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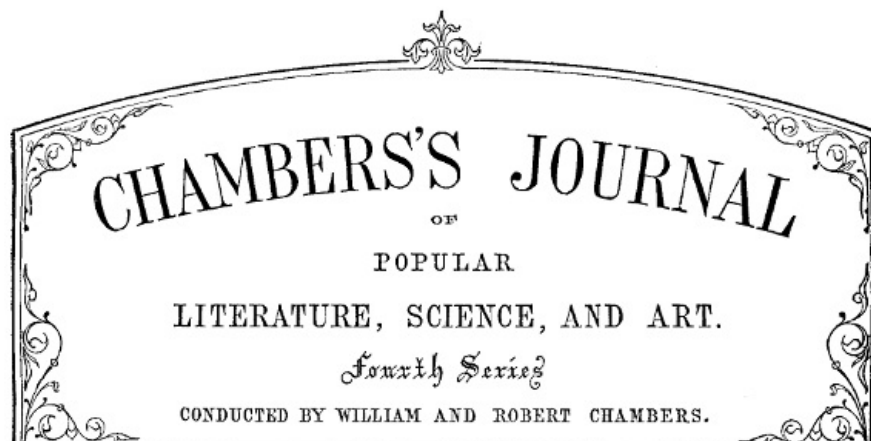
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**CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL
OF
POPULAR
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.**

{785}

CONTENTS

[A BUNCH OF KEYS.](#)
[THE LAND OF THE INCAS.](#)
[A CAST OF THE NET.](#)
[AN EXTRAORDINARY PROJECT.](#)
[GORDON.](#)
[NARCOTISM.](#)
[LIFE IN A MILITARY PRISON.](#)
[DESOLATE.](#)



A BUNCH OF KEYS.

I AM a professional man, and reside in the West End of London. One morning some few months back, my assistant on coming to attend to his duties produced a bunch of keys, which he informed me he had just picked up at the corner of a street leading from Oxford Street.

'Hadn't they best be handed over to the police?' suggested my assistant. I wish to goodness I had at once closed with his suggestion; but I didn't, much to my own cost, as will be presently seen.

'Well, I don't know,' was my answer. 'I rather think it will be a wiser plan to advertise them, if the owner is really to have a chance of recovering them; for to my mind, articles found in that way and handed over to the police are rarely heard of again.'

An advertisement for the *Times* was duly drawn up and sent off for insertion. It merely stated where the keys had been picked up, and where the owner of the bunch could have it returned to him on giving a proper description. The next morning the advertisement appeared; and though I half expected that some applications might be made later on in the same day, it passed over quite quietly. But the following morning I had a foretaste of the trouble that awaited me so soon as the postman had deposited my letters in the box and given his accustomed knock. A glance at my table shewed me that my correspondence was very considerably beyond its average that morning. The very first letter I opened was in reference to the advertisement; and before I had gone through the collection I found there were over twenty applications for the bunch of keys in my possession. Some of the writers took the trouble to describe the keys they had lost; but none of them were in the least like those that had been picked up by my assistant. Some did not take the trouble to give any description at all, or to state if they had been in the part of the town where the keys were found; and a few boldly claimed them on the strength of having dropped a bunch miles from the spot indicated in the advertisement!

By the time I had got through my letters and my breakfast, my servant came to tell me that my waiting-room was already full of people—'mostly ladies,' he said—though it was nearly two hours before the time I was accustomed to see any one professionally. With a foreboding that a good deal of worry and a loss of much valuable time was in store for me, I entered my consulting-room, and gave orders that the ladies should be admitted in the order of their arrival. They were all applicants for the keys; and out of the sixteen persons that were waiting, fourteen were ladies. The two gentlemen were soon despatched. They *had* lost keys, near the spot for anything they could tell; but on being satisfied that what had been found did in no way agree with the description of what they had lost, they apologised for the trouble and went at once.

But it was no such easy matter to get rid of my fourteen lady-applicants. Some of them were for inflicting upon me a narration of family affairs that had not the most remote connection with the business in hand. A few kept closely enough to the subject on which they had come; but would not take a denial that the keys in my possession were not the least like those they said they had lost; and it was only at the sacrifice of some of my usual politeness that I was able to get rid of them. Not one of the morning's arrival could make out anything like a fair claim, and one or two owned that they had not even been in the quarter where the keys were found on the day specified.

More letters, more applicants, came as the day wore on; and I began heartily to repent of my well-meant desire to benefit my fellow-mortals by taking the trouble to find out the rightful owner of a lost article. I was just on the point of giving orders to my servant to put off all further applicants until the following morning, when he ushered in a comfortable-looking lady of middle age, who proceeded straight to business by at once describing with the greatest accuracy the bunch of keys that had given me so much anxiety that day; and assuring me that she had passed the spot indicated in the advertisement on the morning they were found. {786}

'Nine keys on the bunch, all Chubb's patent; three very small ones, five of various sizes, and one latch-key longer than any of the others.'

The description was perfect. Some of the other applicants had curiously enough been right as to the number, but wrong as to description.

I at once told my lady visitor that I had no doubt the keys were hers; and that I was ready to hand them over to her. But I ventured to add that it would give me greater security were she to permit my assistant to accompany her to her residence, and there, in his presence, to open the different locks to which the keys belonged. To this proposal not the smallest objection was raised. She begged I would call my assistant, as she had a cab waiting at the door. The direction was given to some place in Bloomsbury, and they drove off. In less than an hour my assistant returned. He stated that the lady opened the street door with the latch-key, and that the other eight keys opened desks, writing-tables, cash-boxes, &c.—all quite correct and satisfactorily. The expense of the advertisement was of course paid.

Congratulating myself that this troublesome business was well over, and mentally resolving that another time, under similar circumstances, I should act on my assistant's suggestion, and hand such matters over to the police, I gave orders that all applicants that might come were to be told that the rightful owner had been found and that the keys were disposed of.

Two days passed, and I had almost dismissed the whole affair from my mind. On the morning of the third day my attention was attracted by an altercation going on between my servant and an

irate lady—well advanced in years—to whom he refused admittance. Anxious to escape disturbance, I gave orders that she should be shewn into my consulting-room, where I presently went to see what she wanted.

'I want to know why you never answered my letter about the bunch of keys you advertised as having found, and which I lost? I have come for them now.'

'But, madam, none of the letters described the keys accurately, and I was therefore not bound to notice any of the written applications that reached me.'

'Not describe them properly! But I *can* describe them; they were nine in number on the bunch.'

'So far, that is right, madam. Proceed with your description.'

The description was entirely wrong; and I told her so. I told her, moreover, that the rightful owner had been found, who had not only described the keys properly, but who had taken my assistant to her house and had used each individual key in his presence. I added that if she were not satisfied, I could furnish her with the address of the lady to whom the keys had been given up, and that she might call and try to establish her claim if she fancied she had one.

She was very far from being satisfied. She wanted to argue the matter further and, as I feared, to an unreasonable length. I told her firmly I could waste no further time on her; whereupon she left vowing vengeance.

The threats of the old lady did not much disturb me; but they were not altogether so unmeaning as I supposed, for in two days thereafter a summons was handed into me, demanding my presence at the police court of the district, to answer for my refusal to deliver up to the rightful owner property belonging to her, which I owned to having found, but refused to account for.

That I was very much annoyed may be easily supposed; but at the same time I could not help being somewhat amused, bearing in recollection how I had tried to satisfy the unreasonable dame, who had evidently more money than wit, seeing she was ready to waste it on so hopeless a case.

I duly made my appearance before the worthy magistrate, whom I happened to know slightly, and who could not restrain an amused grin when I was called forward. My assistant accompanied me as a matter of course.

The old lady had engaged a smart lawyer, who did his best in trying to make out a case; but his client rather weakened his statement by her inconsequential answers to both her counsel and the magistrate. My answer was easy. I shewed how the prosecutrix had utterly failed in describing the keys. I told that the rightful owner had rightly described them; and I put my assistant into the box to prove his having seen every key in the bunch fitted into its proper lock.

'Were you passing along Oxford Street on the morning that this bunch of keys was found?' asked the magistrate of the old lady.

'I was that way in an omnibus in the afternoon,' was the answer.

'But the keys in question were found in the morning, and were lying on the pavement,' remarked His Worship.

'Ah, I don't know how that might be,' said my persecutor; 'but I know I lost a bunch of keys.'

'Well, the case is dismissed; and you must pay expenses.' And so ended the case.

Now I have no doubt the old lady, though so wrong-headed in the claim she set up against me, had really lost a bunch of keys on the day my assistant made his—for me—unlucky find. Nor do I for a moment doubt the fact of some of the other applicants having also lost keys on the same day and perhaps near the same spot. But the applications by letter and personally numbered altogether not far short of fifty; and it may be set down as a moral certainty that they did not all lose, each of them, a bunch of keys on that particular day, and in Oxford Street—without being particular as to the spot. My theory is, that some of them had probably got their pockets picked of their keys while travelling by omnibus, and could not of course tell exactly where they lost them. Others may have simply mislaid their keys, and jumped to the conclusion that they were lost. Some others, I fear, had not lost keys at all, but merely came to my place out of idle curiosity. All of them, I know, gave me more trouble than I ever hope to have again in an affair of the kind.

[We can hardly say that the foregoing narrative, to call it so, is overstrained. It points to a marvellous want of logical precision in reasoning which is far from uncommon. Some years ago, in these pages, we mentioned a droll case within our own experience. One day we chanced to find a brooch, and advertised the fact in the newspapers. Next day a lady called on us to say that she had lost a ring, and asked if we knew anything about it. 'Madam,' was our reply, 'you must understand that it was a brooch we found, and not a ring.' 'O yes, that maybe so; but I thought as you were in the way of finding things, you might perhaps have seen something of my ring.' A very pretty example this of want of common-sense. Our advice to all who happen to find any article of value on the street is, to take it at once to the police office, where it may be reclaimed by the owner. Those who will not take this trouble, should let the article alone. Finding does not constitute ownership. We knew a gentleman, now deceased, who in the course of his life punctiliously refrained from picking up any article of value on the street, as the article was not his, and he might have been brought into trouble. This was being too fastidious, for it was allowing the article to be appropriated by possibly some dishonest person. True kindness and true honesty consist in lodging the article found, at the police office, whence, if no owner casts

THE LAND OF THE INCAS.

