough of the other—one’s conscience adapts itself without much difficulty to one’s inclinations.

Between my host and myself, there was a certain amount of rivalry; and as the head forester was his stalker, the rivalry between our men aroused rancorous jealousy. I think the gillies on either side would have spoilt the others’ sport, could they have done so with impunity. For two seasons, a very big stag used occasionally to find its way into our forest from the Black Mount, where it was also known. Thistlethwayte had had a chance, and missed it; then my turn came. I got a long snap-shot end on at the galloping stag. It was an unsportsmanlike thing to do, but considering the rivalry and other temptations I fired, and hit the beast in the haunch. It was late in the day, and the wounded animal escaped.

Nine days later I spied the 'big stag' again. He was nearly in the middle of a herd of about twenty, mostly hinds, on the look-out. They were on a large open moss at the bottom of a corrie, whence they could see a moving object on every side of them. A stalk where they were was out of the question. I made up my mind to wait and watch.

Now comes the moral of my story. For hours I watched that stag. Though three hundred yards or so away from me, I could through my glass see almost the expression of his face. Not once did he rise or attempt to feed, but lay restlessly beating his head upon the ground for hour after hour. I knew well enough what that meant. I could not hear his groans. His plaints could not reach my ears, but they reached my heart. The refrain varied little: 'How long shall I cry and Thou wilt not hear?'—that was the monotonous burden of the moans, though sometimes I fancied it changed to: 'Lord how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?'

The evening came, and then, as is their habit, the deer began to feed up wind. The wounded stag seemed loth to stir. By degrees the last watchful hind fed quietly out of sight. With throbbing pulse and with the instincts of a fox—or prehistoric man, 'tis all the same—I crawled and dragged myself through the peat bog and the pools of water. But nearer than two hundred yards it was impossible to get; even to raise my head or find a tussock whereon to rest the rifle would have started any deer but this one. From the hollow I was in, the most I could see of him was the outline of his back and his head and neck. I put up the 200 yards sight and killed him.

A vivid description of the body is not desirable. It was almost fleshless, wasted away, except his wounded haunch. That was nearly twice its normal size; about one half of it was maggots. The stench drove us all away. This I had done, and I had done it for my pleasure!

After that year I went no more to Scotland. I blame no one for his pursuit of sport. But I submit that he must follow it, if at all, with Reason's eyes shut. Happily, your true sportsman does not violate his conscience. As a friend of mine said to me the other day, 'Unless you give a man of that kind something to kill, his own life is not worth having.' This, to be sure, is all he has to think about.

CHAPTER XLVIII

For eight or nine years, while my sons were at school, I lived at Rickmansworth. Unfortunately the Leweses had just left it. Moor Park belonged to Lord Ebury, my wife's uncle, and the beauties of its magnificent park and the amenities of its charming house were at all times open to us, and freely taken advantage of. During those nine years I lived the life of a student, and wrote and published the book I have elsewhere spoken of, the 'Creeds of the Day.'

Of the visitors of note whose acquaintance I made while I was staying at Moor Park, by far the most illustrious was Froude. He was too reserved a man to lavish his intimacy when taken unawares; and if he suspected, as he might have done by my probing, that one wanted to draw him out, he was much too shrewd to commit himself to definite expressions of any kind until he knew something of his interviewer. Reticence of this kind, on the part of such a man, is both prudent and commendable. But is not this habit of cautiousness sometimes carried to the extent of ambiguity in his 'Short Studies on Great Subjects'? The careful reader is left in no sort of doubt as to Froude's own views upon Biblical criticism, as to his theological dogmas, or his speculative opinions. But the conviction is only reached by comparing him with himself in different moods, by collating essay with essay, and one part of an essay with another part of the same essay. Sometimes we have an astute defence of doctrines worthy at least of a temperate apologist, and a few pages further on we wonder whether the writer was not masking his disdain for the credulity which he now exposes and laughs at. Neither excessive caution nor timidity are implied by his editing of the Carlyle papers; and he may have failed—who that has done so much has not?—in keeping his balance on the swaying slack-rope between the judicious and the injudicious. In his own line, however, he is, to my taste, the most scholarly, the most refined, and the most suggestive, of our recent essayists. The man himself in manner and in appearance was in perfect keeping with these attractive qualities.

While speaking of Moor Park and its kind owner I may avail myself of this opportunity to mention an early reminiscence of Lord Ebury's concerning the Grosvenor estate in London.