PERU recalls to every thoughtful student of history not only the half-barbaric splendour of the empire of the Incas, but the vanished prestige and glory of their Spanish conquerors. The gorgeous figure of Pizarro, the stately hidalgo, the successful captain, the ruthless soldier of fortune, meets us still at every step in the once rich Indian empire he won for Spain. On that low swampy mangrove-fringed stretch of coast, a tangled maze of vines and flowering creepers, the half-famished Castilian adventurer landed in 1524. And here, where the full tide of the Pacific rolls in upon the beach in columns of snowy foam, he, in 1535, founded Lima, the 'city of the kings.'

To examine the cities of the Incas, their ruined palaces, and other objects of note in this interesting region, was a task undertaken and carried out by Mr Squier, whose researches have been embodied in a volume entitled the *Land of the Incas*, the perusal of which enables us to offer the following items to our readers.

The coast of Peru is arid and barren, lined with guano islands, which although adding little to the charm of the scenery, are found as lucrative to-day as the mines of Potosi and Pasco were in the heyday of Spanish greatness. Thanks to this useful but unfragrant compost, Pizarro's city of the kings is still rich and flourishing, though the veins of silver are exhausted, and the golden sands no longer glitter with the precious ore, which fired the Spanish breasts of old with such fierce cupidity. It is very unhealthy, and although in the tropics, the climate for six months in the year is extremely damp and almost cold. Lima, which stands in an earthquake region, is built so as to sustain the least possible damage from the ever recurring shocks of those alarming phenomena. The private houses are never more than two stories in height. They have flat roofs and projecting balconies, and are constructed (one can hardly say built) of cane, plastered with mud, and painted in imitation of stone. Most of them have courts with open galleries in the Moorish style, extending along the four sides; and many of them have towers, from which, in addition to the surrounding scenery, an extended view of acres of flat roofs may be obtained—the said flat roofs being piled with heaps of refuse, filth, and all manner of abominations; very often they are used as poultry-yards, and here the buzzards, which act as scavengers in all the South American cities, roost at night.

The furniture in the better class of these wicker and mud-built dwellings is often very fine: antique plate, velvet hangings, costly mirrors, and family portraits, that smile or frown upon you with all the charm or vigour the brush of Vandyke or Velasquez was able to impart. The *pasios* or public walks are planted with trees, and the arcades, which are lined with fine shops, are a very favourite promenade. The inhabitants of Lima of all grades are remarkably fond of flowers, particularly of roses, which they contrive to keep in bloom all the year round. 'Roses,' Mr Squier says, 'bloom in every court and blush on every balcony, and decorate alike the heavy tresses of the belle and the curly shock of the zamba.'

Bull-fights are a favourite amusement, and so is cock-fighting, although it is no longer, as formerly, practised in the public streets.

The markets are well supplied, especially with fruit and vegetables. Fish is good and the butcher-meat of fair quality. The luckless traveller in Central America who could get nothing but chickens and turkeys to eat, and was afraid at last that his whiskers would transform themselves into feathers, may go to Lima with all safety, as a medium-sized turkey there costs twenty dollars in gold. The cookery is Spanish in its character, and consists much of stews savoury with oil and garlic and pungent with red pepper.

Twenty miles from Lima is Pachacamac, a sacred city of the Incas, where once stood a gigantic temple, dedicated to a deity of the same name, the supreme creator and preserver of the universe. The ruins of two large wings of this temple still remain, one of which contains a perfect well-turned arch, which is so rare a feature in American ruins that Mr Squier says 'it is the only proper arch I ever found in all my explorations in Central and South America.' Pachacamac was the Mecca of South America; and its barren hills and dry nitrous sand-heaps are filled with the dead bodies of ancient pilgrims, who travelled from all parts of the country to lay their bones, not their dust, in this hallowed spot. 'Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' has no meaning here; the dead body does not decay, but is dried and shrivelled into a mummy. Mr Squier had the curiosity to open the shroud of what may once have been perchance an Aztec belle. The body, which was that of a young girl, was in a sitting posture, supported on a workbox of braided reeds, in which were rude specimens of knitting, spindles for weaving, spools of thread, needles of bone and bronze, a small bronze knife, a fan, and a set of curious cosmetic-boxes formed of the hollow bones of a bird. These were filled with pigments of various colours, and were carefully stopped with cotton. Beside them was a small powder-puff of cotton for applying them to the face, and a rude mirror formed of a piece of iron pyrites highly polished. There was also a netting instrument and a little crushed ornament of gold intended to represent a butterfly. The long black hair, still glossy as in life, was braided and plaited round the forehead, which was bound with a fillet of white cloth adorned with silver spangles. A silver bracelet hung on the shrunken arm; and between the feet was the dried body of a dead parrot, a pet no doubt in life, and sacrificed to bear its mistress company into the dread unknown land of spirits.

In the fertile valley of Canete, amid rich sugar-plantations, Mr Squier found vast pyramidal buildings, rising stage upon stage, with broad flights of steps winding round them to the summits. While sketching amid a maze of these massive shattered adobe walls, our author was startled by seeing three men suddenly leap over a low wall into the vivid sunshine before him. 'God and peace be with you!' he said as calmly as he could, instinctively divining that his best cue was to appear as cool as possible. 'God and peace be with you!' responded the bandits, for such they were; and after a little bullying, an amicable parley ensued, which had for its object the acquisition of Mr Squier's breech-loading rifle, a weapon which kindled in the bosom of Rossi Arci, the robber chief, an ardent, but with all due deference to Mr Longfellow, a wasted affection, for he did not obtain it. Four weeks afterwards, Mr Squier saw the swollen disfigured corpse of this bandit captain exposed to public view in one of the principal streets of Lima.

At Truxillo our author came across a treasure-hunter, one Colonel La Rosa. This man spent his whole life in burrowing like a mole among the old ruins in search of buried gold, gems, silver goblets, or any other relic of antiquity which he could turn into money. Under his guidance, Mr Squier visited a great pyramid called the Temple of the Sun, and the extensive, interesting, and well preserved ruins of Grand Chimu. Here he found vast halls, the walls of which were covered with arabesques, and wide corridors from which spacious rooms diverged. The walls of these apartments were bright with vivid and delicate colours; and Colonel La Rosa shewed him where in the midst of them he had found a walled-up closet filled with vessels of gold and silver placed in regular layers one above the other, as if they had been hidden there in some dire emergency. Two vaults were also discovered filled with silver cups and goblets. The silver of which these vessels were composed was much alloyed with copper, and was so much oxidised that it had become exceedingly brittle. Mr Squier obtained possession of two of the cups. They have the appearance of being hammered out of a single piece of metal, are as thick as ordinary tin-plate, and are both adorned by the representation of a human face, with clearly cut features and a large aquiline nose.

About a hundred yards to the westward of the excavations which have revealed the half-buried palace of the ancient princes of Chimu, is a low broad mound, which has been found to be a necropolis, filled with bodies richly clad and covered with gold and silver ornaments. Many of the heads of the dead bodies found by Colonel La Rosa were gilt and encircled by bands of gold; and one body, that of a woman, was covered with thin sheets of gold, and wrapped in a robe spangled with silver fishes. Warlike weapons and agricultural implements, knives, war-clubs, lance-heads, and spear-points, with spades and mattocks of different shapes, all of bronze, are found abundantly in the vicinity of these ruins; as are also specimens of excellent pottery, on which are modelled with spirit and fidelity representations of birds, animals, fishes, shells, fruit, vegetables, and the human face and form.

Leaving Chimu reluctantly, Mr Squier travelled down to the coast, along which he sailed, examining the coast ruins at Calaveras and other places, till he reached Arica, the port of Tacna.

This is peculiarly an earthquake region; and some of these subterranean convulsions are terrible to a degree which we dwellers in a temperate clime can scarcely even imagine. A notably dreadful and destructive earthquake was that of 1868, which shook to its base all the adjacent country. It was first noted in Arica about five o'clock in the morning, its premonitory symptoms being immense clouds of dust, which were seen slowly advancing across the plain in dusky columns at a distance of about ten miles.

Nearer and nearer they came; and in the awful pause of dread expectancy that ensued, the distant snowy peaks of the Cordilleras were observed to nod and reel, as if executing some horribly suggestive cyclopean dance. Gradually this impulse extended itself to the mountains nearer to the town, till the huge *morro* or headland, a little to the left of it, began to rock violently to and fro, heaving with sickening lurches, as if about to cast itself loose into space, and always bringing to again, like a hard bestead ship in a driving tempest. As it worked back and forward, huge fragments of stone detached themselves from its cave-worn surface, and fell with deafening crash into the surf below; while under and above all, like a subdued monotone of horror, was a prolonged incessant rumble, now like the roll of distant thunder, but ever and anon at irregular intervals swelling into a deafening crash, like the discharge of a whole park of artillery.

As far as could be seen, the usually solid earth was agitated by a slow wave-like motion, which became first tremulous, and then unspeakably violent, throwing half of the houses into heaps of ruins, and yawning into wide chasm-like fissures, from which mephitic sulphurous vapours issued. Shrieks and groans of anguish filled the air, a mournful interlude shrilly resounding at intervals above the subterranean thunder, as the terrified crowd rushed to the mole, to seek refuge on board the vessels in the harbour. Scarcely had they reached this hoped-for haven of safety, when the sea, treacherous as the heaving land, glided softly back, and then rushing forward with a terrific roar, submerged the mole with its panting terror-stricken occupants, and poured on in a foaming flood over the prostrate town, where it completed the havoc the earthquake had begun. It then rushed back almost more suddenly than it had advanced, the whole fearful deluge occupying only about five minutes. Again and again the earth quivered and shook, as if about to rend asunder and drop into some unfathomable abyss below, and again the sea dashed forward as if in frantic fury, and then as suddenly recoiled, the last time shewing a perpendicular wall of water forty-five feet high, capped by an angry crest of foam. This tremendous wave swept miles inshore, where it stranded the largest ships then lying in the harbour, one of them a United States frigate.

In Arica Mr Squier equipped himself for a journey over the Cordilleras. Nothing can exceed the savage wildness of these mountains, or the difficulties and dangers of the long narrow passes

that intersect them. Mr Squier says: 'I have crossed the Alps by the routes of the Simplon, the Grand St Bernard, and St Gothard; but at no point on any of them have I witnessed a scene so wild and utterly desolate as that which spreads out around La Portada.' It is the very acmé of desolation—treeless, shrubless, bare of grass, with scarcely a lichen clinging to the rugged sides of the huge cliffs. Pile upon pile towering to the sullen skies, rise ridges of dark-brown hills bristling with snowy peaks, from several of which long trails of smoke stream lazily out upon the air, shewing where the pent volcano surges in ominous life beneath the wintry wastes of snow.

Descending from the Cordilleras, Mr Squier examined Tiaguanuco, the Baalbec of the New World; and from thence proceeded to Cuzco, the City of the Sun, the ancient capital of the Incas, which abounds with memorials of their vanished greatness. Here stood a magnificent temple of the sun, which was lined throughout with plates of gold, two of which, preserved as curiosities, were shewn to Mr Squier. The huge stones composing this and other massive buildings which yet remain are cut and fitted together with a precision which has been equalled, but never surpassed. So accurately do they fit, that it is impossible to pass the finest-bladed knife between their edges.

In close proximity to these splendid ruins, sometimes under their very walls, our author found rude circles of stone, such as still exist at Stonehenge and in other parts of Great Britain, and in Brittany. Bidding adieu to Cuzco and its suggestive relics, Mr Squier in his journey to the coast passed over a stupendously high swinging bridge formed of cables of braided withes. This dreadful rope-edifice swung freely in space between two gigantic cliffs, which guarded like twin sentinels the rush of the deep and rapid Apurimac, one of the head-waters of the Amazon. It was something worse than the most breakneck defile among the Cordilleras. 'Never,' says our author, 'will I forget this experience. I can see still the frail structure swaying at dizzy height over a dark abyss filled with the deep hoarse roar of the river. My eyes grew dim, my heart faint, my feet unsteady as I struggled across, not daring to cast a look on either hand.' It was no wonder that the nerves of one of the party, an artist, were so shaken that he declared that rather than set a foot upon it, he would swim across the Apurimac. This he did, and found the water so delightfully cool and pleasant, that he resolved to prolong his bath, and placed the bundle containing his clothes and shoes on a convenient cliff, whence a perverse gust of wind blew them into the water. Long he pursued them, with no result except the conviction that he had lost them irrecoverably and his way as well. In this condition, foodless, garmentless, he wandered about for three days in pathless thickets. His feet were cut and bleeding; and his body, scratched and torn, was scorched all day by a blistering sun, and so chilled at night by the cold breezes that he was glad to bury himself in the warm sand. On the fourth day he staggered, faint with fatigue and hunger, to the door of an Indian hut, and the inhabitants mistaking him in his ghastly squalor for the incarnate genius of fever, which they dread above all things, half killed with stones what little life was left in him before they would listen to his story.

Mr Squier's researches abundantly shew that, possessing no written language, the Incas have impressed their history in characters which yet remain upon the scenes of their former glory. Their greatness may be traced in the splendid ruins of their temples and palaces. Their civilisation is abundantly proved by their bridges, roads, caravansaries, reservoirs, aqueducts, and perfect and extensive system of irrigation, by means of which vegetation was carried in terraces thousands of feet up the steep hill-sides, and the now desert coast blushed like a garden with the profuse luxuriance of the tropics. One may well ask, which were the barbarians, they or the Spaniards who soon made a Sahara of that which they found a Goshen? Their great fortresses bristling on every hill-side teach us alike the vastness of their military power and their great resources. Of their internal polity we catch a suggestive glimpse from their ample prisons; and we learn how they lived as we turn over curiously their household and agricultural implements, or mark with mute surprise the exquisitely fine texture of some mummy shroud, or the delicate carving on some long-buried goblet, or the graceful form and excellent workmanship of some fragile relic of earthenware. We can even make a guess, as we look at their burial towers and tombs, at the current of national thought on one important subject. They who laid the dead so carefully, so tenderly to rest, believed that in the far-off world of shadows the soul would live again.

A CAST OF THE NET.

THE STORY OF A DETECTIVE OFFICER.

CHAPTER III.

THERE was nothing for me to do, that I could see, for a day or two, beyond improving my acquaintance with the factory hands, and keeping my eyes open generally; and in pursuance of this latter branch of the business, I got up very early on the following morning, and sat for an hour or two after daylight in the arbours or boxes I have so often mentioned. There was one great charm about the *Anchor*. It was low and dirty, decaying and disreputable, and the landlord was a drinking fellow, utterly bankrupt and hopeless, who troubled himself about nothing. His potman was sottish also, and too accustomed to riff-raff and queer doings of every kind to trouble himself about me; so I was thoroughly at my ease. All I saw which appeared worthy of notice was that the ill-tempered ferryman rowed out alone to the ship I have spoken of, and disappeared round its

bows. I watched for some time, but did not see him come out into midstream; but just before I gave up my watch, he came into sight again. Whether he had crossed after rowing up a bit and had come back, or whether he had been lying all the time just hidden by the ship, of course I could not say.

I had told the potman that I was in hope of seeing a friend of mine who was going to Australia and had half promised to take me with him. I consequently shewed a great deal of interest in the craft, and asked him lots of questions about them. This morning I guessed that the ship (the ferryman's ship), was an Australian liner; and this was just the joke for the potman, who laughed till his beery cheeks shook again at my mistaking a slow old Dutch trader for an Australian liner. He was quite severe in his way of poking fun at me; but he ought to have pitied my ignorance, not ridiculed it—and so I told him. {790}

I thought I would pass away the morning by going over to T— and watching Mr Byrle's house. I had learnt that he was to be from home all day; Miss Doyle had told me so herself; so I knew *she* knew it also; and if she had any suspicious visits to pay, or queer company to receive, now was the time: that was evident. Accordingly, I went to T— by rail as before, starting in the rain; but luckily, just as I got there it cleared up and the sun came out. To give me a chance of learning something, I got asking my way to a lot of places I didn't want to go to, just by way of starting a conversation, you know; and the man I pitched upon was employed in the goods shed of the railway, but did not seem to have much to do just then; and when I asked him if he could spare time to run across to the public-house with me, he said yes, he thought he could; and he did.

We could see Mr Byrle's house from this place, so it answered as well for me as any other; and while I was talking to the porter, I saw a tall young fellow, good-looking, but rather flash-looking too, go past, and in three or four minutes I saw him ring at the gate of Mr Byrle's house.

'Hollo!' I says to my railway friend, 'isn't that Sims Reeves? Does he come down here to give lessons?'

He was no more like Sims Reeves than I am, but his was the first name I could think of.

'Sims Reeves!' says the porter; 'why that's young Mr Byrle, as gives his father no end of trouble. You wouldn't see him there, only the old gent is off somewhere for a while. He went from our station last night.'

'Indeed!' I said (and then I saw the young man go into the house); 'and what's the quarrel about?'

'Oh, his goings on,' said the railway man. 'Why, I have heard that his father has paid thousands on his account; and if he hadn't paid one time pretty heavily too, this young fellow would have been in Newgate for forging his governor's name. He's agoing abroad, I believe; and a good riddance too, I say.'

'And what does he do at the house when his father is away?' I asked; and I really felt that our conversation was getting quite interesting.

'Well, it's the old story; a lady's in the case,' said the porter. 'There's a niece there that's over head and ears in love with Mr Edmund—that's his name—and he pretends to be equally sweet on her. But if she had seen only as much of him as we have seen at this here station, she would never— There's my foreman agoing into the shed! Excuse me.' With that the railway-man finished his pint and was off.

I considered a minute, and then decided I was as well off where I was as anywhere; so I borrowed yesterday's *Morning Advertiser* of the barmaid, and sitting down where I could watch the house, pretended to read. If any one had watched me, he must have thought I was most remarkably interested in the Money Market, for I had that part of the paper folded towards me without changing for a good half-hour. At the end of that time the door of Mr Byrle's house was opened and the son came out. I was ready for a start after him, let him go in which direction he might; but he came towards the *Railway Tavern*, my post; straight on, nearer, nearer he passed my door. I peeped out after him, and saw him actually come into the tavern, entering by another door the compartment of the bar next to mine!

I was in the common place; he was in one of those divisions where 'Glasses only are served in this department;' and so on. There was some one there already, for I had heard the occasional clink of a spoon and glass, and a cough; but there wasn't more than one, for I had heard no voices. I now heard some one speak; I judged it to be young Mr Byrle, and I was right.

'Hollo, skipper!' he said, 'what have you been doing to your face? Have you been fighting?'

'Fighting!—Well, never mind my face; I don't want to talk about that; I shall settle that account some day,' said a voice. (*I knew what voice; I knew what was the matter with the man's face.*)

His surly tone seemed to shut young Mr Byrle up on the subject, for he gave a sort of forced laugh and said no more about it. 'When do you sail?—for certain now. I must know to an hour to-day, for I don't like what I hear of things,' said Mr Byrle.

'Don't speak so loud,' said the other; 'you can never tell who is listening;' and there he was more thoroughly right than he suspected. However, they dropped their voices so completely after this, that though I sat right up against the partition, I could hear nothing more than a stray word or so, out of which I could make no sense, until at last Mr Byrle said: 'Time's about up, skipper.'

'I suppose so,' said the other. 'Well, you feel quite confident about her then; her courage won't fail, you think?'

'*Her* courage fail? Ha, ha! skipper,' said Mr Byrle; 'you don't know her, or you wouldn't say that.'

She'll come with the material, you'll see. From first to last she's never wavered; and look what a penetrating mind she has got!

'Yes; she's clever, I think,' says the skipper.

'Clever!' Mr Byrle repeated, with a deal of contempt in his voice—'clever! Who but her would have found out the scheme'—

'Hush!' said the skipper, stopping the young man, just as his conversation was getting, I may say, instructive and important. Then Edmund Byrle said his train was due, and posted off to the station.