Mr. Gladstone was wont to amuse himself with speculations as to the future dimensions of London; what had been its growth within his memory; what causes might arise to cheek its increase. After listening to his remarks on the subject one day at dinner, I observed that I had heard Lord Ebury talk of shooting over ground which is now Eaton Square. Mr. Gladstone of course did not doubt it; but some of the young men smiled incredulously. I afterwards wrote to Lord Ebury to make sure that I had not erred. Here is his reply:

‘Moor Park, Rickmansworth: January 9, 1883.

> ‘My dear Henry,—What you said I had told you about snipe-shooting is quite true, though I think I ought to have mentioned a space rather nearer the river than Eaton Square. In the year 1815, when the battle of Waterloo was fought, there was nothing behind Grosvenor Place but the (—?) fields—so called, a place something like the Scrubbs, where the household troops drilled. That part of Grosvenor Place where the Grosvenor Place houses now stand was occupied by the Lock Hospital and Chapel, and it ended where the small houses are now to be found. A little farther, a somewhat tortuous lane called the King’s Road led to Chelsea, and, I think, where now St. Peter’s, Pimlico, was afterwards built. I remember going to a breakfast at a villa belonging to Lady Buckinghamshire. The Chelsea Waterworks Company had a sort of marshy place with canals and osier beds, now, I suppose, Ebury Street, and here it was that I was permitted to go and try my hand at snipe-shooting, a special privilege given to the son of the freeholder.
>
> ‘The successful fox-hunt terminating in either Bedford or Russell Square is very strange, but quite appropriate, commemorated, I suppose, by the statue [342] there erected.

Yours affectionately,
‘E.’

The successful ‘fox-hunt’ was an event of which I told Lord Ebury as even more remarkable than his snipe-shooting in Belgravia. As it is still more indicative of the growth of London in recent times it may be here recorded.

In connection with Mr. Gladstone’s forecasts, I had written to the last Lord Digby, who was a grandson of my father’s, stating that I had heard—whether from my father or not I could not say—that he had killed a fox where now is Bedford Square, with his own hounds.

Lord Digby replied:

‘Minterne, Dorset: January 7, 1883.

> ‘My dear Henry,—My grandfather killed a fox with his hounds either in Bedford or Russell Square. Old Jones, the huntsman, who died at Holkham when you were a child, was my informant. I asked my grandfather if it was correct. He said “Yes”—he had kennels at Epping Place, and hunted the roodings of Essex, which, he said, was the best scenting-ground in England.

‘Yours affectionately,
‘Digby.’

(My father was born in 1754.)

Mr. W. S. Gilbert had been a much valued friend of ours before we lived at Rickmansworth. We had been his guests for the ‘first night’ of almost every one of his plays—plays that may have a thousand imitators, but the speciality of whose excellence will remain unrivalled and inimitable. His visits to us introduced him, I think, to the picturesque country which he has now made his home. When Mr. Gilbert built his house in Harrington Gardens he easily persuaded us to build next door to him. This led to my acquaintance with his neighbour on the other side, Mr. Walter Cassels, now well known as the author of ‘Supernatural Religion.’

When first published in 1874, this learned work, summarising and elaborately examining the higher criticism of the four Gospels up to date, created a sensation throughout the theological world, which was not a little intensified by the anonymity of its author. The virulence with which it was attacked by Dr. Lightfoot, the most erudite bishop on the bench, at once demonstrated its weighty significance and its destructive force; while Mr. Morley’s high commendation of its literary merits and the scrupulous equity of its tone, placed it far above the level of controversial diatribes.

In my ‘Creeds of the Day’ I had made frequent references to the anonymous book; and soon after my introduction to Mr. Cassels spoke to him of its importance, and asked him whether he had read it. He hesitated for a moment, then said:

‘We are very much of the same way of thinking on these subjects. I will tell you a secret which I kept for some time even from my publishers—I am the author of “Supernatural Religion.”’

From that time forth, we became the closest of allies. I know no man whose tastes and opinions and interests are more completely in accord with my own than those of Mr. Walter Cassels. It is one of my greatest pleasures to meet him every summer at the beautiful place of our mutual and sympathetic friend, Mrs. Robertson, on the skirts of the Ashtead forest, in Surrey.

The winter of 1888 I spent at Cairo under the roof of General Sir Frederick Stephenson, then commanding the English forces in Egypt. I had known Sir Frederick as an ensign in the Guards. He was adjutant of his regiment at the Alma, and at Inkerman. He is now Colonel of the Coldstreams and Governor of the Tower. He has often been given a still higher title, that of ‘the most popular man in the army.'

Everybody in these days has seen the Pyramids, and has been up the Nile. There is only one name I have to mention here, and that is one of the best-known in the world. Mr. Thomas Cook was the son of the original inventor of the 'Globe-trotter.' But it was the extraordinary energy and powers of organisation of the son that enabled him to develop to its present efficiency the initial scheme of the father.

Shortly before the General's term expired, he invited Mr. Cook to dinner. The Nile share of the Gordon Relief Expedition had been handed over to Cook. The boats, the provisioning of them, and the river transport service up to Wady Halfa, were contracted for and undertaken by Cook.

A most entertaining account he gave of the whole affair. He told us how the Mudir of Dongola, who was by way of rendering every possible assistance, had offered him an enormous bribe to wreck the most valuable cargoes on their passage through the Cataracts.

Before Mr. Cook took leave of the General, he expressed the regret felt by the British residents in Cairo at the termination of Sir Frederick's command; and wound up a pretty little speech by a sincere request that he might be allowed to furnish Sir Frederick *gratis* with all the means at his disposal for a tour through the Holy Land. The liberal and highly complimentary offer was gratefully acknowledged, but at once emphatically declined. The old soldier, (at least, this was my guess,) brave in all else, had not the courage to face the tourists' profanation of such sacred scenes.

Dr. Bird told me a nice story, a pendant to this, of Mr. Thomas Cook's liberality. One day, before the Gordon Expedition, which was then in the air, Dr. Bird was smoking his cigarette on the terrace in front of Shepherd's Hotel, in company with four or five other men, strangers to him and to one another. A discussion arose as to the best means of relieving Gordon. Each had his own favourite general. Presently the doctor exclaimed: 'Why don't they put the thing into the hands of Cook? I'll be bound to say he would undertake it, and do the job better than anyone else.'

'Do you know Cook, sir?' asked one of the smokers who had hitherto been silent.

'No, I never saw him, but everybody knows he has a genius for organisation; and I don't believe there is a general in the British Army to match him.'

When the company broke up, the silent stranger asked the doctor his name and address, and introduced himself as Thomas Cook. The following winter Dr. Bird received a letter enclosing tickets for himself and Miss Bird for a trip to Egypt and back, free of expense, 'in return for his good opinion and good wishes.'

After my General's departure, and a month up the Nile, I—already disillusioned, alas!—rode through Syria, following the beaten track from Jerusalem to Damascus. On my way from Alexandria to Jaffa I had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of an agreeable fellow-traveller, Mr. Henry Lopes, afterwards member for Northampton, also bound for Palestine. We went to Constantinople and to the Crimea together, then through Greece, and only parted at Charing Cross.

It was easy to understand Sir Frederick Stephenson's (supposed) unwillingness to visit Jerusalem. It was probably far from being what it is now, or even what it was when Pierre Loti saw it, for there was no railway from Jaffa in our time. Still, what Loti pathetically describes as 'une banalité de banlieue parisienne,' was even then too painfully casting its vulgar shadows before it. And it was rather with the forlorn eyes of the sentimental Frenchman than with the veneration of Dean Stanley, that we wandered about the ever-sacred Aceldama of mortally wounded and dying Christianity.

One dares not, one could never, speak irreverently of Jerusalem. One cannot think heartlessly of a disappointed love. One cannot tear out creeds interwoven with the tenderest fibres of one's heart. It is better to be silent. Yet is it a place for unwept tears, for the deep sadness and hard resignation borne in upon us by the eternal loss of something dearer once than life. All we who are weary and heavy laden, in whom now shall we seek the rest which is not nothingness?

My story is told, but I fain would take my leave with words less sorrowful. If a man has no better legacy to bequeath than bid his fellow-beings despair, he had better take it with him to his grave.

> We know all this, we know!

But it is in what we do not know that our hope and our religion lies. Thrice blessed are we in the certainty that here our range is infinite. This infinite that makes our brains reel, that begets the feeling that makes us 'shrink,' is perhaps the most portentous argument in the logic of the sceptic. Since the days of Laplace, we have been haunted in some form or other with the ghost of the *Mécanique Céleste*. Take one or two commonplaces from the text-books of astronomy:

Every half-hour we are about ten thousand miles nearer to the constellation of Lyra. 'The sun and his system must travel at his present rate for far more than a million years (divide this into half-hours) before we have crossed the abyss between our present position and the frontiers of Lyra' (Ball's 'Story of the Heavens').

'Sirius is about one million times as far from us as the sun. If we take the distance of Sirius from the earth and subdivide it into one million equal parts, each of these parts would be long enough to span the great distance of 92,700,000 miles from the earth to the sun,' yet Sirius is one of the *nearest* of the stars to us.