A minute or so after I heard the skipper put down his glass as though he had emptied it, and then he too left. I followed at a little distance, and got into the same train with him, and got out with him, and still following, saw him go to the ferry, pick out, as I knew he would, the surly waterman; and I saw him rowed to his own ship, where the waterman left him and then rowed over to the other side. Very good. Then the skipper had gone to T— specially to meet Edmund Byrle; and Edmund Byrle had gone there specially because his father was away; and— Then I couldn't follow it up any further. {791}

I went boldly into the *Yarmouth Smack*, and not seeing Tilley anywhere about, I asked for him under the agreed name, and was told he had gone to work on Byrle's wharf; not for the firm, but for some lighterman who frequented the public-house. This looked well; and if I got taken on, as I expected, the next Monday, I thought it would be very odd if between us we didn't find something out. Yet my interest in the business seemed dying away, or drifting into altogether a new channel, for I could not believe for a moment that Miss Doyle and Edmund Byrle, and the skipper and the sulky ferryman, were all linked in with stealing a few paltry brass fittings.

I crossed over before the old ferryman came back, and had my dinner in the tap-room of the *Anchor and Five Mermaids*. It wasn't a nice place for a dinner, and I was always partial to having my things neat and tidy, which was by no means the rule at the *Anchor*, and the company was not to my standard. I was late to-day, so I missed the factory hands; and there were only two men in the room with me; one was a costermongerish-looking rough in a velveteen coat and fur cap, which was about all I could see of him, for he was asleep all of a heap in a corner. The other was a man who had his dinner in a newspaper, and took it out, whatever it was, with his fingers, till he had finished it and then went away.

I was glad when he was gone, and I had the room as I may say to myself; so I sent my plate away, called for a little drop of rum-and-water (the only thing you could get fit to drink at the *Anchor*), and lighting my pipe, sat with my feet on the fender, to have a good smoke and a good hard think. I had sat there perhaps half-a-dozen minutes, and had fairly settled down to my thinking, when a low voice said: 'Mr Nickham!' My name! It was a very low voice which spoke, but the roar of an elephant couldn't have startled me more. In an instant it flashed upon me that my disguise was seen through and all my plans understood. Robinson Crusoe was not so staggered when he saw the foot-print on the sand as I was on hearing these two familiar words. I turned round, and there was that miserable-looking rough that I thought had been asleep, standing up and making signs to me. He was a regular rough and no mistake, with short hair, an ugly handkerchief twisted round his neck; his nose had been broken at some time or another, and he looked a complete jail-bird. 'Mr Nickham!'

It was he that spoke; no mistake about it this time; and he put his hand up to the side of his mouth to keep the sound straight.

'Who are you?' said I; for you know I didn't like to answer to the name at once, in case he wasn't certain.

'My name is Wilkins—Barney Wilkins,' said the man. 'But you won't recollect me by that p'raps; though I've been through your hands, sergeant; but I giv some other name then. You got me twelve penn'orth for ringing in shofuls.' (He meant that he had been sent to prison for twelve months for passing bad money. I wasn't surprised to hear it; he looked fit for that or anything bad. But if he got it through me, why he should speak to me now was beyond my comprehension.) 'I knowed you directly I see you, sergeant,' he says, coming nearer, but still speaking in the same hoarse whisper as at first; 'and though you're a tight hand, you're fair and square, and acted as such by me when you copped me. You are down here on business—you're after some rare downy cards. Now ain't you, sergeant?'

'If you know,' I said, 'what do you ask me for? And if you think I am what you say, you don't suppose I shall tell you my business, do you?'

'Sergeant,' he says, coming nearer still, 'you fought a man in the street last night, and giv him a thorough good licking. You was the only man there as would take the part of a poor gal as wasn't doing no harm to nobody; and I respect you for it, sergeant; I do. That gal was my sister—my young sister, as has been like a child to me, and was so tidy and pretty that I was proud on her, and hoped— Well, sergeant, whatever we are, we all have our feelings; and Sergeant Nickham, I'll do you a good turn. Look here!' With this he crept quite close and put his mouth almost to my ear. I watched him carefully, being much puzzled by his actions, yet I had seen such unexpected things occur in the police that I was quite ready to hear something of consequence from him. 'You are down here about that Bank paper, what is said to be all got back, but which you know it isn't. You are on the right parties, and it does you credit; but you'll never get them nor the paper without *me*.'

He stopped here, to see what I would say; but though I was ten times more surprised than ever, I

kept my countenance, and only said: 'Well?' In point of fact I didn't know what *to* say.

'I've been used bad, Mr Nickham,' he went on. 'I've had a lot of trouble and risk about that there paper. I got it from B—, and took the money for it to him, honest; and have been as near took with it in my possession as anythink. Twice the slops (he meant the police; 'slops' is what we call 'back-slang,' a rough sort of spelling the words backwards)—twice they have come into my place when the stuff was there. Once I was sitting upon it done up like bundles of rabbit-skins. Now he gives me (the party wot I am down on)—he gives me five pounds, and I can't get no more out of him. And you see there ain't no reward out.'

'No, not regularly, Barney,' I said; 'but there's no doubt at all that any man coming forward would be very handsomely considered by the Bank people.'

'He might be, if he'd got anybody like you to speak for him,' says Barney. 'But you know, Mr Nickham, that I am wanted for a lot of things by the bobbies; and I have been through the mill so often, that without I've got a friend I don't half like touching 'em again. But you're fair and square, and you licked the fellow last night; and I'm told you can box better than even Tom Sayers could; and if that's so, I'll trust you. And this here man won't give me more than five pounds; and he has settled with a regular fence, a sort of Dutch-Yankee skipper, what pretends to command one of them traders out there.'

'Yes, yes,' I said; 'the man I fought last night. I know him.'

'*Him!*' almost screeched the man (although, mind you, he never once forgot his hoarse whisper); 'was it him you licked? Sergeant Nickham, I'd go through fire and water for you now, for I hate and despise that wretch; and if I had got a chance to do it safely, I'd have'— He checked himself very sudden here, as if what he was going to say wasn't exactly the sort of thing to say to a detective. 'I see you are on the right lay,' he begins again; 'but I tell you he has settled with that skipper to have the stuff put on board, if it ain't already there; and then he'll go with it to whatever foreign port the craft comes from.'

{792}

'And who is he,' I asked, 'who has arranged with the skipper?'

'Ah, Mr Nickham,' says Wilkins, with a very cunning look, 'as if you didn't know! Haven't you been on the lurk round his house for two days past? Wasn't you there this morning?'

Egad! I saw it all now! You might have knocked me down with a feather. I could hardly help saying something which would have shewed my astonishment; but I choked it down, and quite determined to keep the upper hand with him, I said as cool as I could: 'Now, Wilkins, no beating about the bush, or making me help you out. If you've got anything to say, any name to mention, out with it like a man, and I'm your friend. You understand me.'

'Fair and square you are, Mr Nickham,' says Barney; 'and so you'll find me. That young Mr Byrle has got the paper, and he means to go out with the trader. There is people over in Holland awaiting anxious for it; and if once they gets hold of it, it's all U. P. with our bank-notes. Now, I don't know where the paper is; if I had known, bust me if I wouldn't have blowed the gaff long ago!'

He meant that he would have exposed the whole transaction, and I noticed that this declaration did not quite agree with his anxiety to have a friend on his side, a point on which he had dwelt so much before; but that didn't signify.

'Now, Mr Nickham,' he went on, 'you must board the craft when the paper is shipped, if it ain't there yet.'

'It ain't there yet, my man,' I said, remembering what had dropped from Edmund Byrle, that 'she would come on board with the material.'

'Then I think it will be to-night,' he continued; 'for a sail-maker as has been at work aboard her says she drops down the river to-morrow; and I think by what I can learn in other quarters, he is right.'

I thought so too, and at once made up my mind that the meeting at the *Railway Tavern* was to settle about shipping the paper.

'I can give a pretty good guess at the man they will engage for the job,' says Wilkins.

'I know him,' I said; 'a tall, sulky-looking, bony-headed old fellow, with a game eye.'

'Why, Mr Nickham,' says Wilkins, 'you're a wonder, a perfect wonder! You're a credit to the force, and Sir Richard ought to hear of it! Why, that's the man, the very man; and here have you only been down two days, and know all about it! Keep your eye on him after dark, and you're all right.'

We had some more talk after this; and then he pretended to go to sleep in his corner again, and I went out.

I went straight into the City and saw some of our chief people, who sent over to the Bank. They would not chance my going there, for fear of somebody seeing me that had better know nothing about it. The gents from the Bank could hardly believe their ears, and the compliments they paid me, to be sure! It was decided that everything was to be left in my hands, and I was provided with letters to the right parties at the water-side. But I need not go into any further particulars of that kind.

I was not going to trouble myself any more just now about the pilfering at Byrle & Co.'s factory; as far as I was interested in it, the thieves might take boilers, wheels, chimneys, and all. I took up my post in the old arbour, and there, though the rain came steadily down, I sat. I managed to

get a pretty dry corner; and with a little of the *Anchor's* rum-and-water and my pipe, I made myself tolerably comfortable while I sat and watched the Dutch trader. I was well screened from the sight of any one below, or else my corner would not have suited; and although I could hear the steps and the voices of the people going to the ferry, and could have touched them by leaning over, yet they could not see me.

The bony ferryman, in his tarpaulin coat and hat, was there this afternoon; and very sloppy and miserable all the boats looked; and as the tide fell lower and lower, the great broad bed of river-mud grew broader, and the path to the ferryboat grew longer, and still I kept my watch, and meant to keep it. I must own, however, that I did not expect to see anything worth notice, for what could there be? But sometimes, you know, in our business, it is as necessary to watch to make sure there is nothing being done, as it is to make sure that some important movement is going on.

There was an oyster-smack not fifty yards from me as was left on the shingle or mud when the tide went down; and there was a man smoking his pipe on the deck of that oyster-smack, just as I was smoking mine in the arbour; and when night came, and the river got dark, and you couldn't make anything out of it but a great black space, with a hollow sound of the wind moaning over it and of the water lapping on the shore as the tide rose again—then there was a lantern burning on the deck of that smack, and there was a similar lantern burning in my arbour; but the light was shewn open on board of the smack, and mine was a dark-lantern (so was the other) with the light hid. But I was perfectly well aware that the man aboard that smack never took his eyes off me while it was light, and that after dark he watched to see if I shewed my lantern. I didn't shew it; but if I had, there would have been a Thames police galley and five armed constables alongside of that hard in a couple of minutes.

AN EXTRAORDINARY PROJECT.

IN the city of San Francisco resides Mr Hubert Howe Bancroft, a gentleman about forty-five years of age, formerly engaged in commerce, but now retired from business, in order that he may devote his whole life, as well as the wealth which he had amassed, to the furtherance of a project which he formed some sixteen years ago. This was no less comprehensive a task than the compilation of a full history, as well as a scientific account, of all that vast district west of the Rocky Mountains, which, stretching from Panama to Alaska, embraces Central America, Mexico, and California. It was to be in a popular form, and to embrace every point of interest that could be ascertained respecting the Pacific States, their aboriginal inhabitants, their successive civilised occupiers, their geology, botany, and other natural features. First of all in this stupendous task comes the history of the native tribes—to be completed in five volumes, the first instalments of which are already published by Messrs Appleton and Co. in New York, and by Messrs Longmans in our own country. These will be followed by a history of the States from the Spanish Conquest down to contemporary times, and for this portion of the work it is thought that some twenty volumes will be required. A third series will treat of the geological structure of the territory, its minerals especially, and of mining operations. Physical geography forms the fourth section of the proposed work; whilst the fifth will deal with agriculture; and the sixth with bibliography. It must be apparent that a man must be of a highly sanguine temperament to imagine such an enterprise; it will be well if he live to complete only a portion of it; and should he really succeed in doing what he wishes, he will have earned for himself an honourable distinction, and conferred on the world an extraordinary boon.

{793}

But how was such an undertaking to be begun? Where were the materials; and even granting that they were to be procured, how was such a mass of general reading as must be consulted, to be utilised? Mr Bancroft's first step was to solve this difficulty. He decided to establish at his own cost, in San Francisco, a library of reference, which should contain all the books to be had for money which could throw any light on the subject. With this end in view, he appointed agents in all the principal cities of the world, whose business was to frequent sales, examine book catalogues, and effect the purchase of any volumes which seemed likely to contain useful information. Of course by such a system many books were transmitted to headquarters which ultimately proved to be of little or no value; but this was inevitable in the course of purchases of such magnitude. And notwithstanding all drawbacks of the kind, the collection has gradually increased, until it is said now to consist of between eighteen and twenty thousand volumes, including pamphlets; whether this number also includes manuscripts, we are unable to say. The acquisition of these works has been occasionally furthered by adventitious circumstances. The Mexican war, for instance, was the means of throwing in Mr Bancroft's way some highly valuable documents, which, under favourable circumstances, would have remained the property of their lawful owners; these, contained in four volumes, are a set of parchment records of the Church in Mexico between the years 1530 and 1583, and apart from their historical value, have an interest to the biblioplist as containing autographs of many celebrated men, amongst others of Philip II., Torquemada, Las Casas, and Zumarraga, first Archbishop of Mexico. This last-named worthy is notorious for his act of insensate bigotry in destroying the Aztec records, and thereby depriving the world of the history of that race; he burned the hieroglyphic paintings of Anahuac in the public square of Tlatelolco, much as Ximenes did with eighty thousand Moorish manuscripts in Granada. These priceless records were stolen from the government archives! When the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian's library was sold, many valuable works were also obtained

from that collection, which had been gathered together during a lifetime by a well-known amateur, Count Andrade.

The weakest part of the arrangement of Mr Bancroft's undertaking is the manner in which the books are housed, but this is probably an unavoidable evil; they occupy the fifth story of the owner's house in Market Street, San Francisco, where they are exposed to all the risk of fire, to say nothing of the inconvenience of such a plan. The apartment in which they are kept occupies the whole length of the building, and the books are arranged upon shelves reaching from the floor to the ceiling, and running from one end of the room to the other. Let us now see how it is proposed to utilise this mass of literature for reference.

No one but a resolute enthusiast with an abundance of means could have brought this extraordinary project into shape. The trouble spent in the undertaking has been enormous. Of course, the projector has a staff of assistants possessing the requisite accomplishments, headed by a librarian, Mr Oak, who has been indefatigable in producing a catalogue of the works collected, with copious subordinate references. So aided, Mr Bancroft, as we understand, has begun his literary operations; but whether he will live to complete his colossal production in proper artistic style must necessarily be left to conjecture. Fortunately, besides being still in middle life, he is said to have splendid bodily health and great powers of endurance, both of which must stand him in good stead. He always writes at a standing desk, and sometimes prolongs his hours of labour to as many as eleven or twelve—which seem to us excessive. Such application may do for work which is chiefly compilation; but any brain-worker knows that it is simply impossible to do really valuable work throughout such a time. As a matter of fact, very few men can read or write hard for more than six hours a day with profitable result. Let us hope, however, that the man who has had courage to undertake such a task, will have self-restraint enough not to endanger its success by an undue straining of the faculties, which must be kept in full repair to insure its accomplishment. We should be sorry to hear that any disaster from fire had put an abrupt termination to so well-meaning, though we may be allowed to call it a somewhat eccentric undertaking.

GORDON.

SHE came on towards me, her trailing draperies falling round her with the soft grace she gave to all she touched. Sunshine was on her beautiful hair—evening sunshine, which turned the wreath of plaits she wore into a crown of burnished gold. She came floating on, through the flower and fruit gemmed orange trees, through the crimson and pure white camellia bloom; violets grew beneath her feet, and she seemed to me part of the glory and the fragrance of the sunset and the blossoms.

Below the terrace where I stood, lay the sea, where blue faded to green, and green to opal, melting into one deep far-stretching mystery of purple light and banks of golden cloud. Palaces and domes and tapering spires shone white against the dark background of distant mountains. Suddenly the music of many bells rung out on the still air, their chiming softened by distance into low faint sweetness. They were the bells of the stately marble city that shone so fair across her gleaming bay. The first bell-notes were taken up and echoed by the bells of chapels in villages along the shore; of convents hidden away in country dells and valleys, till the air was full of lingering prayerful sound. Through it, through the magical Italian twilight came the woman I loved. She came and stood beside me, looking across the water to where Genoa's palaces glimmered against the sky; but I do not think she saw or thought of them. There was a dreamy look in her eyes, a cold, set weariness about her mouth, which is only seen in those whose thoughts have drifted far from where they stand.

{794}

'Are you tired of this place?' I at length ventured to ask her.

'Not particularly,' she answered; 'you know I never care much where I am.' The words sound petulant; but said as she said them, they were only weary. I should have been glad if she had ever shewn impatience; anything rather than the cold quiet which ever lay upon her beauty like a pall. At first, in my triumphant happiness at having won her promise to be my wife, this coldness had not chilled me—as it sometimes did now—to the heart. I so longed, so hungered for a word of love, for a tender look. All her stately beauty would soon be mine, and it seemed still as far from me as ever.

We leaned on the low parapet of the terrace, while the music of the bells died away, till only the slow beating of the waves broke the stillness. It was an hour of wonderful peace and beauty, yet a strange sense of unrest took possession of me, and jarred the music of the waves and the restful quiet of the twilight. Standing there close to her, with the certainty that soon she would be my own for ever, a vague thrill of fear came over me, a fear lest all this feverish joy of knowing she was mine, might vanish away, and leave me a lonely mortal. This love for her had become to me an all-absorbing passion; and yet she never for one moment allowed me to think that my love was returned. Perhaps it was the might of her beauty that filled my senses; yet I have seen beautiful women since, and had seen them before I first saw her on the walls above the old Etruscan gateway at Perugia.

One morning the week before, I had strolled out from the dull hotel; and leaving the street with

its tall houses and quaint old fountain, glowing in the day's first freshness, I sauntered on to the walls, and there I first saw her. Below in the valley the silvery olive leaves trembled in the sunshine; wreaths of broad-leaved vines clung to the gray old trees, clothing them with a borrowed beauty of youth and freshness. Hundreds of flowers blushed in the light, and varied odours from herb and blossom filled the air with a subtle languor. Above, on the lichen-covered wall, with a background of purple mountain, a fitting frame to her stately loveliness, she sat, looking out across the sunlit land, with the dreary far-away look in her great deep eyes, and the haughty coldness upon her chiselled face. I lingered about, drinking draughts of beauty; fancying it was my artistic sense that kept me there watching her face, till she rose wearily, and slowly walking down the street, entered the hotel where I was staying.

I found on inquiry that a Mrs Vereker and her niece, Miss Mayne, had arrived there the previous evening. I had sometimes met Mrs Vereker in London; and later on in the day, while I was carelessly examining the carving on the fountain in the square I saw her and my vision of the morning standing on the cathedral steps. Mrs Vereker came forward with that friendliness we feel for a slight home acquaintance whom we may chance to meet when abroad. So I joined them, and we strolled on chatting over home news. Miss Mayne seldom spoke, and yet that walk seemed to me a strangely happy one. Mrs Vereker told me they had only been a day in Perugia, and had intended going on at once to Rome; but the mountain air and mountain views were so delightful, they had changed their minds, and intended remaining for some time at Perugia.

I had come to the old town to study art; to search the blazoned manuscripts lying hidden in sacristy and convent, and learn from them their secrets of colour and design; to wander through frescoed church and palace, where walls and ceilings are brilliant still as when the hands which wove their gorgeous stories first laid the pencil down and thanked God for the great consoler—Art. I had come to watch the mists rising from the valleys, and wrapping the mountains in soft mystery of cloud—cloud which changes and shifts, and melts at last into the golden and purple, the opaline green of the sunrise; so that I might try to wrest from Nature a faint touch of her magic of shadow and light, of colour and form, and lay it at the feet of the one mistress I had ever known—Art.

What I was now studying was a woman's heart—and what I learned was—nothing. I do not think mine is an impressionable nature. I had spent thirty years in the world, and had never loved any woman until I saw Mary Mayne in the morning light sitting above that old gateway; yet in one short week I had grown to love her—well, as few women are ever loved.