The velocity with which light traverses space is 186,300 miles a second, at which rate it has taken the rays from Sirius which we may see to-night, nine years to reach us. The proper motion of Sirius through space is about one thousand miles a minute. Yet 'careful alignment of the eye would hardly detect that Sirius was moving, in . . . even three or four centuries.'

'There may be, and probably are, stars from which Noah might be seen stepping into the Ark, Eve listening to the temptation of the serpent, or that older race, eating the oysters and leaving the shell-heaps behind them, when the Baltic was an open sea' (Froude's 'Science of History').

Facts and figures such as these simply stupefy us. They vaguely convey the idea of something immeasurably great, but nothing further. They have no more effect upon us than words addressed to some poor 'bewildered creature, stunned and paralysed by awe; no more than the sentence of death to the terror-stricken wretch at the bar. Indeed, it is in this sense that the sceptic uses them for our warning.

'Seit Kopernikus,' says Schopenhauer, 'kommen die Theologen mit dem lieben Gott in Verlegenheit.' 'No one,' he adds, 'has so damaged Theism as Copernicus.' As if limitation and imperfection in the celestial mechanism would make for the belief in God; or, as if immortality were incompatible with dependence. Des Cartes, for one, (and he counts for many,) held just the opposite opinion.

Our sun and all the millions upon millions of suns whose light will never reach us are but the aggregation of atoms drawn together by the same force that governs their orbit, and which makes the apple fall. When their heat, however generated, is expended, they die to frozen cinders; possibly to be again diffused as nebulæ, to begin again the eternal round of change.

What is life amidst this change? 'When I consider the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him?'

But is He mindful of us? That is what the sceptic asks. Is He mindful of life here or anywhere in all this boundless space? We have no ground for supposing (so we are told) that life, if it exists at all elsewhere, in the solar system at least, is any better than it is here? 'Analogy compels us to think,' says M. France, one of the most thoughtful of living writers, 'that our entire solar system is a gehenna where the animal is born for suffering. . . . This alone would suffice to disgust me with the universe.' But M. France is too deep a thinker to abide by such a verdict. There must be something 'behind the veil.' 'Je sens que ces immensités ne sont rien, et qu'enfin, s'il y a quelque chose, ce quelque chose n'est pas ce que nous voyons.' That is it. All these immensities are not 'rien,' but they are assuredly not what we take them to be. They are the veil of the Infinite, behind which we are not permitted to see.

It were the seeing Him, no flesh shall dare.

The very greatness proves our impotence to grasp it, proves the futility of our speculations, and should help us best of all though outwardly so appalling, to stand calm while the snake of unbelief writhes beneath our feet. The unutterable insignificance of man and his little world connotes the infinity which leaves his possibilities as limitless as itself.

Spectrology informs us that the chemical elements of matter are everywhere the same; and in a boundless universe where such unity is manifested there must be conditions similar to those which support life here. It is impossible to doubt, on these grounds alone, that life does exist elsewhere. Were we rashly to assume from scientific data that no form of animal life could obtain except under conditions similar to our own, would not reason rebel at such an inference, on the mere ground that to assume that there is no conscious being in the universe save man, is incomparably more unwarrantable, and in itself incredible?

Admitting, then, the hypothesis of the universal distribution of life, has anyone the hardihood to believe that this is either the best or worst of worlds? Must we not suppose that life exists in every stage of progress, in every state of imperfection, and, conversely, of advancement? Have we still the audacity to believe with the ancient Israelites, or as the Church of Rome believed only three centuries ago, that the universe was made for us, and we its centre? Or must we not believe that—infinity given—the stages and degrees of life are infinite as their conditions? And where is this to stop? There is no halting place for imagination till we reach the *Anima Mundi*, the infinite and eternal Spirit from which all Being emanates.

The materialist and the sceptic have forcible arguments on their side. They appeal to experience and to common sense, and ask pathetically, yet triumphantly, whether aspiration, however fervid, is a pledge for its validity, 'or does being weary prove that he hath where to rest?' They smile at the flights of poetry and imagination, and love to repeat:

Fools! that so often here
Happiness mocked our prayer,
I think might make us fear
A like event elsewhere;
Make us not fly to dreams, but moderate desire.

But then, if the other view is true, the Elsewhere is not the Here, nor is there any conceivable likeness between the two. It is not mere repugnance to truths, or speculations rather, which we dread, that makes us shrink from a creed so shallow, so palpably inept, as atheism. There are many sides to our nature, and I see not that reason, doubtless our trustiest guide, has one syllable to utter against our loftiest hopes. Our higher instincts are just as much a part of us as any that we listen to; and reason, to the end, can never dogmatise with what it is not conversant.

FOOTNOTES

[342] Alluding to the statue of Fox.

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