At the end of that week came a letter from Willie Vereker, saying his yacht needed some repairs, and he would put in at Genoa for a few days if his mother could meet him there. He had been to the East, and she had not seen him for some time; so she decided on going back to Genoa; hoping the *Gwendoline* might need more repairing than Willie thought, and keep him there longer than he expected. The evening of the day Mrs Vereker received that letter, I told her of my love for her niece, and asked permission to accompany them to Genoa.

She regarded me with an odd look of compassion. 'Have you spoken to Mary yet?' she asked.

I told her I had not; I wished to wait until we had known each other longer; I feared being too precipitate. {795}

'Then,' said Mrs Vereker, 'I have no right to tell you anything of her story. It is a sad one, poor child! and I warn you, you have little chance of success. If you choose, you can come with us to Genoa; but if I were you, I should not do so. Save yourself while you can. You have known her a very short time. If you leave us now, you will soon forget her; later, you may find it a more difficult task.'

I shook my head. The advice came too late. I went with them to Genoa. The stately marble city had a charm for us all. Mrs Vereker had her son, and the two found marvellous attractions in the quaint narrow streets with their palace portals, their courts and halls, where fountains sparkled and flung diamonds of spray round the brows of pure fair statues; where in the coolness and the shadow, gold-laden orange trees and thick masses of crimson blossom gleamed with sudden startling glory.

I had my idol. Day after day I was by her side. It was a fool's Paradise perhaps; but I suppose there is such an Eden in every life; and looking back, when we have left its short-lived peace, we vainly long for a single throb of its rapture. So, during those quiet days at Genoa, each of us, except Mary Mayne, had our heart's desire: Willie, the life, the colour, the loveliness he and his *Gwendoline* sought in voyages to many lands; Mrs Vereker, her son; I, my new delirious joy. There, on the terrace where we were standing, I first spoke to Mary, and heard her tell me my love was hopeless. She told me her story.

Her wedding-day had been fixed. In a year she was to have been married to a man she loved with her whole heart; when the war with Russia broke out, and Gordon Frazer's regiment was ordered to the Crimea. He and Mary wished to be married before he left, but family reasons prevented it, and so they parted. He had never returned to England. A soldier brought Mary a little locket which she had given Gordon. The ribbon it hung upon was thickened here and there with deep dark stains; and the man said Gordon Frazer had given it to him to take to Mary, when the young officer lay dying after the charge at Balaklava. It was only the story of many an English and many a Russian girl during that dreadful time. When a strong, self-contained nature breaks down, it is almost utter collapse; so it was with Mary. For months she lay silent, tearless, listlessly unable to make the slightest exertion, to take the smallest interest in life. Her friends thought her brain had suffered from the shock; and when she recovered sufficiently to travel, Mrs Vereker had

taken her abroad, where they had been moving from place to place ever since. Her body regained health; she was now quite strong; but the girl's heart and soul seemed dead; as she said, dead, and buried in Gordon Frazer's grave. Yet as I listened I did not despair. I had no living rival; he was dead, this man she loved; while my heart was beating, living, and strong with its worship of her. If I could only win her to be my wife, the dead love would pale and faint before my real and passionate devotion. So I hoped, as day by day I watched her every look, forestalled her every wish, until she grew accustomed to my presence, and to rely upon my care. My hopes were answered; ere long I won her reluctant consent to be my wife, but on the condition that our marriage should not take place until their return to England next year.

The rosy clouds were fading into the deep purple of Italian night. Silence fell around us as a mantle; only the throb of the sea below the terrace broke the intense quiet. Out on the sea shone the white sails of a little yacht. Nearer, within the harbour, rose the masts and spars of many ships, mysterious, spectre-like, as ships always look at night. As we were seated in calm enjoyment of the scene, a small boat shot out from the rocks beneath our feet, where lay some hidden cave or landing-place. It was rowed by two men; a third sat wrapped in a large cloak in the stern. They rowed well, and the boat was nearly a mile from us, leaving a bright line of light upon the shining water, when a cry broke the calm of the night—a wild, weird cry, with agony in its tone. 'Gordon!' I have never heard its like since, and I hope I never shall again. In its agonised tone I could scarcely recognise the voice of Mary, so changed was it, so shrill with long pent-up yearning, as it wailed out that one word—'Gordon!' The cry seemed to be repeated again and again, though softened by the echoes, while the little boat sped on its way, and its passengers—mere dark specks they seemed—climbed into the yacht. The white sails gleamed against the horizon, and then, phantom-like, were lost in its dim purple.

I turned and looked at Mary. She stood with her eyes fixed on the darkness which hid the yacht from sight, her hands clasped upon her heart, her face drawn and colourless. I feared the fate her friends dreaded for her had stricken her as she stood beside me there in the still luxurious twilight. 'Mary, my dearest, my own! what is it?'—taking her hand and drawing her closer.

She drew her hand from mine, and shuddering away from me, leaned against the stone parapet, resting her head on the cold marble coping.

'You are ill; let me take you home, darling,' I said.

'No,' she murmured; 'not ill. But oh,' she exclaimed, 'Harry, Harry! my good kind friend, help me! *Gordon was near us just now.* I felt it; I am sure of it. You will help me to find him; will you not?'

Help her to find him! help to break my own heart—to bruise this new-found sweetness out of my life! The very thought struck me with a sudden chill. What if this fancy of hers, coming so close upon my sure forebodings, should be a reality? What if Gordon Frazer were still in existence? I thrust the thought from me as I should thrust a temptation. 'I will help you in any way I can, my darling,' I said; 'but come in now; the night-air is chilling; and you are giving way to feverish fancies.'

'No,' she said; 'it is no fancy.' Drawing herself up wearily, she turned without looking at me; and I followed her down the terrace and across the marble court of the old palace which was our home in Genoa. I watched her glide, stately and pale and quiet, up the broad white staircase.

It was months before she recovered from the brain-fever in which she awoke next morning—such awful months, during which we often feared the worst. Yet when they were over, and she was among us again, paler, more fragile, but still her own beautiful self, stately, self-possessed as usual, I was almost thankful for the terrible illness, which proved that her cry and wild words on the terrace were but warnings of coming illness, the mere wandering of a brain diseased. {796}

The Roman season was nearly over, yet Rome was full—full of English sightseers, like ourselves; full of Americans, on rapid flight across Europe; of eastern prelates, in flowing eastern robes, with olive-hued eastern faces; of eager-faced French ladies, and solemn-eyed peasants from lonely villages on the Campagna, and of Italians from city and from plain; for it was Easter-time. We were only waiting until the conclusion of the festivities to set out on our journey home. Home! I never until now felt half the meaning of that word. When we got home, Mary and I would be married. I should give up wandering, and settle down into a country gentleman. I thought with a pang of self-reproach of the grand old home which called me master, shut up in desolate state since my dear father died. How a fair young mistress would brighten and beautify the old rooms. I could see it all now—the oaken hall with its quaint old pictures; spring sunshine pouring in at the open door, red-coated sportsmen grouped under the beeches, horns ringing from the copses, children playing under the shadow of the avenue of limes—the loveliness of joyous life, where for so long had been the silence left by death. It was a sunny dream of home—home in fair England, into which I had fallen; standing there, upon the Pincian, under the deep dark blue of Roman night.

Below lay the city, its narrow streets dimly mysterious, no light visible in their tall houses; the fountain murmured its sweet monotonous music in the Piazza di Spagna; the wide white marble steps gleamed along the hillside; tall palm-trees cast weird shadows across the gravelled walks; nightingales answered each other in low rich trills of song, echoing from tree to tree, through whispering palms and odorous night-flowers. Beside me, cold and silent, was the woman whose charming spell woke within me this new sweet longing for home—home musical with the soft rustling of women's garments; with the tender voices of little children. I suppose such a dream and such a longing come to all men at some time of their lives; it came to me that night as I stood

above the city of vanished glories, of dead and buried dreams.

It did not last long. Suddenly, above the city roofs, a cross of silvery light shone out against the sky. The illumination of Saint Peter's had begun. Above the winding narrow streets, above palace roofs, above palm and cypress, above triumphal arch and mouldering temple, over the palace of the Cæsars, over Capitol and Forum, the silvery cross shone glad, triumphant; and from it, the light spread from window to window, from pillar to pillar, till the vast pile was one glory, changing rapidly from soft silvery radiance into a glow of golden fire.

'It was worth coming to see. Was it not, Mary?'

'Mary!' A stranger's voice echoed her name; and instead of answering my question, she sprang with a low cry from my side, and laid her head upon a stranger's breast. 'Did you not get my letters? I have been looking everywhere for you,' I heard him say.

She did not answer, nor raised her head; as if at last she had found her rest.

'You are not alone here?' he went on. 'Who are you with?'

Then with a quiver as of pain, she raised herself, and looked from me to him with beseeching eyes and trembling clasped hands.

Before she spoke—for even in all the agony of my crushed-out hopes, my love for her bore down all other feelings, and I tried to save her from the pain of telling me what I already knew—I said: 'You have found an older friend than I am, Mary. Shall I leave him to take you to Mrs Vereker?'

'An older friend?' he repeated. 'By Jove! I should think so.'

Then raising his hat, he shook hands with me as I turned away.

I turned into the darkness, but not before I had seen that until now I had never known her, my love, my promised wife. I had known a beautiful statue, not the beautiful woman who, with eyes upraised to his, stood in the subdued light looking up to Gordon Frazer. All the coldness, all the stately calm had gone, fallen from her as a mantle falls—a mantle which had hidden the fullness of her loveliness, and had concealed from me a tender grace and beauty I had never till now beheld. I have never seen her since.

Some time afterwards I met a friend who had seen a good deal of the Frazers. He was loud in admiration of Mrs Frazer's beauty and of her devotion to her husband. 'He was out in the Crimea, you know, and was reported dead; but he was only wounded. Some Russian family, to whose house he had managed to be sent, had tended him with kindly care after even his own doctors had given up hope, and had pulled him through his danger. Mrs Frazer told me,' continued my friend, 'how one evening when standing on a terrace at Genoa, she heard his voice; and thinking it was a reproach from the grave (for she was going to marry another fellow), she got brain-fever, and was near dying. The fact was, the yacht in which a friend had brought him from Constantinople touched at Genoa, and he had actually spent the day doing the palaces! When she heard his voice, he was returning to the *Peri*, which lay about two miles from the shore. Romantic story, isn't it? But Gordon takes her devotion coolly enough; the love seems more on her side than on his. I cannot understand that.'

Understand it? Yes, I could. Hers was one of those great-souled natures who like to give rather than to take, to pour out all the wealth and beauty of their being on the idol which they have clothed in all the glory of their own imaginings. God grant she may live on to the end, happy in her womanly idol-worship!

As for me, the dream I dreamt upon the Pincian Hill, before the cross of golden light shone over the city roofs, was never realised. No rustle of woman's garments makes low music in the old oak-panelled rooms; no children's voices wake the echoes under the avenues of arching limes. The old Devon manor-house stands as yet without a mistress.

{797}

NARCOTISM.

IN these days of medical knowledge, when so many merciful means for the alleviation of pain are known, it follows as a matter of course that great abuse of sleep-producing agents exists. We would therefore say a few words of caution as to the pernicious practice of people making use of chloral, chlorodyne, chloroform, and other kindred agents *without medical advice*. It is, we think, little known to how great an extent this evil exists. To come across a lady who is constantly more or less under the influence of chlorodyne, is by no means uncommon; every trifling ailment or passing *malaise* being an excuse for a few drops of that narcotic. Chloral is also extensively and improperly used; the more so because, unfortunately at the time of its first introduction as a sleep-producing agent, it was most erroneously stated to be perfectly harmless, and many are still under this impression.

The real truth is, that *no* narcotic of any kind whatever is harmless, but on the contrary, invariably pernicious when taken otherwise than by the advice and under the treatment of a medical man. True, sleeplessness is one of the most trying things a person can suffer from; but then there are other means of combating the enemy than by dosing one's self with chloral or any such agent; and thus making an infirmity chronic, which would in all probability have been only a

temporary evil. Rely upon opiates for sleep, and sleep will not come without them. Thus a bad habit is formed; the bodily strength is undermined, the digestive powers enfeebled, the mind and intellect weakened and enervated, and the unfortunate sufferer becomes a slave, bound hand and foot to a habit that it is almost impossible to shake off. Sleeplessness often comes from want of sufficient fresh air and exercise, from over-mental work, mental distress, from too great a quantity of stimulants taken during the day, and from various other causes, which a little care as to diet and regimen would quickly overcome. Taking short naps during the day; too much tea and coffee drinking, especially shortly before bedtime—all these are apt to cause sleeplessness. In many cases a light and simple supper taken shortly before retiring to rest, and attention to the feet being thoroughly warm, will insure a good night's sleep when more energetic means have failed.

In those terrible abodes of suffering, our cancer hospitals, the method of all others most resorted to, and most efficacious for the alleviation of pain, is the sub-cutaneous (under-the-skin) injection of morphia. In sciatica, neuralgia, and other painful nervous affections, this remedy is often exceedingly beneficial, when used under competent medical advice and supervision; but like every other good thing it is open to great abuse, and often made use of merely as a soothing narcotic by the irritable, excitable, and discontented. A long train of evils follows; but with these we are not called upon to deal here. What we want now to lay before the reader is a plain statement as to the prompt treatment called for in a case of over-narcotism from too strong a dose of injected morphia. Coldness of the extremities, lividity of the countenance, profuse cold sweat, and loss of power over the limbs, insensibility, very deep breathing, and contraction of the pupils of the eyes to such an extent that they resemble a black pin-head, result.

What then is to be done? Time is precious, and perhaps half an hour or more may elapse before medical aid can be obtained. Taking it for granted that the patient is in a recumbent position, the first thing to be done is to raise the head, to sponge the face and chest copiously with fresh cold water, to rub the limbs steadily and strongly, to put hot-water applications to the feet and to the sides of the body, if it feel cold to the touch. Place strong smelling-salts to the nose; lay the head on one side with the mouth open, so that the tongue may not fall back and prevent respiration; give brandy-and-water, if the patient can possibly swallow it; but if the narcotism be severe, this will be impossible, and it is wisest to abstain from attempts which may result in fluid going the wrong way. In fact do everything to keep the body warm and the breathing unimpeded, and strive to rouse the unconscious faculties into action.

Supposing, however, that the narcotism be very excessive, and the breathing be slow, irregular, and low, then if medical aid be not forthcoming, it would be well to resort to artificial respiration; by no means a difficult matter to manage, if only any one present has a slight amount of knowledge on the subject. The following is Dr Sylvester's method, and is advantageous from its simplicity: 'Place the patient on the back, inclined a little upwards from the feet by raising and supporting the head on a cushion, placing support also under the shoulder-blades. Draw out the tongue and keep it forward, so as to leave the air-passages free. Remove all clothing from the neck, chest, and abdomen. Stand by the patient's head, take firm hold of the arms just above the elbows, and draw them gently and steadily upwards above the head, keeping them stretched upwards for two or three seconds. Then turn down the arms, and press them firmly and steadily against the sides of the chest for two or three seconds. Repeat these movements alternately, deliberately, and *perseveringly*, until a spontaneous effort at respiration is perceived; immediately upon which, proceed to try by every possible means to induce circulation and warmth.' However, should the case of narcotism be *not* a severe one, such extreme measures as artificial respiration will not be called for, and in all probability, after the use of those simpler remedies at first named, sickness will occur, and this may be taken as a sign that the worst of the evil is over.

And here let us once more emphatically state that in this and all other cases we assume that a medical man is sent for, and that our suggestions only refer to what is to be done *until* he appears upon the scene. Nothing is so annoying and so productive of harm as for a non-professional person to be constantly making this and that suggestion as to the treatment of a sufferer, when a medical man is giving his best thought and skill to the case; but on the other hand it is well for people—more especially women—to know what to do when thrown upon their own resources.

Cases of poisoning from over-doses of opiates are of course only one class of such-like accidents; and the accidental swallowing of irritant poisons, embrocations, &c. often occur, and call for the utmost promptitude of action and presence of mind on the part of those present.

{798}

In the less densely populated parts of the country, it is a positive necessity that people should be able to rely upon themselves in cases of emergency, for if a doctor is many miles distant, and it takes several hours to fetch him, one might almost as well be without him, where sharp practice is called for. To produce vomiting, one of the best emetics we happen to know of is an American one. It consists of a table-spoonful of common treacle (molasses it is called across the water) and as much powdered alum stirred into it as the sticky compound can be made to contain. Now alum is such a valuable drug in many ways that it ought to be kept in every household medicine-chest; and treacle is not usually hard to get. We have never seen this remedy tried in a case of poisoning, but we *have* seen its effect in croup; and anything more decided and imperious in its action it would be difficult to imagine. Such a dose might freely be given in *any* case of poisoning; and after the emetic has acted freely, we would give some soothing mixture, such as thickened milk. There are various things which have the power to a certain extent of protecting the coats of the stomach from the action of irritant poisons; if the poison be an acid, the scrapings off a white-

washed wall or chalk and milk are good. Milk almost stiffened with common brown sugar is one of them; sweet oil taken to nausea is another.

In all cases of poisoning, *loss of time* is the one great thing to be avoided; and the nearest remedy at hand is the best one to make use of. Mustard and water, strong and plenty of it, is a capital emetic. Of croup, that enemy of juvenile humanity, we must now speak a few words; and we know of no better remedy than the American one above described, combined with a hot bath and a hot blanket to roll the child well up in afterwards.

The ignorance of the poor as to the treatment and still more the prevention of the diseases of children is something appalling, and there can be no doubt that thousands of little lives are annually sacrificed to this Moloch.

'I can't tell what ails my child, ma'am,' said a labourer's wife to the writer of this, one bitter day last winter, 'he's carrying on so strange: crowing like a cock, and turning his-self almost black in the face every nows and again.'

The infant in question was comfortably seated on a nice cold door-step, and breathing as if he had swallowed a baby's rattle by mistake. 'Your child has the croup,' I said, picking up the unfortunate little creature and carrying it to the fireside; 'and if you don't do something for him at once, he'll very likely die.'

However something *was* done for him, and he didn't die; but he had a kick for his life all the same, and very little more door-step would have finished him. Yet this poor woman was not an unloving mother; she was only ignorant, and in her ignorance, assisting her child into the grave she would have shed such bitter tears over.

From croup to diphtheria is a natural progression, and we would wish to say a few, a very few words on this terrible disease; not as to its treatment by the amateur nurse, for it is of the greatest importance that such cases should have close medical care. It is then on the subject of the operation called *tracheotomy*—that is, the making an outward incision in the windpipe below the seat of the disease, and inserting a tube for the purpose of respiration, that we would speak—not to discuss it in its medical aspect, but simply to say a word or two to nervous mothers who would shrink from the idea of the surgeon's knife touching a sick child under any circumstances whatever. Surely there can be no more pitiful sight to look upon than a child dying of diphtheria—the eyes wild with fear, looking appealingly for help from one troubled face to another; the little hand thrust into the mouth in helpless, useless effort to dislodge the terrible leather-like substance that is clogging up the throat, and making each breath a sound so painful that for days and weeks to come it will not cease to sound in our ears. What more agonising sight can the sick-room give us to gaze upon? And yet doctors have told us of cases in which a mother has had such an overpowering dread of the surgeon's knife, that even when things come to such a state as this, she has positively refused to allow of any attempt at alleviation of her child's agony by a simple operation!

Now it is on this head we wish to say a few words of encouragement and counsel. Tracheotomy is in the first place a *chance*—a very slight chance in most cases—but still a chance for life; but if it does not save life, it spares the child a death of awful suffering. The pain of the operation itself is so momentary as not to be worth considering, and relief is *instantaneous*. We are not speaking of recovery, but simply of the difference between such a death as that described above and the quiet 'falling asleep' of the child upon whom tracheotomy has been performed; and this is what the writer saw—the frightened appealing eyes; the pitiful effort at self-help; and then the instant relief given by firm and skilful hands; and four-and-twenty hours later, the quiet painless death; the boy smiling up into our faces as the pure spirit fled to that place of rest and peace where 'there shall be no more pain.' It was not a thing to be seen and forgotten.

LIFE IN A MILITARY PRISON.

BY A PRISON CHAPLAIN.

IN an address lately delivered at Birmingham, Professor Tyndall says: 'I met some few years since in a railway carriage the governor of one of our largest prisons. He was evidently an observant and reflective man. He told me that the prisoners in his charge might be divided into three classes. The first class consisted of persons who ought never to have been in prison. External accident, and not internal taint, had brought them within the grasp of the law, and what had happened to them might happen to most of us. They were essentially men of sound moral stamina, though wearing the prison garb. Then came the largest class, formed of individuals possessing no strong bias moral or immoral, plastic to the touch of circumstances, which would mould them into either good or evil members of society. Thirdly came a class—happily not a large one—whom no kindness could conciliate and no discipline tame. They were sent into this world labelled "Incorrigible," wickedness being stamped as it were upon their organisations.'

{799}

As a matter of fact, there is a distinction made, and rightly made, between the inmates of military prisons. They are divided into first, second, and third classes; which you may call bad, worse, and worst, if you are of the despairing type of philanthropist; or good, better, and best, if you are a great believer in human nature, even in imprisoned human nature. The first class wear a red stripe on the arm, and being the best conducted, are given less work to do and more food. Class

number two are marked with a yellow stripe; while the third or lowest class are distinguished by a white badge. A stranger might perhaps shrink from all who wear white stripes as from 'incorrigibles;' but some in the third class may be really very little more 'incorrigible' than himself, for every prisoner, no matter what his character may be, except in very special cases, is placed in the third class on his reception. He then, by good conduct, becomes eligible for promotion into the second class, and subsequently into the first. Rule one hundred and sixty-six of the Regulations for Military Prisons, lays down that 'the first class will be composed of those prisoners who, from their quiet orderly habits and general good conduct under punishment, may appear deserving of being promoted from the second class after some experience has been gained of their characters. Prisoners in either the first or the second class will also be liable to be removed to a lower class for misconduct.' Though the first class of prisoners are employed during the same hours as those prescribed for the second class, the labour is of a less severe description: picking oakum or drill being substituted for the deservedly hated crank and shot exercise. Another privilege enjoyed by the first class is, that they are never deprived of their bed, whereas, 'all prisoners on reception are to sleep for the first week in the same manner as a soldier on guard—that is, on a board without undressing—and subsequently, the third-class prisoners are to sleep as on guard every other night; and the second-class prisoners in the same manner every third night: the prisoners of the first class being alone exempted from this rule.' First and second class prisoners are employed in this prison—which is no Castle of Indolence—at drill, shot exercise, the crank, cleaning the passages and other parts of the premises from six o'clock A.M. to six o'clock P.M.; and those of the third class from six o'clock A.M. to eight o'clock P.M.; with the exception of regular times for parades, chapel, and meals.

'If any man will not work neither let him eat,' is a motto strictly adhered to by the authorities; for no prisoner is allowed meat-dinner who is not employed at hard labour. Those not so engaged are only given porridge and bread-and-milk. When labouring at hard work, prisoners have a meat-dinner every Tuesday and Thursday. Eight ounces of beef without bone and one pint of soup is the allowance. The first class have an additional meat-dinner on Sundays. There is, we see, considerable advantage to be gained by the prisoner, to reward his ambition, should it prompt him to move upward into a higher class. Now this is no trifling matter, for the very essence of good prison discipline is the subordination of mere punishment to reformation; and this system of classification tends not only to preserve a man's self-respect, but to fan the spark of hope that otherwise might be extinguished in his breast.

The justly celebrated novel *Never too late to Mend* has made the public in some degree familiar with the 'silent system' of prison discipline. This system has been found not to work when sentences are for a long period. Speech is discovered to be more than a luxury, being essential to the mental health of prisoners. None now are condemned to the silent system except those who are imprisoned for only a short time. And how great is the punishment of not being allowed to speak, is proved to the chaplain by this one fact. Nowhere are prayers so diligently responded to and hymns sung with such *will*, if without musical taste, as in the chapel of a military prison, for prisoners recognise the service as an opportunity of convincing themselves that they have not become dumb. Until this explanation was given by the governor, I was full of admiration for religion, afterwards discovered to be more loud-sounding than genuine.

Prisoners condemned to solitary confinement are forced to turn to the wall on the approach of visitors or the superior officers of the prison. 'Has my face assumed any terrific aspect? Am I so much worse-looking than usual?' This is the thought that naturally comes into one's mind on walking through a military prison for the first time. Each man takes a quick glance at your Gorgon head, and then, fast as lightning, turns his back to you and his face to the wall, until your apparently baneful or bewitching influence has passed.

Another humiliation to which prisoners have to submit is that of having their hair frequently cut short. A man must sink very low indeed before he lose altogether personal vanity. It would seem as if there were a peacock as well as an angel and a beast in each of us. For this reason the regulation that requires the hair of all prisoners of the third class to be cropped every fortnight is no slight punishment. It is especially felt by those who leave the prison without having been promoted to the second and first classes, in which a prisoner's hair is permitted to grow during the last fortnight of imprisonment. How can a man shew himself in respectable society, or take off his hat to a lady, when that common act of courtesy would reveal the fact that his hair was cut by—government?

Some may desire to know whether flogging has or has not been entirely abolished. To the question, we answer: 'Yes; except for aggravated breaches of prison discipline.' Nor is it easy to see in what other way such cases can be dealt with. A man, let us suppose in a fit of sulky stubbornness, does not attempt to pick his oakum. He is brought before the governor, and sentenced to lose his supper and bed; that is, to be obliged to sleep on the floor. On going back to his cell he says to himself: 'What can I do now to avenge myself on the authorities?' and he acts on the impulse that seizes him, which is to break the window and destroy everything in his cell. Probably this sort of stubborn ill-conditioned character is a coward; and if this be the case, nothing is found to bring him to his senses so well as twenty-five lashes administered in the presence of the governor and medical officer.

The punishments which we should like to see abolished, if others without equal or greater disadvantages could be discovered, are the crank and shot-drill. 'What is the crank?' may be asked by happy people who have never had to do with prisons in any way. It is, we answer, a Sisyphus' wheel that the prisoner is forced to turn twelve or fourteen thousand times each day, for no other reason than because the useless monotonous exercise is sufficiently hateful to him to

be a real punishment. 'To what purpose is this waste?' we may ask. Why is this wheel not made to pump water or grind corn or do some other useful work? Why should a man be degraded into a machine, and made to turn a wheel merely for the sake of turning it? Will he not in this way lose all self-respect? Yes; these are the unanswerable arguments against the crank. But then its very uselessness is urged as an argument for its retention. Suppose, for instance, that prisoners are employed in gardens where vegetables are cultivated for barrack-use, what will be the consequence? That soldiers will desire to abandon their own profession for Adam's calling, and for this purpose will designedly get into prison. If, again, the crank-wheel be utilised in any way, men will feel that they are useful members of society, and will probably prefer their new work to the dull routine and irksome duties of barrack-life. Almost the same remarks are applicable to shot-drill, or the very humiliating process of lifting six times each minute for three hours per diem a thirty-six pound cannon-ball, for no other reason than to put it down again three paces from where it originally lay. Nothing can be more fatiguing and worrying than this process of putting the shot there and back, there and back, there and back! But then we must again remark, that to make prisons very comfortable is absolutely to make them useless.

Almost all the inmates of military prisons are sentenced for such crimes as these: Desertion—the commonest crime of all—making away with kit, breaking out of barracks, insubordination. How is desertion to be stopped? This is now a very difficult problem with the authorities, and almost all officers give it as their opinion that the plague of desertion can only be stayed by again having recourse to the system lately abolished of branding the letter D on the deserter's side. In the absence of this *Nota bene*, there is nothing to prevent a soldier from enlisting over and over again in different corps, in order to get a bounty and new kit on each occasion.

As regards insubordination, when you speak to a prisoner on the folly of having resisted or disobeyed a non-commissioned officer, he will generally give an answer somewhat as follows: 'Well, sir, when I came back from foreign service I had a little money, and with this I drank with some comrades more than was good for me. There is a corporal [or sergeant] in the barrack-room who is always down on me; and upon that day, having had a little too much, I could not stand his going on at me; and so I—though indeed I tried to help myself doing so—just struck him between his eyes.' There is no doubt that nine out of every ten soldiers in military prisons have got into trouble through drink. A soldier was once overheard describing the advantages of the Cape as a station in these words: 'Drink is cheap, and you are always dry.' Men of this stamp fill our military prisons.

In some cases the crime of insubordination is provoked by the petty bullying and offensive manner of non-commissioned officers, though their superiors do their best to check them. Officers are now easily accessible, and are ready to give the youngest private an impartial hearing. In all respects the position of a British soldier is now greatly improved. Indeed it is not too much to say that life in a military prison now is quite as endurable as was existence out of it to the well-conducted soldier of forty years ago.

DESOLATE.

LIKE a funereal pall,
Darkness lies over all;
Weirdly the owl doth call
From her lone steep.
Sadly the night-wind blows
Over December snows;
Vain 'tis my eyes to close—
I cannot sleep.

Thy voice is in my ear;
Once more thy words I hear,
Bringing now hope now fear,
But always love;
And thy sweet face doth rise
Radiant with starry eyes,
Cloudless as summer skies
In heaven above.

Once more at night's soft noon,
Under the pensive moon
Of a long vanished June,
With thee I stray:
As when in days of old
All my heart's love I told,
And to my pleading bold
Thou saidst not nay.

When thou wast by my side,
Calmly the days did glide;
Like an unruffled tide

My life did flow.
Then was each hour too brief;
Now I but seek relief
From my consuming grief,
Rest from my woe.

Now falls the scalding tear,
Shed for the present drear;
Shed for the past so dear,
So quickly flown.
Over thy lonely grave,
Hard by the sounding wave,
Madly the wind-gusts rave;
I am alone.

Yes; but my whole life through
Leal have I been and true;
True shall I be to you,
As true as then;
Till when that life is o'er,
Skyward my soul shall soar,
And on the heavenly shore
We meet again.

H. D.

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